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# **SEEING THROUGH LANDSCAPE: FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES OF CHINA (1840s-1930s)**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2016

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## **DECLARATION FOR PHD THESIS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis addresses the development of the genre of landscape photography in China between the 1840s and the 1930s. Largely unstudied, this genre significantly impacted on a larger socio-cultural context. Due to the current fragmented and disorderly state of photographic archives, I have adopted an object oriented-approach by bringing together hitherto isolated bodies of material held in different institutions across several countries. The connection between this widely dispersed material is related to what I have framed as a French awareness in photographic activity in China. In other words, it concerns not only the production of French operators themselves but also any type of Chinese landscape photographs disseminated in France. The threefold thesis structure unfolds chronologically and through a selection of case studies regarded as pivotal landmarks that marked the first century of photography in China. Enquiries into how shifting ways of seeing and methods for constructing archives were shaped through the materiality of the photographs are threads that run throughout the sections. In Section I, I retrace the early production and consumption of Chinese landscape photography during the second half of the nineteenth century both in France and China. Section II concerns the ways in which photographic records created during campaigns of exploration represented new technological and expressive options for depicting Chinese landscape. Finally, Section III suggests that during the early part of the twentieth century both indigenous and international operators became increasingly inclined to represent landscape according to pre-established local conceptions. The aim of this study is to assess the role of photography in transmitting and transforming perceptions of Chinese landscapes, and the extent to which they relate to changes in sociocultural, economical and political life during the transition from the mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth centuries.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a great pleasure to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Shane McCausland, not only for his teaching and supervision but also for his unceasing support and encouragements. I am also particularly grateful to Dr Charlotte Horlyck and Dr Andrea Janku who gave steadfast and advice throughout the years of my study. In addition, I would like to thank Dr Tania Tribe and Dr Charles Gore who took the time to meet with me and provide most valuable suggestions during the early stages of my research.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the many people in libraries, archives and other institutions, who helped me access valuable materials, in particular Han-yun Chang and Huang Wende from the National Central Library in Taipei; Jérôme Ghesquière and Cristina Cramerotti from the Musée Guimet in Paris; Wai Hing Tse and Jiyeon Wood from SOAS Library; Serge Fouchard, Anne Sigaud and Nathalie Clet-Bonnet from the Musée Albert-Kahn in Boulogne-Billancourt; Charlotte Lanciot and Nathalie Frémaux from the Musée Cernuschi in Paris; Muriel Chagny from the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris; and also Terry Bennett, Dr Régine Thiriez among many other persons who participated in the completion of this study. A very special thanks goes to Tong Bingxue, who kindly supplied images of his rich collection as well as insightful comments on early Chinese photography.

I acknowledge the support of the Sir Percival David Foundation Academic and Research Fund, the École Française d'Extrême Orient (EFEO), the Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL), as well as SOAS who awarded me several research grants that allowed me to undertake fieldwork in China, Taiwan, and France.

A heartfelt tribute goes to my dear doctoral fellows and friends, Tianshuang Liang, Malcolm McNeill, Yin Hwang, Daphne Ang and Chris Kavanagh whose help and encouragement were fundamental to the accomplishment of my research. Pour finir, merci avant tout à ma famille (Maman, Papa, Mimi) et mes amis proches, ce projet n'aurait jamais vu le jour sans votre aide éternelle et votre amour inconditionnel.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Research objectives

This is a thesis examining the genre of landscape photography in China during the first century of photographic practices, specifically addressing the period beginning in the 1840s and stretching to the 1930s. This thesis will enquire into a diverse range of material related to what I term as the French

awareness of photographic activity in China. Underpinning this project is an analysis of which landscapes were represented in the earliest stage of photography in China, while also addressing how shifting ways of seeing and the constitution of archives were shaped by the materiality of the photographs. The overall argument developed will be structured around a selection of key issues. First it will aim to chronicle and analyse the development of the genre of landscape photography in China over the course of the first century of photography in China. I will clarify what were the prominent landmarks in the eyes of early operators, why they tended to travel to specific places, and how the standard itinerary was formed.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, precisely what type of photographic archives these images constituted and what functions did they serve originally will be examined. Second, I will delve into the ways in which Chinese landscapes were mediated through the camera and the printed page. By that I mean that this thesis will address which material characteristics of photographs became visible to the audience and what audience are we talking about? Additionally, I will address how the production of landscape photographs could represent a form of agency that moulded conceptions and consumption practices and address how we might characterize the shifting visual conventions over time. Exploring these issues collectively will also enable me to shed light on the role played by landscape photography in the transmission of various impressions and information about China's natural and cultural sites.

<sup>1</sup> The word operator is deliberately used to designate people who manipulated camera as not all of them were professional photographers.

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Landscape serving as the main theme in this research has not been selected randomly. Instead, although studies on the history of photography in China have become increasingly popular over the last two decades (see the literature review in the following section 'Writing the history of photography in China'), contemporary scholarship has only produced fruitful studies on a limited number of collections and genres. And none to date have presented an in-depth discussion nor incisive visual analysis that specifically addresses the genre of landscape photography. Similarly, there has been little attention paid to the abundant resources related to French photographic activity in China. It is also worth emphasising here that landscape is conceptualized in this thesis in its broadest sense, as a picture representing 'all the visible features of an area of land' that usually do not depict people or at least not as the primary subject matter.<sup>2</sup> Through each chapter I will highlight the increasing variety of landscape representations that occurred gradually over time, as practitioners from different backgrounds proliferated and as new territories opened. In order to maintain consistency while condensing a lot of archival findings, each section will chiefly revolve around one location. All together these locations are regarded as pivotal landmarks in the history of photographic practices in China because – after conducting a detailed examination of the relevant material – I realized that despite the diversity in landscape representations some settings tended to be depicted more frequently and become more broadly diffused more than others. Analysis of primary sources and archives, coupled with examination of contemporary studies, seems to confirm that at particular places in particular moments in time there was a significant collective presence of operators. This observation

served as the initial impetus for my hypothesis that examining such frequently represented places in case studies would help to unveil how certain landscapes more than others have shaped the transmission of knowledge about China's natural and cultural environment. Such changing photographic agendas will be reflected upon my own conception of landscape through this research, which will successively broaden to include more typically natural picturesque vistas, but also human-engineered settings such as photographs

<sup>2</sup>Oxford Dictionary of English. 3rd ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).  
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of buildings and cityscapes, photographs created during campaigns of archaeological explorations, 'cultural landscapes' or other types of sceneries.<sup>3</sup>

## **Writing the history of photography in China**

Attitudes toward photography and the way to write about it have undergone constant change with debates also present ever since the French Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851) and the English Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) invented the first photographic processes respectively in 1839 and 1840. In a similar fashion in China, the arrival of photography as early as the 1840s prompted a diverse range of reactions and a variety of narratives evolved in response over time. Despite a plethora of publications appearing since the second half of the nineteenth century, the development of an academic field focused on studying the history of photography in China was truly only inaugurated in the 1980s. This thesis is clearly positioned within this field and addresses primarily issues and debates in contemporary scholarship. Despite this, a brief consideration of key publications from the period stretching between the 1840s and the 1930s – which corresponds to the time frame covered for the photography discussed in the thesis – will help to elucidate the discursive context in which landscape photography emerged in China.

If we were to look back at early scholarship, it seems that there were two time periods, specifically the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, which concurred with two major waves that swept the literature on photography. In general terms, the earliest publications were either local initiatives or translations of Western sources, and these primarily concentrated on technical knowledge. The first of this genre was the *Sheying zhi qi ji* 攝影之器記 [Notes on a Mechanism for Capturing Images] written probably before 1844 by the Guangdong based scientist, cartographer, and

<sup>3</sup>The term 'cultural landscape' embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment according to the World Heritage Convention.  
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mathematician Zou Boqi 鄒伯奇 (1819-1869).<sup>4</sup> Zou is considered to have played an important role in the history of photography for he was amongst the earliest Chinese intellectuals to promote a new vision.<sup>5</sup> He also coined the Chinese term *sheying* (literally 'capturing images', 攝影), which is still the generic word used nowadays for photography. Another authoritative publication of that time was the *Tuoying qiguan* 脫影奇觀 [Looking at Photography], issued in 1873 by the Scottish appointed doctor of the London Missionary Society in Beijing, John Hepburn Dudgeon (1837-1901). This manual explained the methods of generating a photograph using different types of camera and was argued to have greatly improved the understanding

of photography principles and practices at that time.<sup>6</sup> The Englishman John Fryer (1839-1928) – active in China in the 1860s as an agent of the Church Missionary Society – was another author who contributed in the better understanding of photography in China. Collaborating with several Chinese scholars of his day such as the natural scientist Xu Shou 徐壽 (1818-1884), he engaged in efforts to translate Western science into intelligible Chinese. The manual *Zhaoxiang Luefa* 照相略法 [Techniques of Taking Photography] published in 1887 was one example credited to his name.<sup>7</sup> Central to these types of publications was concept of clarifying the techniques of photography and attempting to familiarize local practitioners with this new medium.

The next period which occurred during the first half of the twentieth century, was when publications displayed a much greater diversity. Such efforts coincided with a time when Chinese intellectuals were seeking to

<sup>4</sup> Zou Boqi, "Sheying zhi qiji" [Notes on a Mechanism for Capturing Images], in *Zou Zhengjun cunqao* (Shanghai: Zou Daquan, 1873).

<sup>5</sup> Oliver Moore, "Zou Boqi on Vision and Photography in Nineteenth-Century China," In *The human tradition in Modern China*, ed. Kenneth James Hammond and Kristin Eileen Stapleton (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 41.

<sup>6</sup> Zhen De, *Tuoying qiguan* (Jingdu: Shi yi yuan, 1873). Amongst the scholarships that have advanced this argument: Terry Bennett, Anthony Payne, and Lindsey Stewart, *History of Photography in China: Western Photographers, 1861-1879* (London: Quaritch, 2010), 37; Chia-Ling Yang, "The Crisis of the Real: Portraiture and Photography in the Late Nineteenth-Century Shanghai," in *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from Treaty Ports to World War II*, ed. Jennifer Purtle and Hans B. Thomsen (Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2009), 31.

<sup>7</sup> Yang, "The Crisis of the Real," 37. For more information on Fryer's translation activities, see: David Wright, "John Fryer and the Shanghai Polytechnic: Making Space for Science in Nineteenth-century China," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 29.1 (1996): 1–16.

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theorize and move beyond the technical mastery of the medium in order to better explore its creative capabilities and its diverse applications to artistic, commercial, and scientific activities. Of particular relevance, it was around that time that the genre of landscape photography became a subject of specialist writing. In contrast to earlier publications designed to provide technical guidance, a greater number of local scholars and amateurs began their study of photography aesthetics that advocated the mingling of personal expression and pictorial principles within the printed image. Personalities such as Liu Bannong 劉半農 (1891-1934), Chen Wanli 陳萬里 (1892-1969), and Lang Jingshan 郎靜山 (1892-1995) might be considered as central figures who theorized in their writings and visualized in their artworks Chinese traditional aesthetics through the use mainly – but not exclusively – of landscape photographs. In addition to these individual initiatives coming from newly growing amateur practices, leading publishing houses also launched a significant number of photo-book series elaborating on a variety of scenes, including landscapes of historical events or popular urban and natural views. I will touch upon the local development of pictorial photography and the publishing phenomenon in more depth in chapter six. The first half of the twentieth-century also saw the proliferation of the illustrated press, increasingly capable, thanks to the development of photomechanical printing, of diffusing photo-mechanically reproduced images, avant-garde graphic design, and visual information in relation to contemporary events. The role of

the illustrated press in strengthening the visibility of photographs is a thread that runs throughout this dissertation; hence I also leave further discussion of this issue for later sections (see notably the section in Chapter two titled 'Illustrated press').

Around the time the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949, independent and amateur publishing gradually ceased and all of the publishing houses, as well as photographers, came under Party or government management. Although the production of photographs and photobooks endured, discourses on photography in this era changed to providing their primary prominence to the promotion of national achievements and visual

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propaganda. It was therefore not surprising that most writing and works were fabricated for the sake of increasing political awareness, embracing the new ideology, and motivating people to participate in the Party's nation-building efforts.<sup>8</sup>

The proper writing of the history of photography as a discipline can be considered a phenomenon which began properly in the 1980s. This makes it a rather new topic for academic research. Specifically, from the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a renewed interest in photography and this was accompanied by a desire to re-collect China's past among the international community of scholars. This urge developed largely due to the dramatic loss of artefacts experienced in China over a hundred years of political and social turmoil. As a matter of fact, photographic archives in China underwent massive destruction due to successive wars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that cumulated with the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s which forced people to destroy family records, and led to the dispersion of many images abroad when they were the property of expatriates. This fragmentary state prompted the establishment of the field and resulted in something of a new wave of publishing, including the establishment of digital databases, and increasing inter-institutional collaborations between scholars in China and the West.

Despite this scholarly enthusiasm, the history of photography of China remains excluded from general writings about Chinese art history. In the major publications on art history in China the word 'photography' almost never appears or if it does feature it is only briefly mentioned.<sup>9</sup> Despite some

scholar's efforts to widen the study of Chinese art by extending beyond the

<sup>8</sup>Zheng Gu, "The Image of a New China 1945-1966," in *The Chinese Photobook: From the 1900s to the Present*, ed. Martin Parr and Zheng Gu (New York : Aperture, 2015), 144-145.

<sup>9</sup>Julia Frances Andrews et al., *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998); Craig Clunas, *Art in China*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1996); Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China* (5th ed., rev. and expanded. ed. Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2008); Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

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conventional favoured materials (i.e. paintings and ceramics) the existence of photographic material remains generally omitted.

Likewise, in general writings about photography, the Eurocentric bias almost utterly avoids the Chinese context or at best only references a few



names of operators active in China. As an example two notable authors of the history of photography only make laconic comments on China in regards to the figure of John Thomson (1837-1921), the Scottish photographer who travelled across China and pioneered photographing daily life, social activities, and landscapes in the 1870s.<sup>10</sup> The Italian-British Felice Beato (1834-1903) is another photographer often cited in these writings because of the impact of his images of war in the wake of British military expansion in the 1860s. Notwithstanding the importance of these two photographers, they can hardly adequately represent the entire history of photography in China.

Contemporary studies on photography in China have involved some predominant schools of thought. Firstly, the international community is making efforts to document and reestablish China's historical photographs by compiling general histories. Thus far, Claire Roberts' *Photography and China*, Zhichuan Hu and Yunzeng Ma's *Zhongguo Sheying Shi 1840-1937* 中國攝影史1840-1937 [History of Photography in China 1840-1937], Clark Worswick and Jonathan D. Spence's *Imperial China*, and Cornell Capa's *Behind the Great Wall of China* have offered valuable chronological overviews of the practice of photography in China by examining a variety of international archives and adopting different readings of the material.<sup>11</sup> The latest and most scholarly study thus far, has been produced by Roberts who provides a piece of writing accessible to a general audience while also offering effective

<sup>10</sup> Helmut Gernsheim, *The History of Photography. Vol 2, the Rise of Photography 1850-1880*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 170; Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present*. (Completely rev. and enl. ed. ed. London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), 103.

<sup>11</sup> Claire Roberts, *Photography and China* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Yunzeng Ma and Zhichuan Hu, *Zhongguo she ying shi, 1840-1937* (Beijing: Zhongguo sheying chubanshe, 1987); Clark Worswick and Jonathan D. Spence, *Imperial China: Photographs 1850-1912* (New York: Pennwick Publishing: [distributed by] Crown, 1978); Cornell Capa and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York N.Y.), *Behind the Great Wall of China: Photographs from 1870 to the Present* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1972).

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analysis of specific themes (landscape, war, propaganda, and so forth) in light of their socio-temporal contexts. This work is currently the only publication that thoroughly addresses the periods beginning from the late nineteenth-century up to contemporary times. Roberts is a scholar and curator of Asian art, lecturer in Art History at the University of Adelaide.

In *Zhongguo Sheying Shi 1840-1937* Hu and Ma have surveyed photography in China up until the 1930s and have suggested a broad periodization: with the first being between 1840 and 1911 and the second from the May Fourth event (1919) until 1937. They account for photographic visual developments (split between aesthetic, commercial, and photojournalism categories) among both Chinese and Westerners, discuss the formation of photographic societies, and enumerate the burgeoning of publications and exhibitions in China. To a certain extent, this work exemplifies trends in Chinese scholarship published on the general history of Chinese photography inasmuch as the lack of images and various tenuous arguments fail to engage in more critical discussions. Comparably, the Chinese photojournalist Liu Heung-Hsing - now director of the Shanghai Center of Photography (SCôP) opened in June 2015 - published two large-size beautifully illustrated books, hoping to offer a visual history of China. His *China in revolution* focuses on

photographs of wartimes stretching from the Second Opium War (1856-60) to the 1920s, whereas his *China: portrait of a country* has drawn from the archives of over eighty nation's photographers. Despite the efforts to unearth little known material, this type of publication eludes scholarly scrutiny as their efforts display varying degrees of seriousness, by providing only a partial account of the development of the medium and a severe lacking of precise notes and captions.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in summary none of Chinese scholarship to date can be considered as fully satisfactory.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Heung Shing Liu and Benedikt Taschen, *China: Portrait of a Country = Porträt Eines Landes = Portrait D'un Pays* (Köln: Taschen, 2008); Heung Shing Liu, *China in Revolution: The Road to 1911* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Selected bibliography of Chinese scholarships: Wu Suxin, *Zhongguo Sheying Shihua* [Topics in the History of Chinese Photography] (Shenyang: Liaoling Meishu Chubanshe, 1984); Wu Qun, *Zhongguo Sheying Licheng* [Historical Developments of Chinese Photography] (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1986); *Shanghai Sheying Shi* [History of Photography in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1992); Jiang Qisheng et al., *Zhongguo Sheyingshi 1937-1949* [History of Chinese Photography 1937-1949]

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Secondly, there has also been a tendency amongst scholars to adopt a biographical approach. The publications that might exemplify this trend are Terry Bennett's three volumes which, despite their titles (*History of Photography in China*), supply mainly – if not exclusively – biographies of both indigenous and foreign operators active in late nineteenth century China.<sup>14</sup> Bennett is a collector, dealer, and historian of East Asian photography of longstanding. His substantial publications provide a cohesive narrative that connects individuals to images, dates, and places. And he has notably identified operators based on correspondences and local advertisements, among other written sources. His substantial compilations also confirm the existence of a commerce of photography at that time, which involved the consumption of not only portraits but also landscapes. The art historian Luke Gartlan's approach to East Asian photography also deserves a special mention, notably his recent studies on the Shanghai photographs of Baron Raimund von Stillfried (1839-1911) and Isabella Bird Bishop's (1831-1904) pictures of East Asia.<sup>15</sup> Using the same approach, several theses have made substantial contributions to the better understanding of the history of photography in China by examining various individual practitioners; the art historian Kin-keung Edwin Lai's thesis on Lang Jingshan, completed in 2000, is perhaps the most notable example of this category.<sup>16</sup>

Interestingly some biographical studies have appraised not the operator but rather the person represented in the image. In the case of the Chinese

<sup>5</sup> Beijing : Zhongguo sheying chubanshe, 1998); Ming Zhang, *Waiguoren paishe de zhongguo yingxiang: 1844-1949* (Beijing: Zhongguo Sheying Chubanshe, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Terry Bennett, Anthony Payne, and Lindsey Stewart, *History of Photography in China: Chinese Photographers, 1844-1879* (London: Quaritch, 2013); Bennett, Stewart, and Payne, *History of Photography in China: Western Photographers*; Terry Bennett, Anthony Payne, and Lindsey Stewart, *History of Photography in China 1842-1860* (London: Quaritch, 2009); Terry Bennett, "China," In *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2008): 1: 295.

<sup>15</sup> Luke Gartlan, *A Career of Japan: Baron Raimund Von Stillfried and Early Yokohama Photography* (Leiden, The Netherlands : Brill, 2016); Luke Gartlan, "A Complete Craze: Isabella Bird Bishop in East Asia," *PhotoResearcher* 15 April (2011): 13-26.

<sup>16</sup> Kin-keung Edwin Lai, "The life and art photography of Lang Jingshan (1892-1995)" (PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2000). Other researches of interest: Marylois Chan, "Le pouvoir dans l'étendue. Victor Segalen's Photographic encounter with China" (PhD diss.,

University of London, 1995); Eliza Ho, *Art, Documentary, and Propaganda in Wartime China: The Photography of Sha Fei* (Columbus: East Asian Studies Center, The Ohio State University, 2009).

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collector and independent researcher Tong Bingxue 仝冰雪 for instance, six decades of the life of a Chinese man living in Republican China is examined through photographic portraiture.<sup>17</sup> Another example is the art historian Yingchen Peng, who has analysed the functions and visual meanings of photographic portraits commissioned by the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧皇太后 (1835–1908), the last Empress and regent who ruled the Manchu government from 1861 until her death.<sup>18</sup>

To some extent such biographical approaches correlate with general scholarships on photography, which tend to consider photography developments primarily as the product of 'great' or 'genius' photographers.<sup>19</sup> However some recent studies have employed innovative approaches by notably defending the variety of photography experience, its relation to society, and embracing a wider range of material. In other words they argue that a new and better way of writing the history of photography is to place stress on the importance of images themselves and embrace all kinds of photographs, ranging from scientific images and archaeological records, to artistic creations.<sup>20</sup> Such alternative approaches have a number of parallels with the efforts of this thesis as I also look beyond the existing corpus of

<sup>17</sup> Tong has been keen on collecting and documenting his own collection of historical photographs. Amongst his researches: Bingxue Tong, *Zhongguo zhaoxiangguan shi (1859-1956)* (Beijing: Zhongguo sheying chubanshe, 2016); Bingxue Tong, *Beiyang Zongtong Fu Daliguan* [The Grand Master of Ceremonies of Beiyang Government] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2012); Bingxue Tong, *Shibohui Zhongguo Liuying (1851-1940)* [China's Images at the World Expos] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2010); Bingxue Tong, *Yi Zhan Yi Zuo Yi Sheng: Yi Ge Zhongguo Ren 62 Nian De Yingxiang Zhi* [Six Decades of a Chinese Life in Photographs] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2010); Bingxue Tong, *Shibohui Jiangpai shoucang Yu Jianshang (1851-1958)* [Medals of the World Expos] (Shanghai Shi: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Ying-Chen Peng, "Lingering between Tradition and Innovation: Photographic Portraits of Empress Dowager Cixi," *Ars Orientalis* 43.6 (2013): 157-74. See also: Beisi Liu and Qixian Xu, *Gugong Zhenzang Renwu Zhaopian Huicui* [Exquisite Figure-Pictures from the Palace Museum] (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House of the Palace Museum, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Cecil Beaton and Gail Buckland, *The Magic Image: The Genius of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975); Michael R. Peres, *The Concise Focal Encyclopedia of Photography: From the First Photo on Paper to the Digital Revolution* (Oxford: Focal Press/Elsevier, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Ian Jeffrey, *Revisions: An Alternative History of Photography* (Bradford: National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, 1999); Heinz K. Henisch and Bridget Ann Henisch, *The Photographic Experience, 1839-1914: Images and Attitudes* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

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photographs in order to consider all types of landscape representations and their shifting functions in society.

Thirdly, a fair number of contemporary scholars adopted an archival approach by exploring specific collections. As an illustration, the historian of art Nick Pearce has produced a visual inventory that successfully catalogues and analyses old photographs of Beijing from the Yetts collection held at the University of Durham.<sup>21</sup> His study offers a *catalogue raisonné* of the two main operators of the collection, namely the Scottish physician John Dudgeon (1837-1901) and John Thomson. Pearce describes the images' visual features

and tracks down the history of the collection. He also briefly addresses ongoing debates on the issue of attribution and the potentially false dichotomy between amateur and professional photographers.<sup>22</sup> Using a similar approach, *Among the celestial* assembles hundreds of high quality images all belonging to the private collections of Ferdinand Bertholet and Lambert van der Aalsvoort. This catalogue thus released many unknown photographs taken by Westerners active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and it was complemented by a scholarly text written by the French independent researcher Régine Thiriez.<sup>23</sup>

I beg the reader's indulgence for a small digression about Thiriez, whose contribution to the field should not be underestimated. Her *Barbarian lens* is an in-depth study of the representation of the Summer Palace by Westerners. More than just providing an interesting case study, her introductory chapter also summarizes the developments of photography in China including its technical aspects, suggests a method for the accurate identification of nineteenth-century photographs, details the major publications

<sup>21</sup> Nick Pearce, *Photographs of Peking, China 1861-1908: An Inventory and Description of the Yetts Collection at the University of Durham : Through Peking with a Camera* (Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005)

<sup>22</sup> Also of the same author: Nick Pearce, "A life in Peking: the Peabody albums," *History of Photography*, 31.3 (2007): 276-293; Nick Pearce, "A novel experiment: John Thomson's Illustrations of China and its People and the beginnings of photographic publishing," *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 44 (2011): 49-65.

<sup>23</sup> Ferdinand M. Bertholet, Lambert van der Aalsvoort, and Régine Thiriez, *Among the Celestials: China in Early Photographs* (Brussels : Mercatorfonds, New Haven : Distributed outside Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg by Yale University Press, 2014).

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at that time, and provides the relevant historical background. In other papers she has discussed the extent to which topographic pictures have shaped and fixed a certain vision of a place.<sup>24</sup> Discussions of the role played by photographs in the shaping of a region thus directly relates to this research. Additionally, it is worth noting that Thiriez remains one of the few scholars who include French operators again making her work comparable to the aims of this thesis.

Another more contemporary example that has recently furnished an alternative, significant source of information regarding the production of photobooks over time is a publication entitled *The Chinese Photobook*. This large publication is based on the rich personal collection of the English photographer Martin Parr, which was assembled with the collaboration of the Beijing- and London-based Dutch photographer team WassinkLundgren. The original motivation behind the collection had been Parr's interest in finding key works related to Socialist Realist photography from the early days of the Communist Party and the era of the Cultural Revolution. But the collections goals also extended to address pre and post Mao era photo publications. Additionally, the collection groups together books published by Japanese sources to commemorate the invasion of China, as well as those published by Europeans on their journey to China.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the literature review identifies preferred topics and photographic genres, such as regions like Shanghai and Hong Kong, and genres like portraiture, war scenes and historical events.<sup>26</sup> *Brush and Shutter: Early Photography in China* is undoubtedly the most important research conducted

<sup>24</sup> Régine Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's*

*European Palaces* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1998); Régine Thiriez, "Ligelang: A French Photographer in 1850s Shanghai" *Orientations* no. 32, Part 9 (2001): 49-54; Régine Thiriez, "Early photographs of the Pearl River Delta: Topographical Views of Canton, Macao and Hong Kong, 1842-1870" (paper presented at the Conference Photography and the Making of History in Modern China, Wadham College, Oxford, December 17-18, 2012).

<sup>25</sup> Parr and Gu, *The Chinese Photobook*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Among recent scholarships on Hong Kong photography: Roberta Wue, *Picturing Hong Kong: Photography 1855-1910* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1997); Cécile Léon Art Projects, *Xianggang Zui Zaoqi Zhaopian 1858-1875* [First photographs of Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2010). The art dealer Dennis George Crow published several illustrated catalogues containing historic photographs of Hong Kong.

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thus far on early photography in China, which placed a strong emphasis on portraiture, while simultaneously addressing a few urban topographical views. Guided by the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, several renowned scholars (art historians and historians) were invited to organize and analyse the institute's collection and to produce articles that suggest methods and produce helpful information in order to better understand historical images taken in China by both natives and foreigners. They present case studies on specific places (Shanghai and Chongqing studies by Wen-hsin Yeh) or on specific operators (Milton Miller's portraits studied by Wu Hung), retrace the genesis of the camera in China, its influence during wartime, its importance in the art market and its impact on Chinese painting practices. However, only Wu Hung, Jeffrey Cody and Frances Terpak allude to the historical connotations and pictorial sensibilities implied in some landscape photographs.<sup>27</sup>

In conjunction with two decades of increasing scholarly interest in Shanghai studies, a number of specialists across the world have produced studies revolving around Shanghai.<sup>28</sup> Hence, in France, Christian Henriot and Christine Cornet – both professors in Chinese contemporary history at the Institut d'Asie Orientale in Lyon – completed substantial anthologies of photographic representations of Shanghai.<sup>29</sup> Henriot's role in the construction of the field is of particular importance as he contributed to 'Virtual Shanghai' and 'Historical Photographs of China': two essential databases compiled by the efforts of several international universities. These provide thus far the largest and most well documented corpus of photographic material derived from a variety of private and public collections.<sup>30</sup> Permeated with a historical

<sup>27</sup> Wu Hung, "Introduction : Reading Early Photographs of China" in *Brush and Shutter: Early Photography in China*, ed. Jeffrey W. Cody, and Frances Terpak. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press in association with the Getty Research Institute, 2011), 1-17; Cody and Terpak, "Through a Foreign Glass: The Art and Science of Photography in the Late Qing China", in Cody and Terpak, *Brush and Shutter*, 33-68.

<sup>28</sup> Joshua A. Fogel, "The Recent Boom in Shanghai Studies," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 71, no.2 (2010): 313-333.

<sup>29</sup> Amongst Cornet's studies that include photographs: Joseph de Reviere de Mauny, François Verdier, and Christine Cornet, *Carnet de Chine: 1932 : le voyage insensé du père Jo* (Arles: Actes Sud Bleu de Chine, 2004); Christine Cornet and Raymond Barre, *Shanghai 1849-1946: la concession française : chronique photographique* (Saint Paul de Varax: Scheibli Editions, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> "Virtual Shanghai" has been under construction since 2003 and gather the work of the Institut d'Asie Orientale (CNRS-University of Lyon) and the Center of Chinese Studies of the

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perspective, Henriot co-edited *Visualizing China and History in Images* evaluating how photographs constitute a useful yet challenging source for research and analysis. For that purpose, he invited several historians and

Sinologists (Joan Judge, Robert Bickers, Wen-Hsin Yeh among others) to suggest possible visual readings.<sup>31</sup>

Such international enthusiasm for topics and photographic genres has also entered the realm of popular culture, with interest focusing largely on the images as a form of remembrance rather than as an analytical exercise. This type of publication is principally composed of a catalogue of images which relegates written analysis and contextualization to a secondary role.<sup>32</sup> The epitome of such an editorial attitude is found in the collections entitled *Lao Zhaopian* 老照片 [Old Photographs]. *Lao Zhaopian* is a publication phenomenon that arose from the mid-1990s onwards and has provided numerous black and white photographs of people and places, which engendered a pervasive vogue for re-using historical photographs in different creative media in contemporary times.<sup>33</sup> These Old Photograph collections do demonstrate some efforts to group images into meaningful categories with people, cities, scenic attractions, war scenes, political or social events being the most recurrent groups. This series also shaped popular interest and provided new meanings to such older photographic material in contemporary

<sup>31</sup> Christian Henriot and Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Visualising China, 1845-1965: Moving and Still Images in Historical Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Christian Henriot and Wen-Hsin Yeh, *History in Images: Pictures and Public Space in Modern China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Similar publications encompass: *1860-1930: Yingguo cang Zhongguo lishi zhaopian* [Western Eyes : Historical Photographs of China in British Collections, 1860-1930] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2008); Zhuchuan Hu and Shen Chen, *Zhongguo Zaoqi Sheying Zuopin xuan (1840-1919)* [A Collection of Pictures of Early-Period Chinese Photography] (Beijing: China Photography Publishing House, 1987); Burton F. Beers and Museum of the American China Trade, *China in Old Photographs, 1860-1910* (New York: Scribner, 1978); Jonathan D. Spence and Ann-ping Chin, *The Chinese Century : A Photographic History* (London: HarperCollins, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> The *Lao Zhaopian* publishing phenomenon, the popular taste, and ceaselessly re-utilization it has engendered nowadays has notably been discussed by Claire Roberts, Ding Ning, and Margaret Hillenbrand at the Conference Photography and the Making of History in Modern China, Wadham College, Oxford, December 17-18, 2012.

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China. The values ascribed to this photographic material in these works is personal and promotes subjective responses rather than being works derived from pure documentary intentions and consequently the tone of most prefaces is emotional promoting sentiments of loss, memory, and nostalgia.

Overall contemporary scholarship tends to argue that landscape photographs remained scarce during the late nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> This assumption can perhaps be attributed to the view that this genre did not appear to have a strong role in local society, as early commercial photographic studios in China for instance made most of their income from selling photographic portraiture. However, such conclusions seem to disregard the frequent appearance of and selling of scenic albums and publications that contained both urban and natural landscape images from the mid nineteenth-century onwards.<sup>35</sup> Besides this an increasing number of scholars have also drawn attention to the representations of cultural heritage landscapes.<sup>36</sup> For instance Ma and Hu have dedicated an entire section to landscape photography and discussed its

earliest appearance in publications regarding scenic sites in the late nineteenth-century, and its artistic developments in the 1920s.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Andrew Jones produced a compelling study on the circulation of representations of Beijing monuments as the embodiment of ideologies in the early twentieth century.<sup>38</sup> Eugene Wang has also made a comparison of the Chinese educator Huang Yanpei 黃炎培 (1878-1965) and four tourists' photographic visions of the West Lake in early twentieth-century China, analysing how historical events changed both perceptions and representations

<sup>34</sup> Worswick and Spence, *Imperial China*, 144.

<sup>35</sup> Bennett's publications, for instance, frequently show advertisements promoting the selling of series of photographs that include landscapes.

<sup>36</sup> Beers, *China in Old Photographs*, 23-34; Cody and Terpak, *Brush and Shutter*, introduction and chapter "Through a Foreign Glass"; Ma and Hu, *Zhongguo Sheying Shi*, 109-110; Bennett et al., *History of Photography in China: Chinese Photographers*, 46-49.

<sup>37</sup> Ma and Hu, *Zhongguo Sheying Shi*, 109-110.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew F. Jones, "Portable Monuments: Architectural Photography and The "Forms" Of Empire in Modern China," *Positions* 18, no. 3 (2010): 599-631.

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of this place.<sup>39</sup> To conclude this summary, a recent publication ---*And the Chinese Cliffs Emerged out of the Mist* has unearthed and analysed rare landscape photographs taken by travellers during the nineteenth century, some of which will be incorporated in this thesis.<sup>40</sup> All of these studies taken collectively demonstrate the growth of scholarly interest in the topic and testify to the role of landscape in the history of photography in China.

Perhaps the most fruitful contribution specifically to the knowledge of landscape photography of China can be attributed to Wu Hung's research. As a specialist in both ancient and contemporary Chinese art history, his works not only cover the fundamentals of the history of photography in China but he also thoroughly identifies and explains its major trends, shifting aesthetics and notable practitioners. His *A story of ruins* analyses early photographs of China of in light of ruins concept and imagery.<sup>41</sup> Another example is his *Zooming In: Histories of Photography in China* (to be published in June 2016) that promises to dissect the multiple histories of photographic production in China by covering a wide range of topics including architectural and landscape photography.<sup>42</sup>

His most important contribution to the study of landscape photography however remains his introduction in *Brush and Shutter*. He advances a method for reading early photographs, and argues that there is a threefold divide between a) Western practice of landscape photography - which for him places emphasis on the 'naturalness' of the scenery and escape the

<sup>39</sup> Eugene Y. Wang, "Perceptions of Change, Changes in Perception: west Lake as Contested

Site/Sight in the Wake of the 1911 Revolution," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture Fall*

Special Issue, no. 2 (2000): 73-122.

<sup>40</sup> Filip Suchomel, Marcela Suchomelová and Hana Dvoráková, ---*And the Chinese Cliffs*

*Emerged out of the Mist: Perception and Image of China in Early Photographs* (Revnice:

Arbor vitae, 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Wu Hung and Peggy Wang. *Contemporary Chinese Art: Primary Documents* (New York: Museum of Modern Art ; Durham, N.C.: Distributed by Duke University Press, 2010); Wu Hung and Christopher Phillips, *Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China*. (1st ed. ed. Chicago, Ill.: Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago ; New York, N.Y. : International Center of Photography ; Göttingen, Germany: Steidl Publishers, 2004); Wu Hung, *Chinese Art at the Crossroads: Between Past and Future, between East and West* (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 2001); Wu Hung, *A Story in Ruins: Presence and Absence in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (London: Reaktion, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Wu Hung, *Zooming In: Histories of Photography in China* (London: Reaktion Books, to be published in 2016).

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representation of built environment, b) the Chinese production of 'picturelike' (ruhua, 如畫) landscape photography filled with pictorial aesthetics, and finally c) the Chinese production of 'iconic view', which are photographs that depict famous sceneries composed of both natural landscape and man-made structures.<sup>43</sup>

There are some clear benefits in embracing Wu's terminology inasmuch as he pinpoints the complexity of visual modes of representations and the historical, cultural, and political agendas often ascribed to a specific place. Furthermore, his idea of an 'iconic view' connects to a certain extent with this thesis' objective to map out the landscapes that served as landmarks in the history of the genre. As both a complement and an alternative to Wu's divide, I suggest reassembling and enquiring into an all-encompassing corpus of landscape photographs, notably by including images created during academic expeditions (see Section II).

This literature review has highlighted significant gaps in the field.

Despite the important contribution made by existing scholarship there is still a dramatic lack of knowledge about the general history of photography in China. However, we can also observe that landscape photographs feature in publications, which proves there is a real interest. Nevertheless, the visual potential of landscape photographs has not been critically developed thus far. Therefore, this thesis will provide the first thorough investigation of an underestimated genre, by characterizing landscape photographs, analysing their visual vocabulary and re-contextualizing them.

<sup>43</sup> Wu Hung, "Introduction", 10-11. The concept of 'picture like' connects photography with the long lineage within the specialized discourses of literati and artistic theory. The term will be briefly discussed in relation to photography in a later chapter. Authors that have discussed it includes: Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, N.J:



Princeton University Press, 1997), 23; Wai-Kam Ho, "The Literary Concepts of "picture-Like" (ju-Hua) and "picture-Idea" (hua-I) in the Relationship between Poetry and Painting," in *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting*, ed. Alfreda Murck and Wen Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 359-404.

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Methodology: on the difficulties of approaching photographic material of China  
Fragmented yet abundant archives

Before explaining the methodologies and the material involved in this research, it would be useful to address what the current state of photographic archives of China are today. Are they presented under specific forms? And does this raise any challenges? As I mentioned, currently archives are in a severely fragmented condition because of the century-long destruction and dispersion of the material; and the lack of organized systematic collection can be added to this. Yet with developments in archival technology and digitization, more of these photographs have been rediscovered and made accessible. Hence today there are three possibilities to access photographic material related to China: via online digital databases, via private or public collections in situ, and via reproductions in written sources. Fieldwork experiences executed over the course of this research allowed me to consult several public and private archives across China, Taiwan, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Indeed, this fieldwork coupled with a long-term examination of the material is primarily what enabled me to recognise the disordered and highly dispersed nature of photographic archives today.

In order to provide the reader with a better appreciation of the extent of the disorder, the following table provides an abstract of a table several pages longer and still being updated list that I have been compiling over the last five years.<sup>44</sup> This list encompasses photographic archives that can be accessed either online or in physical forms in situ. The material presented here solely relates to archives related directly or indirectly to what I have termed 'French archives', which I will detail in a moment. Each of these repositories contains hundreds to thousands of images. Consequently, thanks to the relative ease of access to this material, I have been manipulating a corpus which is comprised of an overwhelming number of images. In face of the complex and

<sup>44</sup> The reader will find a more complete annotated list of databases in the annexe.

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bulky nature of the archives, the goal is then to establish efficient methods to identify relevant material and assess it.

List of repositories related to 'French archives'

ARCHIVE NAME

ARCHIVE

TYPE

DESCRIPTION

Historical

Photographs of China

Online A scholarly and collaborative

database that aims to locate, archive, and disseminate photographs from the substantial holdings of images of modern China, held mostly in private hands overseas

#### The Virtual Cities Project

Online A collaborative enterprise between several international universities.

This online platform provides various types of sources (photographs, maps, documents) about cities such as Beijing, Hankou, Shanghai, Suzhou, Tianjin

#### International

#### Dunhuang Project (IDP)

Online An international collaboration to make information and images of all manuscripts, paintings, textiles and artefacts from Dunhuang and archaeological sites of the Eastern Silk Road freely available on the Internet

Gallica Online Digital portal gathering a wide range of documents, manuscripts, and images, including photographs, kept chiefly at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)

Joconde Online Digital portal gathering a wide range of documents, manuscripts, and images, including photographs of China originally kept in several French museums and institutions

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#### Old China

#### Photography

Online Website offering a selection of photographs of China from Terry Bennett's collection, which cover the period between 1844 and 1911

Musée Cernuschi In situ (Paris) The Museum's library holds over five hundred stereoscopic glass plates donated by Charles de Polignac in 1955, as well as 1930s albums partly donated by the collector Léon Wannieck. The glass plates were shot circa 1909 along the Yangtze River, probably concomitantly with

Commander Audemard's mission along this river  
Musée Guimet Online and in situ (Paris) The Museum holds and has fully digitized the photographs taken during French archaeological expeditions in early twentieth-century China. It also collects several late nineteenth century photo albums and portfolios that contain pictures produced by amateurs and local studios (Afong, William Pryoy Floyd, Auguste François)

Musée d'Orsay Online and in situ (Paris) The Museum mainly holds late nineteenth century anonymous photographs and stereoscopies from various collections (such as the Fonds Etienne Clémentel). The online catalogue includes also photographs by John Thomson, Paul Champion, Adolphe De Meyer, Gustave Popelin

Musée des Arts  
Décoratifs

Online and in situ (Paris) The Museum holds several photographic albums of China dating back to the late nineteenth century

La médiathèque de  
l'architecture et du  
patrimoine (MAP)

Online and in  
situ (Paris)

The MAP's Fonds Chine [China Collection] includes Denise Colomb's journeys in China in the 1930s and mainly anonymous photographs taken before 1914

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Établissement de  
Communication et de  
Production

Audiovisuelle de la  
Défense (ECPAD)

In situ (Paris) The ECPAD is a French public institution under the tutelage of the Ministry of Defence, which functions as an archive and audiovisual centre. It includes historical

photographs of China taken in the late nineteenth century

Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)

In situ (Paris) The BnF collection holds numerous albums and loose photographs of China dating back to the late nineteenth century to contemporary times

École Française d'Extrême Orient (EFEO)

In situ (Paris) The EFEO collection offers early twentieth-century photographs and stereoscopies related to topics such as archaeology, ethnology, and art. It includes the following collections: Noël Péri's photographic records; Joseph Skarbek's mission to Henan in the first decade of the twentieth century; anonymous stereoscopies taken in Yunnanfou (present day Kunming); and other photographs probably taken in Yunnan province and Tibet

Musée du Quai Branly Online and in situ (Paris) The iconographic library of the museum holds nearly 700,000 pieces, including photographs of China dating from the late nineteenth century up to contemporary times  
Musée National de la Marine

In situ (Paris) The Museum holds the photographic archives of Etienne Sigaut (1887-1983), who lived in Shanghai in the early twentieth century, documenting its docks and maritime works

Archives de la société des Missions étrangères

In situ (Paris, France)

The Society possesses a wide photographic collection that is currently being inventoried. These photographs regarding the Chinese mission are located in the series 31-33. They generally have no captions

Agence Roger-Viollet

Online and in situ (Paris, France)

Photography Agency that dates back to the nineteenth century, which provides images taken in China and 29

notably a collection of photographs of Chinese pavilions depicted during the World Exhibitions in France

Archives diplomatiques du ministère des Affaires étrangères

Online and in situ (Paris, France)

The Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs possess rich textual and iconographic resources, including photographs taken in China since the late nineteenth century

Musée départemental Albert-Kahn

In situ (Boulogne-Billancourt, France)

Collection of autochromes and stereoviews taken around the world, including in China in the early twentieth century. These

photographs are part of the Archives de la Planète [Archives of the Planet]

Musée français de la photographie

Online and in situ (Bièvres, France)

A collection of more than three hundred photographs taken in China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It includes Jules Itier's daguerreotype taken in China in the 1840s

Archives photographiques des OEuvres Pontificales Missionnaires (O.P.M.)

In situ (Lyon,  
France)

Collection that offers photographs  
taken by French missionaries across  
China from the late nineteenth  
century to the first half of the  
twentieth-century

Chambre de  
Commerce et  
d'industrie (CCI)

In situ (Lyon,  
France)

The CCI holds several collections  
related to economy and industry, but  
also a collection entitled "Fonds  
Relations Etrangères" (International  
Relations Collection) that offers the  
photographic records of the Mission  
Lyonnaise in China (1895-1897).

Another collection (Fonds  
"Expositions") offers photographs of  
colonial expositions

Archives Nationales  
d'Outre-Mer

In situ and  
Online (Aix-en-  
Provence,  
France)

French governmental database that  
provides diverse visual documents,  
including photographs of China

Fonds Félix Roussel

In situ (Bourgen-  
Bresse,  
France)

Album of souvenir photographs and  
postcards from several countries  
including China

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Musée des  
civilisations de  
l'Europe et de la  
Méditerranée  
(MuCEM)

Online and in  
situ (Marseille,  
France)

The Museum collection offers the  
Fonds Soury (photographs of Indo-  
China) and photographs taken in

China that were displayed at the exhibition "Les échanges intellectuels à travers le monde" in 1937 at the Musée d'art Moderne in Paris

Maison de Pierre Loti

In situ

(Rochefort, France)

Museum dedicated to Pierre Loti, which contains his photographs taken in China in the late nineteenth century

Bibliothèque

municipale de Brest

In situ (Brest, France)

This municipal library holds archives related to Dr Charles Broquet (1876-1964), including an album of photographs taken in China and in Mandchouria during the epidemic of plague in 1910-1911

Archives municipales de Quimper

In situ (Quimper, France)

The municipal archives of the city of Quimper in France holds a large photographic collection (albums and slides) of Othony Hede (1919-2006-, who was a merchant and professional photographer that travelled around the world with his camera, including in China (Macao, Hong Kong)

Archives

départementales - Lotet-Garonne

In Situ (Agen, France)

This departmental archive holds the writer and journalist Jean-Eugène Mouton-Rodes aka Jean Rodes' (1867-1947) collection of photographically illustrated diaries, notes and manuscripts created when he was abroad in Asia

Guomindang Party

Archives

中國國民黨黨史館

In situ (Taipei,  
Taiwan)

Textual and photographic records of French people involved in China (among others), including documents related to war and public affairs mostly from the early twentieth century  
Congrégation du Gd-  
St-Bernard archives

In situ  
(Hsincheng,  
Taiwan)

The archives of the mission in 1930 (China, Tibet, and Taiwan) are held at the Catholic Church Po-Ai Lu 64 971 Hsincheng, (Hwalien) in Taiwan  
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Getty Research  
Institute

Online and in  
situ (Los  
Angeles, United  
States of  
America)

Holds a significant numbers of historical photographs, including the Clark Worswick collection of photographs of China and Southeast Asia (c.1860-c.1939) that contains many French operators, such as Paul Champion, Georges Prat, Paul Fleury, and Michel de Maynard

Peabody Essex  
Museum

In situ (Salem,  
USA)

The museum holds several thousand nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs made in China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia, including stereographs of Louis Legrand, and prints by Lai Afong, Felice Beato, Kusakabe Kimbei, Milton Miller and John Thomson, among others

George Eastman  
House Museum

In situ and  
online



(Rochester,  
USA)

This international museum of  
photography and film holds hundreds  
of early twentieth century  
photographs of China, taken notably  
by Chusseau-Flaviens, Eugène  
Pirou, and Jules Richard among  
others

Musée de l'Elysée

In situ

(Lausanne,  
Switzerland)

The museums holds several  
photographic archives, including the  
Swiss Ella Maillart Collection: a  
female traveller of the twentieth  
century that visited Central Asia and  
China among other places

Methodology

The major methodological challenge is to think about, and think with, this  
morass of material. My methodology has consequently required the adoption  
of mixed methods that are at the junction of history of art and material culture,  
utilising at the same time archival and chronological approaches, in order to  
uncover the agency of photographs. In light of the large corpus of material in  
hand and the predominant school of thoughts, I have realised that studying a  
single collection or adopting a monographic approach would only offer a  
partial view of a much bigger picture, especially when I seek to study the  
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evolution of a genre over time. But the questions remained: how can I  
navigate an all-embracing collection of images and coherently organize and  
connect them to one another? How will my work contribute to the field?  
Consequently, I have decided to adopt an alternative perspective – although  
one that is still anchored in current scholarships – by proposing an objectoriented  
approach of an overlooked genre (landscape) and overlooked type of  
archive ('French archives').

The thesis is thus first and foremost an archival work, whose core purpose is  
to decipher the genre of landscape from the standpoint of French awareness  
in photographic activity in China, hereafter termed 'French archives'. Adopting  
this standpoint however does not mean I have not looked at others or that I  
have only been investigating sources based in France. On the contrary, I have  
inspected a variety of types of documents, concerning the productions of  
French operators in China along with any other types of Chinese landscape  
photographs diffused in France. This approach has been adopted as I believe  
it could provide a productive approach to address the chaotic archives, while  
leaving open the possibility to periodize photographs.

My investigations have provided clear evidence of both indigenous and  
foreign operators' photographs circulating between France and China, with  
some operators even occasionally engaging in a cross-cultural dialogue  
through photography. I postulate that gathering material in such a way makes

it possible to highlight collective visual system that express complex and linked values. There are of course cultural localities and specificities that inevitably have conditioned visual and conceptual approaches; and I will discuss some of these specificities in this research. However, I am more interested in the point of frictions, the visual exchanges. This is why I decline to make generalisation based on strict ethnic oppositions, avoiding discussions about what exactly might constitute 'Chinese photography', and instead examine the cross-cultural intersection in the depictions of a common subject.<sup>45</sup> Therefore the core rationale underlying the choice of 'French

<sup>45</sup> These transnational and non-essentialist approaches are two ideas guided and informed by

Wu Hung's proposition for studying transnational 'photographs of China' and Craig Clunas'

suggestion to examine the history of 'Art in China' rather than thinking about Chinese history

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archives' is that I believe it provides a useful framework to understand the overlaps and contrasts amongst practitioners who contributed to the history of landscape photography in China. Such an approach enabled me to grasp the international dimension of photographic practices in China while illuminating the broader socio-historical context.

In doing so I am conscious of the fact that the archivist's agenda is a constituent part of any archive. There is no such thing as a universal and neutral way to select, gather and catalogue series of documents. Whatever the case (individual or institutions), it remains an 'idiosyncratic arrangement' of things that reveals specific relations and meanings between documents.<sup>46</sup> Put another way, any archive is by essence selective. For this reason, although the ideal aim is to constitute a new and all-encompassing archive that embraces a variety of landscapes photographs, inevitably a certain amount of omission was required in order to maintain consistency and select a workable amount of material to address. For one example, this study excludes landscape photographs directly related to war. This choice was made because the succession of multiple wars and their photographic representation is a topic that would require an entire independent research project to address and thus is outside the scope of this thesis.

A second step in the analysis consists in arranging landscape photographs chronologically. Different elements such as changes of subject matter, techniques, and functions represent useful analytical tools for chronicling the evolution of landscape representations. Such a chronological approach is adopted in order to help the reader to re-contextualize the image in time. The time frame proposed in this thesis is by no means intended as the final word but rather is indicative of what I argue to represent key visual paradigm shifts. of art as a separate entity from a general History of art. Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 1997); Wu Hung, "Why Asian Photography?" *Trans Asia Photography Review*, vol. 1, no. 1., accessed December 23, 2010,

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0001.102>. *Trans Asia Photography review* is a peerreviewed

journal that represents a pioneering work in the study of photography from a

transcultural standpoint by offering bi-annual issues and bringing together researches done by

a variety of scholars, curators, artists among other specialists in the field.

<sup>46</sup> Hopwood, Simon Schaffer, and Jim Secord, "Seriality and Scientific Objects in the Nineteenth Century," *History of Science* 48, no. 3/4 (2010): 252.

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Additionally, it has enabled me to better position myself within contemporary scholarship inasmuch as the time frame of this research – the 1840s-1930s – has been chosen in accordance with other scholars' periodizations, after having extensively examined the photographs.<sup>47</sup> The 1840s is a common starting point for research because it corresponds to the arrival of photography in China. Then it is often argued that a visual paradigm shift occurred with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937. From this date onwards the imagery produced gradually came to be mainly devoted to the depictions of the War of Resistance (kangzhan, 抗戰), including images of soldiers, war horrors, war achievements and so forth.<sup>48</sup> Landscape photography did not stop suddenly, however in general the visual conventions were changed remarkably, and photographers were instructed to create images that would be used for photojournalistic purposes adopting social realism principles that would help the nation-building effort.<sup>49</sup> Consequently the late 1930s are often regarded as another starting point for other war focused research efforts.

There are both advantages and drawbacks to approaching photographs in such a strict chronological order. In particular, dealing with the historical photographs of China renders a chronological approach arduous, mainly due to the paucity of chronological information. Most of the original displays and captions have been dismantled, lost or are gathered randomly in libraries' files or under umbrella terms in digital platforms. Similarly, archives do not always divulge accurate locations, the exact date, and even operators' names as signatures were uncommon in early periods. Labels or captions written onto photographs themselves also cannot be blindly trusted because these might be erroneous. Many negatives have changed hands multiple times and been

<sup>47</sup> Régine Thiriez, "China," in *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph*, ed. Robin Lenman

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 120; Lai, "Lang Jingshan"; Yi Fei Tu, "De l'encre à la

lumière, de l'Occident à l'Orient, le paysage exprimé" (PhD diss., Université Michel de

Montaigne-Bordeaux III, Bordeaux, 2009); 30 ans de photographie chinoise: 1930-1960

(Saint-Denis: Presses de l'université de Vincennes, 1984); Ma and Hu, *Zhongguo Sheying*

Shi.

<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that depictions of wars started as early as the second half of the nineteenth century in concomitance with the several Opium Wars, rebellions and revolts

(Boxer, Taiping) and so forth.

<sup>49</sup> Tu, "De l'encre à la lumière," 204; Zheng Gu, *Contemporary Chinese Photography* (Harrow

Middlesex: CYPI Press, 2011), 4; Lai, "Lang Jingshan," 43.

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used by different owners, while some diffused photographs have eventually become associated with a specific collection, a group of people, or an individual who might have bought and collected photographs and not taken them per se. This consequently makes chronological attempts uncertain and identification a problematic task.

In problematic cases only the technique used and the subject represented (when recognizable) allow an approximate dating. For instance, it is easy to recognize a daguerreotype – the earliest photographic technique – because of its extremely dark tones and peculiar polygonal frames. Once a photograph is identified as a daguerreotype, it is possible to date it as belonging to the period between the 1840s and 1850s, as after this date the wet collodion technique supplanted this older arduous process. The wet collodion process produced a type of printed image called an albumen print and this too can be easily recognized due to the presence of white dots containing dust or impurities, the grainless and detailed quality of the image created, as well as its rich tones.<sup>50</sup> Thus, if one recognizes an albumen print, it is possible to state that it was likely created between the 1850s and the early 1880s as afterwards the gelatin dry plate superseded it, and so forth.<sup>51</sup> The following table serves as an analytical tool – not absolute but rather illustrative – that one could use to establish a general concept of the possible chronological listing of the successive photographic processes.

<sup>50</sup> Louis-Désiré Blanquart Evrard (1802-1872) introduced the earliest albumen prints to the

French Académie des sciences in 1850. This new technique is quickly adopted by operators

and utilized until the end of the nineteenth century. An albumen print is a positive proof

constituted of a layer of albumen, which contains a silver image onto the surface of a thin

sheet of paper. The sizes varied depending on the variety of suppliers. Bertrand Lavédrine,

Jean-Paul Gandolfo, and Sibylle Monod, (Re)connaître Et Conserver Les Photographies

Anciennes (Paris: Éd du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 2007), 122.

<sup>51</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, “Study Room resource: Processes and techniques of photography,” accessed October 16, 2010,

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/s/studyroom-resource-processes-techniques-of-photography/>.

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POPULAR  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
PROCESSES IN  
CHINA

APPROXIMATE  
DATING REMARKS SAMPLES

Daguerreotype c. 1839-1850

Unique image formed directly on a silver plated copper plate. Highly reflective surface, image reversed, dark tones, commonly found in leather or thermoplastic

cases

Jule Alphonse Eugène Itier

Stereograph c. 1840-1950

Two pictures mounted next to each other, viewed through a specific lens called stereoscope so that it gives a sense of three dimensionality. In black and white or in colour. Very popular in the 1850s and 1860s

Louis Legrand

Albumen print c. 1850-1880

Smooth, shiny surface, grainless, detailed, rich tones, colour can vary but mostly purplish-brown, sometimes white dots, streak or impurities stuck into the collodion.

An albumen print can sometimes be identified as being produced from a wetcollodion negative, which was amongst the most common type of photographic process made during the nineteenth century.

Negatives made of glass

Lai Afong

Aristotype c. 1860-1940

Warm hues, surface smooth and white.

Previously known in the 1860s as "leptographic" paper, aristotype prints became popular between the 1890 and the 1940

Pierre Duclos

Gelatin silver print c. 1880-present

Varying tones but generally neutral black, high surface gloss, white highlights. This process had generally displaced albumen prints in popularity by the 1890s because they could be prepared and stored for months before use, were more stable, did not yellow, and were simpler and quicker to use. Negatives made of glass were used until the 1930s and were supplanted by negatives on celluloid film still utilized today

Edouard Chavannes

Autochrome 1905-1930s

Coloured, transparent image on glass. Dyed red, green and blue, grainy quality due to the presence of microscopic grains of potato starch. Patented by the Lumière brothers in 1905 and marketed in 1907

Stéphane Passet

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The purpose of arranging landscape photographs chronologically is not to constrain this study to a mere historicist mode. Rather, informed by current

thinking about agency, one of the most important goals of this thesis is to evaluate the extent to which visual strategies are put into effects while understanding photographs as components in networks of social relations.<sup>52</sup> Such an analysis begins from within the photographs themselves, addressing the formal aspects such as subject matter, techniques, and material characteristics. More precisely, I will assess the ways in which the presentation and arrangement of photographs constructed shifting conceptions of landscape and shifting 'ways of looking'. Such a characterization of the evolving ways of seeing is informed by Clunas' study of visibility in modern China. As he convincingly advanced: 'who gets to look, where and when, must be considered together with what there was to look at.'<sup>53</sup>

Consequently, where possible, I will also inspect the diffusion process (production, circulation) of certain photographs in order to understand the wider cultural background of the images, as well as the function that such diffusion served for their producers and audience. The question of visibility is of particular importance for the study of photography in China, and few existing studies have considered this issue in depth. By analysing photographs within their original context and then by tracing their diffusion, I will underline reconstructed displays that might have altered the original context of viewing and sometimes even the image itself. In the end, this combination of methodological standpoints has prompted me to adopt a three sections structure for the thesis that I shall introduce below.

<sup>52</sup> Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998);

Robin Osborne and Jeremy Tanner, *Art's Agency and Art History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality*, 111-133. The threefold division of this thesis and their titles

are indebted in Clunas' characterization of evolving ways of seeing images in Ming period,

shifting from 'looking at' (kan, 看), to 'contemplating' (guan, 觀), to 'reading' (du, 讀).

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Thesis structure

The structure of the thesis unfolds in three parts arranged chronologically, themselves composed of two chapters each. Enquiries into how shifting ways of seeing and methods for constructing archives were shaped through the materiality of the photographs are threads that run throughout the chapters. They will assess what I believe to represent the key visual paradigm shifts in the genre of landscape photography. These shifts will be examined through the discussion of specific case studies.

Section I will be oriented towards the emergence of landscape photography of China, and the ways in which it triggered certain impressions of the country. Chapter one will examine what French audiences have understood about landscape imagery on China. It will highlight the prevalent channels through which reprographic images (photographs, engravings) about China had been diffused between the advent of the medium in 1839 and 1900. Following this, chapter two will reconstruct the genesis of landscape photography in China and the variety of practices and material characteristics

it brought about. The creation of Chinese landscape photographs touched upon very different contexts, ranging from diplomatic expeditions, religious missions, commercial framework, to souvenirs of personal journeys and imaginary voyages. Despite the diversity of these contexts, I will assess whether this period overall demonstrated tendencies for photo-essays to be compiled and imbued with a sense of personal experience, and to depict preferred subject matter such as port cities.

Section II will evaluate the ways in which exploratory photographs produced in the service of the sciences can represent new technological and expressive options for depicting Chinese landscape while (re)constructing Chinese ancient history. From the late 1890s onwards and particularly at the turn of the twentieth-century, the gradual improved access to hinterland regions, the development of photography and its systematic use in scientific disciplines precipitated an urge for exhaustive photographic surveys. In order to explore this visual paradigm shift, chapter three will address the relationships with scientific disciplines discourses and landscape photography. Chapter four will then focus on a specific case study of Charles Nouette's

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photographs of Dunhuang taken during Paul Pelliot's expedition to Chinese Turkestan (1906-1908). Overall, this Section will demonstrate how landscape photographs produced during campaigns of exploration in China contributed to the international photographic community. Exploring the cross-cultural dialogue by means of landscape photography will be the main theme of the following final Section.

In Section III, I will enquire into landscape photographs that portray what was considered in Chinese culture as famous sights (mingsheng, 名勝). I will explore the extent to which photographs did not function merely as tools to produce knowledge, but more importantly offered a platform for dialoguing with already known geographical and pictorial conceptions. In chapter five, I will delineate the contours of this particular development in the genre of landscape photography by inspecting a large body of material, namely autochromes or colour photographs shot by the amateur Stéphane François Marie Passet, appointed operator on behalf of the Archives de la Planète (Archives of the Planet). My objective here is to clarify whether or not operators like him might have responded to pre-existing representations of scenic attractions, notably those found in illustrated primary sources like Chinese local gazetteers (difang zhi, 地方誌). The final chapter will deliberately take a larger vantage point by reconstituting for the first time the integrity of the Commercial Press of Shanghai's photo-book series Scenic China (Zhongguo Mingsheng, 中國名勝), which was collected by a French journalist as early as the late 1920s. Through studying this publication series, I will examine the maturation of this type of photography, elaborating on famous sights in Chinese publishing culture, while assessing its relation to local and international audiences.

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Figure 1 - Jules Itier, Gate of the Great Pagoda of the Chinese city in Macao, October 1844. Daguerreotype, 20.7 x 16.7 cm (Inventory number: 76.3000.3). Musée français de la Photographie / Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, Benoit Chain.

**CHAPTER ONE - TRACING THE IMAGERY ON CHINESE  
LANDSCAPE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY FRANCE**

## Introduction

The perception of China was changing in nineteenth-century France. China had been acknowledged since the seventeenth century mainly thanks to missionaries, however their accounts and images merely targeted to the educated elite. Hence, China and the Chinese remained little known to a general audience. The arrival of photography in 1839 – considered at that time as an ‘apparatus to see’ – offered the potential to replace previous fantasies with more accurate representations.<sup>54</sup> And yet it would be wrong to assert that photography’s ways of framing China were invented from scratch. For centuries export luxury goods like paintings, porcelains, watercolours, wallpapers, furniture and other objects represented another substantial vehicle in the diffusion of images from China and they saturated the international market. Landscapes portraying China’s topography, its fauna and flora, the manufacture of tea or porcelain, the port city activities- notably bay or dock scenes, and figures at leisure in natural sceneries were amongst the most popular themes portrayed, as they constituted various pleasant souvenir items.<sup>55</sup> Yet there is little evidence that many nineteenth-century operators had been personally impacted by such artefacts.

Thus, the objective here is not to restate the history of Chinese landscape representations. Instead, the conceptual framework of this chapter is oriented towards the study of reprographic images that may have prompted

<sup>54</sup> André Rouillé, *La photographie : entre document et art contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 81.

<sup>55</sup> Craig Clunas and Ian Thomas, *Chinese Export Art and Design* (London: Victoria and Albert

Museum, 1987), 116; Tina Pang, *Haimao Liuzhen : Zhongguo Waiziaopin De Fengmao*

[*Picturing Cathay : Maritime and Cultural Images of the China Trade*] (Hong Kong: University

Museum and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong, 2003), 15.

the development in France of particular imagery on China. Reprography corresponds to the practice of reproducing or copying texts and/or images by employing methods such as metal asset techniques, xylographic techniques, and photography. More specifically then, I intend to investigate reproducible images, including engravings and photographs. In so doing I will address the questions of whether there are any pre-existing reproducible images from which photography might have emerged? And if so, how did photography enter this visual continuum? Furthermore, did nineteenth-century France come to form specific impressions of China and its landscape?

The main goals of this chapter are thus to delineate the cultural ambience in which images of Chinese landscapes in France have to be understood, and clarify the imagery that had been established up to 1900.<sup>56</sup> I argue that such imagery pertained to several ‘social contexts of viewing’ in



which these images appeared.<sup>57</sup>

The visual continuum of diplomatic relations

The sun casts a bright light onto a gate that shows elaborated decorations (Figure 1). An ornate staircase and a balustrade with carved low relief flank this gate. The tiled roofs are curved upwards. Two paper lanterns are hung on the gate frame. The same frame is itself inscribed with non-Latin characters. A human figure wearing a high rounded hat with a wide flat brim and a long outfit stands at the right side of the stairs. The end of the handrails forms a sculpture that look like a beast. As one looks from a distance, one notices that the bright and white elements of the foreground contrast strongly with the dark and fuzzy background composed of what are apparently trees. The weak tones of the image prevent a clear identification of the background. Yet we can safely assume that are certainly not in France, nor any other Western country. A handwritten ink inscription – at the back of the image – indicates the title.

<sup>56</sup> One should be aware that other types of material culture such as letters, novels, theatre

plays, and literature also played an important role in the construction of an imaginary Orient.

Yet they remain outside the scope of this thesis. Sophie Monneret, *L'Orient des peintres*

(Paris: Nathan, 1989), 6-7.

<sup>57</sup> The concept of social context of viewing is borrowed from: Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies : An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (2nd ed. ed. London:

Sage, 2007), 12.

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The image actually shows a three-quarter view of the Gate Pavilion that is located at the entrance of the Mother Temple (also known as A-Ma temple, Ma Ge Miao 媽閣廟), a Daoist temple founded in the late fifteenth century in Southwest Macao.

The French custom officer, geologist and amateur photographer Jules Alphonse Eugène Itier (1802-1877) was the author of this photograph, or more precisely this daguerreotype. The daguerreotype was the earliest and most common technique used by operators between the 1840s and 1850s and produced a unique image on metal. Taken originally in 1844, this image was part of the earliest surviving body of photographic materials of China.<sup>58</sup> Itier's daguerreotypes is offered as a starting point to understand the overall objective of this chapter, which seeks to explore the extent to which photography pursued a kind of imagery that was assumed to be persistent throughout the nineteenth century. From an initial examination, the thirty or so surviving daguerreotypes currently housed at the Musée français de la photographie (Bièvres, France) illustrate two points that I discuss below. First, the visual vocabulary in early photographic representations of China elaborated on a somewhat limited choice of subject matter and specific ways of framing. Second, Itier's production sets out a framework for understanding how these images fitted within a broader context of Sino-French diplomatic relationships, since he took his daguerreotypes while he accompanied the diplomat Théodore-Marie de Lagrené's Embassy to China (1844-1846). Embassies to China and their visual legacies

Talking about the creation of images within a diplomatic context might seem

strange but foreign embassies sent to China usually took artists with them. If the advent of photography in some ways changed the way people saw the world, the manner to produce images fitted neatly with existing practices and

<sup>58</sup> Current studies agree that Itier left the earliest surviving body of daguerreotypes.

However

according to Harry Parkes' (1828–1885) journal, two men - the Major George

Malcolm (date

unknown) and Dr Richard Woosnam (1815-1888) - took daguerreotypes while sailing up the

Yangtze River in 16th July 1842. Thus few years earlier than Itier but no image survived.

Stanley Lane-Poole and F V. Dickins, *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes: K.C.B., G.C.M.G., Sometime Her Majesty's Minister to China and Japan – Volume I* (London: Macmillan and Co,

1894), 31.

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protocols concerning how to record events, people, and places. Itier was a diplomatic amateur photographer working in China in the mid-1840s and had he chosen to ask his government minders what the background to his visit was he would have been informed that the earliest French voyage sent to China in 1698 were comprised of different members, including Jesuit missionaries and an Italian painter. The painter was named Giovanni Battista Gherardini (1652?-1723) and was the author of several decorative paintings in churches both in France and China.<sup>59</sup> The timid emergence of Sino-French diplomatic relationships in the seventeenth century triggered then the first visual dialogue – if I may call it so. The privileged position of Jesuits in Chinese court life granted them the ability to receive countless commissions from officials, and encouraged them to produce images that combined European and Chinese pictorial conventions. Imbued with European scientific thoughts and Christian agendas, it is sometimes argued that they helped foreign audiences to revise some of the more misleading previous ideas about this country.<sup>60</sup>

However, as often chronicled in sources, France's official diplomatic relation with China was belated compared to other Western powers like Britain which initiated the earliest wave of diplomatic embassies to China. This is probably the reason why the outcomes of the Irishman George Earl Macartney's (1737-1806) mission to China between 1793 and 1794 prompted a massive visual response amongst French audience.<sup>61</sup> The primary objective of the mission was to seek out prospects for economic cooperation and improve intercultural relations, while also bringing back information on Chinese climate, topography

<sup>59</sup> François Froger and Ernst Arthur Voretzsch, *Relation du premier voyage des Français à la*

*Chine fait en 1698, 1699 et 1700 sur le vaisseau "l'Amphitrite"* (Leipzig: Verlag der Asia major,

1926); Giovanni Battista Gherardini, *Relation du voyage fait à la Chine sur le vaisseau*

*l'Amphitrite, en l'année 1698* (Paris: N. Pepie, 1700); Claudius Madrolle, *Les premiers*

*voyages Français à la Chine: la compagnie de la Chine, 1698-1719* (Paris: A. Challamel,

1901), Book I, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Danielle Elisseeff-Poisle. "Chinese influence in France, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,"

in *China and Europe: Images and Influences in Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed.

Thomas H. C. Lee (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1991), 151.

<sup>61</sup> George Staunton and George M. Macartney, *An Historical Account of the Embassy to the*

*Emperor of China, Undertaken by Order of the King of Great Britain: Including the Manners*

*and Customs of the Inhabitants; and Preceded by an Account of the Causes of the Embassy*

*and Voyage to China* (London: Printed for J. Stockdale, 1797).

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and defence. The activities of this embassy also precipitated a renewal of interest in Chinese culture and artefacts. As usual in such a mission, there were a variety of skilled members that made up the group, including draftsmen, specifically the Irish painter Thomas Hickey (circa 1741-1824) and the English painter William Alexander (1767-1816). These men would eventually produce drawings and paintings, which framed the predominant representation of China in Western countries by being repeated, reprinted, and reinterpreted in diverse publications across countries.

Only a few years after the mission, several volumes concerning

Macartney's Embassy were translated and reprinted in French language.

These volumes offered a pretext for French artists and engravers to comment and vicariously interpret what they understood about the Chinese environment

and Chinese people.<sup>62</sup> An illustration of this phenomenon is found with the

French engraver Ambroise Tardieu (1788-1841) who created a series of engravings based on Lord Macartney's writing (Figure 2 and 3). This

illustrated album was part of the French translation of Macartney's embassy.

Among the various scenes represented, there were a significant amount of views of a bay, boats on a river or nearby wharf, Chinese natural landscapes,

and detailed depictions of traditional architecture, such as bridges, pagodas

and other monuments. Having never visited China, Tardieu's engravings

elaborated on Alexander's previously published drawings, regardless of their degree of faithfulness to what was really found in China.

<sup>62</sup> George Staunton, Jean Castéra, Erasme Gower, and George Macartney, *Voyage dans*

*l'intérieur de la Chine et en Tartarie : fait dans les années 1792, 1793 et 1794, par Lord*

*Macartney...* (Paris: Buisson, 1798); William Alexander, [Recueil de planches (plans et

images) sur la Chine] (London: G. Nicol, 1796).

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Figure 2 – William Alexander, View of a

Bridge, plate 44 in:

William Alexander,

William Alexander,

William Miller, William

Miller, G Nicol, David  
Lasell, and D B.  
Malpière, *The Costume  
of China: Illustrated in  
Forty-Eight Coloured  
Engravings* (London:  
published by William  
Miller, Albemarle Street,  
1805), unnumbered page.  
Paris, Bibliothèque  
nationale de France.

Figure 3 – Ambroise Tardieu, *Pont  
Chinois* [Chinese bridge], plate  
XVIII in: *Voyage dans l'intérieur de  
la Chine et en Tartarie fait dans les  
années 1792, 1793 et 1794 par lord  
Macartney. Tome 3* (Paris: Buisson,  
1804), 131. Paris, Bibliothèque  
nationale de France.

This intaglio engraving shows an  
interpretation of a Chinese bridge.  
This image discloses the curiosity  
mingled with lack of knowledge at  
that time since the decoration and  
sculptures that ornate the bridge  
had been schematized. Similarly to  
Alexander's image above, it portrays  
a Chinese junk seen from behind.  
The addition of nearby fishermen  
and onlookers in Alexander's image  
on the middle ground evokes the  
practice of composing landscape in  
European pictorial tradition.

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In contrast with Britain, French authorities had to wait until the nineteenth century before intensifying dramatically relations with the Middle Kingdom. After this time, countless French diplomats, merchants, travellers, missionaries and others continued to cross the Middle Kingdom's borders with various intentions, at a time when China's relationship with the rest of the world was becoming increasingly complex due to internal dysfunction.<sup>63</sup> The early nineteenth century naval expeditions in China allow us to understand how for a long time French sailors were the major agents in international relations.<sup>64</sup> It is around the late 1830s that France, under the reign of Louis Philippe (reign 1830–48), initiated naval expeditions in the Far East. Jules Dumont d'Urville (1790-1842), Abel Dupetit-Thouars (1793-1864) and Commandant Cyrille Laplace (1793-1875) amongst others explored many parts of the world including the Chinese seas in order to:  
(...) Assure the presence of French pavilion abroad,  
encourage the economic expansion and the  
development of exchanges with France, explore

unknown or less-known regions, conduct scientific observations and collect military information. <sup>65</sup>

Before 1842 France only had a Consul in Canton, Charles Lefebvre de Becourt (1843-1844), as this was the only open port in China since the mideighteenth

century.<sup>66</sup> France's initial strategy was to gradually settle navy

bases and consulates in South East Asia – notably in Manilla where France installed its 'General Consulate in Indochina' in 1840 – in order to gain access to China and Japan. It is recorded that Adolphe Barrot (date unknown), French

<sup>63</sup> China underwent multiple upheavals throughout the nineteenth century. The gradual

mistrust and disorganisation of the last Manchu Dynasty triggered revolts (Taiping Rebellion

1851-64; Boxer Rebellion 1899-1901), drastic reforms (Hundred Days' Reform 1898), and

wars with Imperialist powers such as the First Opium War (1839-42), the Second Opium War

(1856-60), the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). For an overall study of this watershed period

see: John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution : 1800-1985* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).

<sup>64</sup> Hervé Barbier, "La Division Navale d'Extrême-Orient, 1870-1940" (PhD diss., University of Nantes, 2006), 6.

<sup>65</sup> Translated from the original French text found in: Pierre de Rosamel and Pierre Lévêque,

"La corvette Danaïde autour du monde 1839-1843," *Neptunia*, no.233, mars (2004): 36-45.

<sup>66</sup> Henri Cordier, "La première Légation de France en Chine (1847)," *T'oung Pao* 7 no. 3

(1906): 351.

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Consul in Manilla, visited China briefly in January 1838. A few years after in 1841, Adolphe Dubois de Jancigny (1795-1860) navigated near Chinese seas in his frigate the *Erigone*, but no dialogue with Chinese officials was initiated.<sup>67</sup>

Thus it was the 1840s that marked France's first substantial burst of

diplomatic activity in China. It was also the time when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877), received several speeches that

advocated for France to act in China by sending a mission in order to address the problematic lack of knowledge about the country.<sup>68</sup> As a letter addressed

to François-Auguste Alexis Mignet (1796-1884) indicated in 16 April 1840

'there is in Europe considerable documents relating to China: well! Who knows right now something general about this country?'.<sup>69</sup>

Despite these early attempts, the Minister Plenipotentiary Théodose-

Marie de Lagrené's (1800-1862) Embassy to China between 1844 and 1846 remained the most important as it was regarded to be the first official effort.<sup>70</sup>

Once the treaty of Whampoa [Huangpu] was signed in 24 October 1844, the French government decided to suppress its consulates in Manilla in order to

install a permanent legation in China, notably in Shanghai.<sup>71</sup> Similarly to other

embassies, Lagrené's goals were not only to reinforce economic and political ties, preserve French religious and moral interests with China and promote France's prestige vis-à-vis the power relationship with Britain, but also to gather drawings (notably commissioned to local Chinese artisans) and photographs by Itier.<sup>72</sup> Other members of the mission also attempted to take daguerreotypes during the expedition. The Captain Pâris, another man called Rondot, and the mechanic Raffoux tried several times to use this complex camera without great success notably due to the oxidation of plates, extreme

<sup>67</sup> Denis Nardin, "Les Français à Basile : un projet de colonisation avorté," *Archipel*, Volume 15 (1978): 29-30.

<sup>68</sup> Amable-Severin Bellée, *Programme d'une mission en Chine fait et adressé par A.-S. Bellée,...* À M. Thiers, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Président du Conseil des Ministres,

les 19 mars Et 16 avril 1840 (Paris: impr. de Guiraudet et Jouaust, 1840).

<sup>69</sup> Translated from the original French text in: Bellée, *Programme d'une mission en Chine*, 9.

<sup>70</sup> Bernard Brizay, *La France en Chine: du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 2013).

<sup>71</sup> Cordier, "La première Légation de France en Chine", 353.

<sup>72</sup> Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism 1871-1914 : Myths and Realities* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), 13.

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temperatures and humidity and a general lack of skills.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, none of these daguerreotypes survived.

One of the main reasons why it seems clear that landscape photographs did not emerge in a vacuum but rather from an existing visual continuum is that there is a high degree of visual consistency among nineteenth century reprographic images. When one looks at images existing at that time, one can notice the conspicuous presence of similar isolated representations; inclined to give prominence to port views, traditional architecture, and street scenes amongst other images of the Chinese environment.

Had Itier or other members of the embassy cared to search for information and existing images, he would have quickly discovered the works of established foreign and local draftsmen based in China, such as the British amateur William Prinsep (1794-1874), who took lessons in painting from the London-born Georges Chinnery (1774–1852) who trained at the Royal Academy.<sup>74</sup> They might also have come across another local French artist, namely Auguste Borget (1808-1877). This French painter was one of the rare artists to live in China in the first half of the nineteenth century, similar to Chinnery who is said to have exerted some influence on him. These three painters met one another at some point and were aware of their mutual works. But to what extent one can conjecture that Itier was aware of such pictorial works? Figure 1 shown at the beginning of this chapter was actually a spot in Macao that was repeatedly represented by local artists, including Prinsep and Borget (Figure 4), who sold a painting depicting a scene of the Mother Temple (Ama temple) to the French King Louis-Philippe in 1841.<sup>75</sup> In that sense, this temple was already part of the cultural and pictorial history of the foreigners.

<sup>73</sup> This information is mentioned in Captain Pâris's diary while navigating the Archimède between 1844 and 1845. Edmond Pâris, "Journal de l'Archimède," *Annales maritimes et coloniales* (1844-45): unknown pages; Géraldine Barron, "La Chine en daguerréotype," *Marine et science* blog, accessed November 13, 2014, [http://paris.hypotheses.org/337#\\_ftn3](http://paris.hypotheses.org/337#_ftn3).

<sup>74</sup> Chinnery spent many years in Canton from the 1820s onwards and specialized in portraiture and views of the local sceneries.

<sup>75</sup> Jeremy Tambling and Louis Lo, "Colonialism and Modernity," in *Walking Macao, Reading the Baroque*, ed. Jeremy Tambling and Louis Lo (Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 158–

179; Robin Hutcheon, and Auguste Borget, *Souvenirs of Auguste Borget* (Hong Kong: South

China Morning Post, 1979), 96.

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Itier stayed one year in Macao, so he had the time to ask around for advice in regards interesting views to photograph. Additionally Borget was one of the people that were frequently solicited by visiting foreigners since he had been living in China for a long time. It is even said that Itier acquainted himself with the painter as he included in his *Journal d'un voyage en Chine* a reproduction of Borget's imaginary sketch of the arrival in Macao of the ambassador Lagrené.<sup>76</sup>

Figure 4 – Auguste Borget and Eugène Cicéri, *La Chine et les Chinois: Dessins exécutés d'après nature* (Paris: Goupil & Vibert, 1842), plate VIII: 'Façade du temple de Macao' [Front of the Great Temple of Macao]. Drawing from nature by Auguste Borget, lithograph by Eugène Cicéri (1813-1890). Photo © RMNGrand Palais (Sèvres, Cité de la céramique) / Martine Beck-Coppola

This lithograph represents an exterior view facing the front of the Great Temple of Macao. We recognize the gate that Itier also photographed in the background, in front of which two Chinese face one another, one standing and the other crouching. The vivid local everyday life is reconstructed in the foreground; some are playing games (left), some are working (middle), while others are simply passing by (right).

<sup>76</sup> Hutcheon, and Borget, *Souvenirs of Auguste Borget*, 110.

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Borget distinguished himself by his peculiar treatment of composition and *mise-en-scène*, especially for the placement of figures in his landscapes.<sup>77</sup> His lofty Chinese views filled with traditional architecture amidst wild trees correlated with the tastes of early nineteenth-century-France, which desired a landscape in-between *paysage portrait* and *paysage composé*, in other words in-between a faithful portrayal and arrangement of the scenery.<sup>78</sup> Borget's works became widely known thanks to the publication *La Chine et les Chinois* [Sketches of China and the Chinese], and *La Chine ouverte*, which reproduced his works respectively as lithographs and wood engravings.<sup>79</sup> His works were also dispersed in the French illustrated press which reprinted an engraving based on one of his drawings representing a street scene nearby a bridge and a market in Canton.<sup>80</sup>

## Daguerreotypes of the first French Embassy to China (1844-1846)

What interests me in this diplomatic episode is not its history, but the body of images created and the functions ascribed to them. Itier was an official custom officer of Lagrené's Embassy and was in charge of studying prices and navigation. The images produced during the mission served the primary function of documenting China, including its land, agricultural, industrial and cultural practices. As such it has been advanced that Itier offered one of the earliest reportages of China.<sup>81</sup> Being the earliest surviving images of China, these daguerreotypes intrinsically possess a documentary connotation. However, Itier's daguerreotypes betray visual strategies that counteract a strict documentary approach.

<sup>77</sup> G. H. R. Tillotson, *Fan Kwae Pictures: Paintings and Drawings by George Chinnery and*

*Other Artists in the Collection of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation* (London:

Spink & Son for The Corporation, 1987), 78.

<sup>78</sup> The notions of *paysage portrait* and *paysage composé* are abstracted from the following

manual: Jean-Pierre Thénot, *Cours complet de paysage* (Paris: l'auteur, 1834), 5.

<sup>79</sup> Auguste Borget, *Sketches of China and the Chinese. From Drawings by A. Borget.* [with

*Extracts from Letters by the Artist.*] (London: Tilt & Bogue, 1842); Émile Daurand Forgues and

Auguste Borget, *La Chine ouverte : aventures d'un Fan-Kouei dans le pays de Tsin* (Paris: H.

Fournier, 1845).

<sup>80</sup> Eric Baschet, *Les grands dossiers de l'illustration: histoire d'un siècle 1843-1944. La Chine*

(Paris; Bagnaux: Le Livre de Paris, 1987), 25.

<sup>81</sup> Jules Itier et al., *Jules Itier, Premières photographies de la Chine, 1844. Catalogue de*

*l'exposition, [Centre Culturel de Chine, Paris, 14-27 novembre 2012]* (Évry: Publication du

Musée français de la photographie-Conseil général de l'Essonne, 2012), 36. 52

A conspicuous compositional strategy tended to isolate the subject, by focusing tightly, and cropping or framing in a very narrow way so it almost disembodies the subject from its initial environment. If one has to take into account the possible operator's own framing agenda, the limitations of daguerreotype technique might have also imposed such compositions. In fact, it was a hazardous journey in the 1840s to transport the bulky daguerreotype material since the technique involved a complex immediate utilization of chemicals that polished, sensitized, exposed, developed, fixed, and treated the copper plate. Such technical aspects inevitably affected both the choice of subject matter and the final visual features because the subject had to be inanimate (any movement would cause a blurred image) and placed at a far enough distance from the lens. The mounting accentuated this idea of isolation.<sup>82</sup> Because daguerreotype plates were extremely fragile and perishable, they needed to be protected by a framing-mat usually made of cardboard as well as a hermetic glass mounting, which prevented the image



to be altered by abrasions and the exterior air. Itier's daguerreotypes were usually placed within white framing-mats with a large dark outline. He used several types of framing-mat shapes, including rounded-corners or rectilinear corners rectangular, octagonal shapes, rounded shapes, horizontal or vertical (Figures 5 and 6). The varying shapes of the framing-mat played with the force lines in images, while compressing even more the subject within a tight composition.

<sup>82</sup> The standard measures of daguerreotype plates were 162 x 216 millimetres. In China, Itier majorly used quarter plates (10.7 x 8.2 cm) and few half-plate format (16.5 x 10.7 cm). Itier et al., Jules Itier, Premières photographies de la Chine, 54.

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Figure 5 – Jules Itier, View from Macao, October 1844.

Daguerreotype, 17 x 21 cm (Inventory number: 76.3000.31).

Musée français de la Photographie / Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, Benoit Chain.

Figure 6 - Jules Itier, View of the west of Canton, Temple Chang-Shou-Gan, November 1844.

Daguerreotype, 17 x 21 cm. (Inventory number: 76.3000.26).

Musée français de la Photographie / Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, Benoit Chain.

The images above show two possible forms of framing-mat: a polygonal and round shape. Although the chief function of framing-mats' is to protect the fragile silver plate of the daguerreotype, its geometrical shape and its thin dark trim add a decorative effect. These images also display two of the popular

subjects at that time: views of port bays in which Chinese junks and Western steam boats are floating, as well as cityscapes showing Chinese port cities' changing urban planning where local Chinese architecture confronted Western neo-colonial or factories buildings.

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Another noticeable visual strategy was the addition of human figures in the landscapes. In Figure 1, the viewer can see a person wearing Chinese clothes posing in the right side, next to the gate. While this person might have been placed there in order to provide a sense of scale (the gate measured over four meters wide), his pose with joined hand hidden under the long sleeves of a local outfit also served as reference points. This person standing next to this architecture might serve as an index to late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) period in China, its people and their clothing style, while responding to the vogue of genre scenes where small human figures appear in larger landscapes. I will further underscore this propensity of adding human figures later on. Another flaw in this reportage argument is that daguerreotypes only provided mirror images, showing things in the reverse. And this seemingly inconsequential detail might actually significantly alter the perception of actual places (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7 – (Left) Jules Itier, Reverse view of the Praia Grande in Macao, October 1844. Daguerreotype, 17 x 21 cm (Inventory number: 76.3000.15). Musée français de la Photographie / Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, Benoit Chain.

Figure 8 – (Right) Jules Itier, Adjusted view of the Praia in Macao, October 1844. Daguerreotype, 17 x 21 cm (Inventory number: 76.3000.13). Musée français de la Photographie / Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, Benoit Chain.

What seemed to be particularly favoured in such panorama was the contrasts between the old and the new, Chinese and Western. In this picture (which is the same presented backward and then rectified), Itier carefully placed fishermen and their simple boat in the foreground. They appeared at odds with the rest of the colonial buildings on the embankment. Many other photographs of bays deployed similar compositions.

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On account of such visual strategies, there are reasons to argue that photographs created within the context of diplomatic missions such as Itier ones reinforced the notion of type. And in evoking type and photography, they might call to mind early ethnographic images that portrayed people posing from the front and from profile. Ethnographic images developed the concept of 'photographic types' in which professional activities and external physiognomic details were conceived as visual evidence of ethnic peculiarities, of differing category of people.<sup>83</sup> I would like to argue that landscape was another genre in which type existed, more specifically when it placed emphasis on the generic rather than on the particular. As an illustration, daguerreotypes showing topographical port scenes, local traditional architecture, or colonial style buildings functioned as variations of a type of panorama of Chinese port cities rather than reflecting the individuality of each view. Although in his *Journal d'un voyage en Chine*, Itier defined himself these landscapes as 'noteworthy points of view', they appeared as choices selected without any clear knowledge of the place but with the goal to bring back a general picture

of the country.<sup>84</sup> This argument is validated by the fact that concern for presenting this 'type' was not unique to Itier. Other contemporary operators like Thomson also wished to produce a record of what he termed 'characteristic scenes' of China.<sup>85</sup>

This might explain why titles remained vague. We have seen that the architectural complex of the temple in Figure 1 was not identified precisely as the title merely read *Porte de la Grande Pagode de la ville chinoise à Macao* [Gate of the Great Pagoda in Macao's Chinatown]. Such indistinct labelling allowed the entrance gate to stand as a representation of the entire temple. However, not all early landscape photographs were utterly generic or unidentified. As I have indicated above, the Mother Temple of Macao was a  
<sup>83</sup> See Sarah Elizabeth Fraser's paper on the development of the concept of 'China' and 'the Chinese' through the camera. Sarah E. Fraser, "Chinese as Subject: Photographic Genres in the Nineteenth Century," in *Brush and Shutter*, 91-119.

<sup>84</sup> Jules Itier, *Journal d'un voyage en Chine en 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846*. Volume 1 (Paris: Dauvin et Fontaine, 1848-53), 321.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in: John Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China: Or, Ten Years'*

*Travels, Adventures and Residence Abroad* (London: S. Low, Marston, Low, & Searle, 1875),

9.

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rather well known and frequently represented spot. Similarly, the view of the Praja-Grande in Macao (Figure 7 and 8 above) was another familiar view that was frequently depicted in various mediums. This promenade along the sea located on the East side of this port city was the site of many surrounding official buildings, including consulates, commercial and administrative offices, palaces and fortresses. The professor in *Orientalist Literature* Guy Barthélémy's conception of type might help further elucidate the concept suggested here. Barthélémy believes that the notion of type possesses a synthetic value by offering a fragmentary representation due to the accumulation of similar elements (props in portraits, landmarks in landscapes).<sup>86</sup>

In sum, Itier's images inform us about the extent to which early diplomatic missions' participants had laid the foundation for a particular type of Chinese landscape photographs. These daguerreotypes generated a paradox of propounding what one may call generic representations while simultaneously offering valuable photographic documents of China since they were the earliest photographs taken. Yet the tendency to isolate the subject, the decorative aspect of the mounting, the generic labelling, and the alterations (added human figures, cropped compositions and so on) represented visual strategies that conflicted with the ideals of reportage. If these images were to serve to document a little known country, they had to be communicated to a French audience somehow. So where images, including Itier's daguerreotypes, diffused in France afterwards? The following section attempts to address this question.

A limited and altered diffusion?

Between 21 July and 20 August 1846, a special exhibition opened its doors in two rooms of the École Supérieure de la ville de Paris. It was called Exposition d'échantillons et de modèles rapportés de la Chine et de l'Inde [Exhibition of samples and models brought back from China and India], and it would travel later to a dozen cities across France. Also published as a catalogue, this

<sup>86</sup> Guy Barthélémy, "Photographie et représentation des sociétés exotiques au XIXe siècle," *Romantisme* no.105 (1999): 120-124.

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exhibition displayed several types of industrial, agricultural and artistic artefacts that were brought back from Lagrené's Embassy.<sup>87</sup> In the same year the magazine *L'illustration*, journal universel announced the exhibition and illustrated it using an engraving showing the overall display (Figure 9). *L'illustration* (ran between 1843 and 1944) was the first weekly-illustrated newspaper in France that targeted a bourgeois audience due to its price (75 centimes). Its format and feature articles that sought to supply useful knowledge in light of contemporary news were greatly indebted to its British precursor *The Illustrated London news*.<sup>88</sup> According to *L'illustration*, Itier brought back a diverse array of products from China and put them on display. Moreover, there was an attempt made to contextualise objects through the use of images, although it is not clear whether or not daguerreotypes were on display during the exhibition. Yet it was possible to identify alternative vehicles through which Itier's daguerreotypes were communicated to French audience.

<sup>87</sup> Artefacts such as cotton, wool, silk, Tabasco, sugar, weapons, porcelains, bronzes, oil

paintings, scrolls, albums illustrated with watercolour, and illustrated books.

<sup>88</sup> *L'illustration* was founded by Edouard Charton (1807-1890), Adolphe Joanne (1813-1881), Alexandre Paulin (1793-1859), Jean-Jacques Dubochet (?-1868). It ran between 1843 and 1944, and later between 1945 and 1955 under the name of *France Illustration*. Claude

Bellanger, Jacques Godechot, Pierre Guiral, and Fernand Terrou, *Histoire générale de la presse française* : 2 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969), 300.

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Figure 9 - C.L., "Exposition d'échantillons et de modèles rapportés de la Chine et de l'Inde [Exhibition of samples and models brought back from China and India]," *L'illustration* no.182 (1846): 592. © Crédit L'illustration ([www.lillustration.com](http://www.lillustration.com))

This engraving epitomizes how artefacts from China were displayed and conceived in nineteenth century France. The artefacts that are displayed above are accumulated and displayed in a manner closer to Cabinet of curiosity than museum.

Primary sources attest that engravings based on his daguerreotypes were diffused in the three volumes of his travelogue *Journal d'un voyage en Chine*, which apparently became popular as C.Lavollée stated: 'As early as 1848, Mr. Itier published two volumes of his *Journal de voyage*; he published a third volume that will be as successful as the previous ones.'<sup>89</sup> Similarly engravings based on his daguerreotypes featured in the French press.<sup>90</sup> A comparison of

<sup>89</sup> C. Lavollée, "Les voyageurs en Chine [Travellers in China]," *L'Illustration* 22 July (1854): 59.

<sup>90</sup> Among the nineteenth century sources that discussed Itier's travelogue: "Bibliographie,"

*Revue de l'Orient*, bulletin de la Société orientale volume 3 (1848): 436; *Chine Douanes*

*maritimes impériales*, Catalogue spécial de la collection exposée au Palais du Champ de

Mars, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1878 (Shanghai: Bureau des statistiques de la Direction

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one original daguerreotype with its corresponding engravings will serve to underline both the diffusion process and the extent to which it generated modifications (Figures 10 to 12). The daguerreotype entitled *Main wing of the country house owned by Paw-ssé-tchen* (...) showed the front façade of a house belonging to a Chinese mandarin who participated in the negotiations for the Whampoa treaty signed by the Lagrené's mission. In his *Journal*, Itier described the scene thusly:

You can see the entire house and part of the surroundings from atop the artificial rock. This point of view became the object of my first daguerreotype proof. From the terrace of a charming pavilion (...) the house presented its main façade to me; a large wire aviary is on the front; slender stone columns rise up out of the water to support the ground floor, which stretches out over a vast pool covered with nelumbium leaves... then comes the curling tile roof. Ornate varnished faience mouldings grace every corner (...).<sup>91</sup>

Itier's description pinpointed the key elements that composed this picture, namely the pavilion façade, the aviary, and the garden. This image was turned into an engraving and displayed at the beginning of the first volume of his *Journal* published in 1848. In fact, each volume offered one illustration. At the beginning of volume two (1848) an engraving was displayed after the daguerreotype *Vue de la ville flottante de Canton* [View of the floating city of Canton]. And in volume three (1853), the engraving based on the daguerreotype entitled *Fort cochinchinois de Non-Nay* [Cochin-Chinese fort of Non-Nay] was displayed.

These illustrations were reproduced in 1854 in the newspaper *L'Illustration*. Based on personal observation, it appears that *L'Illustration's* images were wood engravings, which involved a technique of carving directly

*générale des Douanes*, 1878), v; Isidore Hedde, *Description méthodique des produits divers* :

recueillis dans un voyage en Chine (Saint-Etienne: impr. de Théolier aîné, 1848),

376.

<sup>91</sup>

Itier, *Journal d'un voyage en Chine*, volume 2, 42.

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onto the stable and dense material of the wood's end grain.<sup>92</sup> This practice of transferring photographs into a specially prepared woodblock had been established in the 1860s and was widely used in illustrated publications. It is no surprise that this technique was commonly used to create photographic

reproductions because it permitted the precise, fine lines and intricate details that enabled accurate rendering of photographic records. Additionally, woodblock printing was particularly favoured in the mid-to-late nineteenth illustrated publications as it allowed both text and image to be printed at the same time since they were carved on the same woodblock.<sup>93</sup> Following this technical investigation, Itier's Journal images derived from his daguerreotypes clearly indicated they were tinted lithographs: a planographic printing process often used for book illustration that was composed of a line drawing (the black image) and accentuated by a fawn-colored background tone, with highlights in white gouache or chalk.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Wood engravings (common use 1800-1885) are created by using a chisel-like tool called a

burin to cut a relief image into the end grain of a block of hardwood. For detailed explanations

of printing processes, see Graphic Atlas website launched by The Image Permanence

Institute ® (IPI), a recognized world leader in the development and deployment of sustainable

practices for the preservation of images and cultural property. Accessed November 14, 2014,

[http://www.graphicsatlas.org/identification/?process\\_id=55](http://www.graphicsatlas.org/identification/?process_id=55).

<sup>93</sup> Patrizia Di Bello, Colette Wilson, and Zamir Shamoon, *The Photobook: From Talbot to*

*Ruscha and Beyond* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 8.

<sup>94</sup> "Graphic Atlas," accessed November 14, 2014.

<http://www.graphicsatlas.org/identification/>.

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Figure 10 – (Top) Jules Itier, Main building of Pan Chen Tsen's country house, great mandarin of the first class, red button, peacock feather, above Canton, November 1844. Daguerreotype, 17 x 21 cm (Inventory number: 76.3000.25.). Musée français de la Photographie / Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, Benoit Chain.

Figure 11 – (Left) Jules Itier, *Journal d'un voyage en Chine en 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846* (Paris: Dauvin et Fontaine, 1848), lithograph before the title. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2731-717)

Figure 12 – (Right) C. Lavollée, "Les voyageurs en Chine [Travellers in China]," *L'illustration* 22 July (1854): 60. © Crédit L'illustration ([www.lillustration.com](http://www.lillustration.com)).

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When we compare the three images (daguerreotype, lithograph, wood engraving) of Paw-ssé-tchen's house we can notice several visual and textual rearrangements. The daguerreotype did not offer a full and clear depiction of the surroundings. Probably due to the passage of time, the image had been damaged and the borders darkened, to the extent that we cannot see clearly the surrounding garden composed of trees. The lithograph published in his *Journal* compensated this tonal issue by clarifying the image, while redressing it so that the roof appeared perpendicular to the frame. The illusion of shading and depth in the print were well rendered – especially if we look closely at the aviary in the foreground – thanks to the removal of highlighted areas from the background tint. A variation of the tone within the background tint produced an

effect on the line drawing as we can see in the delicate representation of clouds in the sky. The fawn-coloured background tint created a border around the drawing itself, circumscribing the house in a clear rectangular frame. Moving away from the naturalism of the lithograph, the wood engraving in *L'illustration* made the house appear in a sort of rounded bubble shape, without clouds in the sky and without a clearly delineated foreground. Such a composition might be reminiscent of the image's function within the text, serving as a souvenir of the author (C. Lavollée) who visited China alongside Itier. Both the lithograph and the wood engraving appear reverse as compared to the daguerreotype. This is merely a result of the technique since the logic of block printing necessarily engendered a reverse image.

Interestingly the lithograph and the wood engraving added two small figures conversing in the corridor. On the one hand this answered a specific taste of genre scenes where small human figures appear within larger landscapes, and on the other hand it participated in the construction of the notion of type as discussed earlier. The evolution of the image's title offers another reason to consider this notion of type. It ranged from a detailed title provided on the back of the daguerreotype, to a shorter version that still enabled one to identify the place, to a simplified caption schematically defining a 'Chinese countryside house'. These rearrangements are recurrent features in illustrated publications of that time.

By now I have demonstrated that Itier's daguerreotypes were diffused, albeit limitedly, in the forms of reprographic printing techniques (wood

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engraving and lithography) in French illustrated publications and press. This pinpoints the role of reprographic images and the print media in the diffusion of photographs of China.

Circulating a particular type of Chinese landscape

Engravings based on photographs in French illustrated press

Having examined the visual continuum from which the photography of China emerged, I shall now examine how landscape photographs were circulated in France and how they participated in the formation of a particular type of Chinese landscape. A close examination of engravings based on photographs published in French illustrated periodicals demonstrated how photography gradually became a new dimension within the press. The approach below aims to move beyond the usual chronological classification of illustrated periodicals –invented around the 1830s – and instead regroup them based on the mediation between image and text.<sup>95</sup> Although the growing use of photographic illustrations in press is often associated with the development of what is sometimes qualified as photojournalism, one should be cautious before affirming this. Building on the examination from the previous section, illustrated newspapers revealed clear editorial stances in favour of rearrangement, which seems to have been more concerned with generating the impression of reportage rather than reporting unbiased facts. A possible method of pinpointing such remodelling is to scrutinize the differing utilization of images and their visual alterations, which by the same token reveals an intensifying relationship between text and image.

Landscape photographs of China were sometimes used in order to illustrate novels. In 1861 *L'illustration* published ten or so wood engravings after stereoviews made by Denis Louis Legrand (circa 1820-?) (Figure 13). These

<sup>95</sup> Scholarships on the topic tend to classify French illustrated periodicals by chronological phases. They sometimes disagree on the classification of some magazines. Jean-Pierre Bacot, *La presse illustrée au XIXe siècle* (Limoges: Pulim, 2005); Gilles Feyel, *La presse en France des origines à 1944, Histoire politique et matérielle* (Paris: Ellipses, 1999); Bellanger et al., *Histoire générale de la presse française*.

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images were taken mostly in Shanghai and its vicinity. Legrand – known in China as Ligelang – was a French merchant and amateur photographer partner of Legrand Frères & Co., one of the earliest commercial photographic studio in Shanghai active from August 1857 until the 1860s.<sup>96</sup> *L'illustration* shows a mixture of images, including those taken by another operator also active in Shanghai in the late 1850s, the Italian Giacomo Caneva (1813-1865). The images also demonstrated clear pictorial strategies. Legrand placed stress on reflections of architecture in water, and used a wide range of compositions depending on the effect expected. This could be a frontal image to enhance the verticality of architecture or a diagonal image to accentuate the sinuosity of a river, for instance. He willingly juxtaposed several registers, increasing the impression of depth while creating a complex scene. This was partly due to the original format of the images. An efficient stereograph required such complex association of volumes in order to recreate three-dimensional effects when one looked at it while wearing special glasses.

<sup>96</sup> For a more detailed study of Legrand's biography, photographic production in China as well

as his diffusion, see Régine Thiriez, "Ligelang," 49-54.

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Figure 13 - Henri Este, "Voyage de sir Edmund Broomley, à la recherche d'une tasse à thé (quatrième article) [The adventures of Sir Edmund Broomley, in search of a tea-cup (fourth article)]," *L'illustration* 9 November (1861): 300-301. © Crédit L'illustration ([www.lillustration.com](http://www.lillustration.com)).

The first reason why Legrand's case deserves attention is because it demonstrates a possible utilization of landscape photographs of China, that is illustrating novels and more specifically here Albert Kaempfen's (1826-1907) *La Tasse à Thé [In Search of a Tea-Cup]*.<sup>97</sup> This story traced the adventures of the Englishman Sir Edmund Broomley's journey to China and his (fictional) encounters, notably with the photographer Legrand. Images here not only illustrated the story, such as places mentioned for instance, but they also served as (fictional) proof of Edmund's own memories. Continuing this amalgamation of fiction and reality, the text novelized Legrand's own conception of photography. 'I want to give the world a stereoscopic China that will be contained in an ordinary sized pocket (...)' the author wrote on behalf

<sup>97</sup> Albert Kaempfen, Henri Este, Jules Worms, and Ferdinand de Gramont, *La tasse à thé*.

Illustré par Worms (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1865).

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of Legrand.<sup>98</sup> This last sentence also offers evidence that Legrand's images were stereoviews, whereas the engravings published do not reflect the original



of two photographic images pasted side by side on a standard-sized card with a space in between.<sup>98</sup> Other visual transformations due to the transposition of photography into engraving are identifiable, notably the addition of small human figures in the foreground, such as in the picture *Un pont dans le Jardin du Thé* [A bridge inside the Tea Garden] (Figure 15). In the original picture (Figure 14), the foreground did not show a fisherman nor people crossing the bridge. We have already noticed similar additions of human figure in Itier's engravings based on daguerreotypes.

<sup>98</sup> Este, "Voyage de sir Edmund Broomley", 300.

<sup>99</sup> Stereoscopic photography consists in a pair of small photographs of slightly different angle

that, once viewed through the proper optical equipment, form a single image of startling depth.

Lavédrine, Gandolfo, and Monod, (Re)connaître et conserver les photographies anciennes,

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Figure 14 – Louis Legrand, *Un pont dans le Jardin du Thé, promenade publique dans la cité de Shang-Haï* [A bridge inside the Tea Garden, public promenade inside the city of Shanghai], circa 1859. Albumen print stereoview. Salem, Peabody Essex Museum, Phillips Library.

Figure 15 – Henri Este, "Voyage de sir Edmund Broomley, à la recherche d'une tasse à thé (quatrième article) [The adventures of Sir Edmund Broomley, in search of a tea-cup (fourth article)]," *L'illustration* 9 November (1861): 300. © Crédit *L'illustration* ([www.lillustration.com](http://www.lillustration.com)).

While the main elements of the compositions are preserved, the engraving strengthens the perspective effect by adding figures on the left and darkening

their shapes. The diagonal pile behind the bridge has been erased and clarifies the succession of rooftops. Similarly, shadows under the bridge are unified and accentuate the curved arch and stoned balustrade.

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The second reason why Legrand's engravings based on stereographs are noteworthy is because they were the earliest consistent body of photographs of China created within a commercial framework. It has been argued that up to the 1850s China remained a vague notion among European audience and as discussed Itier's daguerreotypes experienced only a limited diffusion. This situation started to change thanks to the diffusion of the Swiss photographer Pierre Joseph Rossier (1829-c.1897) and Legrand's stereoviews of China in London and Paris through illustrated journals.<sup>100</sup> Such images fitted within a particular social phenomenon of the 1850s and 1860s wherein both Chinese and Westerners produced a large quantity of these kind of images to answer public demand. Consequently, other publishers also spread Legrand's stereoviews in different sets.<sup>101</sup> These images confirmed a certain taste for views of China that existed at the junction of imagination of places in the Far East and a desire for veracity that pervaded the illustrated press.

Engravings after photographs were also used to illustrate personal journeys, with the accompanying text frequently adopting a personal tone and sometimes direct dialogue. In such cases, images were generally directly linked to the text and inserted next to it. As already mentioned, one peculiarity of engravings based on photographs was the potential alteration of the original image, leaving room for reinvention and imagination. A comparison of the wood engravings published in the 1880s by two other popular illustrated journals named *Les deux mondes illustrés*, *journal des grands voyages* and *Le Magasin pittoresque* serves as an example of this trend (Figures 16 and 17). These two journals emphasised cultural news rather than strictly covering political issues.<sup>102</sup> *Le Magasin Pittoresque* was founded by Édouard Charton  
<sup>100</sup> The London firm Negretti & Zambra (specialised in the manufacture and sale of photographic and scientific equipment) commissioned Rossier to create stereographs of

Canton and Hong Kong. Images were published in 1859 in London, few years earlier than

Legrand's stereos in *L'illustration*. Rossier's records are argued to be the earliest commercial

photographs to be sold in the West. Roberts, *Photography and China*, 17; Itier, *Premières*

*photographies de la Chine*, 45.

<sup>101</sup> According to Thiriez, several publishers printed at least five sets of the series. Thiriez,

"Ligelang," 52.

<sup>102</sup> *Les deux mondes illustrés* was a weekly magazine sold 25 centimes (ran between 1879

and 1884?) that was under the direction of Olympe Audouard (1832-1890), Henry La Luberne,

Féo de Jouval, J.W. Harrison, Maurice Rustrel, John Robins (all authors' dates are unknown).

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(1807-1890), a lawyer, journalist and politician, and founder of key illustrated

periodicals of that time including *L'illustration* and *Le Tour du monde*. Both offered views of the Great Wall, which they depicted in a radically different manner.

Figure 16 – (Left) Max, “La muraille de la Chine [The Great Wall of China],” *Les deux mondes illustrés* no.60 Sunday 3 October (1880): 75. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Figure 17 – (Right) Imbault-Huart, “Une excursion à la grande muraille de Chine en 1886 [A journey to the Great Wall of China in 1886],” *Le Magasin pittoresque* serie II Volume 6 (1888): 196. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

*Les deux mondes illustrés'* picture (Figure 16) appeared closer to fantasy than reality, representing a palm tree which do not grow in northern China because of the climate and portraying a group of people, one transported by a palanquin and followed by a horseman. Conversely *Le Magasin pittoresque's* picture (Figure 17) revealed that vegetation near the Great Wall as quite sparse due to its aridity, and that transportation was most commonly made on donkeys and not horses. Additionally, the topography in this image appeared more faithful to reality as it suggested the steepness of the mountain on which the wall was build. The large rocks leading to the gate also resembled those of the Nankou pass that people visiting the Great Wall had to cross. Articles in *Le Magasin pittoresque* were usually composed of several episodes and *Le Magasin Pittoresque* ran between 1833-1923 and 1937-38. It was sold 50 centimes. They

were consequently less expensive than *L'illustration*.

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illustrated by maps and images abstracted from a variety of sources, drawing their inspiration from either drawings or photographs. The images discussed above betrayed the growing interest in ancient sites that were newly accessible in the aftermath of the Convention of Peking [Beijing] in 1860.<sup>103</sup> A similar creative – if not imaginative – approach was adopted in *Le Tour du monde* (1860-1914). This magazine aimed at introducing to a French readership what there was to discover in the world while providing an equal role to images and texts, as stated in a preface by the founder Charton in an issue published on 30 June 1860. If the draftsmen occasionally participated in the journeys, it was more frequent for them to imagine the place based on the written account. Several issues of *Le Tour du Monde* published long texts describing in great details topics related to China, including political events, architectural planning, and customs. For instance, the 1876 issue provided a rare juxtaposition of images based on Dr Georges Morache's (1837-1906) photographs and Thomson's photographs which pervaded Britain and also the Chinese illustrated press and art market (Figure 18).<sup>104</sup> The drawings made after both authors' photographs were created by identified artists and functioned as visual testifiers of information provided in the text regarding Chinese people's professions, customs, vernacular and monumental architecture, and official meetings.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> This convention was signed in 18 October 1860 between Britain, France, and Russia after

the defeat of Chinese against British and French troops that invaded the Forbidden City in

Beijing and sacked northern sites such as the Summer Palace.

<sup>104</sup> Thomson's photographs were widely diffused thanks to his publications as well as thanks to illustrated periodicals such as the China Magazine among others. His publications were translated in French. John Thomson and H Vattermare, *L'Indo-Chine et la Chine: récits de voyages* (Paris: Hachette, 1879); John Thomson, *Dix ans de voyages dans la Chine et l'Indo-Chine* (Paris: Hachette, 1877).

<sup>105</sup> Captions indicate the drawings were executed by the following names: E. Ronjat, H. Clerget, A. Marie, Taylor, H. Catenacci, F. Sorrieu, A. Deroy, B. Bonnafoux, O. Mathieu.

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Figure 18 - T. Choutzé, "Pékin et le nord de la Chine [Beijing and northern China]," *Le tour du Monde, nouveau journal des voyages* Second Semester (1876): 193. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

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The engraving depicting the gate of a house in Beijing based on Morache's photograph above might recall daguerreotypes made by Itier in the 1840s. It portrays a frontal and symmetrical view of one of the major components of Chinese traditional architecture, that is the main gate of a mansion flanked by panels and preceded by an elevated stone staircase with a marble balustrade. Two Chinese figures wearing local robes and posing in front of the door served as an additional index, indicating that the scene happened in China. Images in *Le Tour du Monde* generally occupied one third if not the entire space of the page and were praised for their refined quality. Although they were usually not described individually, they helped to illustrate a detailed written description of a site; functioning as a visual aid for the audience unfamiliar with the country. In this case the editor even inserted photographs taken by diverse operators, whose name are clearly credited. Such a mingling of international images attested to the wide circulation of images at that time. Finally, missionary periodicals provided another social context of viewing landscape photographs of China. For instance, *Les Missions catholiques* was a journal explaining the state and rise of catholic faith around the world, including China. It was composed of a succession of episodes often based on letters written by priests. Similar to other periodicals, they were illustrated by wood engravings based on drawings or photographs shot supposedly by priests themselves. Illustrations occupied at least one third of the page and even half on some occasions. They were inserted in the middle of a text in two columns, which strengthened the physical centrality of the image on the page. This periodical also utilized sophisticated framings, alongside the more classical rectangular frames observable in other publications of this time. As an illustration of this text/image relationship, the engraving showing the Tong-Ka-dou Cathedral published in the 1892 issue was placed in the centre of the page (Figure 19).

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Figure 19 - R.P. Ravary, "Le Chang-Hai chrétien et le Chan-Hai payen [The Christian Shanghai and the pagan Shanghai]," *Les missions catholiques*, bulletin hebdomadaire illustré de l'oeuvre de la propagation de la foi volume

24 January-December (1892): 16. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

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The dark foreground structures dramatically contrast with the whiteness of the church in the background. The perspective effect of the church walls on the right and left sides lead the reader's eyes to plunge into the image, encouraging the eyes to enter the gate and the church door, as an invitation to adopt the Catholic faith. This engraving based on the photographs of priest R.P. Ravary (date unknown) was placed next to his relatively short letter (three pages). However, images were not all inserted next to corresponding text, which meant the reader had to reconstruct the sequence of viewing. It also enabled the visual and textual story to continue and overlap with others, mingling portrayals of different countries with one another. Such periodicals published within a missionary context passed on an alternative way of perceiving the Chinese landscape, which has been previously argued to have been constrained by religious agendas.<sup>106</sup>

In sum, engravings based on photographs in French illustrated periodicals demonstrate the widespread practice of adjusting an image to accord with particular editorial stances, as well as the tastes of readers. Furthermore they also simultaneously serve to establish a relationship in which image and text became indivisible as they clarify one another.<sup>107</sup> The periodicals facilitated the circulation of landscape photographs of China by binding them with a variety of news, fiction, travel and religious narratives.

Photographs showcased in Paris World's Fairs

In this section I intend to chronicle the presence of landscape photographs of China in the successive Chinese pavilions at Parisian World Fairs. The aim here is to highlight how these events provided another substantial platform for French audiences to form a particular impression of Chinese landscapes.

These worldwide events attracted thousands of people from a wide range of social backgrounds, who might have visited Chinese pavilions and thus seen

<sup>106</sup> Garan made an in-depth study of the periodical *Les missions catholiques* while analysing

the role of images, including photographs. Frédéric Garan, "Itinéraires photographiques, de la

Chine aux "Missions Catholiques" (1880-1940) perception de la Chine à travers les archivers

photographiques des O.P.M. et la revue des "Missions Catholiques" (PhD diss., University of

Lille III, 1999).

<sup>107</sup> Marie-Laure Aurenche, "L'invention des magazines illustrés au XIXe siècle, d'après la

correspondance générale d'Édouard Charton (1824-1890)," *Médias 19* (2012), accessed

January 16, 2016. <http://www.medias19.org/index.php?id=331>.

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photographs displayed there.<sup>108</sup> Photographs during world exhibitions were not only displayed but also sold, alongside many other goods. The potential wide impact of these events is the primary reason that this section focuses on this type of large-scale exhibition.

One should remember that researching the possible presence of landscape photographs of China in the successive Chinese pavilions is a

difficult task, insofar as very few images provide internal views of the pavilions; and French guides or official catalogues remain either elusive or not illustrated.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese pavilion unfolded a complex intertwining of commercial and colonial agendas, rather than necessarily a national positioning. Consequently, it seems difficult to evaluate how far the Qing government had any impact on the image projected at the world fairs in Paris since first, the national concept of 'China' was unusual at that time, and second, most of the objects displayed in Chinese pavilions were selected by foreign merchants or by Maritime Customs. However, despite such difficulties it has been proven possible to uncover several bodies of photographs of China from this period, especially in 1867 and in 1900 based on a careful study of textual sources.

1855: the first World Fair in Paris and the role of photography

In 1855, France set up its first World Exhibition drawing on the British model of 1851. While there is no mention of any photographs of China in primary sources, this event marked the official recognition of photography as a new discipline with great potential for industry and science and art.<sup>110</sup> Although photography was accepted with reservations, it also bore moral and social aspects since photographs were believed to '(...) instruct, educate, and

<sup>108</sup> World Exhibitions were planned successively in Paris in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, and 1900.

<sup>109</sup> For external views of the pavilions during Paris World Exhibitions in the nineteenth century,

see collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Agence Roger-Viollet, and the

Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. For postcards created during these events, see the online catalogue Joconde.

<sup>110</sup> This explains why photographs were exhibited inside the Palais de l'Industrie. Guide dans

l'Exposition universelle des produits de l'Industrie et des Beaux-Arts de toutes les nations.

1855 (Paris : Paulin et Le Chevalier, 1855), 113-4.

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encourage for the sake of progress a 'moral' action on the 'working class.'<sup>111</sup>

The medium was even thought of as participating in the democratic development of French society. This search for 'moral' and 'material' utility of photography gave rise to contradictory discourses, which encouraged people to conceive of the medium either as art or as science.<sup>112</sup> Hence, if technology and practitioners' skills remained to be developed, the capabilities of bringing 'veracity' and 'sincerity' were already pointed out.<sup>113</sup> While primary sources mention the participation of various countries – France, Prussia, Austria, Italy, United-States, Switzerland, Portugal, Florence, Romania, Greece, Bavaria – China was not included. In fact, as with other World Exhibitions organised during this century, the Qing government did not participate in the organisation of its pavilion. As a substitute, foreign merchants in China and Western officials in Europe took care of the display by selecting objects of their own interest.

I shall not expand too much on this first event since it seems no

photographs of China were exhibited. In any event, what was termed 'picturesque views and landscape' appeared as the foremost category of photography according to the classification of the Société française de photographie.<sup>114</sup> This factor indicates that landscape photography was greatly valued since the very earliest stages of portrayals of China among French audience. Moreover, reports indicate that the early operators were mostly wealthy amateurs and trained artists.<sup>115</sup> Such backgrounds and genre preferences amongst the audience, inevitably impacted the practice of landscape photography in China.

<sup>111</sup> Maria Helena Souto and Ana Cardoso de Matos, "The 19th century World Exhibitions and their photographic memories. Between historicism, exoticism and innovation in architecture,"

Quaderns d'història de l'enginyeria vol. XIII (2012): 58.

<sup>112</sup> André A.E. Disdéri, *Renseignements photographiques indispensables à tous* (Paris: the author, 1855), 6.

<sup>113</sup> Jules Ziegler, *Compte rendu de la photographie à l'exposition universelle de 1855* (Dijon: Imprimerie de Douillier, 1855), 28.

<sup>114</sup> The Society suggested in total six categories, namely 1) vues pittoresques et paysages; 2) architecture, monuments et panoramiques; 3) portraits; 4) reproductions; 5) genre; 6) science.

Paul Périer, *Société française de photographie. Compte rendu de l'exposition universelle de 1855* (Paris: Imprimerie de Mallet-Bachelier, 1855), 15.

<sup>115</sup> André Rouillé, "La Photographie française à l'Exposition Universelle de 1855," *Le Mouvement social* no. 131 (1985): 88.

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Figure 20 – Unidentified author, Photography exhibit, Palace of Liberal Arts, Paris Exposition, 1889. Albumen print. Washington DC, Library of Congress. This photograph shows how objects and images were presented to the visitors during World's Fairs. These events were full of many items displayed in a rather confusing manner, a kind of 'sensory overload' display typical of tastes of that time.<sup>116</sup>

1867: the appearance of photographs of Asia

In the same way that the 1855 World Exhibition was a founding moment for the introduction of photography, the 1867 World Exhibition attested to the important developments of the medium. Over six hundreds practitioners from a diverse range of countries participated, more photographs were exhibited even having a room specifically dedicated to them, and the techniques and

<sup>116</sup> Patrizia Di Bello, "'Multiplying statues by Machinery': Stereoscopic Photographs of Sculptures at the 1862 International Exhibition," *History of Photography*, 37:4 (2013): 418.

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equipment improved.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, existing sources consulted provide evidence that photographs of Asia, including China, appeared for the first time. Of particular interest was the display of series of stereographs of China made by Paul Champion (1838-1884), who received a bronze medal for his work.<sup>118</sup>

This French amateur photographer was originally trained as a chemical engineer, and had been asked by the Société Impériale d'Acclimatation to explore China to prospect for flora and fauna exchange and trade industries.<sup>119</sup> This gave him the opportunity to pass through Japan and China in 1865-1866 and to bring back numerous stereoviews and wet collodion plates. His stereographs of China captured views of Wuhan and Beijing and the surrounding vicinity (Figure 21). I will discuss more fully Champion's activity in Wuhan in the following chapter.

Figure 21 - Paul Champion, Temple of Light, Peking, circa 1865-66. Albumen print.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Alphonse Davanne, Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports du jury international publiés sous la direction de M. Michel Chevalier. Épreuves et appareils de photographie (Paris: P. Dupont, 1867), 5.

<sup>118</sup> Thiriez, Barbarian lens, 11.

<sup>119</sup> "Obituary," La Nature. Revue des Sciences et de leurs applications aux Arts et à l'Industrie

no.556 January 26 (1884). For further biographical elements, see: Bennett, History of

Photography in China: Western Photographers, 200-206.

<sup>120</sup> Image source: Bennett, History of Photography in China, Western photographers, 319.

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Although the black and white cannot render the genuine striking colours of the architecture, this picture successfully renders the contrasting textures and tones that oppose the white marble staircase and the rounded structure with its double-eaved roof. The foreground frontally portrays the traditional architecture, which stands out in the blank background and strengthens its monumentality and stillness.

Although official catalogues typically did not offer illustrations, it is known that Champion's photographs were then turned into engravings and diffused in a fascicle published for the World Exhibition. In the *Études sur l'Exposition de 1867 – Annales et archives de l'industrie au XIXe siècle (...)* several engravings derived from Champion's photographs were inserted within the text, notably four landscape photographs showing traditional architecture in Beijing.<sup>121</sup> Similarly to the illustrated press examined earlier, the original double-image stereograph has been slightly modified in order to become a single engraving. Champion's stereographs might be seen as recalling Legrand's, as both the format and the visual components tended to portray China through typical views of places familiar and accessible to foreigners at that time. However, Champion's lens purveyed a cleaner style.

Champion's records also constituted visual proof of the changing reception of landscape photography, which became increasingly defined as an art. In fact, in the jury report of the exhibition, the photographer and President of the Société française de photographie Alphonse Davanne (1824-1912) recognised landscape as an artistic application of photography (in contrast to scientific and industrial applications), while affirming that this genre was also seeking 'fidelity to souvenirs'. Davanne regarded Champion's stereographs as existing in the junction between artistic depictions and documents developed



from a commercial framework, which helped to 'know diverse regions of the globe.'<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> The four photographs were entitled: Ancien tombeau à Pékin; Porte Tsien-Men (Pékin);

Temple de la lumière à Pékin; Porte placée à l'entrée du pont de marbre. Eugène Lacroix,

Études sur l'Exposition de 1867, annales et archives de l'industrie au XIXe siècle : nouvelle

technologie des arts et métiers des manufactures, de l'agriculture, des mines, etc (Paris: E.

Lacroix, 1868), 306.

<sup>122</sup> Davanne, Exposition Universelle de 1867, 26-27.

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While Champion's stereoviews accounted for most of the larger body of images that were displayed, primary sources also mentioned two other operators. Alphonse Amyot (living in Paris at 8 rue de la Paix, date unknown) exhibited 'photographs related to China', while the Sinologist Léon d'Hervey de Saint-Denis (1823-1892) presented his photographs of ruins of the Old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan, 圓明園) and other monuments.<sup>123</sup>

Unfortunately, so far no landscape photographs have been discovered from the 1878 and 1889 World Exhibitions. Though one should not forget the numerous ethnographic photographs of Chinese people that were displayed throughout the years, contributing then to the search of type and race in the genre of portrait. As an illustration, the official catalogue of 1889 World Fair referred to a permanent exhibition of Colonies in which one could observe 'photographs showing views and indigenous type from Colonies'.<sup>124</sup>

1900: Showcasing the works of Chinese and French operators

As the years went on, the presence of photographs of China at the World Fair both increased and diversified. The 1900 World Fair in Paris was a special moment for photography as during this event a significant number of landscape photographs appeared, and additionally a retrospective museum dedicated to the history of photography was built, affirming the role of the medium in society.<sup>125</sup> This change in conception was also evident in the

constantly shifting classification of the medium over the years.<sup>126</sup> Of particular importance, is that not only French operators but also Chinese operators were

<sup>123</sup> Hélène Bocard, "Les expositions de photographie à Paris sous le Second Empire et leur

réception par la critique" (PhD diss., Université Paris IV Sorbonne, 2004), 250.

<sup>124</sup> Colonies françaises et pays de protectorat : catalogue officiel / République française.

Exposition universelle de 1889 (Paris: J. Bell, 1889), 16.

<sup>125</sup> Alphonse Davanne, Maurice Bucquet, Léon Vidal, and Exposition international, Musée

rétrospectif de la classe 12 : photographie (matériel, procédés et produits) : à l'Exposition

universelle internationale de 1900, à Paris : rapport du comité d'installation (Saint-Cloud: impr.

de Belin frères, 1903).

<sup>126</sup> Photography belonged to Group VII ("Ameublement et décoration modes dessin industriel

imprimerie musique”) and class 26 (“Dessin et de la plastique appliqués à l’industrie, de l’imprimerie en caractère et en taille douce”) in 1855; Group II and class 9 (“papier, verre, bois, étoffe, email”) as well as group IV and class 38 (“photographie de voyage”) in 1867; Group II (“Education et Enseignement. Matériel et Procédés des Arts libéraux”) and class 12 (“Epreuves et appareils de photographie”) in 1878 and 1889; Group III (“Instruments et procédés généraux des lettres, des sciences et des arts”) and class 12 (“Photographie, matériel, procédé et produits”) in 1900.

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showcased. The Chinese section exhibited hundreds of photographs with many notably taken by the successful Chinese studio Sze Yuen Ming & Co, known in Chinese as Yao Hua studio (*Shangyang Yaohua zhaoxiang* 上洋耀華照相). This studio based in Shanghai and active between 1892 and the 1920s was directed by Shi Dezhi 施德之 (1861-1935). Sze’s production ranged from portraits (notably popular hand-tinted photographs of courtesans) and news pictures, to topographical scenes that suited the tastes of both Chinese and Western communities.<sup>127</sup> Sze’s landscape photographs received official recognition with the World Exhibition International Jury awarding the studio a honourable grant (Figure 22). It became then the only studio in the late Qing dynasty period to be awarded an international prize.<sup>128</sup> Figure 22 - Postcard showing the ‘Mention Honorable’ award granted to Sze Yuen Ming & Co at the Exposition Universelle in 1900. Courtesy of Tong Bingxue. 129

<sup>127</sup> For further biographical information on Sze see: Roberts, *Photography and China*, 30;

Régine Thiriez, “Sze Yuen Ming,” In *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph*, ed. Robin

Lenman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 615.

<sup>128</sup> *Shanghai tushuguan cang lishi yuanzhao* [Original historical photos in the Shanghai

Library collections Volume 1] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2007), 219.

<sup>129</sup> Source: Tong Bingxue, Shi Bo Hui *Zhongguo Liuying*, 84.

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The Chinese section catalogue alluded to fifty albums showing panoramas of Shanghai, five hundred and seventy coloured photographs, and six hundred and eighty photographs.<sup>130</sup> However, it is not clear if the Sze studio produced the totality of these photographs, and which photographs were displayed as no titles are provided. Despite that, an examination of surviving photographs can help to give an idea of the kind of landscape photographs produced by Sze studio (Figure 23). The View of the Bund and the Huangpu River from the North was a black and white photograph on paper using a panoramic view. Both the subject matter (Shanghai’s Bund) and the angle (panoramic) correlated with the taste of the time. In fact, amongst popular views of Shanghai that were sold at that time, views of the Bund were particularly

common. Sze's picture, as with many other similar ones, show the grand route running along the Huangpu river, with the traffic flow of traditional Chinese wheelbarrows on the road, rendered out-of-focus because of technical limitations, contrasting with the modernity of Western boats and colonial architecture in the background. The Bund embodied the coexistence between East and West, but it chiefly provided a showcase for Western expansion in China for a foreign audience.

<sup>130</sup> Catalogue spécial de la collection exposée au Palais du Champ de Mars, Exposition

Universelle, Paris, 1878, 13.

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Figure 23 - Sze Yuen Ming & Co., View of the Bund from the Public Garden looking South, circa 1870-1900. Black and white photograph on paper. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2011.R.21)

In addition to Sze's pictures, a large number of photographs of Chinese port cities taken by unidentified authors were exhibited in the Chinese section. Primary sources listed the following items: ten photographs showing factories in Hanyang (city of Wuhan); one album containing views of Fuzhou and its vicinity; two albums composed of Canton's views; a series of photographs taken in Pakoi (modern city of Beihai in Guangxi province), including the 'Leper Hospital', landscape, and architecture; one album depicting the city of Mengtsh (Yunnan province) and a series of photographs showing Szemao (Yunnan province).<sup>131</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Catalogue spécial de la collection exposée au Palais du Champ de Mars, Exposition

Universelle, Paris, 1878, 13-14.

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While the above photographs displayed the imagery I have been discussing throughout the chapter – an imagery mainly focused on subjects found in port cities – another group of photographs also emerged. These were photographs taken in China's hinterland which were now placed under the rubric of scientific expeditions. Whether or not these expeditions were truly scientific is questionable given that some of them were unofficial, composed of independent adventurers and others were commercial, or even involved spying missions conducted in disguise. However, it is not my goal here to unpack the highly connoted term, and therefore hereafter I will knowingly use it to discuss expeditions led by academic specialists. For instance, sources mention that the Prince Henri d'Orléans (1867-1901) introduced photographs taken during the mission led by the Orientalist Gabriel-Pierre Bonvalot (1853-1933), which explored Tibet, Central Asia, Pamir, and Tonkin (1889-1890).<sup>132</sup> The Prince – whose father originally financed the expedition – had the duty to constitute the herbarium and take photographs. Few original photographs have survived but some are in the archives of the Société de Géographie and others were reprinted several times in the periodical *L'Illustration* between 1891 and 1896. I will analyse in Section II the extent to which photographs taken during such expeditions offered an alternative visual vocabulary. What do landscape photographs displayed in Parisian World Fairs teach us? They firstly manifest the sporadic yet growing appearance of photographs of China that had become accessible to a wide range of audiences. Secondly, they relate to a growing awareness and recognition of specific operators and

studios active in China, regardless of their ethnicity. Thirdly, they disclose an interest that had shifted from a somewhat generic portrayal of Chinese ports areas to views of newly discovered sites based on academic expeditions from the 1890s onwards. It is likely that there are other occurrences of landscape photographs in Parisian World Fairs and consequently this section would

<sup>132</sup> Marie-Hélène Degroise, 2009, "Bonvalot, Pierre Gabriel Edouard, 1853-1933; Briffaut ; prince Henri d'Orléans, 1867-1901," Blog Photographes d'Asie (1840-1944), accessed October 15, 2015, <http://photographesenoutremerasia.blogspot.fr/2009/11/bonvalot-pierregabriel-edouard-1853.html>. The following publication contains one hundred and eight engravings after Henri d'Orléans photographs. Gabriel Bonvalot, *De Paris au Tonkin à travers le Tibet inconnu* (Paris: Hachette, 1892).

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require further in-depth research to be considered exhaustive. But even with the current limitations the above-mentioned images already allow us to see how France had constructed a certain impression of China, one which seemed to engage in more self-reflection over time.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have assessed the extent to which photographs of China entered a visual continuum bonded to diplomatic relations, while promoting particular conceptions of Chinese landscape in nineteenth-century France. In order to understand the ways in which this imagery was established, I have distinguished several frameworks through which such reproducible images were circulated to a wider audience. Amongst these frameworks, there were diplomatic missions' communications, illustrated journals, and public exhibitions- especially the World Fairs. These all constituted the cultural ambiance in which the images have to be understood.

The images studied above addressed a wide range of narratives and discourses, relating alternatively to diplomatic events, commercial possibilities, personal or fictional journeys, and to religious expansion. Yet despite such variety and the possible visual modifications, these images elaborated on a somewhat codified and limited visual vocabulary. Consequently, I have postulated that early photographs of China tended to place stress on generic views of port cities. That is, the images reveal a strong interest in topographical port scenes, cityscapes showing Chinese traditional architecture or colonial architecture, and street scenes. If a few portions of the imagery depicted ancient monuments on the outskirts of Beijing, it is not before the late 1860s that they truly began to pervade foreign photographic practice. The main reason why the selected subjects were widespread is because these were the places where operators were based, as well as the only places open to foreigners. As a consequence, early occurrences of Chinese landscape photographs in France constructed in my view a sort of type: a 'framed vision which isolates a site from its environment'.<sup>133</sup> I shall now connect this chapter

<sup>133</sup> Thiriez, "Ligelang," 49.

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focused on the French reception of images of China with an analysis of early photographic production in China per se.

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Figure 24 - Lai Wah & Co. The Studio of Lai Wah & Co. at the corner of Lloyd and Nanking Roads, Shanghai, circa 1900. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of Tong Bingxue.

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## **CHAPTER TWO – THE GENESIS OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY IN CHINA**

### Introduction

The chief goal of this chapter is to reconstruct the genesis of the genre of landscapes by highlighting the diversity in the practice of photography during the second half of the nineteenth-century in China. In searching for the genesis I am not merely interested in where and when the earliest landscape photographs were made. More importantly I would like to focus on how early landscape photographs were created and whose interests they served. A selection of key questions will guide the present inquiry, in particular: What do early-created landscape photographs tell us about practitioners and the physical formats of the material? What were the visual configurations of early landscape photography? How did people make use of the photographs? In regards the physical formats I am referring to both the content (subject matter, visual vocabulary) and the format of the photograph (presentation, mounting) and seek to better comprehend the interplay between the two. Images were never entirely innocent and their material characteristics were fashioned to 'make present' things that were unknown beforehand.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, nineteenth century operators were also engaging in the empirical discovery of China, whose image already had started to take on a more concrete shape.

Port cities as catalysts for the emergence of a commerce of photography

The main actors: commercial studios

An over-crowded view of Shanghai's Nanjing Road captures a corner building with inscribed Latin letters and Chinese characters on its moulding (Figure 24). The first row of people in the foreground – posing and seemingly intrigued

<sup>134</sup> David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*

(London: Phaidon Press, 2003), 252; Stanislaus Fung, "Dualism and Polarism: Structures of

Architectural and Landscape Architectural Discourse in China and the West," *Interstices 4*

(1996): 14.

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– gaze at the camera. The rest of the people continue their daily life, walking down the street holding baskets filled with goods. Their clothing and hairstyle enable us to understand that we are in China before 1911. The shaved forehead while braiding the rest of the hair into a queue was a characteristic of Manchu hairstyles. Imposed by the ruling Manchu Qing authority, the hairstyle was a symbol of the Han Chinese's submission. Looking more closely at the building on the right side, we can notice the entrance of what resembles a shop named 'Laiwha Portrait'. The vertically mounted and hung photographs that decorate the three doorframes indicate that it is a commercial photography studio. They have been placed in such a way to attract the attention from people in the street, as demonstrated by some of the

pedestrians looking inside the shop on the middle ground. The content of this single image expounds the interweaving of historical forces that are fundamental to understanding photographic practices in this early period. More specifically it invokes the extent to which the forced opening of some port cities, the subsequent melting pot of local and international cultures in those places, and the increasing presence of photography due to its commercial potential, were all connected to one another.

Port cities are crucial to our understanding of early photography in China. Hence I would like to briefly review the basic facts that underline the central role these places played. Southern port cities had been important platforms in the trading system that linked China to the outside world from ancient times, but more particularly since the sixteenth century. This system of international commercial exchange started with the leasing of Macau to the Portuguese in 1557 and extended upriver to foreign quarters at Canton from the 1710s onwards, which remained the system until the cession of Hong Kong to England in the aftermath of the Treaty of Nanking [Nanjing] in 1842.

The nineteenth century therefore marked a significant change in Sino-Western relations, to the extent that increasing mutual contention over the growing unstable and uneven trade system eventually precipitated a succession of conflicts, the most significant being the First Opium War (1838-42) and the Second Opium War (1856-60). The First Opium War involved the Qing authority and the British government in which the latter wanted the

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Chinese market to be open to the trade of opium and other manufactured goods. While the Treaty of Nanjing signed on 29 August 1842 ended the battles, it intensified foreign presence on Chinese coasts because of the establishment of open ports and henceforth these sites were fully transformed into gateways of international trade (Figure 25).<sup>135</sup>

This first treaty incited other Western powers to obtain their own treaties granting them further territories and advantages. Successively a number of treaties, including the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858, the Chefoo [Yantai] Convention of 1876, the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895, and the Convention of Beijing in 1898 made concessions in the face of pressure from imperial powers. Commonly put under the umbrella term of treaty ports, Ningbo, Amoy, Fuzhou, Shanghai, Yantai and other coastal cities provided the necessary preconditions that allowed photographic practices to become established within a localised trade framework.

Figure 25 – Map of the China treaty ports opened between 1842 and 1920

<sup>135</sup> The five first treaty ports opened in 1842 were Amoy (Xiamen), Canton (Guangzhou),

Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningpo (Ningbo), and Shanghai. Robert Nield, *The China Coast: Trade*

and the First Treaty Ports (Hong Kong: Joint Pub, 2010), sections 6 to 11 called “The Ports”.

Peter C. Perdue, “Rise & Fall of the Canton Trade System,” MIT Visualizing Cultures, accessed February 10, 2013,

[http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/rise\\_fall\\_canton\\_03/cw\\_essay01.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/rise_fall_canton_03/cw_essay01.html).

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Once open, these areas favourable to trade attracted a mixture of local and foreign audiences, professional merchants and amateur connoisseurs, all

interested alternatively in creating, selling, and consuming photographs. It is usually advanced that foreign diplomats, merchants, or wealthy adventurers imported photography in China almost immediately after its invention in Europe in 1839. Hence, there is evidence that Daguerre's invention was announced in the Canton Press only two months after its invention.<sup>136</sup> The rapid diffusion of this information demonstrated that there was an existing audience in China interested in such technological advancements. This audience was in fact composed not only of foreigners but also Chinese people. For instance two figures that are frequently mentioned are Luo Yili 羅以禮 (1802-1852) and Zou Boqi from the Guangdong province. These two men might personify Chinese intellectuals' long term interest in optics and light experiments that had been conducted – as with many other countries – since antiquity. In fact, Zou has at times been assumed to have potentially invented a camera on his own in the nineteenth century. However, this assumption remains strongly contested by current studies as there is still no concrete evidence and no surviving images.<sup>137</sup> The debate over a possible indigenous genealogy for photography in China does not concern this study. Instead, what interests me is the cross-cultural nature of the medium which was evident from its earliest development and the rather substantial interest it triggered amongst local and international gentry.

The implementation of the treaty-port system with its subsequent melting pot of populations naturally gave rise to a commerce of photography. As

<sup>136</sup> Mr. Walsh's letter, letterpress from Canton Press, 19 October 1839, San Diego State

University Library, Microforms Center. See also the reproduction of this letter in: Brush and Shutter, 21.

<sup>137</sup> The scholar Yi Gu has explained that the claim of a Chinese origin for photography mentioned in Chinese primary sources was not based on physical evidence but on later

writings. Yi Gu, "What's in a Name? Photography and the Reinvention of Visual Truth in

China, 1840-1911," *Art Bulletin* 95, no. 1 (2013): 130; 137. Other studies have left opened the

possibility of Zou's photographic achievements, notably the modern intellectual Liang Qichao

梁啟超 (known as Liang Rengong 梁任公, 1873-1929) and the contemporary art historian Oliver Moore. Liang Qichao, "Qingdai xuezhe zhengli jiuxue zhi zong chengji [The Qing

scholars' achievements in organizing previous scholarship]," in Liang Qichao lun Qingxue

shierzhong, ed. Zhu Weizheng (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1985); Moore, "Zou Boqi

on Vision and Photography."

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mentioned in chapter one, photography entered from within an existing realm of a pre-existing imagery of China, which was notably conspicuous in a great variety of artefacts that circulated internationally. People who were already

involved in the production of such visual products became key players in the imbrication of commerce and photography in China. Amongst those involved were expatriate merchants and Chinese craftsmen who took over photography as a mean to create souvenir pictures of China. Some studios would be exclusively dedicated to the production of photography, whereas others – mostly those own by Chinese – created equally photographs, paintings, and a diverse range of artefacts, which familiarized Chinese clients more easily with these new mechanical images.<sup>138</sup>

The flurry of excitement surrounding the commercial potential of photography encouraged the opening of photographic studios – often shortlived – initially mainly in southern port cities, with Hong Kong sometimes being considered the birthplace of commercial photography in China. As a matter of fact, the earliest known studio was located in Hong Kong and opened by the American George R. West (circa 1825-1859) according to the advertisement of his daguerreotypes found in the *China Mail* on 6 March 1845.<sup>139</sup> However, despite the early enthusiasm the expansion of studios grew only little by little. As imperial powers continued to pressurize the Qing government to open more territories – studios moved from the south and spread into to the north. In Beijing for instance, a flourishing studio scene was only established in the 1890s.<sup>140</sup> There are few traces of photographs taken before the 1860s, particularly for Chinese studios.<sup>141</sup> The great majority of the material left to us dated back to the invention of wet collodion glass plate, thus dating from around the 1850s-60. This is why it has been argued that the technical evolution of photography to collodion technique was the real trigger for

<sup>138</sup> Gu, "What's in a name," 123.

<sup>139</sup> Bennett et al., *History of Photography in China : Chinese Photographers*, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Yi Gu, "Prince Chun through the Lens Negotiating the Photographic Medium in Royal

Images," *Ars Orientalis* 43 (2013): 126.

<sup>141</sup> With rare exceptions to the rule, such as Lai Chong and Luo Yuanyou who were active in

Shanghai in the mid-1850s.

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photography in China.<sup>142</sup> The times of severe socio-political upheaval might also explain the gap in the records. With the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64) one of the most destructive events of the mid-nineteenth century China. This fifteen year-long uprising presented the self-proclaimed Heavenly Kingdom of the Taiping against the Manchu regime. It ravaged countless places in the countryside in China, displaced and caused the loss of twenty to thirty million people due to battles or starvation. This socio-political storm occasioned the paradox of the destruction of an innumerable amount of photographs while stimulating the production of a genre of photography permeated with news that answered a growing demand for newspapers to communicate about current events. Sometimes qualified as photojournalism, this genre associated with warfare and the hostile incursion of Western powers represents a significant component in the history of photography in China, which again falls somewhat outside the scope of this thesis.

However, on top of this context, the emergence of commerce in port cities did not mean that photography was accepted immediately everywhere across China. People living in the hinterland or those not in direct contacts with



foreigners held many superstitions and fears over the new medium. This hostility towards photography does not seem to have been significantly different from the reaction encountered in other countries around the world. Local populations unfamiliar with the mechanical processes involved associated evil, supernatural or even magical beliefs with photography and its operator. In France for instance, the professional photographer, journalist and caricaturist Félix Nadar (1820-1910) wrote that people were 'bewildered and frightened' while 'shrinking back as if from a disease' when facing the camera.<sup>143</sup> While visiting the African continent, the British explorer Joseph Thomson (1858-1894) described that locals imagined he was 'a magician trying to take possession of their souls'.<sup>144</sup> As for China, several operators

<sup>142</sup> Kin-keung Edwin Lai, "Pioneers of photography in Hong Kong," in *First Photographs of Hong Kong*, ed. Cécile Léon Art Projects (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>143</sup> Félix Nadar and Léon Daudet, *Quand j'étais photographe* (Paris: Flammarion, 1900), 1-5.

<sup>144</sup> Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land: A Journey of Exploration Among the Snowclad Volcanic Mountains and Strange Tribes of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Being the Narrative of*

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travelling in the interior – like Itier, Thomson, and the British commercial photographer David Griffith (circa 1841-?) – witnessed a similar animosity against the medium. Commoners believed for instance that a photograph would steal one's soul or that operators would use kidnapped children's eyes for photographic purposes, which at time caused difficulties in taking photographs because people would run away from the camera or even attempt to destroy it (Figure 26).<sup>145</sup>

the Royal Geographical Society's Expedition to Mount Kenia and Lake Victoria Nyanza, 1883-1884 (London: Sampson Low, 1885), 86.

<sup>145</sup> Among the authors who have discussed the fear of photography in China: Bennett et al.,

*History of Photography in China: Chinese Photographers*, 11-24; Tong, Yi Zhan Yi Zuo Yi

Sheng [Six Decades of a Chinese Life in Photographs], 205; Musée Guimet, Musée Paul

Dupuy, and Musée Georges Labit, *De la mer de Chine au Tonkin, photographies, 1886- 1904*

(Toulouse: Somogy éd. d'art, Musée Georges Labit, 1996), 19.

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Figure 26 - Rev. R. O'Dowd Ross-Lewin, Chaplain R.N., "Amateur Photographers in China," *The Illustrated London news*, March 7 (1891), 14.

The legends read as the following: 1. Messrs. Tripod and Foetts go ashore from a river steamer. 2. They decide to photograph a party of the natives sleeping in a field. 3. The Chinamen, awakening and alarmed, take flight with yells of terror. 4. The mob of hostile peasantry is kept at bay, dreading the levelled camera as a new kind of artillery. 5. But they drive some of their 'water buffaloes,' good beasts when yoked to the plough, in a fresh attack on the

foreign intruders. 6. Messrs. Tripod and Foetts, leaving their camera to destruction, take refuge up a tree. 7. Ransomed by paying away their dollars, they are permitted to embark in safety. China does not yet appreciate every art of civilization!

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Commercial studios had 'mixed clienteles' with specific needs.<sup>146</sup> Sources tell us that the Chinese learnt the technique and adapted it to both local and international tastes by apprenticing with Western practitioners and reading translations of Western manuals.<sup>147</sup> Adapting photography to both international and local tastes meant that Chinese and Western commercial studios were under severe competition.<sup>148</sup> Although Chinese studios were frequently criticised by their Western counterparts due to the presumed inferiority of their works, some were recognized and hoped to assert their authority. One effective method was to lower the prices (especially of portrait, which was the cherished genre amongst Chinese clients) that Chinese studios overtly advertised in local foreign-language newspapers, directories or business cards. For instance, the Laikong studio (Likang zhaoxiangguan, 麗康照相館) in Wuhan sold its prints at five cents each and developed one roll for sixty cents (Figure 27).

However, clients and operators were exclusively wealthy people as the buying and/or practicing of photography was a luxury at that time. Production during this period usually spanned several genres, including: studio portraits, local's everyday life, contemporary events, 'Chinese views' that comprised panoramics of cities and views of the nearby countryside. Thus, although generally of less financial impact than portraiture and assumedly representing a smaller quantity of the overall production, landscapes and more specifically cityscapes were also present in the early stages of the commerce of photography.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Jason C. Kuo, *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s* (Washington, D.C: New Academia Pub, 2007), 96.

<sup>147</sup> Roberts, *Photography and China*, 7.

<sup>148</sup> Bertholet, Aalsvoort, and Thiriez, *Among the Celestials*, 16.

<sup>149</sup> Bennett et al., *History of Photography in China : Chinese Photographers*, 46; *Éclats*

*d'histoire: les collections photographiques de L'institut de France* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2003), 231.

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Figure 27 - Laikong studio business card. Courtesy of Tong Bingxue

The microcosm of Wuhan

The situation of photography in Hong Kong, Macau, Canton, and Shanghai has been studied most extensively, but there is still a lot of work to do on other newly opened zones. Photographic depictions of the Yangtze River areas like Wuhan, for instance, played an important role in the history of the medium and the perception of Chinese landscapes, and it should be remembered that many of these landscapes were displayed in the 1867 and 1900 World Fairs in Paris (see Chapter one). Wuhan is the contemporary name of the three cities Hankou, Wuchang, and Hanyang, and is usually referred to as Hankou in

primary sources. Hence, below I focus on the Yangtze and Wuhan areas considering them as microcosms for early landscape photography practices in China.

The documentation about the commerce of photography in Wuhan remains sparse. Despite the paucity of information, surviving materials validate the existence of multiple commercial studios in Wuhan with Rong Hua studio (榮華) being the earliest to open its doors in 1872. Here I would like to

98 pay particular attention to the studio naming system. In the same way there were shifting terminologies for the word photography in the Chinese language, the denomination of photographic studio seemed to have evolved in concert with the evolving nature of the commerce.<sup>150</sup> Chinese studios usually had their name accompanied by a Latin transcription to facilitate the pronunciation for Western clients. Comparably, Western studios often had transcribed phonetically their names to the Chinese language. In Chinese their name usually ended by the qualifying term *zhaoxiang lou* (照相樓) or *zhaoxiang guan* (照相館). *Lou* and *guan* literally indicated the building (*lou*) where photography (*zhaoxiang*) was taken.<sup>151</sup> There were also others qualifying terms, such as *xiezhen dian* (寫真店), *xiangguan* (像館), *hualou* (畫樓), *yingxiang pu* (影相鋪), *zhaoxiang hao* (照相號), or *zhaoxiang yu* (照相寓).

The changing qualifying terms divulged shifts in the conception of photographic studios, connected with technical and economical factors. As an example, the qualifying term *hao* (號) – usually used for bank and shops – was also associated with photographic studios by the late decades of the nineteenth century when techniques facilitated the production of multiple prints. This was a conscious intention to insert photographic studios within the existing economy. In a similar fashion, nineteenth century studios frequently used the qualifying term *lou* as they had to be located on the upper levels of buildings to obtain a larger amount of day-light in order to compensate for the absence of artificial light.<sup>152</sup> In Wuhan, photographic material attests that several studios were located in specific buildings, such as the *Aolüe lou* (奧略

<sup>150</sup> Different appellations for the word photography circulated in China at that time, such as

*yingxiang* (影像), *xiezhen* (寫真), *zhaopian* (照片) and eventually *sheying* (攝影) still in use

today. For a full analysis on this topic see: Gu, “What’s in a name,” 120.

<sup>151</sup> “Qing mo zhaoxiangguan chenwei kaozheng,” Tong Bingxue Blog, posted on 29 November

2008, accessed November 9, 2015,

[http://www.yijingwenhua.cn/s/blog\\_53d4694a0100betf.html](http://www.yijingwenhua.cn/s/blog_53d4694a0100betf.html).

<sup>152</sup> Technical improvement in the early twentieth century encouraged professionals to open

*riye zhaoxiang* (日夜照相), literally ‘night-and-day studios’. Tong, “Qing mo zhaoxiangguan.”

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樓) in which settled the *San Jing zhaoxiang* (三景照像), and later *Cui Guang meishu zhaoxiang fangda* (萃光美術照像放大) (Figure 28).<sup>153</sup>

Figure 28 - Wah Chang Photo Co. (Hua Chang zhaoxian, 華昌照相), Group photo with four men, date unknown. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of Tong Bingxue

Generally speaking, what kind of studios were active in Wuhan? Sources mention the presence of a fair number of indigenous studios, including Pow Kee (*Bao Ji zhaoxiangguan*, 寶記照相館), Wenhua zhaoxiangguan (文化照相館), Yung Kong Kouran (Ge Kang guan, 客康館), Wah Chang Photo Co. (Hua Chang zhaoxian, 華昌照相), Mei Hua studio (美華照相), Xian Zhen lou zhaoxiang (顯真樓照像) and Rong Zhen tebie zhaoxiang chu (容真特別照像處). Others signatures on photographs indicate a solitary name without the mention studio, such as Hongtu Ge (鴻圖閣), Tsuah Kuang (Hua Guan, 華光), Lai Kong (Li Kang, 麗康), Tsoong Yen (中瀛), Yung Fong (Rong Fang, 榮芳).

Thus, the occasional decision to include or omit of the qualifying word studio renders it difficult to make clear identifications of companies or individual

<sup>153</sup> The presence of Cui Guang meishu zhaoxiang fangda studio is attested in a photograph taken in the 1920s. "Aolüe lou de zhaoxiangguan," Jiuying Zhi Blog (舊影誌), accessed

November 07, 2011, <http://jiuyingzhi.com/antiquephotos/1995.html>

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photographers.<sup>154</sup> For instance the 1881 opened studio Xian Zhen lou zhaoxiang (顯真樓照像) was actually ran by Yan Chengtian (嚴添承). Similarly, others like S. Tung Chong photographer (Tong Chang zhaoxiang, 同昌照相) and Hong Too Kok photographer (*Hong Tu Ge zhaoxiang*, 鴻圖閣照相) used both individual names and the qualifying term studio.

Some foreigners competed with native studios. These individuals were of diverse ethnicities and were located close to Chinese studios and sometimes even within the same building.<sup>155</sup> In Wuhan for instance, there was William G. Todd, and the Japanese Nagakiyokwan (*Yong Qing guan*, 永情館), T. Watanabe (Du Bian zhaoxiangguan, 渡邊照相館). Japanese commercial studios enjoyed something of a significant presence in China, especially between the mid nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>156</sup> In summary then, the naming system of photographic studios exemplifies the heterogeneous network of commercial studios in treaty ports, which functioned as a 'bi-level market', one led by natives and another led by foreigners.<sup>157</sup>

If the researcher can acknowledge the existence of studios thanks to the labels found on surviving photograph (Figure 29), cartes de visite, business card, or advertisements in illustrated press, one should remain cautious with attributing any absolute identification. As commercial studios also bought and subsequently reused stock of photographic negatives belonging to previous studios, to which several photographers might have contributed. The archetype of such difficulties is perhaps best illustrated by the Hong Kong entity called the Firm. Between the 1860s and 1870s the Firm belonged to several commercial photographers, who bought successively a large stock of photographic images while simultaneously enriching it with their own

<sup>154</sup> This list of studio names has been compiled thanks to visual examination of photographs currently owned by the Chinese collector Tong Bingxue's collection as well as based on: Zhou

Dejun and Zhu Shengyuan, "Bainian Xianzhenlou," Wuhan wenshi ziliao no.12 (2006): 44-47.

<sup>155</sup> A Japanese studio is said to have been located in Aolüe lou (奧略樓). Zhou and Zhu

"Bainian Xianzhenlou," 44.

<sup>156</sup> Wue, *Picturing Hong Kong*, 45.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

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photographs. Additionally, the Firm was eventually bought by Li Huafang (黎華芳), better known as Lai Afong, one of the best known Chinese commercial studios in nineteenth century China.<sup>158</sup> The identity of the studios owners was also unclear since most managed several operators and used different names.<sup>159</sup> A final difficulty relates to misattributions made by consumers, who often added the wrong name or wrong caption onto an original print. I will examine further this issue later in this chapter.

Figure 29 - S. Tung Chong photographer (Tong Chang zhaoxiang, 同昌照相), Foreign naval vessel, date unknown. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of Tong Bingxue.

<sup>158</sup> Bernard Marbot, and René Viénet, *Notes sur quelques photographies de la Chine au XIXe*

*siècle : à l'occasion de l'exposition "La Chine entre le collodion humide et le gélatinobromure"*

(Paris: Centre de publication Asie orientale, 1978), 11; Worswick and Spence, *Imperial China*,

139; Bennett, *History of Photography in China: Western photographers*, chapter 1

<sup>159</sup> Régine Thiriez, "Photography in Hong Kong, The formative years (1858-1875)," In *Xianggang Zui Zaoqi Zhaopian 1858-1875 [First photographs of Hong Kong]*, 22.

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It is not a surprise that photography took off in Wuhan. This region was the largest major commercial city of Central China, the 'warehouse mouth' as the French missionary Évariste-Régis Huc (1813-1860) called it.<sup>160</sup> This central node of terrestrial and naval communication functioned as a platform for the trade of raw material (seeds, rice, tea), luxury goods, people and information.<sup>161</sup> Its favourable position in the Chinese market was also linked to Wuhan's geography. Located on the confluence of the Yangtze and the Hanjiang rivers, Wuhan was therefore connected to all hinterland provinces.<sup>162</sup> As a consequence, Wuhan presented a commercially vivid and cosmopolitan metropolis. A metropolis that became accessible only in 1860, when the signature of the Treaty of Tientsin (that ended the Second Opium War) and the Convention of Beijing allowed foreign powers to establish concessions in the city (see maps below).<sup>163</sup>

The British were the first to settle down and it is within this context that the amateur William Nassau Jocelyn (1832-1892) – who travelled with Lord Elgin's Embassy in 1858 – created the earliest photographs of the city.<sup>164</sup> Hankou (as I mentioned, one of the three cities composing modern Wuhan)

comprised five international concessions which from West to East were: the English settlement placed side by side with the Chinese city, the Russian settlement, in the middle the French concession, the German concession, and finally the Japanese concessions. These concessions were alongside the Consulates of Great Britain, the United-States, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Russia (Figures 30 and 31). The topography and urban planning that clearly separated Chinese and foreign/colonial zones

<sup>160</sup> Évariste-Régis Huc, *Le Christianisme en Chine, en Tartarie et au Thibet* (Paris, 1857), 327.

<sup>161</sup> William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796-1889* (Stanford (USA): Stanford UP, 1984), 54.

<sup>162</sup> Léon Rousset, *À travers la Chine* (Paris, 1878), 174.

<sup>163</sup> Pierre Marie Gaston de Carsalade du Pont, *La Marine Française sur le haut-Yang Tsé* (Paris: Académie de Marine, 1964), 11.

<sup>164</sup> A few of Jocelyn's photographs of China can be found at the Victoria and Albert Museum

and at the Edinburgh University Library. Felice Beato, William Nassau Jocelyn, and Milton M.

Miller, [China, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Macao: Photographs Taken on Lord Elgin's Diplomatic

Mission and Military Campaign in China 1857 - 1861.], mounted photographs and loose prints,

dated circa 1860-1863. For biographical information: John Hannavy, *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Photography: 1* (New York [u.a.: Routledge, 2008), 293; Bennett et al.,

*History of Photography in China : Chinese Photographers*, 241.

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alongside the surrounding watery scenery were of particular importance for the type of landscape photographs created at that time.

Figure 30 – Maps. (Left) Map of Wuhan, composed of the three cities Hankou (North), Wuchang (East), and Hanyang (West)

Figure 31 - (Right) Map of foreign concessions in Hankou. 165

The no less important Itinerant amateurs

Not all operators in China were professional photographers owning studios.

The works of itinerant amateurs were no less significant. One might ask first who precisely I mean by itinerant amateurs? This simply designates a type of person who practiced photography for leisure – not with the original purpose of selling – but whose photographs still ultimately connected with the larger commerce of photography. The goal of discussing commercial studios and itinerant amateurs' work together is to underline the visual dialogue between images.

To illustrate this point, I would like to focus on the example of

Champion, who was active in Wuhan between 1865 and 1866.<sup>166</sup> In chapter one, I have already analysed some of his stereoviews that received a bronze medal at the 1867 World Fair in Paris. Champion declared that he used a

<sup>165</sup> Source of both maps: NationMaster.com, accessed December 19, 2014, <http://maps.nationmaster.com/country/ch>.

<sup>166</sup> Bennett, *History of Photography in China, Chinese photographers*, 355-360.

portable Relandin dark room with a Dallmeyer triplet lens. These technical details are useful to understand not only his photographic practices, but also why the content and material aspects of the photographs look the way they do. Relandin dark rooms could produce both wet and dry collodion plates measuring 27 x 33 centimetres. They were considered as the most suitable device for those who travelled and walked a lot due to their lightweight, limited dimensions, and fair resistance to climate conditions. The use of Dallmeyer triplet lens was regarded as particularly efficient for depicting landscape inasmuch as it offered the possibility to obtain neat and large size images. Unfortunately, this did not alleviate utterly the burdensome task of taking a wet collodion plate because of the voluminous and fragile accessories and chemicals needed. Champion evoked these difficulties in a paper submitted to the Société Française de photographie, republished afterwards in the press (Figure 32).<sup>167</sup>

Figure 32 – “Outdoor shooting session and equipment with the wet collodion process,” *Le Magasin Pittoresque* (1863): 389. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

This picture illustrates what an operator needed when taking a wet collodion plate. This painstaking process necessitated cumbersome paraphernalia, including a large camera, a heavy wooden tripod, a massive box filled with chemicals that the operator had to pour before and after onto the glass plate while being hidden under a tent that functioned as a darkroom.

<sup>167</sup> Champion gave this lecture at the general meeting of the Société française de Photographie on 11th January 1867. Paul Champion, “Sur les difficultés que présente l'exercice de la photographie dans les contrées telles que la Chine et le Japon,” *La Lumière* no.3

February 15 (1867): 2; “Photography in China and Japan,” *Photographic News* 8 February (1867): 66

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The rather fragmented state of the archive does not allow a full reconstruction of the places Champion depicted.<sup>168</sup> However, based on a *La Lumière* announcement in 1866, he appears to have created at least six photographs in Wuhan, including views of Chinese people, professional activities, Chinese junks, and architecture in the foreign concession.<sup>169</sup> An analysis of the surviving images enables a continuation of the debate concerning the concept of type while simultaneously revealing the space of negotiations with local production.

Since chapter one I have suggested that early landscape photographs of China tended to elaborate on a somewhat codified and limited visual vocabulary. I have argued that they ultimately constructed somewhat typical views of China and that these constituted the predominant images that circulated both in the commerce and in the press. This is demonstrated by the fact that even though Champion was an amateur – which means he did not strictly depend on commercial demands – the subject matter and composition of his photographs still resonate clearly with the type of landscape in vogue at that time. As an illustration, Champion’s photograph of the English concession appears particularly consistent with the kind of images produced by local

commercial photographers (Figures 33 to 34). In fact, the Chinese studio Pow Kee depicted the same street with a similar angle several times, showing it covered in snow and flooded.<sup>170</sup> Pow Kee was first active in Hankou, then moved to Nanjing by the 1880s, and finally re-established its business in Shanghai by the 1890s apparently under the name of 'Powkee & Sons'.<sup>171</sup> It is sometimes possible to attribute photographs to this studio as some were signed and dated in the negatives.

<sup>168</sup> Today, Champion's records of Hankou are split between the Musée d'Orsay (Paris), the Getty Research Institute (Los Angeles), and Terry Bennett's collection that is partly accessible though the website [oldchinaphotography.com](http://oldchinaphotography.com).

<sup>169</sup> These six photographs' titles are: *Métier à tisser le coton, Hankew; Concession anglaise, à Hankew; Jonques chinoises, à Hankew; Hankew; Fabrication des cordes de bambou, à Hankew; Groupe de Chinois, à Hankew*. Gaudin, "La Chine et le Japon au stéréoscope par un amateur," 4.

<sup>170</sup> Primary sources often state that the flooding – usually occurring between March and April - of the early 1870s was the largest. Rousset, *À travers la Chine*, 178.

<sup>171</sup> Bennett et al., *History of Photography in China: Chinese Photographers*, 241; Grace Lau, *Picturing the Chinese: Early Western Photographs and Postcards of China* (South San Francisco, CA: Long River Press, 2008), 95-96.

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Figure 33 - Paul Champion, *Concession Anglaise à Han-Kew, Chine*, [English Concession in Hankou], circa 1865-66. Albumen print, 22 x 31.5 cm. Terry Bennet Collection.

Champion's photograph was taken in the English concession in the city of Hankou. It represents buildings with neoclassical architecture (reminiscent of colonial style) that gradually recedes in space along a diagonal line. Such receding composition strategy was comparable to other photographs representing city bunds, corroborating the argument that such images were widely circulating and constituted typical views.

Figure 34 – (Left) Pow Kee, *Hankow snow scene*, 1887. Albumen print. Terry Bennet Collection.

Figure 35 – (Right) Attributed to Pow Kee, *Hankow Bund during the flood*, 1887. Albumen print. Terry Bennet Collection.

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These two pictures represent also the English concession in Hankou. Interestingly the buildings are shot from the same angle: the operator placed his camera at the right, allowing a large foreground section and perspective effect. The angle chosen attenuates the somewhat rigid receding diagonal, which is accompanied by the curved movement of the boats navigating towards the right side of the image. We can notice the extent to which trees grew and took a fairly important place in the composition compared to Champion's photographs taken twenty years before.



The portion of the English concession the above photographs show was built in the early 1860s. From that moment onwards large-scale mansions were erected for wealthy merchants that made their fortune over the years. Champion's image offers a general impression of quietness. The composition is split in almost two equal halves, both echoing each other thanks to the whiteness and emptiness of the sky and the street. Primary sources that describe the atmosphere of the diverse parts of Wuhan often contrast the busy, dense, and overcrowded Chinese city with the tranquillity and monumentality of the foreign concessions. The town that is perched on a livershaped bank of sand and surrounded by water has been described as follows:

The city (...) is where authority officials and literati bourgeoisie live (...). The largest part of commercial activity with all its noisy and bustling accessories is located outside the walls (...). The city is large, almost deserted; streets are large; but the grass that grows between the flagstones indicates that the circulation is not very active (...). The rest of the city is dead; however everything is clean and we breathe a sort of calm and distinguished air. (...) Contrarily the faubourgs demonstrate the exuberant forms of life. (...) Here, no gardens, no spare place left; little houses are piled up; narrow streets are filled with a bustling crowd jostling and insulting each other (...). We are far from

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the calm and distinguished atmosphere of the city!  
(...)172

This dichotomy between the jumbled Chinese city and the ordered foreign concessions is explained by the topography shown in the maps earlier. Both were physically separated and consequently kept out of the flood of people. Such an absence of people and sound of silence, might speak to the state of privilege and wealth that was only available to the rich foreigners who could live in these large mansions. However, the large and empty road in front of the buildings that gives a sensation of quietness should not be overestimated for it could simply be a technical consequence since the cameras of the 1860s required long exposure times and often could not capture movement, such as people walking down the street.

Although these photographs adopted comparable modes of framing – which might have been maintained for recognisability – some components distinguish them from each other. Champion's cooling arcades where cool breezes might be expected to flow down appear as a pure clear view. Back in Western countries, such images stimulated the audience to conceive of a visual identity for China as almost a new colony.<sup>173</sup> This seems to endorse the postulation that such views were agents of visual conventions, which ultimately dictated typical views of China.<sup>174</sup>

In contrast Pow Kee offered pictures that seemed more detached and emphatic of the event. The snow and flood views were not merely records of a place in a particular moment, but they were events in themselves. The snowy image appeared to particularly work within Chinese visual mechanisms, which were inclined to connect landscapes with affective, seasonal, or narrative depictions. If we follow this argument, the representation of snow in Figure 34

was then not a generic choice but one that impregnated the picture with a

<sup>172</sup> Rousset, *À travers la Chine*, 193-194.

<sup>173</sup> China had never been a colony per se, except for Hong Kong that was ceded to Britain.

There were only several colonial regimes in particular places as Western imperial powers

exerted strong control over some coastal territories between the mid nineteenth century and

the first half of the twentieth century.

<sup>174</sup> Wue, *Picturing Hong Kong*, 39-40.

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‘cold mood’.<sup>175</sup> And such mood invited comparison with the poetic notion of ‘picture-like’ (ruhua, 如畫) in the Chinese pictorial tradition: a picture that is considered to convey the interplay of the representation of nature, ‘sensory experiences’ and literati meanings.<sup>176</sup> It would be then tempting to suggest such landscape could have been created for a Chinese audience. However, one should not overstate these aesthetic considerations for nineteenth-century Chinese practitioners were predominantly – if not exclusively – professional photographers adapting their photographs to a mixture of audience’s tastes.

By comparing Pow Kee and Champion’s photographs, I intend to pinpoint the extent to which they convey points of friction. Expressed in a different way, a mixture of interchangeable visual aspects operated in landscape photographs regardless of the professional background or the ethnicity of the operator. Although the commerce of photography was to a certain extent dictated by clients, one should be cautious in asserting that the visual vocabulary employed corresponded strictly to either Chinese or foreign taste. Instead, both Chinese and foreign clients equally demanded images of one another. The existence of ‘lucky bags’ filled with portraits of individuals in the foreign community and offered as prizes to Chinese clients might corroborate this assumption.<sup>177</sup> The recording of natural disaster (floods, earthquakes, typhoons) offers another example of mutual interest inasmuch as it was a type of subject matter frequently represented by all type of operators.<sup>178</sup> As I have attempted to demonstrate, all operators had mixed

<sup>175</sup> Eugene Y. Wang, "Response: "Picture Idea" and Its Cultural Dynamics in Northern Song

China," *The Art Bulletin*. 89.3 (2014): 466-467.

<sup>176</sup> Ho, "The Literary Concepts of "picture-Like," 359-404.

<sup>177</sup> Jonathan Hay, "Notes on Chinese photography and Advertising in late 19th century

Shanghai," in *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*, ed. Jason C. Kuo (Washington, D.C:

New Academia Publication, 2007), 103.

<sup>178</sup> For instance the Chinese studio Afong left a series of photographs of the typhoon that

struck Macao and Hong Kong in 1874. A portion of these archives is now held at the British

Library and the Royal Asiatic Society in London. Photographs of earthquake were particularly

employed in Japan at that time. John Milne, William K. Burton, and K Ogawa, *The Great*

Earthquake in Japan, 1891 (Yokohama, Japan: Lane, Crawford, 1891); Old Japan: Old & Rare Photographs : Catalogue 34, Commemorating 150 Years of Japanese Photography (Purley, Surrey, U.K: Old Japan, 2007); Jennifer S. Weisenfeld, Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923 (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2012).

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clienteles and visual agendas that might have spoken to different people in different ways.

The role of postcard companies and local illustrated press

The existence of a commerce of photography in nineteenth century China was not only connected with the production of commercial studios and amateurs, but also to diffusers. I would like to introduce here key enterprises – more specifically postcards companies and local illustrated press – that constituted another arena within which photographs were consumed and transformed into other material forms. The first postcard that appeared in China dates back to 1874, when an English postage company produced a first series in Shanghai.<sup>179</sup> The traceability and identification of postcards remain an arduous task as none was dated and only a few had copyrights inscribed either onto the border of the image on the recto or onto the verso. Yet it is known that German, Japanese, and French companies nourished the commerce thanks to their printing offices located in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tianjin, Qingdao, Beijing, and Hankou.<sup>180</sup> Postcard companies functioned as both diffusers and producers as they transformed single original negatives into multiple postcards produced industrially, which were then printed on card.

Surviving sources and material today indicate that at least one company was based in Wuhan. A person of francophone origins who owned the Pharmacie Centrale (Central Pharmacy) in the French concession of Hankou sold photographic material and produced a fair number of postcards depicting popular places and architecture of Wuhan from the end of the nineteenth-century onwards (Figure 36).<sup>181</sup> Over the years, his images were copyrighted under the changing names of 'Ch.Bernard', 'Ch.Bernard – Pharmacie Centrale', 'Bernard et Monhouval', and 'Bernard & Monhonval'.

<sup>179</sup> Zhefu, Lao Mingxin pian Xuan [Old Postcards] (Xianggang: Lingtian chubanshe, 2001), 1.

<sup>180</sup> Régine Thiriez, "Imperial China in Postcards," Orientations 35.5 (2004): 50.

<sup>181</sup> The name of Ch.Bernard is mentioned on page 263 in the following digitized document:

"Who's who: an alphabetical list of foreign residents and Honk employees in Shanghai, and

outports, 1904" accessed July 21, 2014,

[http://www.bris.ac.uk/history/customs/ancestors/1904deskhonglist\\_3.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/history/customs/ancestors/1904deskhonglist_3.pdf). A brief report on his

activity is introduced in: Jialu Zhang, Baofang Hu, and Shanghai shi lishi bowuguan, Wuhan

jiuying (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2007), 26.

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The mention of 'Copyright - L.M. Rey, Hankow' on a fair number of postcards depicting Wuhan views also suggests that there was probably another Wuhan based company called L.M. Rey (Figure 37). There were also other companies based elsewhere that produced postcards of Wuhan, such as 'L.K. Max Nössler & Co' based on 23 Nanjing Road in Shanghai and the Japanese 'Kamogawa & Co' and 'Kigawa bin yu (きがは便郵)'. Similar to their presence as commercial studios, Japanese postcard companies also positioned themselves in the commerce of photography in China.

Figure 36 - Hankow. – Le bund allemande, the german bund, der deutsche Bund, postcard. Copyright Bernard & Monhonval, Hankow. © Lim Yap collectables on eBay.<sup>182</sup>

This postcard made after a photograph of an unknown operator presents the German bund in the port city of Hankou. The handwriting that reads: 'Put all the Bunds together you have the front of Hankou along the River (...)' might exemplify the type of panorama evoked earlier. Shot from eye level, the colonial style buildings gradually recede in perspective by following a diagonal line. Their monumentality and stillness is balanced by the bodily gesture of the Chinese figures on the foreground wearing local costumes and hats, who are bending over, walking, talking to each other.

<sup>182</sup> Source: Ebay, accessed June 01, 2014, <http://www.ebay.com/itm/Hankow-Hankoudeutsche-German-Bund-Wuhan-Hubei-China-ca-1906-/300626682633?hash=item45febf2309:m:mR1snXQG2gHjfPMifRZEpEw112>

Figure 37 – Hankow – Peking Railway Building the Yellow River Bridge, postcard. Copyright L.M. Rey.<sup>183</sup>

This postcard shows the undergoing construction of the Hankow-Peking Railway. It reflects the interest in the modernization of the Chinese transport infrastructure.

Similar to the context in France discussed in the previous chapter, local press companies and publishing houses – principally based in Shanghai – played a key role in the transmission of photography in nineteenth century China. Sometimes short-lived or struggling to ensure their continuity, they still fully participated in the existing commerce of photography diffusing operator's production and commissioning series. If their images were generally more indebted to the depictions of current news, they still also explored other topics such as popular landscapes.

Four of these periodicals are of particular relevance. According to surviving sources, the two periodicals named The China Magazine (1870-78) and Far East (1870-78) were pioneering platforms in which a variety of operators advertised original photographs – often unpublished elsewhere –

<sup>183</sup> Source: Delcampe.net, accessed November 11, 2015, <http://www.delcampe.net/page/item/id,200104714,var,CHINE--HANKOW-PEKING-RAILWAYBUILDING-THE-YELLOW-RIVER-BRIDGE,language,F.html>

while providing feature articles about contemporary events in China (Figures 38 and 39).<sup>184</sup> Surviving volumes of these magazines are very rare. Yet even with this limitation they still provide a rich source of information, notably because operators' contributions were intermittently credited. The China

Magazine for instance contained original pasted-in photographs by Thomson, Beato, the American Milton M. Miller (1830-1899) alongside those taken by the magazine's staff. The Far East commissioned in the late 1870s a series of landscape photographs of Sichuan to what is believed to be Kung Tai, a Chinese studio active in Shanghai in the 1860s-70s. Moreover, The Far East concomitantly offered the possibility to buy these works from the stock of negatives in the possession of the publisher. An advertisement in the issue published in 1878 for instance listed a selection of the British Thomas Child's (1841-1898) views of Peking and its vicinity, while stating that: 'Any of the above views (...) may be obtained, Price 50 cents each, through the Far East Agency, 5 Honan Road, Shanghai.'<sup>185</sup> In other words, this illustrated periodical also functioned as a photo agency in its embryonic stages.

Free of government regulations, the Shenbao 申報 (1872-1949) was another foreign-style newspaper praised for its social activism and for being a 'forum for intellectual discussion and moral challenge'.<sup>186</sup> It was one of the rare magazines that proved to be long-lived. It had once asked its collaborating operators to document the devastated northern provinces by a three-year-long drought and its resulting famine in the late 1870s.<sup>187</sup>

Continuing its focus on social changes, Shenbao also commissioned

<sup>184</sup> The China Magazine was a weekly then monthly-illustrated magazine edited by Charles

Langdon Davies. The Far East was published fortnightly by John Reddie Black. Further

information on the China Magazine and Far East can be found: Bennett, History of Photography in China, Western Photographers, chapter 6; Wue, Picturing Hong Kong, 34;

Thiriez, Barbarian Lens, 31.

<sup>185</sup> The company later joined with an Art Agency for the sale of both photographs and other

works of art. This information is based on advertisements published the Far East respectively

in April 1878 and September 1876. See reproductions in: Bennett, Stewart, and Payne,

History of Photography in China: Western Photographers, 71; 136; 163.

<sup>186</sup> Barbara Mittler, A Newspaper for China?: Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News

Media, 1872-1912 (Cambridge (Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 1.

<sup>187</sup> Roberta Wue, Art Worlds: Artists, Images, and Audiences in Late Nineteenth-Century

Shanghai (Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press/HKU Press, 2014), 82-83.

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commemorative photographs of the Shanghai-Wusong railway in 1876.<sup>188</sup>

Even the Chinese pictorial magazine Dianshizhai huabao 點石齋畫報

(1884-98) occasionally included illustrations based directly on photographs (Figure 40). Controlled by the same owners, the Shenbao and the Dianshizhai huabao were the most popular pictorial newspapers, reaching a wide range of readership.<sup>189</sup> The Dianshizhai huabao was usually filled with sketches

illustrating a wide range of subjects, with a particular emphasis on introducing scientific and technological discoveries from the West.

Figure 38 – (Left) John Thomson, Part of Queen's Road, Hong Kong, reproduction of an original photograph printed in the China Magazine, volume 1 (1868). Source: Terry Bennett Collection. 190

Figure 39 – (Right) The Far East magazine front page. Source: Terry Bennett Collection. 191

<sup>188</sup> Hay, "Notes on Chinese photography and Advertising," 97.

<sup>189</sup> After their arrival in China in the early 1860s the brothers Ernest and Frederick Major

owned the Shenbao and Dianshizhai Huabao. The Dianshizhai Huabao was issued every ten

days as a supplement of the eponymous newspaper. More information on Chinese press see:

Yue Meng, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

2006), 33; Mittler, *A Newspaper for China?*; Xiaoqing Ye, *The Dianshizhai Pictorial: Shanghai*

*Urban Life, 1884-1898* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, the University of Michigan,

2003); Roberta Wue, "Selling the Artist: Advertising, Art, and Audience in Nineteenth-Century

Shanghai," *The Art Bulletin* 91, no. 4 (12/01 2009): 465; 473; 475; Julia Frances Andrews and

Kuiyi Shen, *The art of modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 16.

<sup>190</sup> Also reproduced in: Bennett, Stewart, and Payne, *History of Photography in China: Western Photographers*, 218.

<sup>191</sup> Also reproduced in: Terry Bennett, Anthony Payne, and Lindsey Stewart, *History of*

*Photography in China: Western Photographers, 1861-1879* (London: Quaritch, 2010), 304-

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Figure 40 – Illustrations from the 1898 edition of the Dianshizhai huabao.<sup>192</sup>

To sum up, the microcosm of photographic practices in Wuhan enable us to grasp the construction of a commerce of photography in China. This commerce targeted a global audience, it was lucrative, competitive and chiefly limited to within the boundaries of port cities. Commercial studios and itinerant amateurs led this commerce somewhat equally and their production reveals some visual connections. This microcosm also informed us about the widespread distribution of photographs that were often diffused or commissioned by postcard companies and local press. Based on this

<sup>192</sup> Source: Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Rebecca Nedostup, "Shanghai's Lens on the New(s)-1:

*Dianshizhai Pictorial (1884-1898)*," MIT Visualizing Cultures, accessed September 10, 2015,

[http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/dianshizhai/dsz\\_gal.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/dianshizhai/dsz_gal.html).

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commerce, one might also ask, how people made use of photographs? The following section presents what I argue to be one of the key utilizations that occurred during that time, namely the assemblage of disparate photographs

into photo-essays.

In between souvenir image and document: assembling photo-essays

Composite albums

Albums were direct by-products of the commerce of photography as images featured inside frequently emanated from the existing trade, while sometimes mingling with personal records. This specific prism through which photographs have to be understood also demonstrates the difficulty of dealing with early photographic material. The assemblage of photographic albums had been popular since the advent of photography in the early 1840s. Albums filled with *carte de visite* photographs – often small albumen prints mounted on cards – were amongst the earliest types to be collected.<sup>193</sup> They gave the opportunity for the owner to showcase not only photographic images but also a luxury object with often sophisticated bindings, a carved or embossed thick leather cover, with bronze clasps, and even potentially an attached music box amongst other refined decorative features. Their distinctive visual configuration also narrated a variety of agendas that emanated from the deliberate action of selecting, arranging, and displaying photographs. Albums containing images of China frequently relied on photographs sold by studios based in China. It happened that complete albums were commissioned to professional photographers in order to commemorate particular events, such as journeys, military modernization schemes, the celebration of someone's residence, and the completion of industrial projects notably railways. Some were individuals' commissions, others were Manchu

<sup>193</sup> Karen Redrobe Beckman and Liliane Weissberg, *On Writing with Photography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 267.

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government-sponsored albums to be included in memorial to the throne.<sup>194</sup>

Otherwise, private individuals arranged themselves albums based on disparate images ready for sale, which consequently created a repertoire of similar photographs that could be found from one album to another. The following examination focuses on this second type of composite album.

Paying closer attention to the photographic albums originally owned by the French collector Georges Sirot (1898-1977) illuminates the personal approach to assembling photographs of China.<sup>195</sup> Albums owned by Sirot played with the heterogeneity of the photographs and the variety of their dispositions. For instance, the two albums entitled *Souvenirs de voyages d'Européens ayant vécu en Extrême-Orient* [Journey souvenirs of European who lived in the Far East] supplied a collection that amalgamated over five hundred photographs and postcards (Figure 41). The first album presented views of China taken during several stopovers along Colombo, Singapore, and Indochina. The second concerned mainly Japanese views. Pages were filled with small sized images, composing a sort of mosaic of moments from the past.

<sup>194</sup> Amongst the Manchu government-sponsored albums: Hanyang Iron Factory; Jingzhang

Railway Section completed in 1909 and commissioned to the Tongsheng 同生 studio. Afong

had once been commissioned to compile an album of photographs that recorded the trip of

British expatriates in mountains nearby Fuzhou port city. Another photographer Liang Shitai also known as See Tay 時泰(active 1870s-80s) was summoned to depict Yihuan's residence.

Gugong Bowuyuan, Zuihou de Huangchao: Gugong Zhencang Shiji Jiuying (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2011); Shanghai tushuguan cang lishi yuanzhao [Original historical photographs in the Shanghai Library collections] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2007), volume 2; Roberts, Photography and China, 43; Gu, "What's in a name," 128; Gu, "Prince Chun," 130.

<sup>195</sup> Sirot collected several albums filled with photographs of Asia and China, such as [Recueil.

Entretiens franco-chinois de Mong Cai (Tonkin)] , 1890, Ref: QE- 856 -4; Albert Menier,

Voyage autour du monde, Yacht Némésis , 1887, Ref: UA- 35 (2) -4; Felice Beato, [Recueil et

albums. Photographies positives. Oeuvre de Felice Beato], circa 1860s-1870s, Ref: EO- 97

(1-4) -BOITE FOL A. Bibliothèque nationale de France. 118

Figure 41 - [Recueil. Souvenirs de voyages d'Européens ayant vécu en Extrême-Orient] [Collection. Journeys souvenirs of European who lived in the Far East], circa 1897-1903. Two albums that comprise in total 560 photographs and 6 postcards, 28 x 35 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

Another of Sirot's album is of particular relevance to this trend of assembling photo-essays, namely the one entitled Loisirs d'un groupe d'Européens à Hankou [Leisure activities of a group of European in Hankou] (Figure 42). Composed of seventy-three photographs shot around the years 1889 and 1890, this leather bound album displayed photographs that varied between one large-size image pasted to cover an entire page, to several small size images pasted side-by-side on the same page in a grid pattern. Despite the absence of titles and scarce captions, one can decipher that photographs depicted the various entertainments that a group of people had in Wuhan and along the nearby the Yangtze River, such as collecting horses, boat cruising, 119

children games, watching tea manufacturing, and so forth. Such a life of leisure was rather common amongst expatriates in China due to their privileged situation. In addition to these leisure activities, journeys to natural landscapes were represented through rather candid shots. The photographs printed in large size denoted a certain attention paid to the scene, which at times had been carefully staged.

Figure 42 – Double page with images 42 and 43. [Loisirs d'un groupe d'Européens à Hankou (Chine)], circa 1889-1890. Album of 73 albumen prints or aristotypes based on gelatin silver glass plate negative, 27 x 40 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie. The double page above demonstrates this association of staged and straight approaches. The four small-size prints on the left page recorded almost the



direct experience of navigating on the Yangtze River. The two extreme left images show foreigners elegantly dressed and accompanied by their dog, who are guided by Chinese while navigating the sampan, a relatively flat wooden boat. Following these shots, two watery scenes shown the differing nature of the water from still to rapids. The rather careless composition and framing of these grid pattern photographs contrast strongly with the following larger image. On the right hand page a single large-size print is displayed that represented a perspectival view of a monumental gorge whose right bank is occupied by dwellings. The caption handwritten below indicated that we are looking at a gorge near Yichang, another treaty port opened in the late 1870s. A Chinese figure wearing Qing Dynasty robe stands and gazes at the viewer  
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in the foreground. While his blurred silhouette manifests a rather unskilled amateur hand behind the camera, such framing recalled the French tradition of historical landscape, a vogue in painting up to the first half of the nineteenth-century. Whether or not this reference was conscious, there is no doubt that the addition of a human figure within a large landscape was evocative of 'the art of composing sites' from nature in order to 'interest vividly the spectator, inspire noble feelings, or develop imagination'.<sup>196</sup> Hence the distribution of the photographs in the album leaves was of particular significance. It created a creative combination of 'surface resources' that the viewer unravelled by looking at the two dimensional images pasted onto the three dimensional album.<sup>197</sup> In other words, several layers of mediations came into play at the same time: the operator's choice to frame the scene in a particular way through the camera, then the technique used to develop the photograph, and finally the print displayed in the album.

Additionally, photographs of the Yangtze River and in particular Yichang relate to the moment when the river was becoming gradually more accessible. Navigation on this watercourse had been forbidden to foreigners previously. Thus, while it is true that the lower part (between Shanghai and Wuhan) was officially opened after the end of the Second Opium War and the conquest of Beijing in 1860, the middle, upper regions and the source remained inaccessible until the very end of the nineteenth century. The main reason was the incapability of foreigners' large boats to cross the dangerous rapids of Yichang. This is why the Yangtze River fascinated and frightened most experienced sailors. Its violent whirlpools, the sudden changing nature of the stream could easily sink steamboats or warships and tore ship's sails away. From a historical standpoint, photographic representations of the Yangtze River were also in close association with its strategic position for French colonial expansion in South China and Indochina. While military officers

<sup>196</sup> Jean-Baptiste Deperthes, *Théorie du paysage, ou, Considérations générales sur les*

*beautés de la nature que l'art peut imiter : et sur les moyens qu'il doit employer pour réussir*

*dans cette imitation* (Paris: Chez Lenormant, 1818), 210.

<sup>197</sup> Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 237.

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initiated early missions, such as the gunboat called Kien-Chan that navigated up to Wuhan in 1863, it was not before 1870 that the French Naval Division

penetrated the Yangtze in order to support official negotiations between the French government and Chinese authorities.<sup>198</sup> Henceforth, this river offered a direct connecting route with Indochina via Tonkin, the area corresponding to the Annam region that was under French protectorate since 1884. The gradual discovery of this large stream allowed protection to be offered to French missionaries living in the hinterlands (Yunnan, Sichuan), to survey hydrography and topography and to better understand Chinese customs, while prospecting for potential new opportunities for industry or the exploitation of natural resources (mines, silk). It also helped with the serious lack of knowledge about China that was prevalent until the late 1890s, as stated succinctly by the Sinologist and Jesuit Henri Havret (1848-1901): 'Each day offers a new publication about China, a new study, in which mistakes coexist with some truths.'<sup>199</sup>

As a result, the gradual opening of the Yangtze River accompanied by development of navigation equipment provided more and more opportunity for operators to constitute a new repertoire of landmarks. This repertoire could include photographs of spectacular views of gorges reflecting on the water's surface, peculiar geological formations of the riverbank, Chinese junks or foreign steamboats and warships in watery landscapes, views of the dangerous rapids, architectural landmarks shot from afar, and Chinese trackers pulling bamboo ropes to haul junks up through the whirlpools.

Armchair collectors

The albums owned by Sirot examined above created what one might describe as '(im)personal souvenir albums' for he was consistently collecting memories of others without visiting the country himself. He kept on buying photographic  
<sup>198</sup> French naval explorations of the Yangtze lasted until 1939, when the outbreak of the war

led no choice but to flee to Singapore and end French presence in the river.

Carsalade du

Pont, *La Marine Française*, 159.

<sup>199</sup> Henri Havret, *L'île de Tsong-Ming à l'embouchure du Yang-Tse-Kiang* (Shanghai: Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, 1901), 1.

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albums in Parisian flea markets and specialised bookshops.<sup>200</sup> These albums then incited what is frequently termed armchair travellers, that is to say people traveling by proxy. I propose to include collectors into this category of imaginary travellers.<sup>201</sup> Albums as objects appeared then as visual platforms in which collectors could fabricate an artificial memory of China owing to their decontextualized gaze. On the one hand such landscapes turned into 'mnemonically significant sites', places in which French expatriate community conducted social or professional activities over a period of time and which consequently represents things that occurred in these places.<sup>202</sup> On the other hand, what a collector like Sirot might have appreciated was the representation of a 'picturesque elsewhere', a context, rather than the actual landscape.<sup>203</sup>

Mentioning Sirot is not an accidental choice. He was one of the first French collectors of nineteenth-century photographs and started building his collection from 1919 onwards. However, his collection was by no means unique. Amongst his contemporaries there were the geographer and writer Elisée Reclus (1830-1905), who recorded views of the Yangtze River in the

1880s-1890s while collecting photographs of China shot by Thomson.<sup>204</sup> The Member of the Société des études japonaises et chinoises Auguste Lesouëf (1829-1906), and the fashion designer and patron Jacques Doucet (1853-  
<sup>200</sup> The paucity of information evades a clear localization of the exact shops were collectors

might have bought such images. It is yet known that the initial group of collectors obtained

Asian art objects from the dealers Madame Desoye's 'La jonque chinoise' on the rue de Rivoli,

Siegfried Bing's (1838-1905) shop on the rue de Provence, and Auguste Sichel's shop on the

Right Bank. Vimalin Rujivacharakul, *Collecting China: The World, China, and a History of*

*Collecting* (Newark [Del.: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 34.

<sup>201</sup> Among the numerous scholars that have discussed the concept of armchair travellers, Wue

linked the diffusion of stereoviews of China with Western armchair traveller's demand.

Roberta Wue, "The Mandarin at Home and Abroad Picturing Li Hongzhang," *Ars Orientalis* 43

(2013): 149.

<sup>202</sup> Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007),

196.

<sup>203</sup> Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography & Remembrance* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh

Museum, 2004), 30.

<sup>204</sup> Elysée Reclus, [21 phot. de Chine et de Hong-Kong, don Elisée Reclus en 1889], before

1889, Ref: SG WD- 90; Elysée Reclus, [Phot. de la peine de la cangue en Chine, don E.

Reclus en 1889], before 1889, Ref: SG WD- 91; John Thoms, [64 phot. de Chine, de Formose

et de Hong-Kong en 1871], 1871, Ref: SG WD- 34, donated by Elysée Reclus in 1886.

Bibliothèque nationale de France.

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1929) also acquired Thomson's views.<sup>205</sup> Additionally, the literati and journalist Hugues Le Roux (1860-1925) gathered photographically illustrated volumes from the Commercial Press of Shanghai's series *Scenic China* in the 1920s, which I will examine more fully in Chapter six.

The patron and art historian Raymond Koechlin (1860-1931) was another collector of photographs of China. An album from his collection held today at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris) further demonstrates the interplay between photographs available and the commerce and collecting agendas.

The album entitled *Chine septentrionale. Vol I* [Northern China Volume I] is part of five other albums containing photographs of China that were donated by Koechlin. Printed on albumen paper, the photographs that compose this album offer views of several cities, sculptures, street scenes, bays, punishment scenes, and studio group portraits. The museum archive record

writes that the author of the album is Child, which was plausible owing to the international diffusion of his photographs at that time. However, this reference is inadequate as several photographs remain unidentified and were created by other authors.

This is the case of the picture in page twenty (Figure 43). It shows a pagoda viewed slightly from below and from afar, leaving it to dominate the overall composition. The horizon line divided the picture in two equal sections: above the pagoda that presided over and below the rest of the city and a river. The contrasts and shadow effects delineated neatly the complex architecture of the rounded plan pagoda and its multiple curved rooftops. One of the first thing that strikes the viewer is the incorrect caption saying 'À Shanghai, dans la ville chinoise' [In Shanghai, in the Chinese town], whereas in reality it represented the Yellow Crane Pagoda (Huanghe lou, 黃鶴樓) located in Wuchang. The misidentified architecture suggested the unfamiliarity of foreigners with local landscape. Embodying the main landmark of Wuchang,<sup>205</sup> John Thomson, [Recueil. Album de photographies sur Hong-Kong], 1868, Ref: RESERVE

VH- 584 -PET FOL, donated by Auguste Lesouëf, Bibliothèque nationale de France; A

Collection of Photographs taken in Persia, Turkey and in the Caucasus, during a seven months' journey in 1891, platinotype prints by J. Thomson. Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, 1891, Ref: NUM

4 PHOT 15 (1) and (2), Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, collections Jacques Doucet.

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the pagoda was conversely well known to the Chinese inasmuch as it had been the subject matter of countless poetry and pictorial representations for thousand years. Naturally, local operators used it often as an architectural background for photographic portraiture or cityscape. Thanks to crossreferencing, I have discovered that the Chinese studio Pow Kee actually created this picture and that other editions of the same print are currently held in at least two other collections (Figure 44).<sup>206</sup>

<sup>206</sup> The same photograph of the Yellow Crane Pagoda is also held in Terry Bennet and Tong Bingxue's collections.

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Figure 43 - Attributed to Thomas Child, À Shanghai, dans la ville chinoise [In Shanghai, inside the Chinese city], circa 1850-1900. From the album entitled Chine septentrionale. Vol I. [Northern China Volume I], composed of 99 albumen prints mounted on cardboard, 27 x 38.3 cm [H 77/8]. Bibliothèque des Arts décoratifs, Paris.

Figure 44 - Pow Kee, Huanghe lou, circa 1884. Albumen print. Courtesy of Tong Bingxue.

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Another album currently held at the Getty Research Institute reveals a similar assemblage while involving the association of photographic image and heavy hand written annotations (Figure 45). The photographs were assembled by G. Prat (date unknown), a Frenchman who lived in Asia between 1878 and 1896.

It contained views of China and Japan, most notably over a hundred views of Shanghai, Canton and Macao. The text and image relationship was fully explored, with labels being almost as important as images, complementing them with cultural, geographical and historical considerations to 'mark their visual statement in specific ways'.<sup>207</sup> As an illustration, in the double page below the photographs depicted places where Chinese mandarin took exams and the text expounded on what precisely is a Chinese literati and mandarin, what was at stake when they took examination to become official, and the practice of gambling examination hall surname. It is interesting to note that the image showing the examination court has been found in a fair number of archives today and also under the form of a coloured postcard (Figures 46 and 47). This proves that this album was a combination of photographic images not pertaining solely to the owner's own experience. As a manuscript leaf left inside the album by G. Prat said:

All these photographs could be – I believe – sold daily to Canton residents or globetrotters, who wish to keep a souvenir of curious things in Canton. A clever Chinese photographer would make the most of it (...).

The quote above also disclosed how private practices of composing albums interacted closely with public commerce of photography.

<sup>207</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical*

*Imagination, 1885-1918* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 114.  
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Figure 45 - G. Prat, *Chine-Japon* photographic album, circa 1878-1896.

Album that contains 139 albumen prints including some hand-coloured, 32.4 x 38.8 cm (photographs 23.7 x 29.1 cm. or smaller). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (98.R.14)

Figure 46 - Unidentified author, *The Imperial examination cubicles*, Canton, circa 1880-90, Black and white photograph on paper [UB01-17]. Image courtesy of University of Bristol Library, Special Collections (DM2520) and the *Historical Photographs of China*, University of Bristol.

Figure 47 – Examination Hall in Canton, postcard, date unknown.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>208</sup> "Old Chinese Postcard. Examination Hall in Canton," Rubylane, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.rubylane.com/item/429-col-11524/Chinese-Postcard-Ex78amination-Hall-Canton->.

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Sirot, Koechlin, Prat and the others belonged to a new generation of collectors that became increasingly intrigued by Asian artefacts. This phenomenon has to be connected with the changing conception of the collector and the changing appreciation of Asian art in Europe and in France. The term collector (collectionneur in French) was actually coined in 1839; thus concomitantly with the advent of photography. The practice of collecting though had already existed for centuries. What had changed was the apparent shift from a strictly elitist habit to a more open and popular practice.<sup>209</sup> Yet although nineteenth century collectors might come from a variety of horizons, they were all rather wealthy. Undoubtedly there were more collectors of Asian artefacts than Asian photography. It would be misplaced here to recap in depth the complex history of collecting Chinese art in France. However, one should be aware that the competition to champion Chinese art revolved around two key collectors: the French Orientalist Émile Guimet (1836-1918) and the Italian patriot settled in France Henri Cernuschi (1821-1896).<sup>210</sup> These two collections eventually became museums that today house crucial collections, as well as photographic archives of China and Asia.

Conclusion: an empirical look at Chinese landscape

This chapter retraced the early production of landscape photography in nineteenth-century China. First, I expounded that port cities embodied key

<sup>209</sup> Emma Bielecki, *The Collector in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Representation,*

*Identity, Knowledge French studies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Oxford ; New

York: Peter Lang, 2012), 9.

<sup>210</sup> Émile Guimet created an eponymous museum dedicated to the study of Religions of the

Far East. First opened in 1879 in Lyon, the museum was transferred to Paris and given to the

French government in 1885. It officially opened its doors in 1889. Henri Cordier, *Half a*

*Decade of Chinese Studies (1886-1891)* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1892), 22; Ting Chang, *Travel,*

*Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT : Ashgate, 2013), chapter 2; Emile Guimet and Félix Régamey, *Exposition*

*universelle. Galeries historiques. Trocadéro. Religions de l'extrême Orient. Notice explicative*

*sur les objets exposés par M. Émile Guimet et sur les peintures et dessins faits par M. Félix*

*Régamey* (Paris: 1878). Henri Cernuschi collected some five thousands objects bought during

his trips to Asia. He publically displayed them in his Parisian residence from 1873 onwards.

Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art*, chapter 3; Albert Jacquemart, "L'Extrême Orient au palais de l'Industrie: notices sur les collections de M.H.

Cernuschi,"

*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, January (?) (1874): unnumbered page. Other Asian collectors of that

time include for instance: the colonel Charles-Louis Du Pin (1814-1868) who looted objects from the Old Summer Palace and probably also took photographs; The politician Georges Clémenceau (1841-1929); Jean-Pierre Dubosc (1903-...); Carl de Vinck (1859-1931); and Robert Gentien (date unknown); E. Lefèvre (date unknown).

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landscapes as they offered the earliest zones where a lucrative and competitive economy of photography could develop. Focusing on the microcosm of Wuhan – one of the Yangtze River's ports – I advanced that the emergence of this economy was due to the presence of both local and international audiences willing to consume images. Commercial studios or amateurs chiefly produced such images, whose distribution was aided by postcard companies and local illustrated press.

Second, I have explored photo-essays, more specifically albums commissioned and/or own by collectors. I have advanced that they were direct by-products of the commerce of photography, constituting significant prisms through which photographs have to be understood. The ways images were printed, gathered, and arranged shaped a somewhat simplistic imagery of China; torn between schematic and empirical approaches. This tendency enhanced the degree of imagination, of fragmentary vision. By doing so, I argued that the physical formats of landscape photographs in the nineteenth century supplied piecemeal conceptions of China.

This idea of non-specific and fragmentary imagery is intended to connect the whole of Section I together, which I have entitled 'Seeing landscape (1840s-1890s)'. The focus on the years 1840s and 1890s is a device to help to understand what we might characterize as a first phase of landscape photography in China. The second half of the nineteenth century corresponded to the moment when operators had to form a cultural imaginaire of a country newly opened to the world. Based on the visual aspects of the photographic archives left to us, I suggested core characteristics of landscape photographs of this period. First, landscape photographs fostered strong conventions that were discernible through the representations of preferred themes, by a tendency to isolate the subject matter from its wider context, by the frequent addition of human figure, and the generic or narrative labelling. Each of these core element delineated what I have discussed under the term of type. Second, in general the operators straightforwardly depicted what they saw by using a rather straightforward empirical approach that was embedded in a localised context. This context being opened coastal territories that possessed 'melting pot' populations and an existing commerce of souvenir images.

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Arguing that this first phase of photography was indebted to the prisms of empiricism is a means to argue that these early depictions offer the representation of 'perceptual space' rather than 'cognitive space'.<sup>211</sup> Having said that, from the late 1890s onwards and particularly at the turn of the twentieth-century, landscape photography in China took a new turn thanks to the continuing opening of new territories and the systematic use of photography in close association with scientific fields, A new gaze increasingly

freed from the frameworks of imagination or commerce started to emerge.

<sup>211</sup> Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*,

*Explorations in Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 15.

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Figure 48 – Firmin Laribe, *La Grande Muraille à la sortie de la passe de Nan-Kow* [The Great Wall after the exit of the Nankou Pass], circa 1900-10. Silver gelatin print mounted on cardboard, 13 x 18 cm (without cardboard). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

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SECTION II – EXPLORING LANDSCAPE (1890s-1910s)

## **CHAPTER THREE – THE ENCOUNTER OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY WITH ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES**

Introduction

In this chapter I propose to briefly account for the discursive practices surrounding the notions of photography and academic disciplines, more specifically archaeology. How can we address the implications of academic disciplines discourses and landscape photography? In order to ponder this, I will examine photographs representing ancient monuments in China and connect them with publications on the relationships between natural and social sciences and photography. Assembling such a corpus enables us to question the extent to which these views laid the foundation for an alternative visual grammar that originated with archaeological and preservation concerns. Another reason to include such landscape photographs is to fill a lacuna in current studies about the history of photography in China, which tend to evade photographs created during academic expeditions. Consequently, throughout the chapter I will attempt to provide both textual and visual evidence that support the idea that academic utilization of photography offers another way to examine the practice of landscape photography.

Recording ancient monuments of China

The contemporaneity of the ‘North Beijing journey’

This vertical black and white photograph set the scene within a rocky and arid mountain landscape (Figure 48). It captured what appeared to form a mountain pass and a gate leading to a long winding wall. Stretching across the mountain edge, this imposing wall was punctuated by rectangular structures pierced with arches to let people walk through. Parts of the ground

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covered with snow indicate that this picture might have been taken during wintertime. All the architectural components and the specific location of this wall help the viewer to understand we are gazing at a defensive monument. On the foreground, three men wearing long local dress led horses by a halter over their head. Our contemporary eye would immediately recognize the Great Wall of China, the succession of fortifications located around forty miles north of Beijing and spanning hundred of kilometres across northern provinces. However, such an identification was not that straightforward based on the limited knowledge available to most people living in the late nineteenth century. Yet in spite of its unfamiliarity at that time, such a landscape provided an opportunity to develop new types of subject matter, which became directly or indirectly connected with the concurrent establishing of various branches of



science.

This image was abstracted from a fairly comprehensive visual record made by a French amateur photographer and military officer, a guard commander of the French Legation in Beijing, Firmin Laribe (1855-1942). In keeping with my archival approach, this corpus of photographs is analysed as one example among many for the primary reason that it offers the opportunity to examine a visual interest that was growing out of concerns over the preservation of ancient Chinese monuments in Northern Beijing. Eventually named under the rubric of the 'North Beijing journey', I intend to discuss photographs of the landmarks en route to the Great Wall and the Ming tombs. These ancient sites are studied here as a coherent group since they are close to each other geographically. Written sources and surviving photographic archives today confirm that they tended to be conceived and recorded in sequence.

Conscious that Section II's time frame addresses the years between the 1890s and 1910s, I believe it is important to go back to briefly the 1860s to understand why the interest in northern Beijing's ancient sites grew among operators. What was noteworthy about photographs of landscapes of the 'North Beijing journey'? Before the 1860s, areas around Beijing were rarely represented through the lens of either Chinese or foreign operators. However, the Anglo-French troops' march on the capital and the subsequent opening of

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new territories thanks to the signing of the Convention of Peking [Beijing] (1860) precipitated a gradual migration of people to the capital, including both professional and amateur photographers. Hence the compilation of such a corpus possessed a strong sense of contemporaneity, it participated in the momentum of the steady discovery of these territories. This concept – informed by Roberta Wue's latest study on Shanghai art worlds – unveiled a set of factors triggering this sense of 'immediacy, accessibility, and topicality'.<sup>212</sup> This contemporaneity was built through specific visual strategies I will discuss presently, as well as the peculiar relationship of photographs with the audience due to their widespread availability as they were diffused within a large network of social interaction.

Despite the quantity of material found in various institutions around the world, photographic archives related to France rarely supply complete sets of images illustrating the North Beijing journey. Instead, the pioneering figures that initiated this new corpus were traveller operators.<sup>213</sup> According to existing research, it appears that the French aristocrat Count Georges-Charles-Alexis Guignard de Saint-Priest (1835-1898) was amongst the earliest French person to portray the Chinese capital as well as the Great Wall, in the 1860s (Figure 49). Similarly, in 1864, the naval lieutenant Jules Apollinaire Félix le Bas (1834-1875) left several records of the monuments and the surrounding landscapes of the Ming Tombs, the identification being greatly facilitated by his signature usually appended on the bottom right corner of each photograph (Figure 50). More is known about him since he also left important visual records of Japan, which he made during his journey onboard the warship *La Semiramis* in 1863-4 in Japan. Le Bas' duty was to create a pictorial record of the campaign.<sup>214</sup> To cite another early example, the first international magazine dedicated to Sinology called *T'oung pao*, published in 1893 a report written by the French Diplomat and Orientalist Camille Imbault-Huart (1857-

<sup>212</sup> Wue, *Art Worlds*, 144-145.

<sup>213</sup> Gabrielle Feyler, "Contribution à l'histoire des origines de la photographie archéologique : 1839-1880," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, Volume 99, no.2 (1987): 1022.

<sup>214</sup> It has been said that Le Bas' archives are currently held in the Dr Dubois and Clark

Worswick collection of photographs of China and Southeast Asia. Terry Bennett, *Photography*

in Japan, 1853-1912 (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2006), Chapter 1.

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1897) that described in detail the overall architectural complex of the Ming Tombs (Figure 51). The text was accompanied by three photograms based on photographs of M. de Semallé depicting key monuments within their landscape.<sup>215</sup>

French operators were not the only ones to visit and photograph these sites. Around the same period, a fair number of engravings derived from photographs appeared in illustrated periodicals, while countless professional and amateur photographers also frequented and captured those sites.<sup>216</sup>

Figure 49 - Georges de St Priest, *La grande muraille de la Chine* [The Great Wall of China], wood engraving after a photograph in *L'Illustration*, 29th September (1860): 224. © Crédit L'illustration ([www.lillustration.com](http://www.lillustration.com)).

<sup>215</sup> The operator might be Marie-Joseph-Claude-Édouard-Robert de Semallé (1849-1936),

who was a French *Gouvernement attaché* in Beijing in the early 1880s.

<sup>216</sup> Among the authors who are frequently evoked as having produced important photographic

records of these sites are: Thomson, Child, the British Reverend Arthur de Carle Sowerby

(1885-1954), the Japanese Sanshichiro Yamamoto (active in the 1900s) who owned a

commercial studio in Beijing, the German Hedda Morrison (1908-1991) who was the manager

of the Hartung Photo Shop in the Legation Quarters of Peking from 1933 onwards, the

Hungarian-British archaeologist Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943), the American missionary

William Edgar Geil (1865-1925), the American petroleum geologist Frederick Gardner Clapp

(1879-1944), and the Chinese professional photographer Sha Fei 沙飛 (1912-1950). 136

Figure 50 - Jules Apollinaire Félix le Bas, *Allée de Monolithes conduisant aux Tombeaux des Ming* [Path flanked with monoliths leading to the Ming Tombs], 1864. Signed in the negative © MNAAG

Figure 51 - Camille Imbault-Huart, "Les Tombeaux des Ming près de Peking (avec trois photogrammes) [Ming tombs near Beijing (through three photograms)]," *T'oung Pao* Volume IV (1893): 406. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. 217

<sup>217</sup> A photogram is a photographic image that does not imply the use of a camera; only the action of light on a photosensitive substrate is required.

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Despite the fragmentary state of current archives, representations of the North Beijing journey should not be underestimated since in many respects they demonstrate a marked change in both French and Chinese visual culture. Representations of the North Beijing journey appear to evade the visual repertory of Chinese operators until the turn of the twentieth century, as to date no photographs taken by Chinese in these places dating from the late nineteenth century have been discovered. Although it was customary for educated Chinese to pay tribute to important historical and/or legendary figures by visiting tombs or mausoleums for instance, these topics tended to evade pictorial tradition, appearing as almost 'unphotogenic scenes' especially in the case of tombs.<sup>218</sup> Such images pertained to ruins and were absent from Chinese visual culture until they were imported from the West around this period.<sup>219</sup> The burgeoning of tourism and the democratization of the portable camera gradually encouraged the Chinese gentry to visit these places from the turn of the twentieth century onwards, and to bring back souvenir photographs.

As for the French audience, people were so astonished to discover these ancient sites they had even doubted about their existence. For instance, primary sources mentioned that the French priest Larrieu proclaimed in the late 1880s that the Great Wall of China as it was conceived was: 'a legend without reality, which has merely left us a false metaphor.'<sup>220</sup> Yet some doubts were cast upon Larrieu's claims few years later. A section in the 1888 Annual Report of the Journal Asiatique satirically stated that Larrieu: 'attempted to destroy the Great Wall of China; the travellers will tell us if he succeeded

<sup>218</sup> Wang, "Perceptions of Change," 96.

<sup>219</sup> Wu, *A Story of Ruins*, chapter two.

<sup>220</sup> The impact of photographs of the Great Wall on the general audience and the debates

over its assumed non-existence was discussed in several sources, including: M. L'Abbé

Larrieu, "La grande muraille de Chine où il est prouvé que cette muraille telle qu'elle est

communément décrite non seulement n'existe pas, mais même n'a jamais existé : Suivi d'un

article sur la barrière de pieux du Léao-Tong," *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1887): 347-363;

Général Séatelli, " Bibliographie - La grande muraille de Chine, par M. l'abbé Larrieu, ancien

missionnaire apostolique en Chine. Où il est prouvé que cette muraille n'existe pas et n'a

jamais existé," *Bulletin archéologique et historique de la société archéologique de Tarn-et-*

*Garonne* Volume XV (1887): unnumbered page. Another scholar stated that Larrieu would

have 'shivered' if he had looked at the American Geil's photographs of the Great Wall newly

published at that time. H.G., "The Great Wall of China by William Edgar GEIL...",  
Toung Pao  
no.2 May Volume XI (1910): 293.  
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(...).'<sup>221</sup> It was also around this period that the French audience realised the Great Wall was actually composed of several portions as opposed to the mythical single unitary line. Thus photographs enabled to certify the presence of past entities within the contemporary.<sup>222</sup>

The construction of a visual archive of the North Beijing journey gave rise to a better knowledge of Chinese history and architecture, and occasioned concerns over their preservation. It is not astonishing then that authors started to deplore: 'the disastrous consequences of this absence of public spirit regarding the preservation of monuments.'<sup>223</sup> In addition to the lack of preservation concerns during the Qing government there was the cultural habit of destroying past dynasties' monuments and a consequent looting by the population.<sup>224</sup>

Confronting amateur and archaeologist framing

Returning to the corpus of images created by Laribe, I believe it not only proceeded from the previous decades of interests, but also could be dubbed as transitional in that it enables us to understand a shift that occurred within the compilation and visual features of landscape photography in China from the later decades of the nineteenth century onwards. Laribe left four binders containing in total over four hundred gelatin silver prints mounted on fawn colour cardboard taken around the year 1900. Photographs were shot in the sequence of his journey through these areas. On the one hand, the study of the whole set of Laribe's photographs discloses an attempt to build a rather comprehensive view of the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs. Although he did not know all the exact Chinese names of the corresponding monuments (especially in Ming Tombs site), he demonstrated a clear attempt to provide accurate information: capturing sometimes the same place from different angles, and indicating the geographic location of monuments. On the other

<sup>221</sup> "Rapport Annuel – X: Chine, Annam, Japon," Journal Asiatique 8th Series Volumes XII (1888): 189.

<sup>222</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, "Photography and the Material Performance of the Past," History and Theory. 48.4 (2009): 132.

<sup>223</sup> Gisbert Combaz, Les sépultures impériales de la Chine (Bruxelles: Vromant, 1907), 12.

<sup>224</sup> Ann Paludan, The Imperial Ming Tombs (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 6.

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hand, this corpus also betrays a visual approach indebted to early photoessays filled with mise-en-scène and narrative labelling.

The insertion of human figure is of particular interest (Figures 52 to 54).

In most of his photographs of the Ming Tombs, for instance, Chinese people – both children and adults – seem to act out small scenes. They would sit, squat, stand alone or in a group, looking in particular directions, and adopting peculiar body gesture (hands up in the sky, turning their back while gazing at a sculpture, pointing their fingers towards a specific direction). It would be false

to assert that human figures were completely absent from the photography championed in academic disciplines like archaeology as human figures – and more specifically local people – were occasionally important actors as: ‘their presence not only gives the sense of proportion but also completes the general effects’ as it was described in an essay on photography of that time.<sup>225</sup> Yet the sense of theatricality in these images seems to differ from the methodical archaeological utilization of human figures.

<sup>225</sup> Albert Londe, *La Photographie moderne, traité pratique de la photographie et de ses*

*applications à l'industrie et à la science* (Paris: G. Masson, 1896), 568.

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Figure 52 – Firmin Laribe, Tombes impériales de Si-Ling, Pont et pavillon sur l’Avenue sacrée – Au deuxième plan forêt de cèdres et de mélèzes [Imperial tombs of Si-Ling, Bridge and pavilion in the Sacred path – In the background a forest of cedars and larches]

Figure 53 – (Left) Firmin Laribe, Tombes impériales de Si-Ling, Derrière ce pavillon se trouve le cercueil qu’on a fait passer par la porte située au dos du mur crénelé [Imperial tombs of Si-Ling, Behind this pavilion there is a coffin which had been transported through the door located at the back of the crenelated wall]

Figure 54 – (Right) Firmin Laribe, Tombes impériales de Si-Ling, Mur en céramique coupant l’Avenue sacrée conduisant à la tombe de l’empereur Young-tcheng – À droite mandarin civil [Imperial tombs of Si-Ling, ceramic wall crossing the Sacred path and leading to the Young-tcheng emperor’s tomb] Images from Firmin Laribe’s binder entitled “Chine. Palais impériaux de Pékin.

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Tombes impériales des Ming, de Si-ling et de princes et princesses chinoises” [China. Imperial palaces of Beijing. Imperial tombs of Ming, Si-Ling, Chinese princes and princesses]. circa 1900-10. Gelatin silver print mounted on cardboard, 13 x 18 cm (without cardboard). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

However, not all Laribe’s landscape photographs contained human figures.

For instance, those depicting the Great Wall used a plainer vocabulary. In

Figure 55, the wall was shot mostly from afar so as to obtain a more all-encompassing

view of the architecture, showing how it expands in the

topography. This steep section of the famous defensive wall afforded a

spectacular view of the region. As with many other depictions of the Great

Wall, Laribe photographed areas near the Nankou Pass (南口), literally

meaning the Southern pass. In existing photographic archives, this passage is

often captioned as it is one of the recognizable landmarks close to the Great

Wall. It was part of a larger mountain pass called the Juyong Pass

(Juyongguan 居庸關), which was the closest section to the defensive

monument when departing from Beijing.<sup>226</sup> This area comprises an

architectural complex made of fort, temples, several gates, and monuments

like the Juyong arch (*Juyongguan yuntai*, 居庸關雲台), sometimes called the

Cloud Platform. This arch is made of white marble and originally was crowned

by three stupas when it was erected during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).<sup>227</sup>

The Nankou Pass, the Juyong Pass and the Juyong arch constituted

landmarks en route to the Great Wall that had been photographed abundantly.

<sup>226</sup> The Juyong Pass encompasses another sub-pass located in north called Badaling (八達

嶺), which is today the most touristic spot from which travellers climb the Great Wall.

<sup>227</sup> The Juyong arch has been the subject of monographic studies and included in scholarships regarding Chinese sculpture or architecture. Its peculiarities lie in its Buddhist

iconography and multilingual inscriptions. Song Li, "From the Northern Song to the Qing," in

Chinese Sculpture, ed. Angela Falco Howard (Yale University Press, 2006); Nancy Steinhardt

et al. *L'architecture Chinoise* (Arles: P. Picquier, 2005), 230; Ping Shen,

"Juyongguan yuntai

de xixia wen [The Tangut text on the Cloud Platform at Juyongguan]," *Shoudu Bowuguan*

*congkan* [Journal of the Capital Museum] 5 (1990): 91–94; Bai Su, "Juyongguan guojie ta

kaogao [Draft study of the Crossing Street Pagoda at Juyongguan]," *Wenwu* [Cultural Relics]

4 (1964): 13–29; Jirō Murata, *Chū-Yung-Kuan: The Buddhist Arch of the Fourteenth Century*

A.D. at the Pass of the Great Wall Northwest of Peking (Kyoto University Faculty of Engineering, 1957).

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Figure 55 - Firmin Laribe, *Environs de Pékin – La grande muraille de Chine à la sortie de la passe de Nan-Kow* [Beijing surroundings – The Great Wall of China after the Nankou pass]. From the binder entitled "Chine. Temples.

Tours et portes chinoises. Églises. Portiques. Ponts. La Grande Muraille de Chine" [China. Temples. Tours and Chinese gates. Churches. Gentries.

Bridges], circa 1900-10. Gelatin silver print mounted on cardboard, 13 x 18 cm (without cardboard). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

Whether or not Laribe's photographs involved conscious concern about the state of conservation of Chinese monuments, they undoubtedly demonstrated a transitional way of documenting the newly discovered ancient sites. His pictures occupy the junction between picturesque souvenirs of a personal journey and topographical views as they were later advocated by archaeology, a discipline still in its infancy at that time. What elements in Laribe pictures might have been appropriate/ inappropriate to an archaeological approach then? The comparison of his photograph showing the Juyong arch with a picture shot by the French archaeologist Édouard Chavannes (1865-1918)

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around the same time allows us to explore the differences between these two visual approaches more closely (Figures 56 and 57).

Laribe's depiction portrayed the monument within its context: the arch was circumscribed by vernacular dwellings and locals passed by daily as we can see illustrated by the person pulling a donkey. On the right, two children rest on a tree in a providing a natural posed quality. The tree is slightly bent over, hiding partly the carved tympanum as well as the ruined balustrade on the roof terrace above. Whether or not this was done on purpose, the overall

composition and the moment chosen to shoot the picture enhance the impression of souvenir. The scene is composed of a ruined monument, a bare tree and a discreet human presence, somewhat reminiscent of European romantic and poetic conceptions of landscape.

Contrarily, Chavannes, as a trained archaeologist, was encouraged by his academic peers to utilize a 'dispassionate eye' emphasising the accurate rendering of surfaces.<sup>228</sup> He paid less attention to the daily life surrounding the arch and to the overall composition. We notice for instance that the horizon is slightly tipped, whereas landscapes imbued with aesthetic quality would have called for the horizon line to be parallel to the lower and upper edges of the rectangular support. Instead, his focus rested on getting the best angle so as to capture sharp contrasts, which highlight the arch's low relief. Such an attention to lighting recalled principles prescribed by contemporary authoritative scholarship on archaeology and photography. They specified notably that one take utmost care to take a picture under as vivid light as possible in order to obtain: 'projected shadows that give relief to prominent parts and well balanced perspective effects.'<sup>229</sup> This desire for sharpness and clarity explains also why Chavannes, as opposed to Laribe, shot the arch from a side where there was no tree since this afforded an unobstructed view. In addition, Chavannes' picture did not include any human figures, although their presence as already noted might be recommended especially to: 'judge the

<sup>228</sup> Frederick Nathaniel Bohrer, *Photography and Archaeology* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 48.

<sup>229</sup> Eugène Trutat, *La photographie appliquée à l'archéologie: Reproduction des monuments, oeuvres d'art, mobilier, inscriptions, manuscrits* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1879), 38-39. 144

size of the monument' as he declared himself.<sup>230</sup> Still here the 'documentary precision' was methodically applied.<sup>231</sup>

In the end both images represent the same subject matter, however their functions and visual aspects differ. Although Laribe implemented a sort of taxonomical approach, something of a 'sense of individuality' permeated his pictures.<sup>232</sup> Whereas Chavannes employed a blunt gaze that was consistent with a methodical approach focused strictly on the subject represented rather than giving expression of one's self.

<sup>230</sup> Édouard Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1909), 42.

<sup>231</sup> Londe, *La photographie moderne*, XII.

<sup>232</sup> Bohrer, *Photography and Archaeology*, 104. 145

Figure 56 -Firmin Laribe, *Environs de Pékin – La porte de Tsu-loung-kouan, route de Kalgan dans le passe de Nan-Kow, nord-ouest de Pékin* [Beijing surroundings – The Tsu-loung-kouan gate, Kalgan road in the Nankou pass], circa 1900-10. Gelatin silver print mounted on cardboard, 13 x 18 cm (without cardboard). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

Figure 57 -Édouard Chavannes, *Porte de Kiuyong*

kouan [Juyongguan]  
(face nord) (date: 1345)  
[Juyongguan Gate,  
northern facade], 1907.  
Gelatin silver print from a  
glass negative, 9 x 12 cm  
(AP13039) © MNAAG.  
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Photography in the discourses on natural and social  
sciences

General debates

The visual differences between the amateur Laribe and Chavannes are hardly surprising given their differences and the functions the photographs were intended to served. What differentiated the production of landscape photographs between the 1890s and 1910s was a dominant institutional urge to constitute large archives of photographic materials and the subsequent need to catalogue methodically and topically. To what extent did the abovementioned

photographs connect with academic discourses in the natural and social sciences? A consideration of the contemporary debates concerning photography and the concerns of the diverse branches of science will help to shed light on the ways in which surrounding discourses and image-making became increasingly entwined.

Although the late nineteenth century experienced an upsurge in the conception of photography as a tool for academic disciplines, the debate over photography in the natural and social sciences started as early as the advent of photography in 1839 and proceeded a century of progress made in human science and positivist philosophy.<sup>233</sup> Since its inception, photography has been considered as a medium whose intrinsic nature participated in the development not only of science, but also of arts and industry. In order to clarify its application to these seemingly disparate fields, a flurry of publications introducing technical and theoretical aspects were published from the earliest periods. Within these writings it is possible to discern how negotiations between photography and science were characterised.

The earliest debates were targeted towards techniques themselves. As an example, the earliest daguerreotype technique was argued to be more scientific than the concomitant calotype technique for the later was printed on

<sup>233</sup> Also called the philosophy of science, the Positivism was developed in the early nineteenth

century by the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857).

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paper, appeared closer to drawing, and offered less sharp details than the results obtained on highly polished copper plate.<sup>234</sup> Therefore from the earliest beginnings the medium was discussed in contradictory terms, constructing tensions between the fields of art and science. Similar tensions over the value of using specific techniques appeared also in regards to stereoscopic photography. This pair of two small photographs separated by two or three inches gave the illusion of three dimensionality when observed with special glasses and was equally relegated as a 'distraction' and alternatively valued as a tool helping new scientific methods.<sup>235</sup> The doctor and archaeologist



Édouard Loydreau (1820?-1905?) noticed the contradictory appreciation of stereoscopic photography, and stated that most people at that time regarded it as a 'child's toy'. At the same time he argued in favour of its use in the field of archaeology because of its utility in rendering surface relief and its accuracy in reproducing artefacts.<sup>236</sup> Another author advanced that stereoscopic images were useful in archaeology, especially when a subject matter offered only confused masses like ruins.<sup>237</sup> A similar discourse was applied to later autochrome: a coloured photographic technique invented by the brothers Auguste Lumière (1862–1954) and Louis Lumière (1864–1948) in 1904.<sup>238</sup> Autochrome was regarded by geographers to be a fundamental tool for the

<sup>234</sup> The calotype was discovered by William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) in 1840, and patented in 1841. It would be pointless to cite all the references that debated the assumed dichotomy between daguerreotype and calotype. An excerpt of the *Edinburgh Review* published in January 1843 may be cited as a telling example for the author discusses the two techniques while affirming that the: 'Daguerreotype is much more sharp and accurate in its details than a Calotype (...).' *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal* no. CLIV January (1843): 333.

<sup>235</sup> Arden Reed, "Flaubert et la stéréographie française, 1850-1880," *Flaubert Revue Critique et Génétique* (2014), accessed January 14, 2015, <http://flaubert.revues.org/2348>.

<sup>236</sup> Édouard Loydreau, *De la photographie appliquée à l'étude de l'archéologie : notices lues à la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Châlon-sur-Saône, les 26 juin 1856 et 30 juin 1857* (Beaune: imprimerie de Lambert, 1866), 14.

<sup>237</sup> Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie, *Methods & Aims in Archaeology* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1904), 81.

<sup>238</sup> The Autochrome was the product of researches initiated first by Antoine Lumière (1840-1911), father of Auguste and Louis Lumière. It involved the optical mingling of starch grains and three primary colours – blue, green, red – on a sticky glass plate. Despite the Lumière's initial hope to allow reproducibility, the autochrome process only created a unique image measuring generally 9 x 12 centimetres. The viewer could watch an autochrome by placing the glass plate onto a lantern that projected the image. Auguste Lumière and Louis Lumière, *La photographie des couleurs et les plaques autochromes* (Lyon: A. Lumière & ses Fils, 1908); Antoine Lumière, *Notice sur l'emploi des plaques autochromes* (Lyon-Monplaisir: La

Société, circa 1900-11).

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better study of geology and topography among other fields (see Chapter five and the example of Stéphane Passet's autochromes).<sup>239</sup>

In addition to these considerations of techniques, photography was also considered an innovative and unbiased tool crucial for the understanding of phenomena previously imperceptible to the human eye. Called 'the retina of the savant' by the French physician Jules Janseen (1824-1907), photography helped research in astronomy,<sup>240</sup> in understanding motion,<sup>241</sup> and in capturing X-Rays and radiation along with other pioneering discoveries.<sup>242</sup> The existing literature on this topic is multifarious and it is not the intention here to provide a history of this discursive practice. For example, the Director of the photographic service of the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital (Paris), Albert Londe (1858-1917), is one author who has covered this topic rather exhaustively. His *La Photographie moderne* [Modern Photography] published in 1896 integrated a manual clarifying technical aspects with definitions of the categories in which photography can be related to the scientific quest for the invisible. He highlighted the following: documentary photography, metrophotography, military photography, microphotography, judicial photography, medical photography, and astronomical photography. These categorizations exhorted an 'archival rationalization' that attempted to use these images in order to organize scientific knowledge.<sup>243</sup>

These debates took place during a period in which the government started to officially support the use of photography in academic disciplines. The <sup>239</sup> Maurice Bruce Cookson, *Photography for Archaeologists* (London: Parrish, 1954), 106.

<sup>240</sup> André Gunthert, "La rétine du savant," *Études photographiques* May 7 (2000), accessed

January 4, 2015, <http://etudesphotographiques.revues.org/205>. According to written sources,

the American JW Draper, who took in 1840 daguerreotypes of the moon by using the Newton

telescope, took the earliest astronomic pictures. G. Chicandard, *La photographie* (Paris :

Octave Doin et Fils, 1909), 243.

<sup>241</sup> Such as the series of chronophotographs showing animal and human locomotion by the

British-born photographer Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904) in the late 1870s.

<sup>242</sup> Kelley E Wilder, *Photography and Science* (London: Reaktion, 2009), 46.

<sup>243</sup> Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* Volume 39 Winter (1986): 58; Wilder,

*Photography and Science*, 46. Feyler, has also argued in favour of a visual shift through the

production of 'archaeological photography'. Feyler, "Contribution à l'histoire des origines de la

photographie archéologique," 1034.

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Photographic observation became the main vehicle for education from the last decades of the nineteenth century onwards due to a growing 'encyclopedia desire' that expected to surpass the earlier phase of practices maintained by a

small group of the elite.<sup>244</sup> The founding moment in France was perhaps the Ministerial Decree of 1 June 1877 that opened up for the first time photography to state collection while promulgating how: 'the use of photography is allowed in scientific and literature institutions that depends on our department.'<sup>245</sup> Since then, several scientific disciplines – notably archaeology, geography, and anthropology – championed photography as their figurehead method of recording, classifying, and analysing. There is no expectation that the French would have read Chinese sources, still it should be noted that some Chinese texts existed on the topic of photography and academic disciplines. Starting from the last decades of the nineteenth century, the scientific spirit among Chinese literati and the translation and compilation of photography manuals (see the Introduction) prompted a 'scienticizing' conception of photography.<sup>246</sup> Yet it is not until the first half of the twentieth-century that China experienced a burgeoning of publications exploring photography and sciences. An exploration of primary sources revealed that Chinese were particularly interested in how to technically produce a photograph that was suitable for scientific fields like astronomy and natural science. It seems that the recurrence of such texts had a slow start from the 1920s, then grew in the 1930s, and finally flourished in the 1940s. Texts focusing solely on photography and science were frequently translations of Western sources and articles in periodicals, such as Jingwu's *Xueshu: kexue sheying fa* (學術:科學攝影法) which was among the texts that

<sup>244</sup> Edwards, *The camera as historian*, 4-5.

<sup>245</sup> Trutat, *La photographie appliquée à l'archéologie*, 9.

<sup>246</sup> Scientific spirit in late nineteenth-century China is often associated with the 'selfstrengthening' movement (1860s-1890s), which propounded modernization through the formulation 'Chinese learning as essence, Western learning as application.' Huaiyin Li, *Reinventing Modern China : Imagination and Authenticity in Chinese Historical Writing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), 38. The notion of 'scienticizing' conception has been argued by: Yi Gu, "Scientizing Vision in China : Photography, Outdoor Sketching, and the Reinvention of Landscape Perception, 1912-1949" (PhD diss., Brown University, 2009), chapter 3.

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explicitly dealt with the methods and use of photography in scientific fields, notably by identifying the different categories of so-called scientific photography: including aerial photography (*hangkong sheying*, 航空攝影), medical photography (*yixue sheying*, 醫學攝影), and military photography (*junyong sheying*, 軍用攝影).<sup>247</sup>

The meeting of photography and archaeology

Photography was not widespread in archaeological practices until the 1880s.<sup>248</sup> Until then visual recording adopted different forms, including sketches, notes, plans, and rubbings. But drawings and engravings began to face criticism due to their presumed unfaithfulness to reality.<sup>249</sup> In addition,

there was a growing need for archaeology to be distinguished from pure philological studies and this was partly achieved by providing increased support for fieldwork and non-literary evidence, including examinations of landscapes, monuments and excavated items.<sup>250</sup> The medium of photography thus appeared as a potential answer to this methodological crisis as it was viewed as supplying an: 'authentic piece that validates the fact being suggested.'<sup>251</sup> There was a strong belief that photography could restore faithfully, and in detail, the physiognomy and context of any type of material vestige. One example illustrating this position is provided by Loydreau who

<sup>247</sup> Jingwu, "Xue shu: kexue sheying fa," *Haijun zazhi*, [Navy Magazine] Volume 5 no.8 (1933).

<sup>248</sup> There were early attempts, such as Joseph Philibert Girault de Prangey's (1804-1892)

daguerreotypes of the Middle-East shot during Richard Lepsius' expedition between 1839 and

1850, which is argued to be amongst the earliest ones. Joseph Philibert Girault de Prangey's,

*Monuments arabes d'Égypte, de Syrie, d'Asie Mineure* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1846); Feyler,

"Contribution à l'histoire des origines de la photographie archéologique," 1021.

<sup>249</sup> Edwards, "Photography and the Material Performance," 139; 141; 143.

<sup>250</sup> Centuries old interests in the preservation of Chinese antiquities, epigraphy, philology, and religion among others paved the way to nineteenth-century French archaeology in China. The

discourse over the importance of archaeological evidence originated in seventeenth-century

antiquarian thinking, with the French physician Jacob Spon (1647-1685) being one of the

most fervent defender. Eve Gran-Aymeric, *Naissance De L'archéologie Moderne, 1798-1945*

(Paris: CNRS éditions, 1998), 23; 90; Jules Mohl, *Histoire des Etudes Orientales 1840-1854*

(Ganesha Publishing, 2003), 5; Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian*, 19. It has

been argued that the creation of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Saigon in

1900 participated in the development of fieldwork in archaeology. François Pouillon, *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de langue française* (Paris: IISMM, 2008), 350.

<sup>251</sup> Alphonse Davanne, *La photographie appliquée aux sciences, conférence faite a la Sorbonne le 26 Février 1881* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1881), 21.

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criticised the lack of accuracy of sketches made during archaeological expeditions, and instead favoured photography describing it as: '(...) a brush, yet a severe and faithful brush.'<sup>252</sup> Consequently, during the second half of the nineteenth century, photography became the favourite – but not exclusive – recording method for archaeologists. This shift in recording methods stimulated archaeologists to bring cameras with them when conducting fieldwork and over time this proved to offer a more convenient and quicker method for recording information.

In order to generalize and promote the use of photography within archaeological practice, established scholars started to compile manuals which thoroughly explained the practical and methodological aspects of the medium. These were necessary as operating the new mechanical recording tools was not without difficulty for a non-professional who aimed to acquire basic standards. For one specific example, the manual written by the geologist and naturalist Eugène Trutat's (1840-1910) *La photographie appliquée à l'archéologie* [Photography applied to archaeology] included both theoretical and technical aspects concerning how to effectively apply photography to archaeology.<sup>253</sup> Notably Trutat postulated that one of the biggest advantages of using photography was that it offered a 'simple and clear method' that supplied a perfect representation of a place and an all-encompassing view of an area, but simultaneously did not alter any archaeological items. Trutat also suggested essential readings and discussed how the advances in photography offered great advantages for industrial publishing.<sup>254</sup>

<sup>252</sup> Loydreau, *De la photographie appliquée à l'étude de l'archéologie*, 9.

<sup>253</sup> The photographer and chemist Alphonse Davanne (1824-1912) argued that Trutat's study

the most comprehensive publication on the subject. Alphonse Davanne, *La photographie*

*appliquée aux sciences*, 20. In addition to Trutat, the following authors may be cited as

relevant examples: Paul Martellière, "De la photographie comme complément des études

archéologiques," *Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire du Vendômois* Volume 18

(1879): 215-223; Alphonse Bertillon, *Photographie métrique de Alphonse Bertillon: identification judiciaire, anthropologie, archéologie* (Paris: Etablissements Lacour-Berthiot, 1913).

<sup>254</sup> Trutat, *La photographie appliquée à l'archéologie*, 2; 6; 17. For Trutat, the core publications

were: Désiré Charles Emmanuel Van Monckhoven, *Traité général de photographie...* (Paris: A.

Gaudin et frère, 1856); Alphonse Davanne, *Les progrès de la photographie, résumé comprenant les perfectionnements apportés aux divers procédés photographiques pour les*

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Along with the efforts being made to rethink recording methods and the burgeoning of manuals supporting photography, archaeologists started to conceive of landscape in an alternative way. For many archaeologists landscapes became primarily a piece of evidence in the study of ancient civilizations and this meant that the value of photographs lay in their ability to distill archaeological evidence rather than simply providing souvenirs of places visited. Such an elevated status explained why topographical photography started to be discussed under the rubric of scientific practice.<sup>255</sup> But what distinguished a presupposed topographic photograph from another landscape view? According to archaeological principles, an accurate depiction of the physical features of an area involved a punctilious approach. This approach initially manifested through the selection of a distinct subject matter – such as

views of sites, of monuments, of excavations, and depictions of inscriptions and objects.<sup>256</sup> But alongside the subject matter, a set of formal elements tended to also be applied: specialists paid peculiar attention to light and to the variation of angles, including aerial images, general views sharply in focus, frontal shots and close-up views. Finally, the collection of images should involve an abundance of shots so as to develop a better idea of the subject's surroundings and be completed with an accurate and detailed labelling separated from the image .

The photograph showing two pillars in Henan province taken during Chavannes' mission serves as an illustration of this process (Figure 58). Shot frontally and symmetrically, the two pillars stand out from a small cropfield, opening to a larger mountain landscape in the background where we can notice from afar a large gate positioned at the exact centre of the image. The focus on the overall image sharpened each detail, and the size (13 x 18 cm) *épreuves négatives et les épreuves positives* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1877); L. Perrot de

Chaumeux, *Premières leçons de photographie* (Paris : Gauthier-Villars, 1882).

<sup>255</sup> It is said that the French Laussedat established the science of topographical photography

in the 1870s, associating two photographs to determine the accurate measures of a terrain. G.

Chicandard, *La photographie* (Paris : Octave Doin et Fils, 1909), 572. Radau wrote a whole

chapter dedicated to landscapes, whose photographic representations were defined as: 'the

absolutely exact imitation (...) of a large area.' Rodolphe Radau, *La Photographie et ses*

*applications scientifiques* (Paris : Gauthier-Villars, 1878), 40.

<sup>256</sup> The art historian Feyler has advanced these subject matters, which belong to what she

defines as 'archaeological photography'. Feyler, "Contribution à l'histoire des origines de la

photographie archéologique", 1035-38.

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corresponded to a standard format of publishing. Four Chinese people, with their backs turned to us, are present on the left side. The one sitting on the right pillar was hired by Chavannes in order to give a sense of scale.<sup>257</sup> Such elements conformed to what might be called a systematic approach inasmuch as operators followed a set of visual procedures that permitted consideration of a 'landscape as context' while creating a photograph suitable to the field.<sup>258</sup>

Figure 58 - Zhou, Province du Henan. Dengfengxian, les pilliers du Taishi (dynastie des Han postérieurs) [Henan Province, Dengfengxian, Taishi's pillars (Post-Han Dynasty)], 8 août 1907. Gelatin silver print after a glass negative, 13 x 18 cm (AP13100) © MNAAG.<sup>259</sup>

The picture above was part of a vast corpus of material occasioned by a succession of French archaeological expeditions in China that burgeoned

<sup>257</sup> Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, 42.

<sup>258</sup> I have borrowed the concept of 'landscape as context' from Peter J. Ucko and Robert

Layton, *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape: Shaping Your Landscape* (London: Routledge, 1999), 108.

<sup>259</sup> During his trips in China, Chavannes had a Chinese assistant called 'Jo' (Zhou in Chinese), who photographed several places they visited together across China. 154

from the 1890s onwards. These began with Chavannes and his research trips in 1893 and 1907, thanks to which he constituted the first photographic inventory of archaeology in China.<sup>260</sup> Following this, successive expeditions were conducted up until the 1920s. The map below gives insight into the scope of the voyages of Victor Segalen and Augusto Gilbert de Voisins (1909-10), Henri Maspero (1914), Victor Segalen – Augusto Gilbert de Voisins – Jean Lartigue (1914), Victor Segalen (1917), and Jean Lartigue (1921-23). These expeditions explored primarily central and eastern parts of China and each brought back extensive photographic archives, as well as an abundance of antiquities.<sup>261</sup> These specialists belonged to a generation of scholars that was immersed in centuries of Sinological studies as nineteenth century France experienced an intensifying of interest in Sinology. This trend was partly fuelled by the creation of an International Association for the historical, archaeological, linguistic, and ethnographical exploration of Central Asia and the Far East (1899), as well as several chairs in Chinese studies.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>260</sup> During his first expedition in 1893, Chavannes made principally rubbings. Édouard Chavannes, *La sculpture sur pierre en Chine au temps des deux dynasties Han* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1893).

<sup>261</sup> *Missions archéologiques françaises en Chine: photographies et itinéraires, 1907-1923*

(Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2004); François and Segalen, *De la mer de Chine au Tonkin*. The photographs taken during these missions are now held at the Musée Guimet (Paris) and fully available online through the Joconde database.

<sup>262</sup> *Congrès international des orientalistes, Actes du XIIe Congrès international des orientalistes*. Rome. 1899 (Florence: Soc. typogr. florentine, 1901). French Sinology took a

new turn thanks to two watershed moments: the creation of the chair of Chinese and Manchu

Tartar language at the Collège de France (Paris) in 1814, and the teaching of Chinese

language at the École national des Langues Orientale (Paris) in 1843. Zhiming Lin and Siqi

Wei, *Furen daxue di er jie hanxue guoji yantaohui: "Qi yan qu er zhong : hanxue zuowei dui*

*xifang de xin quanshi : faguo de gongxian" lun wen ji* [Actes du colloque : deuxième colloque

international de Sinologie de l'Université Fu Jen le détour et l'accès : la sinologie en tant que

nouvelle herméneutique pour l'Occident : la contribution française] (Taipei: Fuda chubanshe,

2005), 23.

Figure 59 – Itineraries of French archaeological expeditions to China. Colour coding: Chavannes's expedition (1907) is underlined in blue. Segalen and de Voisins (1909-10): red. Maspero (1914): purple. Segalen–de Voisins–Lartigue (1914): yellow. Segalen (1917): brown. Lartigue (1921-23): green. An entrenched method of recording?

As discussed above, based on ideal principles, a photograph shot in an archaeological context should supply tangible information by focusing on the visible, by restoring the environment of the vestige, and by utilizing a depersonalised vision.<sup>263</sup> These principles were thought to produce 'descriptive catalogues as precise as possible'.<sup>264</sup> At first glance, one might agree that photographic archives created during French archaeological expeditions at that time pertained to such a formalized and homogenous vision, perpetuating visual conventions that rendered archives consistent with one another. However, the conventions appear to be more flexible than one might imagine.

Let us consider, for example, one photograph created during the 1914 archaeology and geography expedition led by the ethnologist, doctor, interpret, poet, and operator Victor Segalen (1878-1919). Escorted by de  
<sup>263</sup> The notion of depersonalization of archaeological vision was mentioned in: Bohrer, *Photography and Archaeology*, 25.

<sup>264</sup> Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, 1.  
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Voisins and Lartigue, this mission was in reality more of an exploratory voyage than a strict archaeological mission and was abbreviated due to the outbreak of World War I (1914-18). The point of interest for this thesis purpose however is that within the large photographic archive created in the course of the expedition, some appeared rather unorthodox in terms of their visual aspects. More specifically, there are notable aspects of several depictions gathered in a portfolio of the tomb of the first Emperor of China Qin Shihuang (259-210 B.C.E.) (Figure 60).<sup>265</sup> From a purely factual standpoint, the particular picture under consideration recalls that Segalen was the first to photograph this major tomb hidden under a monumental tumulus, still under excavations today. But from a visual perspective, it is noticeable the extent to which the image concentrated on the abstract dimension of the environment, in which softened outlines and hazy forms almost prevent us from identifying the site. The compelling visual effects of the image have to be associated with Segalen's own poetic account provided when describing the scene.<sup>266</sup> In his field notes he described the tumulus as the following:

Suddenly, at the end of a beautiful path made of yellow earth, Him, the artificial Mount unmasked in its splendid ordonnance. [It is] (...) a noble monument of which the foundation, the symmetric and inward curves, the power of lines and the elegance and the willingness of the double inflexion evoke nothing else but (...) the name of Chéops, builder of the Biggest Pyramid.<sup>267</sup>

<sup>265</sup> See the portfolio composed of thirteen photographs of various sizes: [Recueil. Mission



archéologique, Chine, 1914. Lin-t'ong hien [Lintongxian]] [Image fixe] : [lot de photographies],  
February 1914, Box: EO-298 (2)-BOITE FOL A, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

<sup>266</sup> Segalen's photographs might parallel his narrative practices, imbued with a personal conception of exoticism. The following PhD thesis offers a complete study of Segalen's writings related to China. Gabriel Hourcade, "L'écriture de l'échec: Segalen, l'empereur de Chine et la tentation du mythe [An Account of Failure : Segalen, the Emperor of China and the Temptation of Myth]" (PhD diss., University of California, 2011).

<sup>267</sup> Quoted from Segalen's field notes (feuilles de route) and reproduced in: Missions archéologiques françaises en Chine: photographies et itinéraires, 112. Segalen made the same comparison with Cheops' pyramid in a letter sent to Paul de Cassagnac on 20th

February 1914. Victor Segalen, Stèles, Peintures, Équipée (Paris: Plon, 1970), 602. 157

Figure 60 – Mission Victor Segalen, Augusto Gilbert de Voisins, Jean Lartigue, [Shaanxi] Chin-si. Lin-t'ong hien [Lintongxian], tumulus de Ts'in Che Houang-ti [Qin Shihuangdi] (mort en 210 av. J.-C.), face sud [Lintongxian, tumulus of Qin Shihuangdi (died in 210 BCE) southern side], 1914. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver glass negative, 24 x 30 cm (AP33\_2) © MNAAG.

The straight lines of the soil starting from the foreground and the horizon demarcated a clear T-shaped composition, surmounted by a pyramidal mound with gentle slopes. The mound – or tumulus – stood out the white sky background and elevates from earth. It was clearly the main subject of the photograph. The sharp focus on the foreground allowed the viewer to get a clear view of the soil texture, whereas shapes in the middle and background became gradually hazy as the eyes go through the picture.

A comparable unorthodoxy – if I may call it so – occurred during a later mission independently initiated and led by Jean Lartigue (1886-1940).<sup>268</sup>

<sup>268</sup> Jean Lartigue is not the same person as the better-known amateur photographer Jacques

Henri Lartigue (1894-1986). Any family connection is thus far unconfirmed although some of

the Lartigues were amateur photographers, such as Henri Lartigue father of Jacques Henri.

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Lartigue was a Rear Admiral trained in Chinese language who was originally sent to navigate on the Yangtze River in 1909. While stationed in China in the 1910s, he became a close friend of Segalen and later accompanied him on archaeological expeditions. He hoped to finalize and pay tribute to his recently dead friend with this solitary expedition in 1923. By inspecting Lartigue's picture entitled Chongqing. Zhongbeishatuo, paysage de fleurs [Chongqing. Zhongbeishatuo, landscape with flowers], one might infer two levels of reading (Figure 61). A first and immediate response places the photograph in its

genuine 'social spatial meaning', one that targeted an audience familiar with the visual vocabulary of the field.<sup>269</sup> Accordingly the photograph served as a tool providing proof of discoveries, supporting for instance the presence of particular flora or fauna and topography in China. A second reading however unveils a certain aesthetic attempt. The peculiar attention to framing, the dynamic composition, and playing with the focus/out-of-focus foreground and background, amongst other factors, betrays that the operator had their own agenda. Regardless of which reading is endorsed, these photographs also bring to mind that archaeological expeditions were often staffed by people from differing backgrounds who were expected to be multidisciplinary: pursuing greater knowledge of history, geology, botanic, medicine, customs, and so forth.<sup>270</sup>

On another note, these photographs also reify the problem of identifying the author as most of the images are credited under the umbrella term of the Mission. The concept that records created during such expeditions would not give any primary importance to an author cohered with the practices of the field which were chiefly aimed at providing visual evidence. According to their field notes and letters, it is clear that Segalen and Lartigue manipulated cameras, but at times they also hired local operators to help them. Segalen, for instance, wrote in a letter to his wife that he was 'accompanied by well  
Kevin D. Moore, Jacques Henri Lartigue: The Invention of an Artist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>269</sup> The term 'social spatial meaning' is informed by: Summers, *Real Spaces*, 342.

<sup>270</sup> Numa Broc, "Les grandes missions scientifiques françaises au XIXe siècle (Morée, Algérie, Mexique) et leurs travaux géographiques," *Revue de l'histoire des sciences* Volume 34 no.3-4 (1981): 319.  
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astute Chinese (...) who carried a large 24 x 30 not that bad' for him in order to wander 'in search of decisive [photographic] records'.<sup>271</sup>

Figure 61 – Mission Jean Lartigue, Chongqing. Zhongbeishatuo, paysage de fleurs [Chongqing. Zhongbeishatuo, landscape with flowers], 1923. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver glass negative, 6 x 9 cm (AP14306) © MNAAG.

Some contemporary authors have suggested that scientific approaches to photography were also informed by artistic conceptions.<sup>272</sup> And Trutat himself insisted on the fact that photography even when applied to archaeology

<sup>271</sup> Segalen's letter to his wife on 23 March 1917. Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

Also reproduced in: *Missions archéologiques françaises en Chine*, 16.

<sup>272</sup> Katharina Weiler, "Picturesque Authenticity in Early Archaeological Photography in British

India," in *Archaeologizing" Heritage? Transcultural Entanglements between Local Social*

*Practices and Global Virtual Realities : Proceedings of the 1st International Workshop on*

*Cultural Heritage and the Temples of Angkor*, 2-4 May 2010, Heidelberg University, ed.

Michael S Falser and Monica Juneja (Berlin: Springer, 2013), 6. Abelé argued that scientists and artists collaborated with each other. Christine Abelé, "La photographie de paysage en France au XIXe siècle: des oeuvres et des hommes: 1839-1878" (PhD diss. Université Paris X-Nanterre, 1994), 17.

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remained a 'matter of taste' and that the principles advanced in his book would enable one to 'really obtain artistic results.' However, it was also recognised as important to elude the pitfalls of 'exaggeration' by placing too much emphasis on distortion, contrasts, and projected shadows among other visual effects.<sup>273</sup> Another example can be found in Chavannes' authoritative *La Chine septentrionale* [Northern China], which divided photographic plates into six sections with the sixth being entitled 'Picturesque views'. This term – which has clear pictorial connotations – was used to categorize subject matter related to archaeological discovery, namely the depictions of tombs, rivers, temples, villages, sacred mountains and loess landscapes.

This potential artistic dimension might be linked to the succession of artistic movements in nineteenth-century France that dramatically transformed landscape representations.<sup>274</sup> Landscape was an 'unstable concept' that changed over time and took shape differently depending on the medium.<sup>275</sup> Within these artistic discourses, two assumedly opposing landscape models emerged: the romantic claimed to be more imaginative, versus the realist or topographic accused of being crude and prosaic.<sup>276</sup> Whether or not such aesthetic considerations affected the scientific application of photography, both unquestionably shared a similar aspiration to move towards a 'rational study of landscape'.<sup>277</sup> In addition, the utilization of a certain visual/textual vocabulary closer to aesthetic considerations than to archaeological principles seems to offer support for the idea that photographic practices were permeating across differing genres and methods.

<sup>273</sup> Trutat, *La photographie appliquée à l'archéologie*, 38; 39; 51.

<sup>274</sup> It started with Neoclassicism until the 1830s and its desire for archaeological exactitude and purity of the line, then went to Realism and its attempt to create objective representations of everyday life.

<sup>275</sup> Wendy Ashmore and Arthur Bernard Knapp, *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 1999), 6.

<sup>276</sup> Alfred H. Wall, *Artistic Landscape Photography* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 32; Liz

Wells, *Land matters: landscape photography, culture and identity* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2011),

1.

<sup>277</sup> Albert de Lapparent, "La Science et le Paysage," *Tourista revue pratique de voyages*

October First year no.1 (1903): 174.

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Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how a set of ideas elaborated in nineteenth century academic publications – especially those related to the various branches of science – related to the concomitant production of landscape photographs. I proposed that the representations of monuments of ancient China, maturing from the 1890s onwards, embodied new expressive options in the genre of landscape photography. In order to account for this phenomenon, I first examined landscape photographs of Northern Beijing sites, namely the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall and characterized these views as constituting a transitional body of photographs that originated from the opening of new territories and a fresh awareness of Chinese ancient heritage.

Next I assessed the extent to which such photographs related to scholarly debates on photography and sciences, placing a particular emphasis on archaeology as a core aspect for explaining this new visual approach to landscape. This consideration of the key debates over photography and its role in the natural and social sciences in the late nineteenth century was however not an attempt to assert any univocal definition of scientific or archaeological photography. Instead, it aimed at exploring the extent to which the growth of scientific methods were related to the emergence of an alternative visual grammar found in photographs of archaeological sites. This set of photographs was examined in depth to help delineate a shift in image-making. The trend demonstrates a move away from earlier photoessays, in which photographs tended to be inseparable from personal memories, experiences, and text. It also enabled operators to build exhaustive photographic archives that were aimed at (re)constructing Chinese ancient history while legitimizing one's knowledge. Regardless of whether they were considered professional or amateur, none of the nineteenth-century operators had received any training specifically dedicated to photography.<sup>278</sup> As a result, consulting the existing literature on the medium and self-practice were the only ways to develop an individual's abilities. In that sense, amateurs, professionals, and academic explorers developed their knowledge from the

<sup>278</sup> Abelé, "La photographie de paysage en France au XIXe siècle," 17.

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same type of studies. This conceivably accounts for the fact that even the academic modes of visualization remained open to a variety of visual conventions, including those infused with more aesthetic features. Investigating the flexibility of photographic practices in its visual characteristics, as well as the appropriation of Chinese heritage are central questions that feature in the following chapter.

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Figure 62 - [Chine. Province du Gansu], vue de Touen-Houang [Dunhuang, vue de la vallée, prise de la grotte 16] [China. Province of Gansu, view of Dunhuang, view of the valley taken from the grotto 16]. 1908. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver negative on celluloid roll film, 18 x 24 cm (AP8204; Old number 3) © MNAAG.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR – CREATING HERITAGE: PHOTOGRAPHS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN CHINA HINTERLANDS**

## Introduction

Finalizing the argument of the preceding chapter, in this chapter I will assess the ways that photographs created within archaeological contexts represented new technological and expressive options for depicting Chinese landscape.

The use of photography in campaigns of exploration into hinterland regions in China occurred in Yunnan, Mongolia, and Tibet and yet it is the pictures of sites on the century-old silk roads departing from the Gansu and Xinjiang provinces in North West China that deserve particular attention due to their subsequent widespread diffusion and their ability to stimulate international interactions.<sup>279</sup> Within this broad framework I propose to focus on a particular area that had experienced intense scrutiny, namely the oasis of Dunhuang (敦煌 also spelled Touen-houang in the old French EFEO Romanization system).

This major node on the century-old silk roads attracted a swarm of archaeological expeditions from the 1890s onwards. Amongst them, a French expedition under the guidance of Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) conducted between 1906 and 1908 gave the opportunity to one of its participants – Charles Nouette (1869-1910) – to constitute a comprehensive archive of over fifteen hundred photographs.

To date, Pelliot's expedition has been studied in relation to its historical, archaeological, political, and museological consequences. However, the substantial corpus of photographs it generated remains entirely overlooked.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>279</sup> In accordance with current views, I prefer to use the term silk roads instead of the term

'Silk Road' coined in 1877 by the geographer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833-1905).

There are few reasons why the umbrella term Silk Road is misleading. First the acceptance of

the term started only in the mid-to-late 1930. Second it does not reflect the actual plurality of

roads crossing Eurasia. Third it neglects the fact that goods traded included not only silk but

also spices, metals, and saddles among other goods. Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New*

*History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5-7.

<sup>280</sup> The following is a selection of the latest scholarships on Pelliot. Michel Zink, Jean-Pierre

Drège, Georges-Jean Pinault, Cristina A. Scherrer-Schaub, and Pierre-Étienne Will, Paul

Pelliot: de l'histoire à la légende : colloque international organisé au collège de France et à

l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (palais De L'institut), 2-3 Octobre 2008 (Paris:

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I propose to help to rectify this in the current chapter as Nouette's photographs provide a useful case study for understanding how the production of scientific photography was positioned within landscape photography transformation. Moreover, to what extent did these images interact with local and international cultures? Addressing these questions is intended to help delineate the photograph's visual codes and gauge their

effect in reconstructing China's ancient heritage. As with previous chapters, the methodology of the analysis provided is grounded – principally but not exclusively – within an examination of the visual evidence and the material characteristics of the photographs.<sup>281</sup>

The making of a place: Dunhuang through the lens

Perched on a cliff-side, the viewer's gaze plunges into a valley occupied by a sparse forest of thin trees and a far-off river (Figure 62). The serpentine curves of the cliff sweeping on the lefthand foreground and the valley on the right centre and background meander gently through the distance. The landscape looks arid, burnt by the sun's heat whose rays struck vertically the cliff ridge. The rather uniform greyish tonalities, the powdery texture of the ground, the brittleness of the rock face and the dried trees accentuate the arid quality of this landscape. While the cliffs appear to be pierced by a succession of cavities arranged in layers, the rest of the landscape does not show any man-made dwellings. It seems then that we are in a remote land, distant from any main centres of population.

This image is more than a simple photograph or a mere landscape. It visualizes the first encounter of one of the major Buddhist cave-temple sites in China – the Mogao caves near the town of Dunhuang – with a group of French specialists, operating under the guidance of the scholar Pelliot. Hereafter referred to in sources as the Mission Paul Pelliot, this group (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2013); Paul Pelliot, Jérôme Ghesquière, and

Francis Macouin, *Carnets de route: 1906-1908* (Paris: Indes savantes, 2008); Hartmut

Walravens, *Paul Pelliot (1878-1945): His Life and Works : a Bibliography* (Bloomington, Ind:

Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2001).

<sup>281</sup> This chapter four was presented during a seminar of the Centre d'études sur la Chine

moderne et contemporaine (CECMC) at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales

(EHESS), Paris, March, 1, 2016. The French title was: "(Re)créer l'héritage : la photographie

au service de l'archéologie en Chine (années 1890-1910)".

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travelled across what they termed Chinese Turkestan (modern Xinjiang province) in search of archaeological artefacts with the goal of uncovering the shadow zones of China's past. Ten days after their arrival at the town of Dunhuang (14 February 1908), the team began to properly explore and capture evidence of the newly discovered cave-temple site located in the southeast. The now UNESCO preserved Mogao Caves – also called the Thousand-Buddha Caves (Qianfodong, 千佛洞) – spans over sixteen hundred meters on the Mogao cliff, itself located in the eastern part of the Mingsha mountain (Mingsha shan, 鳴沙山).<sup>282</sup> The complex encompasses nearly five hundred caves built between the fourth and tenth century, inside of which there has been unearthed many rare samples of wall paintings, stucco images, sculptures, and architecture that was venerated when the site was still one of the most important pilgrimage centres.

'No place was more important than Dunhuang.'<sup>283</sup> This somewhat superlative sentence reflects a burst of international interest in this oasis located in Gansu province, and in the larger region of Chinese Turkestan and Central Asia during the transition period between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.<sup>284</sup> This attraction began with the unexpected discovery of a Buddhist manuscript that was purchased by the British Captain Bower in 1889 in Khotan, as well as a similar artefact found during the expedition lead by the French geographer Jules-Léon Dutreuil de Rhins (1846-1894) between 1890 and 1895.<sup>285</sup> Concomitantly, the Russian General Consul of Kashgar called Petrovski began to gather an important

<sup>282</sup> UNESCO has listed the Mogao Caves as World Heritage since 1987. "Mogao Caves", UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed February 19, 2015, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/440/>.

<sup>283</sup> Yajun Mo, "Itineraries for a republic- tourism and travel culture in modern China, 1866-1954" (PhD diss., University of California, 2011), 111.

<sup>284</sup> Chinese Turkestan corresponds to Xinjiang province in Northwest China. Central Asia is generally thought of as a region encompassing Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, which are bounded on the north by Russia and on the south by Iran, Afghanistan, and China.

<sup>285</sup> Jean-Paul Desroches, Emmanuel Starcky, and Catherine Gras, *Âges et visages de l'Asie :*

*un siècle d'exploration à travers les collections du musée Guimet : Dijon, Musée des Beauxarts,*

*juillet-octobre 1996 (Dijon: Le Musée, 1996), 116.*

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collection of terracotta items and manuscripts.<sup>286</sup> A few years later in 1900 the Daoist priest Wang Yuanlu – who settled down at Mogao caves and dedicated his life to the preservation of the caves – randomly unearthed a small side chamber hidden behind a plastered doorway in cave sixteen in Dunhuang while he was clearing of sand from the entrance.<sup>287</sup> This chamber, abandoned for centuries, contained rolled-up scrolls and paintings among a variety of other ancient documents piled-up from the floor to ceiling. Figure 62, presented above, was taken from the entrance of this cave. The fact that the operator stood on the entry of this cave implies a privileged access and echoes the excitement around archaeological discoveries at that time. The information about these discoveries quickly propagated, causing groups of Russian, German, Swedes, Japanese, French, and later Chinese adventurers and archaeologists to flock into the western frontier of China at the edge of the Taklamakan Desert.<sup>288</sup>

Over the past century, the Mission Paul Pelliot has been frequently associated with the figure of its main leader – Pelliot – and notably the picture portraying him deciphering the hidden ancient scrolls in cave sixteen (Figure 63).

Conversely to this trend, I am hoping here to invert the readers' relationship with this photographic archive by giving primacy to the main operator: Nouette. This Frenchman was originally a self-taught photographer who only later became familiar with archaeological methods. Biographical information

regarding Nouette is rather scarce, except from the obituary Pelliot wrote on his memory in 1910. Thanks to this we know that Nouette was originally an electrician and that an illness had prevented him from continuing in this profession. He then dedicated his life to photography and this combined with his scientific knowledge and natural ingenuity attracted the attention of various

<sup>286</sup> Paul Pelliot, Joseph Hackin, and Jacques Bacot, *Bulletin Archéologique Du Musée Guimet*:

*Asie Centrale Et Tibet : Missions Pelliot Et Bacot (documents Exposés Au Musée Guimet)*

(Paris: G. Van Oest, 1921), 5.

<sup>287</sup> Roderick Whitfield, Susan Whitfield, and Neville Agnew, *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History on the Silk Road* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Getty Museum, 2000): 34.

<sup>288</sup> Corinne Debaine-Francfort, *The Search for Ancient China* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 21.

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contemporaries, notably Pelliot. He died in Paris from tuberculosis at the age of forty-one while he was still developing Pelliot's expedition photographs.<sup>289</sup>

Figure 63 – [Chine. Province du Gansu],

Touen-houang

[Dunhuang], grotte

163, niche aux

manuscrits [Paul

Pelliot dans la grotte

des livres] [China,

Province of Gansu,

Dunhuang, grotto

163, niche holding

manuscripts, Paul

Pelliot inside the

library cave], 1908.

Digital photograph

after a gelatin silver

negative on celluloid

roll film, 18 x 24 cm

(AP8186) © MNAAG.

This portrait shows Pelliot crouching and reading ancient scrolls by candle light inside the previously concealed cave sixteen in Dunhuang. Widely diffused in the French press at that time even into the present, it came to serve almost as a metaphor for the whole expedition.

Information concerning the initial encounter between Pelliot and Nouette remains unknown. Primary sources only mention that Pelliot contacted Nouette during an early stage of his preparations for the expedition and asked

<sup>289</sup> Paul Pelliot, "Charles Nouette [Necrologie]," *Toung Pao*, no.2 May Volume XI (1910): 293.

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him to serve as its main operator. Letters exchanged between 1905 and 1906 also revealed that the two men discussed in detail the photographic equipment that would be suitable for the expedition.<sup>290</sup> The particular attention paid to photography from the preparation phase was related to the new methodological emphasis and value ascribed to photography in the archaeological field, which I have discussed in the previous chapter. In the same way that these kind of expeditions were multidisciplinary, Nouette had multiple duties. Pelliot's notebooks describe that amongst other duties he also checked on the workers that excavated the sites, drew schematic plans of grottoes, took some rubbings and managed the bulk of mails to be delivered. Yet his role as the operator of the mission appeared to be his most prominent position, as the group portrait of the three main members of the expedition below shows (Figure 64).

<sup>290</sup> Nouette suggested to bring one 18 x 24 and one 9 x 18, 9 x 12 cameras according to his letter sent to Pelliot on 10 April 1906. Pelliot asked to see the negative plates to purchase.

See letters exchanged between Pelliot and Nouette between 1905 and 1906. Pel Mi. 21.

Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

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Figure 64 – [Chine. Province du Xinjiang, Kuche, de gauche à droite: Louis Vaillant, Paul Pelliot et Charles Nouette] [China. Xinjiang province, Kuche, from left to right: Louis Vaillant, Paul Pelliot, and Charles Nouette], circa 1907. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver print, 13 x 18 cm (J\_V\_01). Paris, Private collection.

Three men wearing captain-like hats sat on folding chairs in front of a rock wall. Vaillant (left) and Pelliot (centre) gazed at the viewer while holding pipes. Nouette (right) was positioned by his photographic material suggesting they were part of his attributes. His materials are arranged at his feet: the camera on the top of its box next to the lens, which in turn is next to the tripod and the dark cloth one should use to cover the head at the rear of the camera. His hands in between his legs and sideway glance give him an almost nonchalant attitude.

Although Nouette was an amateur photographer, his large corpus of images was created within a framework of an established state plan. The well-known Mission Paul Pelliot that took place between 1906 and 1908 originated from a full two years of preparation. Émile Sénart (1847-1928) was the instigator of the project and President of the Comité Français de l'Association Internationale pour l'exploration de l'Asie centrale et de l'Extrême-Orient, which sponsored this archaeological expedition to Chinese Turkestan in

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association with several Sociétés Savantes in Paris.<sup>291</sup> As early as August 1905, the young Langues' O trained Pelliot was appointed the head of the expedition, which raised controversies as he was neither an art historian nor a trained archaeologist in contrast to most of the other French experts leading international expeditions at that time.<sup>292</sup> Pelliot was originally more specialised in philology and linguistics. Still his relative inexperience in the field was compensated for by his mastery of Mandarin, which helped him significantly in acquiring valuable items and accessing important places in China. In addition

to Pelliot and Nouette, there was also Louis Vaillant (1874-?), a doctor of the French Colonial Army who was placed in charge of surveying Chinese topography, astronomy, and natural history. More members joined in situ: the Chinese Ting, Sven Hedin's former tailor Ali Akhoun, and the two Cossacks Iliazov and Bokov.<sup>293</sup>

With the nomination of the core members completed, it remained for the expedition route to be planned. An examination of Pelliot's notebooks and Nouette's photographs helps to delineate the general itinerary. The team departed from Paris (June 1906) and headed for Tashkent (the capital of Uzbekistan) via Moscow (September), then continued in Xinjiang (October 1907), crossed Gansu province (February 1908), and headed back to Beijing via Shaanxi and Henan provinces, while at some point navigating through the Yangtze river towards Shanghai.<sup>294</sup> A great number of places were explored and photographed on the expedition but even still Dunhuang represented one of the major targets within the whole itinerary alongside the oases of Tumchuq, Kutcha, and Dunhuang, at least according to Pelliot's views.<sup>295</sup>

<sup>291</sup> Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, Volume 5 (1905): 511.

<sup>292</sup> Pelliot's experience started few years before in 1899 in Hanoi when he had been appointed head of an archaeological mission by the École Française d'Extrême-Orient

(EFEO). Zink et al., Paul Pelliot: de l'histoire à la légende, 53.

<sup>293</sup> See photo AP7228. Musée Guimet, archives photographiques.

<sup>294</sup> The photographic archive encompasses views along the Yangtze river up to Shanghai.

Pelliot declared that once the work finished in Dunhuang, the team headed for Shanghai were

his companions sent all the documents back to France by the end of 1908. Paul Pelliot, "Trois

ans dans la Haute Asie," L'illustration 12 March (1910): 266.

<sup>295</sup> The old EFEO transcription write these names as the following: Toumchouq, Koutchar,

Touen-Houang. Paul Pelliot, "Rapport de M. Paul Pelliot sur sa mission au Turkestan chinois

(1906-1909)" Académie des inscriptions & Belles-Lettres – Comptes rendus des séances de

l'année 1910 (1910): 58-68.

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Figure 65 - Map of the Pelliot's expedition 1906-1908, printed in 1909 © Société Asiatique.<sup>296</sup>

Visual methods: from photo-essay to photographic survey

Having now highlighted the figure of Nouette and clarified the framework within which he practiced photography, I shall now probe in greater depth the methodology he employed in his shooting procedures. The photographs constituting this archive materialize a specific visual methodology. Equivocal by nature, this methodology was embedded in the burgeoning world of exploratory expeditions conducted under the auspices of developing knowledge for the human or natural sciences.

If we return to the Figure 62 portraying the valley as seen from cave sixteen, one may ponder the extent to which such an image commits to a supposed scientific quality while simultaneously potentially displacing it. To

elaborate, on the one hand it exploited the kind of formalized vision advocated for in contemporary publications on archaeology as discussed in the previous chapter. The operator found a suitable spot that allowed a somewhat panoptic approach, and this resulted in collecting an image that provided an all-encompassing view of the valley. Furthermore, the ladder in the centre ground

and the trees on the right side provide a sense of proportion and give further

<sup>296</sup> Source: "Paul Pelliot", Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, accessed 20 February

2015, <http://www.aibl.fr/societe-asiatique/histoire/membres-illustres-de-la-societe/article/pelliot>

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information about local flora and topography. The vivid and oblique sunlight causes shadows to be projected and this was one of the standard lighting requirements recommended to strengthen a three-dimensional effect and render more accurately the volume and sharp details.<sup>297</sup> In totality, all these visual elements appear to be in accordance with contemporary recording methods and the way that photography was conceived in archaeology. However, on the other hand, the archaeological element of the image was subtly imbedded within a somewhat unessential formal quality. Although the spot chosen offers a rather unobstructed view of the general landscape, such a high-angle shot significantly accentuates the linear perspective and thus gives prominence to the sinuous lines of the cliff edges and soil meanders. By doing so it prevents the production of a strictly frontal prospect of the topography and nearly effaces the archaeological content. The rather unusual diagonal composition, high contrasts, and focus also seem to be less concentrated in portraying the caves along the cliff than in presenting a multiplicity of textures. In addition, the sky is sprinkled with white clouds which appears to be at odds with usual scientific records of that time, in which the sky usually remains white or blank. The conjunction of Chinese climatic conditions (strong sunlight) and technological limitations (average time exposure evading the rendering of subtle shapes such as clouds) were two factors that made it difficult to capture meteorological effects in the atmosphere. Consequently, it was a frequent occurrence at that time that operators would retouch photograph by adding white or dark highlights. Yet it is not clear that such retouching has taken place on this negative; moreover, there are a few other examples from the same archive that represent clouds in the sky. Whether or not there has been retouching, the clouds in the sky balanced the composition of the overall landscape, mingling a sense of verisimilitude with a painterly quality.

Last but not least, the utilization of celluloid film instead of the usually recommended glass plate permitted the production of a negative with smooth textures, even tones and less acute details. This appears at odds with publications of the period which advise operators in an archaeological context

<sup>297</sup> Trutat, *La photographie appliquée à l'archéologie*, 41.

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to use gelatin dry plate on glass support. Glass support was characterized by sharp and detailed negative images, and subsequently detailed positive prints with structureless film, fine grain, and clear whites. In this sense, the adoption of such formal and technical elements had the propensity to conjure up a paradox, in which the archaeological eye meet the idea of the picturesque.

Technical aspects constitute another key element in visual methods in that, by using silver gelatin process, Nouette positioned his photographs within new photography developments. Throughout the expedition Nouette manipulated several photographic supports and formats. For the majority of images he used gelatin silver negatives on glass. Yet it seems that once the team arrived in Xinjiang onwards – in other words one year after the beginning of the mission – he also used gelatin silver negatives on celluloid film in combination.<sup>298</sup> Gelatin silver plate, or dry plate, was a newly invented technique that had superseded the previous wet collodion by the 1880s. It was championed in the field of archaeology owing to the image stability despite the fragile nature of the glass.<sup>299</sup> The silver gelatin process dramatically simplified photographic practice for it permitted exposure time to go from seconds to fractions of a second. Thus, ‘instant photography’ was finally made possible.<sup>300</sup> In Dunhuang Nouette would make use of both of these photographic supports, although there is a significant amount of negatives collected using film, that notably depicted walls decoration inside the grottoes. In fact, between their arrival on 14 February 1908 and their departure on 8 June 1908, the team created a consequential set of over four hundred photographs, exhausting almost the entire stock as indicated by Pelliot’s letter dating from 30th April 1908:

<sup>298</sup> Amongst the 1530 negatives held currently at the Musée Guimet archives, 1027 are glass

plates, 461 are celluloid film, and 35 are prints on paper.

<sup>299</sup> Richard Leach Maddox was the first to successfully make a gelatin dry plate negative in

1871. The process underwent many improvements by a variety of people before it was

commercially viable in 1879. "Gelatin Dry Plate," Graphic Atlas, accessed November 7, 2015,

[http://www.graphicsatlas.org/identification/?process\\_id=303](http://www.graphicsatlas.org/identification/?process_id=303)

<sup>300</sup> Lavédrine, Gandolfo, and Monod, (Re)connaître et conserver les photographies anciennes, 254.

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As for the plates we are running out of provision; We are bringing back from Ts’ien-fo-tong around 430 photographs [measuring] 18/24 and a fair number of 9/12, the latter mainly depicting small inscriptions; for the rest of the journey, we will only have left a hundred or so of 9/12 and two dozens of 18/24 (...).<sup>301</sup>

Why do these technical aspects matter? And how do they relate to the general study of landscape photography? The answer is that they reveal how photographic techniques could be an agency moulding the practices, functions, and formal aspects of the image. The substantial diminution of stock of glass plates might have been one of the reasons why Nouette employed celluloid film at times, but this currently remains unsubstantiated. More importantly, the size of a negative tells us about its function, insofar as formats ranging from 13 x 18 centimetres and above were usually meant for publication, whereas those smaller than this remained as visual records illustrating the journey.<sup>302</sup> Overall, Nouette alternated with various sizes of negatives depending on the subject matter. For instance, wall inscriptions

tended to be framed in a panoramic view and more casual scenes would be shot in square frame or in a stereoscopic paired set of separate images. Alternatively, full glass plates were preferentially employed for individual and group portraits or landscapes.<sup>303</sup>

The changes in negative sizes also imply that Nouette possessed several cameras. The presence of stereographs and panoramic negatives of similar size suggested the manipulation of a panoramic-stereoscopic camera as such an apparatus was able to generate both stereoscopies and

<sup>301</sup> Pelliot et al., *Carnets de route*, 417. While it is true that Nouette mostly used either the

format 9 x 12 or 18 x 24 centimetres for his negatives, Dunhuang photographs were also shot

by using the larger 24 x 30 centimetres format.

<sup>302</sup> Londe explained that if photographs had to be published, their negatives should not

measure less than 9 x 12 centimetres, 13 x 18 centimetres being a better option.

Londe, *La*

*photographie moderne*, 551.

<sup>303</sup> Based on the internal document held at Musée Guimet that lists all the photographs

contained in the archive, Nouette alternated with the following negative sizes. For glass

plates: 8,8 x 8,9 cm (square format); 8,9 x 17,8cm (panoramic view); 9x12 cm (quarter plate);

13 x 13,2 (square format); 13 x 18 cm (half plate); 18 x 24 cm (full plate); 24 x 30 cm (one of

the larger formats possible at that time with 30 x 40 cm). For film: 8,5x17 cm (standard format

for stereographs); 8,7 x 17,2 cm or 8,8 x 17,4 cm (panoramic view); 18 x 24 cm; 24 x 30 cm.

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panoramas. Nouette may have made use of a device like the Leroy stereopanoramic camera, manufactured in France around 1905, a combination

camera with paired lenses, or alternatively with the panoramic stereoscopic model of Jules Dames' cyclographe in use since the 1890s (Figure 66).<sup>304</sup>

However, the other negative sizes suggest the use of at least one more largeformat camera, functioning usually with glass plates. Nouette probably added

a roll film holder at the back of the chamber that would allow him to use roll film when needed. There were traces of such a device in France at that time,

as Nadar had imported a roll film holder produced by the American George Eastman (1854-1932), founder of the Kodak Company in collaboration with

William Walker (1846-1917) (Figure 67). This revealed that Nouette, like other operators in similar expeditions, was making use of all the existing

photographic techniques for the sake of producing a visual record that was as exhaustive as possible.

Figure 66 – The type of apparatus Nouette might have used during the

expedition in China. Left: a French panoramic-stereo camera, unknown brand.

Right: Leroy stereo-panoramic camera.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>304</sup> Jules Dames' cyclographe is discussed in: Maarten Vanvolsem, *The Art of Strip Photography: Making Still Images with a Moving Camera* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven

University Press, 2011), 87.

<sup>305</sup> Source: The image of the French panoramic-stereo camera (left) was found in: Kyle

Husfloen, Bryan Ginns, and Page Ginns, *Antique Trader Cameras and Photographica Price*

Guide (Iola, WI: Krause Pub, 2004), 34.

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Figure 67 – The type of apparatus Nouette might have used during the expedition in China. Several illustrations of the Eastman-Walker a roll film holder © Collection Ruud Hoff NL.306 Last image on bottom right: Collection Stéphane Muratet.

An attention to techniques also reveals that the practices employed in exploratory contexts were by no means simple, and that this was likely exacerbated by the extreme climactic changes and temperatures found in

<sup>306</sup> Sources of pictures from top to bottom and left to right. *How to Make Photographs: With a*

*Descriptive Catalogue of Cameras, Lenses, Tripods, Plate-Holders, Printing-Frames, Plates,*

*Trays, Chemicals, Etc. and All Requisites of the Amateur Photographer* (New York: The Scovill

& Adams Company, 1890), 69; *Illustrated Catalogue of Amateur Photographic Equipments*

and Materials (New York: E.&H.T. Anthony & Co., 1887), 66; “95. Kodak. Eastman Walker

Film roll holder,” Catawiki Auction, accessed March 31, 2016,

<http://auction.catawiki.com/kavels/1375165-kodak-eastman-walker-film-roll-holder>.

Last image

showing the names of Nadar and Eastman: author’s picture from a private collection.

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China. Additionally, most archaeologists had been encouraged to continue using large-format camera accompanied by their necessary bulky materials, even though by around the 1880s-90s hand operated cameras had already made their way to China and made the practice of photography substantially easier since they reduced exponentially the quantity of material to transport, (Figure 68).<sup>307</sup>

Figure 68 – [Sichuan] Sseutch'ouan.

Mien tcheou

[Mianzhou], piliers de P'ing Yang

[Pingyang], photographie de la face antérieure du pilier de droite.

[Sichuan, Mianzhou, pillars of Pingyang, photograph of the anterior side of the right pillar]

1914. Archives mention both gelatin silver negative on glass plate and gelatin silver negative on celluloid roll film, 18 x 13 cm (AP332\_5) © MNAAG.

In this picture, Segalen is taking a photograph during his mission

alongside de Voisins and Lartigue planned in 1914. Segalen is manipulating a large camera that used the gelatin dry plate technique (with either glass plate or roll film negatives). This image highlights the rather cumbersome equipment that inevitably complicated shooting sessions.

Outdoor photographic activities in China involved countless risks of damage. Even though a dry glass plate or film could be preserved for months before being utilized, some of them showed cracks on the glass surface (Figure 69), peeling-off gelatin (Figure 70), or sometimes mould dots on paper supports<sup>307</sup> Petrie, *Methods & Aims in Archaeology*, 73.

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(Figure 71). Such alterations were inevitable due to the complex storage requirements for negatives that required a particular temperature and relative humidity. Another example of these damage risks is provided by the autochromes Nouette was supposed to create.<sup>308</sup> Despite their absence in the present day photographic archive in the Musée Guimet, we also know that letters and purchase orders confirmed that autochromes plates were sent to the team while already in China.<sup>309</sup> We also know that Pelliot highly valued coloured photographs as he states in one of his letters written in Dunhuang in 30 April 1908:

We developed some photographs that depict murals in this grotto, but in the end Nouette coloured them with watercolours, hence they gained value for us by becoming authentic documents that I do not dare to show to either Chinese or Russian authorities (...).<sup>310</sup>

Autochromes plates have been ordered from Lumières & Fils in 1908 and were supposed to depart from the southern port of Marseille in June of the same year.<sup>311</sup> However letters exchanged between Pelliot and the company divulged difficulties that might have helped prevent them from surviving to today: these include, the general instability of the process, production in small quantities that was unsuitable to the amount required by the mission and the risk of damage because of China's climate.<sup>312</sup> Later attempts would succeed to utilize autochrome in China, as I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter five.

<sup>308</sup> As a reminder: an autochrome is a coloured slide on a glass plate industrialized from 1907 onwards.

<sup>309</sup> Letters from the Société Anonyme des Plaques et Papiers Photographiques A. Lumière & ses Fils sent on 10 April and 22 April 1908 from Lyon. Pel Mi 67. Paris, Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque. Exchanges with the Lumière Company started as early as

January 1906. See letters. Pel Mi 21. Paris, Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

<sup>310</sup> Pelliot's quote reproduced in: Pelliot et al., *Carnets de route*, 418.

<sup>311</sup> Memorandum sent to Pelliot on 19 June 1908. Pel Mi 67. Paris, Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

<sup>312</sup> Letter sent by A. Lumière & ses Fils to Nouette and Pelliot respectively on 3 February and 5 April 1906. Pel Mi. 21. Pel Mi 67. Paris, Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque. 180

Figure 69 – (Top left) [Chine. Province du Xinjiang, entre Kashi et Tumushuke], Ördeklik, départ d'un mandarin [China, Xinjiang province, between Kashi and Tumushuke, Ördeklik, departure of a mandarin], 1906. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver negative on glass plate, 09 x 12 cm (AP8295)

Figure 70 – (Top right) [Kirghizistan]. Kourtoug Ata, vue de la vallée [Kyrgyzstan, Kourtoug Ata, view of the valley], 1906. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver negative on glass plate, 09 x 12 cm (AP8253)

Figure 71 – (Bottom) [Chine. Province du Xinjiang, région de] Turfan [Tulufan], Kara Kodja, stûpa [China, Xinjiang province, Turfan region, Kara Kodja, stupa], circa 1907-08. Digital photograph after a gelatin silver print on paper, 8,5 x 17,2 cm (AP7627\_1)

© MNAAG.

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Following this analysis of the methodical shooting process, I would like now to address how Nouette reconstructed the geography of the site by utilizing an all-encompassing framing. A visual examination of this body of photographs as a whole unveils a tendency to go back and forth, outside and inside the grottoes. Since this research stresses landscape representation, I am not concerned with representations of caves' interior, murals, sculptures, and wall inscriptions, which admittedly constitute the majority of photographs.<sup>313</sup> Having said that, exterior landscapes were not given lesser importance. Rather they were actually presented as visual documents of the utmost importance during their diffusion (a topic I will address in greater detail in the following section). In terms of visual aspects per se, exterior photographs aimed at reconstructing the general topography. The photographs originally numbered one to seven – as printed in the official publication – offered a coherent and far-reaching overall view of the Mogao caves. They are first portrayed within their environment, behind the Daquan River (Daquan he, 大泉河) that faced the caves. The river's large branch is portrayed from South West and North West, expanding on a large diagonal of the composition that underlined details of the soil formation on the riverbank (Figure 72 to 73). Then two shots on the other side of the riverbank depicted the river viewed from the caves, with a particular emphasis on the trees growing sporadically at the bottom of the cliff (Figures 74 to 75).

<sup>313</sup> The archive also includes some ethnographical portraits of locals, typically shot in full face

and profile. See for instance photograph number AP12571\_(29).

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From top to bottom and left to right:

Figure 72 - [Chine. Province du Gansu], Touen-houang [Dunhuang], ensemble Sud-Ouest du Ts'ien-fo-tong [Qianfodong] pris du Nord-Ouest [China, Gansu province, Dunhuang, general view of the South-West of



Qianfodong taken from North-West side] (AP8202; Old number 1)

Figure 73 - [Chine. Province du Gansu], Touen-houang [Dunhuang], ensemble Nord-Ouest du Ts'ien-fo-tong [Qianfodong] pris de l'Est [China, Gansu province, Dunhuang, general view of the North-West of Qianfodong taken from East side] (AP8203; Old number 2)

Figure 74 - [Chine. Province du Gansu], vue de Touen-Houang [Dunhuang, vue de la vallée, prise de la grotte 16] [China. Province of Gansu, view of Dunhuang, view of the valley taken from the grotto 16] (AP8204; Old number 3)

Figure 75 - [Chine. Province du Gansu], vue de Touen-Houang [Dunhuang, vue de la vallée, prise de la grotte 16] [China. Province of Gansu, view of Dunhuang, view of the valley taken from the grotto 16] (AP8205; Old number 4)

1908. Digital photograph after gelatin silver negative on celluloid roll film, 18 x 24 cm © MNAAG.

The trees located nearby the river were described by Charles-Eudes Bonin (1865-1929) – a French diplomat and explorer – who was sent on a mission to explore Central Asia and Dunhuang a few years earlier (1899-1900). In his report to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, he described his first impressions of the site as the following:

The first effect is particularly singular (...). In the riverbed are bathing trees that are now centennial and 183

respected by lumberjacks' axes; they compose a real sacred wood, shadowing and partly hiding the grottoes' façade.<sup>314</sup>

Recognising a parallel between Bonin's description and Nouette's photographs help us to grasp the shift from the previous rhetorical exercise of ekphrasis to the systematic photographic survey approach that almost replaced written interpretation.

The following photographs as listed in the original archive depicted the rare man-made constructions lodged within the cliff, by focusing on the architecture of the grottoes' entrance and the wooden balustrades linking them (Figures 76 to 77). The image numbered seven presented a collage of three photographs, two capturing the Daquan River in a frozen state and one depicting the temple where the team were accommodated (Figure 78). Similar depictions of the grottoes' entrance comprise the rest of the archive, while others present views of the Moon Crescent lake, the other accommodation where the team stayed in Dunhuang, landscapes of surroundings (for instance the roads leading to the cities of Hami in Xinjiang or Shazhou in Gansu), and also street views of popular ceremonies (Moon Festival, Buddha's Festival, equestrian games). The consistent and persistent need to capture the succession of explored/excavated locations through various angles – from surroundings to details, details to surrounding – connected with new methodologies championed by the archaeological field. Such consistency triggered a particular visual pattern offering a somewhat systematic and clinical approach, which identified and characterized Dunhuang territory.

<sup>314</sup> Charles-Eudes Bonin, "Les grottes des Mille Bouddhas," *Comptes rendus des séances de*

*l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* no.2 (1901): 212.

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Figure 76 – (Left) [Chine. Province du Gansu], Touen-houang [Dunhuang], vue extérieure des grottes 1 à 40 [China, Gansu province, Dunhuang, exterior view of grottoes 1 to 40] (AP8206; Old number 5)

Figure 77 – (Right) [Chine. Province du Gansu], Touen-houang [Dunhuang], vue extérieure des grottes 76 à 80 [China, Gansu province, Dunhuang, exterior view of grottoes 76 to 80] (AP8207; Old number 6)

Figure 78 - [Chine. Province du Gansu], Touen-houang [Dunhuang, de gauche à droite] la rivière du Ts'ien-fo-tong [Qianfodong] gelée, la rivière dégelée, le Ts'ien-fo-tong à hauteur du temple où nous logions [China, Gansu province, Dunhuang, from left to right, the frozen river in Qianfodong, the river unfrozen, temple where we accommodated in Qianfodong] (AP8208; Old number 7)

1908. Digital photograph after gelatin silver negative on celluloid roll film, 18 x 24 cm © MNAAG.

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Another important element of the methodical shooting process is the labelling system. The placement of written information accompanying the photograph is fundamental. In Section I, I have already examined how often the cardboard of album leaves constituted a space where operators could make a statement. However, the establishment of academic methods at the turn of the twentieth century resulted an alternative system that replaced long descriptive captions with a series of numbers and letters.<sup>315</sup> As an example, the labels inside the album composed by the commander and explorer Henry de Bouillane de Lacoste (1867-1937) differed from Nouette's. Originally sent as an intelligence officer to Tonkin in the late 1890s, this later enabled him to explore several areas in Central Asia including Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan. Lacoste's handwritten descriptions provided at the bottom of each picture and the album format he made use of appears reminiscent of late nineteenth-century production of souvenir image I have discussed in Section I (Figure 79). Yet from another perspective, Nouette's pictures can be regarded as having no label. They were of course identified and precisely recorded in Pelliot's notebooks; and the same notebooks also notified how Pelliot advised Nouette in which topics to photograph.<sup>316</sup> This did not mean that photographs produced in scientific contexts did not leave space for any mounting or framing. In most cases, the photographs' purpose was to be ultimately published so that the outcomes of the expedition can be shared to an educated audience, which by the same token legitimized the investment. Still labels in Nouette's archive remained separated from the picture surface, granting the surface to become the most important and relevant information.

<sup>315</sup> One notebook held at the Guimet Library contains an exhaustive list of photographs'

numbers, location, and size. Box Pel. Mi 12 et 13, "Carnet Pelliot, Liste de courier, Liste des

clichés", Paris, Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

<sup>316</sup> Zink et al., Paul Pelliot: de l'histoire à la légende, 537.

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Figure 79 - Henry de Bouillane de Lacoste, Tortue de granit près d'Erden Dzou [Turtle made of granite near Erden Dzou], 1909. Photographic print, from the Album Mission dans la Mongolie du Nord Ouest © MNAAG.

In sum, the making of Dunhuang through the lens of Nouette unveiled decisive features that counteracted previous tendencies to fix souvenir and to attest one's visit to a place. Of course photographs shot in an archaeological context were also mnemonic in nature but something changed. What elements tell us that the genre of landscape photography evolved? First, the scale dramatically enlarged; in what is termed sometimes as a 'quantitative archive revolution'.<sup>317</sup> Second, the visual methods championed by academic disciplines triggered the utilization of specific procedures and encompassing framings. This ideal of a systematic gaze – which appears to have remained somewhat open to aesthetic effects – promised control and the ability to organise large-scale photographic archives, permitting a formal consistency to be maintained. Third, labels were changed to solely provide facts rather than subjective statements and thus the previous practice of writing onto the image was generally avoided. Finally, the creation of photographic repositories henceforth consciously elaborated the idea of heritage, transforming the perception of a given place and helping to turn previously unknown landscapes into heritage sites.

<sup>317</sup> According to the historian Pierre Nora, since the memory of these places had not been experienced internally, it had to be compensated by a large-scale external form, a sort of outer memory. Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux De Mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), xxvi. 187

A world heritage site at stake

Thus far I have proposed that the making of Dunhuang came into effect through the medium of photography. But one of the reasons why photographs became agents reconstructing what was inherited from China's past is because they acted within a particular global context. In fact, this period starting from the 1890s corresponded to the moment when archaeological heritage became increasingly conceptualized and memorialized in China. What then was at stake in exploring and visualizing this North Western region?

It is first worth recognising that the region was still under construction; what was called Chinese Turkestan thus experienced dramatic political and military turmoil at that time. For instance, in 1864 the Muslim Rebellion broke out, dividing the region and leading to the establishment of a short-lived independent Muslim regime, which was later crushed by Qing armies and transformed in 1884 into the autonomous region called Xinjiang (literally New Territory).<sup>318</sup> Although nominally under the stranglehold of Qing authority, this region was still marked by the presence of multiple ethnicities, notably by the majority Uyghur population. Following this in the 1890s, the French attempted to expand their authority, notably in the economic sphere on Central Asia in collaboration with Russia, however German, Russian, and British powers retained a substantial stranglehold on this region.<sup>319</sup> The rivalry between Russian and British powers over this region is often referred to as the Great Game and relates to the efforts made by both countries to expand their territories in search of mineral potentials and political hegemony, two strong driving forces.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>318</sup> For an in-depth study on the Muslim Rebellion in this region, see: Ho-dong Kim, *Holy War*

in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877 (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2004).

<sup>319</sup> Svetlana Gorshenina, *Explorateurs en Asie centrale: voyageurs et aventuriers de Marco Polo à Ella Maillart* (Genève: Éditions Olizane, 2003), 66.

<sup>320</sup> Sergueï Dmitriev, "Archéologie du Grand Jeu : une brève histoire de L'Asie centrale," in *Le Grand Jeu: XIXe siècle, les enjeux géopolitiques de l'Asie Centrale*, ed. Jacques Piatigorsky and Jacques Sapir (Paris: Autrement, 2009): 71-72; Frances Wood, *The Silk Road: Two*

*Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia* (London: British Library, 2003), 147. 188

In face of this intense local and international rivalry, expeditions conducted under the umbrella term of science were a useful pretext for entering and scrutinizing various strategic landscapes, such as Dunhuang.<sup>321</sup> Interestingly, regardless of their variable nature, most of these expeditions shared similar aspirations of unravelling the Chinese past and making it relevant to the present era by preserving and disseminating it through a large corpus of photographs. Pelliot's team was not the first to explore Dunhuang and the borders of China, nor was it the last. For instance, one person repeatedly referenced in Pelliot's notebooks was the Hungarian-British archaeologist Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943), who led four expeditions between 1900 and 1930 to the Tarim Basin. Stein left behind him an archive of over five thousand photographs, now mostly held by the British Library in London.

There were also a few earlier attempts to explore the larger North Western region. For instance, Bonvalot led several missions between the 1880s-90s with d'Orléans and another one with the photographer Jean Guillaume Capus (1857-1931). The mission with Capus between 1880 and 1882 was commissioned by the ministère de l'Instruction publique.<sup>322</sup> Around the same time Dutreuil de Rhins led a scientific expedition across Khotan (modern Hotan in Xinjiang province), Tibet, and Mongolia between 1890 and 1895. This expedition was subsidized by the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres<sup>323</sup> and primary sources, notably illustrated periodicals, indicate that Fernand Grenard (1866-1942) – who assisted him during the mission by inquiring into archaeological matters – produced the photographs.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>321</sup> Richard Vinograd, "Strategic Landscapes," in *Ershi Shiji Shanshuihua Yanjiu Wenji* [Studies on twentieth Century Shanshuihua] (Shanghai shi: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2006), 293.

<sup>322</sup> Twenty of so surviving photographs taken by Capus across Central Asia, including Chinese

Turkestan are now at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Ref: SG WD- 74). For an account

of the genesis of the exploration of Western regions by French, see: Sheng Geng, "Boxihe

Xiyu Dunhuang tanxian yu Faguo de Dunhuang xueyanjiu," in *Faguo Dunhuang Xue Jing Cui*

[Essence of France Dunhuang Studies], ed. Binglin Zheng (Lanzhou Shi: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2011), 1-53.

<sup>323</sup> J-L Dutreuil de Rhins, *Mission scientifique dans la Haute Asie 1890-1895* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1897).

<sup>324</sup> The Académie gave him a grant of 15.000 francs (equivalent of 42.500 euros) on 16 May 1890. Serre Jacques, "La mission de Dutreuil de Rhins en Haute-Asie (1891-1894)," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 152e année no.3 (2008): 1268-1269; Fernand Grenard, "La dernière mission Dutreuil de Rhins, de Paris à Pékin," *Le tour du monde* (1896): 313-360.

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Yet, the most fruitful expeditions in terms of discovery and photographic archives all occurred during the turn of the twentieth century. To provide a few examples from an international perspective, the German Albert Grünwedel led the first German expedition to Turpan in Xinjiang in 1902-03 and at the same time, the Japanese Ôtani completed excavations in the region during 1902-03. These efforts were followed soon after by the German Albert von Le Coq in 1904-05, and the American Ellsworth Huntington in 1905. Later in the 1920s-30s there were also a number of notable expeditions including efforts made by the American archaeologist and art historian Langdon Warner who arrived at the Mogao Caves in 1924, and the Swedish expedition's discovery of the Xiaohé Tomb complex in Lop Nur led by Folke Bergman (1930s). Although the majority of these expeditions were sponsored or commissioned by state institutions; orientalists, connoisseurs, and even companies also undertook initiatives to explore these areas, often by joining forces with established scholars. A renowned example is the extensive photographic archive left by the Mission Citroën also called *La Croisière Jaune* (1931-1932), which was assisted by the archaeologist and director of Musée Guimet, Joseph Hackin (1886-1941), with forty other members participating in the mission. Organised by the French car company André Citroën, the mission aimed to drive across the Asian continent by separating into two groups – one moving from East to West departing from Tianjin, another moving from West to East departing from Beirut – so as to eventually meet in Xinjiang. While this mission served obvious advertising purposes, the French and British governments also supported it. Additionally, a significant photographic archive composed of over nine hundred photographs was created during the mission and images and developments throughout the mission were disseminated through a diverse range of media. So in summary, we can see that from the 1890s onwards, a multitude of international and local enterprises explored this North Western zone of China while producing significant photographic repositories. And in doing so, they also progressively increased the reputation and popular preoccupation with the region of Northwest China.

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The goals of such 'archive fever', to use the philosopher Jacques Derrida's

term, was rarely devoid of hidden agendas.<sup>325</sup> Exploring this region was not only focused on understanding Chinese heritage, but for the most part in appropriating it. If Pelliot received the financial support of various institutions, such as the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles-Lettres, the ministère de l'Instruction publique, the Comité pour l'exploration de l'Asie Centrale, and the Comité de l'Asie Française, it was also because it was anticipated that the expedition would enrich appreciably French museums collections. It is not surprising then to realize that Pelliot, Dutreuil de Rhins, and Hackin were the three main expeditions led in Central Asia and Chinese Turkestan that enabled the Musée Guimet to constitute its existent collection. It is well established that Pelliot, Stein, and others bought an extensive quantity of archaeological items (mostly rare manuscripts and paintings) for low prices. Pelliot attempted to maintain on-going relationships with locals throughout his journey. Hence he kept various local people up-to-date with his discoveries by sending letters and photographs. Most importantly, at the end of the expedition he headed for Beijing in order to share the mission's discoveries with local scholars. By sharing his findings, Pelliot was among those who triggered a sudden burst of protection concerns over archaeological artefacts in Chinese academic circles as, from that moment onwards, Beijing authorities immediately instructed the locality to stop any further sales to foreigners and to close the caves.<sup>326</sup>

It was difficult at that time for Chinese to gain access to foreigners' findings, since objects were sent abroad and published in reports written in foreign languages.<sup>327</sup> Such gradual dispersion of heritage items out of China raised a new awareness and concerns over the notions of heritage and cultural property. The severity of the problem prompted the Qing government of China by the 1910s to progressively implement protection legislation and edict laws, to found specialised organisations such as the China Monument

<sup>325</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 84.

<sup>326</sup> Wood, *The Silk Road*, 211; Jinshi Fan, *The Caves of Dunhuang* (Hong Kong: Dunhuang Academy in collaboration with London Editions, 2010), 227.

<sup>327</sup> Mo, "Itineraries for a republic," 115.

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Society and Gallery of Antiquities (*Guwu chenliesuo*, 古物陳列所), to encourage the development of collotype reproduction of antiquities, and to increase collaboration with foreign scientific expeditions.<sup>328</sup> Examples of collaborations are the Sino-Swedish expedition led by Sven Hedin (1928-1931), and the collaboration between the head of the Geological Survey of China, Ding Wengjian, and the French, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), in excavations at Zhoukoudian in 1929.<sup>329</sup>

In fact, it was not until the mid to late 1920s that the field of archaeology received any support from the Chinese government and was recognized as a branch of academic research. Once established, several Chinese academics explored the North Western region in the later half of the 1920s and early 1930s. Memorable examples from these efforts are the modern archaeologists Xu Xusheng 徐旭生 (1888-1976) and Huang Wenbi 黃

文弼 (1893-1966), the latter producing publications illustrated with photographs of excavations. There were also the photographers Chen Wanli 陳萬里 (1892-1969) and Zhuang Xueben 莊學本 (1909-1984) who captured Dunhuang and the borderlands between Tibet and China (Figure 80). Later, in the 1940s, the archaeologist Shi Zhangru 石璋如 (1902-2004) excavated and photographed Dunhuang, while the artist Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899-1983) reproduced the frescos inside Dunhuang caves. By that time the region had become a popular touristic destination in China, seducing travellers such as the adventurer couple, James and Lucy Lo, who captured about two hundred and fifty black-and-white photographs of the caves during their

<sup>328</sup> Cheng-hua Wang, "New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation: Collotype Reproduction of Antiquities in Modern China, circa 1908-1917," in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley, California: Global, Area, and International Archive/University of California Press, 2012), 273-373; Robert E. Murowchick, "Despoiled of the Garments of Her Civilization:" Problems and Progress in Archaeological Heritage Management in China," in Anne P. A Underhill, *Companion to Chinese Archaeology* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 16; For an up-to-date study of the China and its heritage see: James B. Cuno, *Who Owns Antiquity?: Museums and the Battle Over Our Ancient Heritage* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2008), 88-120.

<sup>329</sup> Further information on the Geological Survey of China can be found in: Debaine-Francfort, *The Search for Ancient China*, 25. The main primary source regarding the Sino-Swedish expedition is: Sven A. Hedin, *Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China Under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin* (Stockholm: Tryckeri Aktiebolaget Thule, 1952).

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eighteenth-months stay in Dunhuang.<sup>330</sup> This attests to the multidisciplinary and 'transcultural form' of archaeology in China.<sup>331</sup> The field was both an international and local affair even though it developed at a different pace in the West and locally. In sum, the Northwest region surrounding the Dunhuang site might be regarded as a 'contact zone', a network of circuits that provided multidirectional flows of people, who combined efforts to outline a new heritage landmark by means of photographic archives.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>330</sup> See the Lo Archive of photographs archived in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University, New Jersey.

<sup>331</sup> The transculturality of archaeology has been advanced by: Margarita Díaz-Andreu García, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past*

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 196-197. For a summary of archaeological studies in

China, see: For a summary of archaeological studies in China, see: Li Chi, "Archaeological

studies in China," in *Essays on the Sources for Chinese History*, ed. Donald Leslie, Colin

Mackerras, Gungwu Wang, and C P. Fitzgerald (Canberra: Australian National University

Press, 1973).

<sup>332</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91 (1991): 33-40. 193

Figure 80 - Chen Wanli, "The Buddhist Grottoes of Dunhuang and Longgang," *Tuhua shibao* [Illustrated times] no.316 August 29 (1926): 2. Source: Chinese Periodical Full-text Database

Chen's four pictures of Dunhuang are displayed in a grid in the illustrated journal. Functioning almost as diptych, the two on the left side depict the outside architecture and carved niches, whereas the two on the right side provide details of the inside sculptures and paintings. The overall page clearly shows what was of interest at Mogao site, namely wall paintings, carved decorations and how the wooden architecture and caves were imbricated within the cliff.

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Figure 81 - Shi Zhangru measuring the Yinxu, Anyang site with a theodolite in 1937.333

Shot from above, this picture captures an on-going archaeological excavation led by a Chinese effort. We can see the archaeological methods established by that time. While a worker gently removes dust from a pot, two specialists (recognizable with their long straight male gown dress) use a geometric device (right foreground) and a camera on a tripod (right background) so as to measure and record the site precisely. A red and white scale (centre foreground) thrust into the ground was another common tool to give a sense of scale, replacing a person posing next to a vestige.

<sup>333</sup> Source: Wu Hung, *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and*

*Visual Culture* (Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2010), 345.

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The shifting trajectories of Dunhuang photographic archives

The initial functions of Nouette's archive

If the landscape photographs created by Nouette can claim a position in the history of photography in China, it is also because they underwent a wide process of diffusion across borders and throughout time which continues up to this day. Thus, I am interested in this last section in tracing Nouette's photographs in order to uncover how they were re-arranged, re-appropriated and re-narrativized through diverse channels.

The first method of disseminating the photographs was the official publication Pelliot edited in the aftermath of the expedition titled *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* [The Dunhuang Grottoes] (Figure 82). Gathered in four large size volumes (thirty-four centimetres) that actually bound together six volumes



in total, this series of publication gave a prominent place to photography.<sup>334</sup> This pre-eminence of photography was emphasised by the display, which offered a catalogue of one-page format photographs using high-quality printing that allowed for strong contrasts and sharp details to be displayed. In the introduction, Pelliot stated that the choice of displaying first the ‘superb photographs’ taken by Nouette was deliberate.<sup>335</sup> It was done, on the one hand, to pay homage to Nouette who had recently died and, on the other, to exalt the prevalence of photography in the archaeological field:

It seems to me that, in order to initiate the work, it was necessary first and foremost to publish the photographs of the sanctuaries. [Despite] the difficult material conditions, and the utilization of two years old glass plates that suffered from extreme climatic variations, my companion Charles Nouette created veritable marvels. By reproducing these hundreds of

<sup>334</sup> The publications should have been published in 1914 but the outbreak of World War I

postponed it until 1924. Another series of volumes was dedicated to facsimiles of manuscripts, other texts, and research outcomes such as in linguistics, translations, and glossaries.

<sup>335</sup> Paul Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang : peintures et sculptures bouddhiques des époques des Wei, des T'ang et des Song* (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1914), 2. 196

records, I am conscious to serve at the same time the interest of our studies as well as to pay a legitimate tribute to a good worker that death stopped in the middle of his task. Incidentally the commentary of these documents itself implies the freedom to go back and forth from one another; this is only possible when all the plates had been published. This is the reason why we first give our photographs.<sup>336</sup>

At that time, publishing the outcomes of a scientific expedition – whether they were textual and/or visual – was an integral part of the project. This fact explained why, as already discussed, the photograph negatives sizes were utilized in accordance with their possible publication.<sup>337</sup> Manuscripts and notebooks written by Pelliot over the course of the mission confirm that he was already preparing the sequence of photographs that would be published after their return. Accordingly, the volumes begun with exterior views of Mogao site (Figures 72 to 78) and explore the inside of the grottoes by moving from South to North. The whole project was published by Paul Geuthner, a logical choice as this publishing house specialised in Near East, Middle East, and Far East publications.<sup>338</sup>

<sup>336</sup> Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang*, 5.

<sup>337</sup> Londe, *La photographie moderne*, 551.

<sup>338</sup> Previously named Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner and founded in 1901, Geuthner’s

publications targeted mainly an educated audience and covered disciplines ranging from

Humanities, arts, philology, to religion among others. Éditions Geuthner website, accessed

November 11, 2015, <http://www.geuthner.com/a-propos>.

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Figure 82 – Paul Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang: peintures et sculptures bouddhiques des époques des Wei, des T'ang et des Song* [The Dunhuang Grottoes: paintings and sculptures from Wei, Tang, and Song periods] (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1914-1924), 2; 5.

In addition, throughout the expedition Pelliot continued to send photographs (mostly of manuscripts) to individuals (peers, family members, international and local private collectors), and to institutions, such as the British Library, and the Commercial Press of Shanghai, whose director Mr Chang received thousands of pictures from Pelliot.<sup>339</sup> Such exchange of images on the one hand corresponded to a willingness to share knowledge but, on the other hand, also served as a lucrative business for Pelliot who was paid for each photographic reproduction.<sup>340</sup> When photographs were not sent, they were

<sup>339</sup> Letters sent to Pelliot on 10 March 1911 and 14 May 1913. Pel Mi 67. Paris, Musée

Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

<sup>340</sup> For instance a letter written on 26 December 1909 attests that Pelliot received the amount

of 'five thousands francs' on behalf of Mister Tongkang so as to obtain the photographic

reproduction of documents found in Dunhuang. Pel Mi. 67. Paris, Musée Guimet, archives de la bibliothèque.

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sometimes offered as a gift, helping to build or cement the on-going relationship between Pelliot and local scholars.<sup>341</sup>

Conferences were also useful circumstances through which photographs were communicated. In 1909 the year of the team's return to France, Pelliot gave a conference paper at the Sorbonne. Here he not only revealed the images to the audience during the conference for their 'documentary value', but also published some of them in the written report.<sup>342</sup>

Pelliot organised another conference the year after in 1910 and in the first footnote inside the written report of this conference it is divulged that: 'During his exposé, M. Pelliot showed to the Academy members a fair number of photographs related to his excavations in Toumchouq and Koutchar (...).'

<sup>343</sup> Subsequent mingling narratives

A decade after the official publication *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* and at the request of the organisers of the Mission Citroën mentioned earlier, Pelliot embarked on the compilation of another monograph that incorporated Nouette's photographs entitled *La Haute Asie* [The High Asia].<sup>344</sup> More focused on the history of Central Asia – thought of as the association of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia –, the book inserted Nouette's landscape photographs of Dunhuang including detailed captions yet did not make any mention of his name. This exclusion pinpointed a shift in the original narrative and function of the archive. One of the main outcomes following this decision is that Nouette's name would fade into oblivion and would quickly be substituted by the umbrella term Mission Pelliot or even misattributed under Pelliot's name. This

depersonalization process, as indicated in the previous chapter, appeared consistent with the archaeological ideal of a depersonalised vision, in which the author had to disappear as the subject matter presided over.

<sup>341</sup> Pelliot et al., *Carnets de route*, 321.

<sup>342</sup> The page six of the report states that: 'The photo-engravings published in this report are made after the M. Nouette's photographs, photographer of the Pelliot's expedition'. Paul

Pelliot, *Trois ans dans la Haute Asie: conférence de M. Paul Pelliot : au grand amphithéâtre de la Sorbonne, le 10 décembre 1909* (Paris, Comité de l'Asie Française, 1910), 16.

<sup>343</sup> Paul Pelliot, "Rapport de M. Paul Pelliot sur sa mission au Turkestan chinois (1906-1909),"

*Comptes rendus des séances - Académie des inscriptions & belles-lettres* (1910): 62.

<sup>344</sup> Paul Pelliot, *La Haute Asie* (Paris, L'Édition artistique J. Goudard, 1931). 199

This generic nomenclature was disseminated in a similar fashion in both the French and Chinese popular illustrated press. By entering these circles, Nouette's photographs experienced another phenomenon. They moved beyond the rather limited circles of specialised audience to address popular readers. French popular illustrated periodicals covered the Pelliot's expedition news throughout its duration. An illustrative example of this would be *L'illustration* which had around ten articles that covered Pelliot's expedition. In regards to the article published in March 1910, the editorial team asked Pelliot to summarize his three year journey for the readers, which he did by compiling a summary accompanied by several of Nouette's photographs (Figure 83). They showed landscapes, inside views of the caves, excavated items, group portraits of the team, Pelliot deciphering manuscripts in cave sixteen (Figure 63), and the newly opened Pelliot room in the Musée du Louvre in Paris. While the captions below images excluded Nouette's name, Pelliot praised his photographic skills within the text:

The reader of *L'illustration* will clearly notice, in particular, what our photographic documentation gained from the presence of a specialist like M. Nouette. (...) The experience of M. Nouette was particularly precious to us. Never an amateur had been able of capturing such beautiful records despite the narrow and dark corridors and the darkened panels with faded tones.<sup>345</sup>

<sup>345</sup> Pelliot, "Trois ans dans la Haute Asie," 262. 200

Figure 83 - Paul Pelliot, "Trois ans dans la Haute Asie [Three years in High Asia]," *L'illustration* 12 March (1910): 263. © Crédit L'illustration ([www.lillustration.com](http://www.lillustration.com)).

Five large photographs illustrated this double-page. They were either inserted within the text (right) or juxtaposed onto the entire page (left). They seemed designed to demonstrate what an efficient archaeological survey should produce in terms of technique and subject matter: panoramics, close-ups, low angle and high angle views, the rendering of textural effects, the ability to record landscape, sculptures, and wall paintings.

The diffusion of Nouette's photographs went far beyond French borders and entered the realm of Chinese language periodicals, which reprinted them from time to time from the 1920s-30s onwards. According to the authoritative databases that have comprehensively digitalized late Qing and Republican periodicals, the figures of Pelliot and Stein and their respective expeditions' photographic archives dominated images on the theme of archaeology in Chinese illustrated periodicals.<sup>346</sup> It is not surprising then that articles tended

<sup>346</sup> The databases that can be regarded as the most all-encompassing are Dacheng 大成 and

Chinese Periodical Full-text Database 民國時期期刊全文數據庫.

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to amalgamate the pictures taken during both missions, or to use Nouette's photographs in articles talking about Stein.<sup>347</sup>

In regards to Nouette's photographs per se, it is important to note that the photographs numbered one to seven discussed earlier (Figures 72 to 78) seem to be amongst those that were most widely diffused and described (Figures 84 to 87). The diffusion of Nouette's photographs was accompanied by the translation of Pelliot's texts, enhancing then the overarching impact of this expedition on the Chinese audience.<sup>348</sup> These types of articles perpetuated the visibility of Nouette's photographs across borders but while the motor of the narrative remained Dunhuang, the original visual narrative became detached from its original operator and original viewing context, with even the naming being altered.

<sup>347</sup> "Sitanyin shi yu Dunhuang shishi: Dunhuang Qianfodong quanjing zhi yi jiao," Xuesheng Zazhi no.9 (1930): 34.

<sup>348</sup> Many of Pelliot's writings were translated into Chinese mostly one or two decades after his discoveries in Dunhuang. Among the relevant texts: Dunhuang shishi fang shuji (Beijing: Guoli Beiping Tushuguan, 1935), which was a translation of his Une bibliothèque médiévale retrouvée au Kansou; Paul Pelliot and Chengjun Feng, Xiyu Nanhai shidi kaozheng yi cong (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934).

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Figure 84 – "Dunhuang de Fojiao yishu," Dongfang Zazhi [The Eastern Miscellany] no.17 (1931): 1. Source: Chinese Periodical Full-text Database

Figure 85 – "Sitanyin shi yu Dunhuang shishi: Dunhuang Qianfodong quanjing zhi yi jiao," Xuesheng Zazhi no.9 (1930): 34. Source: Chinese Periodical Full-text Database

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Figure 86 – "Dunhuang Shiku quanjing,"

Weimiao sheng no.3 (1937): 56. Source:

Source: Chinese Periodical Full-text Database

Figure 87 – "Boxihe

xiansheng guanyu  
Dunhuang jianzhu de yi  
fengxin," Zhongguo  
yingzao xueshe huikan  
[Bulletin of the Society  
for Research In Chinese  
Architecture] no.4 (1932):

1. Source: Shanghai  
Library.

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Public exhibitions offered another means of interaction between Nouette's photographs and audiences. Although primary sources do not confirm for certain whether or not his photographs were displayed, in 1921 the Musée Guimet's Bulletin Archéologique indicated that an exhibition related to documents of Pelliot's expedition offered 'access to a particularly rich field, which is illustrated by works and researches of Édouard Chavannes and Victor Segalen.' This was directly followed by a note that: 'Our friend Victor Goloubev wanted to reinforce this abounding documentation by adding a new element: a photographic service and a vast photographic depository, which will counterbalance the absence of some monuments.'<sup>349</sup> This last sentence suggested that photographs taken during Pelliot's expedition might have been exhibited and pinpointed the role played by the figure of Goloubev in the establishment of a photographic archive of Asia. Victor Goloubev (1879-1945), also spelled Goloubew, was a member of the EFEO, a collector, trained art historian, and archaeologist with a specific focus on India and Indochina. In the 1910s he became a fervent defender of photography in the field of archaeology, by notably encouraging the utilization of aerial photography, photographic enlargement, and extensive photographic surveys. By bringing back his own pictures and encouraging his peers, he instigated the first consistent photographic archives initially at the EFEO and after that the Musée Guimet.<sup>350</sup>

A later event corroborates this hypothesis. An exhibition review written in the Gazette des beaux-arts in 1932 described the new arrangement of Musée Guimet rooms, mentioning that Chinese sculptures were 'flanked by photographic documents' taken during expeditions led by Chavannes, Segalen, Lartigue and de Voisins.<sup>351</sup> This article was compiled a decade after  
<sup>349</sup> Pelliot, Hackin, and Bacot, Bulletin Archéologique du Musée Guimet: Asie Centrale et Tibet, 9.

<sup>350</sup> Biographical and further information on Goloubew's activities can be found in the following

sources. Louis Malleret, "Le vingtième anniversaire de la mort de Victor Goloubew (1878-

1945)," Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient Volume 53 (1967): 331-373;

Louis

Malleret, "Un oublié: Victor Goloubew, membre de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (1878-

1945)," Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises Volume XXXIX no.4 (1964): 433- 448;

Jeannine Auboyer, "Victor Goloubew (1879-1945)," Artibus Asiae 10 1 (1947): 64-68.

<sup>351</sup> Odette Bruhl, "Les nouvelles collections du musée Guimet," *Gazette des beaux-arts*

Volume VII (1932): 301-365.

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the one mentioned above, therefore it might be misleading to assert with any certainty that Nouette's pictures were exhibited alongside artefacts. But regardless, it is still indicative of photography's role in institutions' curatorial and educative aspirations.<sup>352</sup>

Nouette's photographs have continued to be used and be reprinted up until the present day. Dunhuang studies have perhaps never been as vivid a field as they are today. In particular, over the past few years, old photographs depicting this oasis have attracted a great deal of interest in the international scholarly community. Additionally, the International Dunhuang Project's (IDP) retakes of Stein's photographs for their IDP News Issue no.32 of 2008, and the Dunhuang Academy's exhibition in 2011, together with its subsequent catalogue of early twentieth-century photographs of Dunhuang – including those taken by Nouette – are just two of a wide variety of events that demonstrate the continuing significance attached to photographic archives.<sup>353</sup>

Among later scholarship that has reproduced Nouette's records, one source deserves particular attention for its peculiar utilization of landscape photographs: *The Centenary Catalogue of Dunhuang Mogao Caves: Pelliot's pictures of Dunhuang* (敦煌莫高窟百年圖錄: 伯希和敦煌圖錄).<sup>354</sup> These two large volumes published in 2008 offered essentially a catalogue of pictures that juxtaposed before and after photographs, with the older before images being those shot by Nouette (Figures 88). Likely with the intention of demonstrating the changes that have occurred over time, the contemporary

<sup>352</sup> Another exhibition review of the Musée Guimet confirms the presence of both artefacts and

photography. "Chronique," *T'oung-pao* Volume 24 (1926): 129. Exhibition of archaeological

photographs occurred similarly in China. As an example, the Beijing University weekly

magazine published in 1925 a brief review announcing this exhibition: "Xueshujie xiaoxi:

kaogu zhaopian zhanlan," *Beijing Daxue yanjiusuo guoxuemen zhoukan* 1 5 (1925): 24.

<sup>353</sup> "A Century On: Documenting Archaeological Sites in Xinjiang: Stein's Silk Road Legacy

Revisited," IDP News no.32 2008, accessed September 10, 2012, [http://idp.bl.uk/archives/news32/idpnews\\_32.a4d](http://idp.bl.uk/archives/news32/idpnews_32.a4d).

<sup>354</sup> Binglin Zheng and Guoxiang Gao, *Dunhuang Mogaoku bainian tulu: Boxihe Dunhuang tulu*

(Lanzhou Shi: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2008). See also the reutilization of Nouette's

photographs in: Hong Gu, *Shijie De Dunhuang* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011);

Paul Pelliot, Louis Hambis, Krishna Riboud, Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, and M Paul-David,

*Mission Paul Pelliot : documents archéologiques publiés sous les auspices de l'Académie des*

Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1961); René Grousset, *De la Grèce à la Chine* (Monaco: Documents d'art, 1948).

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images endeavoured to recreate as faithfully as possible the old photographs using a similar angle as well as black and white coloring. A small description usually accompanied each plate. Interestingly, the catalogue begins by juxtaposing the same sequence of landscapes photographs found in the original publication (the images numbered one to seven, discussed above). However, not all of the plates displayed were contemporary retakes, a fair number of Nouette's photographs occupied either an entire page or are presented in grid pattern.

Such contemporary publications, similarly to other events re-utilizing photographs of Dunhuang, highlight the extent to which scholars are indebted to the production of early photographic archives. If at that time photographs permitted scholars and institutions to rethink respectively their knowledge and collections, today they offer the sole surviving visual records of landscapes or remains that for some have succumbed to the effects of time. On top of that, such catalogues displaying before/after photographs remind one of the contemporary craze for old pictures (jiuying, 舊影 or lao zhaopian 老照片) (see the discussion of Old Photographs publication series in the Introduction).

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Figure 88 – Source: Zheng and Gao, *Dunhuang Mogaoku bainian tulu*, 21.

Source: Shanghai Library.

These two pictures represented the landscape view captured from the entrance of the cave sixteen in Dunhuang. The contemporary view (above) as compared to Nouette's one (bottom) visualized the evolution of the landscape over time. Trees grew up on the riverbank; and the grottoes entrances and cliff edges were consolidated with modern construction.

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The international interest in Nouette's photographs nowadays has also engendered a greater dispersal of his archive, which has dramatically increased through the digitization process. While the majority of physical photographs are currently held at the Musée Guimet in Paris, several online databases have rendered freely accessible his pictures in digital files.<sup>355</sup> The most important source, the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) platform supplies the totality of Nouette's photographs in large format alongside detailed captions.<sup>356</sup> Moreover, recently the Beijing National Library launched a small online platform presented in the Chinese language, gathering slideshows of photographs taken during Pelliot, Stein, Oldenburg, Shi Zhuangru, and Needham's expeditions. Images are grouped by themes ('Cityscapes of Dunhuang', 'Landscapes of Mogao', 'Monastery of Dunhuang', 'The Mogao caves', 'Mogao stupas', 'Miscellaneous'). This database is a byproduct of the photographic exhibition organised by the Dunhuang Academy mentioned above. However, the captions and pictures' files are of lesser quality compared to the IDP resource mentioned above.

This shift from classical print-base archive to multimedia storage is emblematic of what has been termed a new 'regime of memory' proper to software cultures.<sup>357</sup> Digital archives are attempting to offer coherent archiving system to keep traces from the past online. They 'aspire to enhance,

complement or substitute the experience of a site or object of historical and/or cultural significance, by making active use of digital computer technologies.’<sup>358</sup> However digital archives inexorably alter the understanding of the subject

<sup>355</sup> According to the research thus far, the following institutions also possess photographic

records of Pelliot’s expedition: the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris), the Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art (INHA, Paris), and the Ermitage Museum (Saint-Petersburg).

Dominique Morelon, “L’image documentaire et ses métamorphoses: les collections photographiques de la bibliothèque de l’INHA,” in *Photo Archives and the Photographic*

*Memory of Art History*, ed. Costanza Caraffa (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011), 291.

<sup>356</sup> Launched in 1994, the IDP is a collaborative online platform in which international institutions and libraries around the world share knowledge about Dunhuang studies and its

latest news. Among the various documents supplied, a comprehensive database encompasses all photographs taken during Pelliot, Stein and other expeditions.

<sup>357</sup> Wolfgang Ernst and Jussi Parikka, *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Minneapolis: University

of Minnesota Press, 2012), 2; 28; 121.

<sup>358</sup> L W. MacDonald, *Digital Heritage: Applying Digital Imaging to Cultural Heritage* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 448.

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matter, which ultimately complicates the reception and study of visual documents.

Conclusion

This chapter closes Section II in which I have argued that exploratory expeditions linked to academic disciplines gave rise to an alternative for depicting Chinese landscape. Granted that one of the main objectives of this thesis is to reassemble the landscapes that marked the first century of photography in China, consequently I focused on the representations of a key landmark, namely Dunhuang.

In order to examine how the production of Dunhuang photographs positioned itself within the transformation of landscape photography, I conducted a case study of Charles Nouette, the appointed operator during the Paul Pelliot archaeological expedition to Chinese Turkestan (1906-08).

Through this case study I identified a set of visual methods that differed from previous practices. In particular these methods involved not just the choice of specific techniques but also the need to produce an extensive number of images while using a detached labelling system, and adopting an encompassing way of framing the subject matter. I conclude that such visual strategies combined with the global context within which they were inscribed and generated the reputation of a newly discovered place, turning a landscape into a world heritage site. Although landscape photographs produced within exploratory expeditions from the 1890s onwards offered a new visual knowledge of what was unknown, this does not mean that spontaneous and mnemonic approaches, like those studied in Section I, suddenly stopped. Yet I believe that it is fair to acknowledge that the ways of seeing/recording,



especially ancient heritage, shifted in this period as it became increasingly informed by academic disciplines.

This chapter also mapped out the diverse trajectories of Nouette's images, through diverse mediums, across borders, and over time. I presented evidence that his pictures went through a wide diffusion by being successively published, sent by mail, projected during conferences, reproduced in popular illustrated magazines internationally, probably displayed in public exhibitions, 210

and uploaded in digital databases. However, whilst Nouette's photographs enjoyed a vast circulation up till the present, paradoxically his name has slowly disappeared and been replaced with umbrella terms.

This chapter sought to demonstrate how landscape photographs produced during exploratory expeditions contributed to the photographic community of twentieth-century China. Discourses on the camera's role as a technology of colonial expansion tend to pervade current scholarships.

Alternatively, I attempted to shape the contours of the role of photography in promoting a dialogue and sharing heritage issues across cultures.<sup>359</sup> Heritage and cross-cultural dialogue arising from landscape photographs are two major themes that I will pursue further in the final Section III of this thesis.

<sup>359</sup> This cross-cultural approach of photography in Asia has been advanced by the art historian

Luke Gartlan in several articles, in particular: Luke Gartlan, "Samuel Cocking and the Rise of

Japanese Photography," *History of Photography* 33 2 (2009): 145-164.

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Figure 89 - Stéphane Passet, Duisongshan ('Mountain facing the Pine'), also called Wansongshan ('Ten-Thousand-Pine Mountain'). Situated below the Nantianmen ('Heavenly Gate of the South'). 9th June 1913. Autochrome, 9 x 12 cm (inv. A 1364). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.

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SECTION III – READING LANDSCAPE (1910s-1930s)

## **CHAPTER FIVE – THE CRAZE FOR 'FAMOUS SIGHTS' PHOTOGRAPHY**

Introduction

It is not enough indeed to 'look' in order to 'see' truly a landscape or any other subject matter, in other words in order to analyse it, to understand it. Educating the eye is therefore necessary to know how to choose (...) the angle and the object that compose a picture

(...).<sup>360</sup>

Following on the idea that landscape photographs constituted a visual platform for cross-cultural interactions, the main argument in this last Section III is that during the first half of the twentieth century both local and international operators became increasingly inclined to represent coherent series of landscapes according to pre-established views. More specifically what was considered within Chinese culture as famous sights (mingsheng 名勝). I postulate that landscape photographs of famous sights attested to the

blossoming of another paradigm shift inasmuch as they offered alternative subject matters, specific visual codes, functions and uses. Moving away from earlier rather candid views chiefly answering market demand and exhaustive academic repositories (two paradigm shifts I examined through Section I and Section II), landscape photographs depicting famous sights engaged with local spatial conceptions and history and engaged in dialogued with it, all the while reaching large popular audiences. The main query then binding the whole of Section III together is to distinguish the visual pattern and specific practices that bring the photographs together.

<sup>360</sup> Mariel Jean Brunhes Delamarre's (1905-2001) citation quoted in: Joël Cuénot, Jeanne

Beausoleil, and Albert Kahn, *Les Archives de la Planète : Collections Albert Kahn* : 1 La

France : quatre-vingt autochromes (Paris: Joël Cuénot, 1978), 105.

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In order to evaluate this proposition, the two chapters of this last Section III proceed through a series of case studies that concentrate on the depiction of one of the best-known mountains in China, namely Mount Tai (hereinafter referred to as Taishan, 泰山). Located in Shandong province to the north of Tai'an city, Taishan is conceived as the Eastern Marchmount of the Five Sacred Peaks (wuyue, 五嶽).

In this current chapter, I will delineate the contours of this particular development in the genre of landscape photography by inspecting a large body of material, namely autochromes or colour photographs shot by the amateur Stéphane François Marie Passet (1875-1941), appointed operator on behalf of the Archives de la Planète (Archives of the Planet). A number of primary and secondary sources have dealt with this archive but none have paid sufficient attention to the agency and visual characteristics of the photographs.<sup>361</sup> Considered as a relevant illustration of famous sights photography in China, Passet's landscapes will allow me to consider several key questions. How were photographs of famous sights situated within broader processes of democratization of sightseeing in China? And to what extent were these landscapes informed by cultural habits that proceed from Chinese sources? My main objectives here are to clarify the extent to which operators might have responded to pre-existing local conceptions of scenic attractions, as well as to shed light on the possible frameworks from which this shift sprang.

<sup>361</sup> Primary sources rarely mention specifically Passet's photographs, while contemporary sources have tended to focus on the study of films from the Archives de la Planète. Thus far,

only the volume *Chine = China = 中國* (1909-1934) published by the Musée Albert Kahn

(Boulogne-Billancourt, France) in 2001 offers a focused view of China by providing principally

a catalogue of still images. For other studies see: Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive : Film, the*

*Everyday*, and Albert Kahn's *Archives De La Planète* (New York ; Chichester: Columbia

University Press, 2010); H  l  ne Bourguignon, "Les Archives De La Plan  te,"  
Vingti  me  
Si  cle. Revue d'histoire, no. 101 (2009): 203-07; Teresa Castro, "Les Archives De la  
Plan  te  
ou les rythmes de l'histoire," Revue de l'association fran  aise de recherche sur  
l'histoire du  
cin  ma no.54, no. February (2008): 57-78; Paula Amad, "Cinema's 'Sanctuary': From  
Pre-  
Documentary to Documentary Film in Albert Kahn's "Archives de la Plan  te" (1908-  
1931),"  
Film History 13, no. 2 (2001): 138-59; Fran  ois de la Bret  que, "Les Archives de la  
Plan  te  
d'Albert Kahn," Vingti  me Si  cle. Revue d'histoire, no. 70 (2001): 156-58.  
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Serving the democratization of sightseeing in China

Looking at a grey cloudy sky and overhanging a valley, the viewer's gaze is  
first captivated by the brightness and almost pointillist quality of colours  
(Figure 89). Green scattered groves of oddly-shaped trees and vegetation  
rooted on the steep rocky slopes expands on both left and right sides. As one  
looks closer one recognizes pine trees typical of some provinces because of  
the crooked and laterally stretched branches that sometimes twist together. A  
prominent pictorial trope in Chinese visual culture, this species of pine trees  
grows in alpine regions in China such as in Mount Huang in Anhui province  
(Huang shan, 黄山) and Mount Wutai in Shanxi province (Wutai shan, 五臺山).

The accuracy of the caption gives us further information. The title Ten-  
Thousand-Pine Mountain (Wansong shan or Duisong shan, 萬松山 or 對松山)  
indicates that we are standing in one of the scenic attractions located in  
Taishan. This appellation came from the fact that these precipitous mountain  
tiers were filled with countless ancient pine trees. Taishan counted a certain  
number of ancient cypress and pines. They were revered because of their use  
in historical stories and serving as a symbol of longevity, inspiring generations  
of poets and painters. The simple fact of knowing this specific spot and  
naming it in Chinese bespoke the author's ability to read this landscape.  
Besides the date of 9 June 1913 allows us to deduce that the photographs  
was taken after the 1911 Xinhai Revolution (Xinhai Geming, 辛亥革命), which  
led to the overthrowing of the Qing dynasty and the abdication of the last  
Manchu Emperor Puyi 溥儀 (reign 1909-11), which was followed by a decade  
of socio-cultural movements and political upheaval. In that sense, the  
utilization of a colour photography technique, the choice of Taishan as a  
subject matter, and the specific date are three crucial elements that fit the  
image within a specific historical moment: the Republican era, a period that  
spanned between 1912 and 1949 in China.<sup>362</sup>

<sup>362</sup> The final date of this period varies as some studies consider it lasted until 1937,  
thus until

the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-45. Passet was not the sole operator  
to have

utilized autochrome in China. Other foreigners such as the French Th  ophile Piry  
(1851-1918)

and the German Henrich Handel-Mazzetti among others depicted China by using the same technique. Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens*, 93; Heinrich Handel-Mazzetti, *Naturbilder Aus Südwest-China: Erlebnisse Und Eindrücke Eines Österreichischen Forschers Während Des* 215

It was in fact during this era that Taishan emerged as part of a popular tour leading to the city of Qufu (曲阜), which held the tomb of the historical philosopher Confucius (551-479 B.C.).<sup>363</sup> But why and how did such a journey become established? Adventure travels and leisure tourism in the pursuit of China's famous sights were not new. However, their far-reaching democratization to both local and foreign audiences remains a twentieth-century phenomenon. This phenomenon has kept pace with the drastic concomitant social and historical changes that took place in this decade. Indeed, the Republic strengthened a general desire for modernization through the implementing of a new political system and promotion of new cultural values intended to improve China's negative impression of backwardness when compared to an assumedly superior West.<sup>364</sup> The development of sightseeing and transport infrastructures were two important aspects in these modernization efforts and landscape photography was intrinsically linked to this phenomenon.

The railway as a catalyst for clarifying China tours

The gradual expansion of railways was a major factor that determined a number of popular excursions, ranging from natural to urban landscapes, from newly established beach and mountain resorts to heritage sites known in local culture. Before the development of railways in China, anyone could travel by hiring cars, palanquins, junks, domestic mammals (horses, donkeys, camels) to travel along land and water routes. Yet they helped the population to travel only a limited distance. Western imperial powers understood quickly the need for China to renovate its transportation infrastructure. Thus, from the second half of the nineteenth century the Western powers attempted to force the Qing *Weltkrieger* (Wien: Österreichischer bundesverlag für unterricht, wissenschaft und kunst, 1927).

<sup>363</sup> Jinpu tielu lüxing zhinan (Tianjin: Jinpu tielu guanliju zongwu chubian chake, 1921).

<sup>364</sup> The desire for modernization in China initiated during the last decades of the nineteenth

century but matured after the establishment of the Republic. Morris Rossabi, *History of China*

(Malden, Mass.: John Wiley and Sons, 2014), Part IV "China in Global History". A similar

notion of 'belatedness' was also conspicuous the arts. Wen Fong, *Between Two Cultures:*

*Late-Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings* from the Robert H. Ellsworth

Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of

Art; Yale University Press, 2001), 254.

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government to either let Westerners build their own lines or to cooperate with

them. After several years of various unfortunate projects, the Qing Reform Movement of the 1890s – also called the Self-Strengthening-Movement whose motto was ‘Chinese learning as essence, Western learning as application’ – prompted the government to finally focus its modernization efforts on the construction of railways and be less disinclined to collaborate with Western powers.<sup>365</sup> By the early years of the Republican era, a network of railways connected major routes across all parts of the country. They aimed at reinforcing the government’s control over remote territories, developing the economy of the entire country, improving the conveyance of raw material, and eventually, as a by-product, developing tourism.

The key rail projects included the Peking-Mukden line, Peking-Hankow, Shanghai-Hangchow, and, of particular relevance for this study, the Jinpu railway – also called the Tientsin-Pukow [Tianjin-Pukou] railway – and the Peking-Kalgan line. The construction of the Jinpu railway enabled visitors to commute between Tianjing and Nanjing, via Taishan and Qufu. The construction started after 1905 and full service began in 1912, the year Passet arrived in China. During that time, the area surrounding Taishan was experiencing a phase of great prosperity and progress thanks notably to foreign investments. The subsequent construction of many buildings and various infrastructures for transportation contributed significantly to both commuters and travellers.<sup>366</sup> Before the completion of this railroad, visitors had little means to gain access to the celebrated mountain.<sup>367</sup> Once completed, people seeking to visit Taishan had to depart on trains from the

<sup>365</sup> In 1876, a British engineer named Gabriel James Morrison (1840-1905) built the first

railway in China, which linked Shanghai and Wusong. Imperial Japanese Government

Railways, *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia: Trans-continental Connections between Europe*

and Asia, Vol. Iv: China (Tokyo: Imperial Japanese Government Railways, 1915), xvi; Ralph

W. Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse: The Economics of Railroads in China, 1876-*

*1937* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984), 2. Another

source states that the Convention signed on June 20th 1895 between France and China for

the construction of railways in Yunnan, Guangxi and Guangdong is the earliest surviving

document. Lin Cheng, *The Chinese Railways: A Historical Survey* (Shanghai: China United

Press, 1935), 21; Li, *Reinventing Modern China*, 38.

<sup>366</sup> Madeline Y. Hsu, "Migration and Native Place: Qiaokan and the Imagined Community of

Taishan County, Guangdong, 1893-1993," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59.2 (2000): 311; 321.

<sup>367</sup> Walter K. Fisher, "The Oldest Place of Worship in the World," *The Scientific Monthly* 2(6)

June (1916): 522-23.

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city of Tianjin and take a daylong journey to reach the small station of Tai'anfu, itself located two miles west of the city of Tai'an. From a broader perspective, the Jinpu railway represented a major infrastructure project that played a significant socio-political and economic role over the years. It has been argued to constitute one of the 'backbone(s) of China's strategic railroads' as it was the first railway in northern China that linked with other major communication lines: specifically, the Tianjin-Beijing and Nanjing-Shanghai railways, as well as maritime lines.<sup>368</sup> By connecting these key provinces in China and thus improving passengers transport, the Jinpu railway served a key function in the expansion of industry and commerce, while strengthening cultural communication. This major infrastructure project eventually became a Chinese national railway after being initially financed and constructed by German and British companies that obtained concessions as soon as 1898.<sup>369</sup> The spread of railways across inland territories was of particular importance to landscape photography as it brought about the production of many photographic projects, sometimes commissioned by railway companies themselves, and other times driven by individual initiatives. Thanks to these lines a greater amount of people were capable of exploring and documenting portions of lands that were otherwise difficult – if not impossible to reach. This was the case for the rich banker and philanthropist, founder of the Archives de la Planète, Albert Kahn (1860-1940), whose first encounter with China was to some extent conditioned by railways, more precisely the Peking-Kalgan railway, which he used in 1909 (Figure 90).

<sup>368</sup> Bruce A. Elleman and Stephen Kotkin, *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: An International History* (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 104; 124.

<sup>369</sup> The Jinpu railway is among the largest loans for railways in China. The agreement of 1908

– which was issued in London and Berlin – stipulated that the construction and control of the

railroad was in the hands of Qing government of China, with the exception of the foreign

appointed chief engineer. Arthur N. Young, *China's Nation-Building Effort, 1927-1937: The*

*Financial and Economic Record* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1971), 129; 139;

Chi-ming Hou, *Foreign Investment and Economic Development in China, 1840-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 36.

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Figure 90 – Jacques Gachet, *Between Juyongguan and Shangguan*. The railway line: an employee of the railway company is switching the points, 31st January 1909. Black and white stereographic negative, 4.5 x 10.7 cm (inv. G 55). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.

Gachet arrived in China in 1904 and acted as Kahn's interpreter. He sometimes joined Kahn and his driver-operator (Albert Dutertre) during journeys, including the one that led them to the Great Wall in January 1909.<sup>370</sup> This railway led to the Northern Beijing sites I discussed in chapter three but when Kahn used it, a portion of the line was not finished yet.<sup>371</sup> Beijing gradually became equipped with a number of railways – alongside traditional

means of conveyance –, including the Jing-zhang Section that had begun in 1905 and was completed in 1909.<sup>372</sup> However, before this it has been a long and hazardous journey to visit those sites. It took at least two days from Beijing to reach them and even after the railway was built and connected to

<sup>370</sup> Musée Albert Kahn, *Chine = Zhongguo = China*, volume 1, 48.

<sup>371</sup> Albert Dutertre's diary reproduced in: Musée Albert Kahn, *Chine = Zhongguo = China*, volume 1, 35.

<sup>372</sup> The Jing-zhang section belonged to the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway that connected Beijing to

Suiyuan via Kalgan from 1921 onwards. Kalgan was a European denomination for the

Chinese town of Zhangjiakou (Hebei province). Later referred as the Beijing-Baotou Railway,

it was extended several times so that to reach by 1925 its terminus at Baotou, in Inner

Mongolia. Justin Tighe, *Constructing Suiyuan: The Politics of Northwestern Territory and*

*Development in Early Twentieth Century China* (Leiden :, Biggleswade: Brill, Extenza Turpin,

2005), 82. For further information on the general development of railways in China including

Jing-zhang section, see: Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories*

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 36; Fengbo Zhang, *Economic Analysis of*

*Chinese Transportation* ([England]: Lulu.com, 2009), Chapter "Impact of Railways on China's

Modern Economy".

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the Nankou pass, visitors still had to climb to the Great Wall either on foot or by riding a donkey for approximately twenty minutes, with the most

courageous of them reaching the highest point of the Great Wall in an hour

and a half.<sup>373</sup> This first two-hundred-kilometre railway was the first to be

constructed entirely by Chinese. It enabled visitors to stop at Changping, an area that granted access to the Ming tombs and the Great Wall. This railway –

part of what was called at that time the 'Peiping-Suiyuan Railway' – reduced considerably the transportation time to various popular sites as after its

opening to traffic it took only eight to nine hours to reach the Great Wall.<sup>374</sup>

Kahn embarked on a part-business, part-pleasure trip to China

between November 1908 and May 1909 with his chauffeur and appointed operator Albert Dutertre (dates unknown), along with other assistants.

Although this trip was not organised within the context of the Archives de la Planète, it allowed them to bring back a fair number of black and white

stereographs taken with a Pathé cinematograph (Figure 91).<sup>375</sup>

Figure 91 – Albert Dutertre, Juyongguan, houses, fortifications and the

Guojiet gate ('Tower astride the Way'). Below the Guangou ('Torrent of the Pass'), straddled by a gate for access by water (shuimen), 31st January 1909.

Black and white stereoscopic positive, 4.5 x 10.7 cm (inv. D 2531).

Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives

de la Planète.

<sup>373</sup> Paul Henri Maurice Fabre, Pékin, ses palais, ses temples et ses environs; guide historique et descriptif (Tien-Tsin, Chine: Librairie Française, 1937), 133; Paludan, The Ming tombs, 18.

<sup>374</sup> Zhang, Economic Analysis of Chinese Transportation, 37.

<sup>375</sup> Amad, "Cinema's 'Sanctuary'," 143.

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Dutertre was neither a professional photographer nor a trained amateur. He quickly learned how to operate a stereoscopic camera at the request of Kahn just before their departure. This might explain the slightly awkward composition, leaning horizons, and lack of neatness of some of the pictures. Still they unveiled a certain sensitivity towards the Chinese landscape. The architectural complex of the Nankou pass is barely visible in the stereoscopic positive above for it was too far from the lens of the operator. Yet the foreground shows a pile of fallen rocks, whose volume might have made a great impression with the three-dimensionality of the technique.

Kahn's visit to China induced him to be concerned about understanding the Chinese cultural heritage, which was facing, along with many other countries, a global phenomenon inclined to decrease diversity.<sup>376</sup> After his return to Paris, he decided to launch the worldwide project Les Archives de la Planète. It was a three-decade long project that distinguished itself from any other initiated at that time thanks to the compilation of a visual inventory of the world utilizing ground-breaking types of media from that time, namely autochrome and film. This global project originally derived from the earlier Autour du Monde (Around the World) grants. Issued since 1898 by the Sorbonne University and sponsored by Kahn, these grants aimed at offering young French and foreign graduates the opportunity to travel abroad to enrich their life experience.<sup>377</sup> 'Keeping an eye open' and 'engaging in sympathetic communion with ideas, feelings, and life of different civilizations' were some of the principles that continued to prevail over the later Archives de la Planète.<sup>378</sup> With the utopian aim to 'fix once and for all the aspects, the practices, and modes of human activity whose fatal disappearing is just a question of time', this global archival project ended in 1931 when Kahn was bankrupted.<sup>379</sup>

<sup>376</sup> Pouillon, Dictionnaire des orientalistes, 533.

<sup>377</sup> Castro, "Les Archives de la Planète," 58; David Okuefuna, Albert Kahn: le Monde en

couleurs : Autochromes 1908-1931 (Paris: Chêne, 2008), 12.

<sup>378</sup> Pouillon, Dictionnaire des orientalistes, 533.

<sup>379</sup> Albert Kahn cited by Emmanuel de Margerie in a letter to Jean Brunhes 26 January 1912.

Also cited in: Autour du monde : Jean Brunhes, regards d'un géographe, regards de la

géographie (Boulogne-Billancourt: Musée Albert Kahn, 1993), 92. Kahn originally made his

fortune by speculating on society exploiting diamond and gold in South Africa. By 1892 he

established his own bank.

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China was of particular importance as it was the first country to be explored



within the framework of the Archives de la Planète.

Establishing popular sites: the role of guidebooks

The construction of railways gathered tremendous financial resources, with investments coming from abroad and mainland China. In order to make the lines profitable, investors had to define and encourage leisure tours. This gave rise to the development and implementation of travel agencies and publicity campaigns, which were circulated across several types of media including newspapers, periodicals, publications, and most importantly guidebooks.<sup>380</sup> Although guidebooks started to be published as early as the first half of the nineteenth-century, the turn of the twentieth-century saw the real emergence of this literary genre, concomitantly with the development of tourism and travel infrastructure. Called *zhinan* (指南) in the Chinese language, they gradually established specific tours in diverse areas of China. Guidebooks targeted the local to the same degree as they targeted foreigners. As mentioned earlier these tours ranged from natural to urban sites and from newly established resorts to heritage sites celebrated by local culture. Of particular relevance were the tours that focused on the archaeological domain in China, such as the Northern Beijing sites and Taishan-Qufu, these were amongst the recurrent tour destinations.

Railway companies, local and international travel companies, other types of enterprises and individuals all published guidebooks and the information contained within was often drawn from disparate sources. A usual guidebook provided general information that sought to aid the visitor's excursion by indicating accommodation, prices, transportation methods, administrative paperwork, geographic details, and a historical overview of particular

<sup>380</sup> For instance local Chinese agencies were created mainly from the mid-1910s onwards. It

has been argued that two travel companies stood out amongst others: the Union Travel Party

(Yousheng lüxingtuan, 友聲旅行團) founded in 1915 by a group of travellers in Shanghai; and

the China Travel Service (Zhongguo lüxingshe, 中國旅行社). António Eduardo Hawthorne

Barrento, "On the Move: Tourist Culture in China, 1895-1949" (PhD diss., School of Oriental

and African Studies, 2013), 13. For a study on the emergence of guidebooks: André Rauch,

"Le voyageur et le touriste," *In Situ: Revue des patrimoines* 15 (2011), accessed October 7,

2013, <http://insitu.revues.org/533>.

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locations. While not all the guides supplied exhaustive historical commentaries about locations, they all provided the visitor with rather clear ideas about local geographic conditions. This was primarily achieved thanks to lists of locations or vistas which visitors should aim to stop at. These attractions tended to be arranged geographically, that is to say in the same spatial order as one would see them while actually visiting the location. By doing so, guidebooks advised visitors about how to move in space and name the scene accordingly.

To cite popular examples, the British businessman Thomas Cook

(1808-1892), and the German Karl Baedeker (1837-1911) with their respective eponymous companies published numerous guides that offered a variety of sightseeing programmes across China.<sup>381</sup> In regards to French sources, it seemed that guidebooks compiled by the French Civil Servant and traveller Claudius Madrolle (1870-1949) were prevalent in France. He provided a rare large series of guidebooks focused on the Far East, which provided fairly comprehensive information (maps, history, tourism facilities, and so forth).<sup>382</sup> Madrolle's guidebooks exemplify the tendency to incorporate heterogeneous sources as, for instance, in his Northern China guidebook, he re-used some of the archaeological findings of Chavannes' authoritative report on the cultural and religious customs of Taishan. More specifically he inserted a reproduction of Chavannes' map of Taishan as well as small sections of his texts.<sup>383</sup> It is

<sup>381</sup> A selection of Cook's and Baedeker's guidebooks related to China includes: Karl Bædeker, *Rejsen Til China [Journey to China]* (København: S. Triers Bogtrykkeri, 1872); Karl Baedeker, *Rusland: Nebst Teheran, Port Arthur, Peking : Handbuch Fur Reisende* (Leipzig : Verlag von Karl Baedeker, 1912); Thomas Cook Firm, *Tour to China and Japan from Sydney: March 1899* (Melbourne: T. Cook, 1899); Thomas Cook Firm, *Handbook to China* (Hong Kong: Thos. Cook & Son, 1910); Thomas Cook Firm, *Chinese Government Railways: Travellers' Notes and Through Booking Arrangements, Return Tourist Tickets, Circular Tours in China, Chosen and Japan* (Shanghai: Thos. Cook & Son, 1918); Thomas Cook Firm, *Information for Travellers Visiting Peking: Brief Description of Points of Interest and Cook's Sightseeing Arrangements in Peking and Vicinity* (Peking: Thos. Cook & Son, 1920).

<sup>382</sup> A selection of Madrolle's guidebooks to China includes: Claudius Madrolle, *Itinéraires dans l'ouest de la Chine, 1895 pour accompagner le journal de l'auteur dans son voyage au Iunnan, au Tibet chinois et au Se-tchouen* (Paris: A. Challamel, 1900); Claudius Madrolle, *De Marseille à Canton: Guide du voyageur* (Paris: Comité Asie française, 1902); Claudius Madrolle, *Chine du sud et de l'est* (Paris: Comité de l'Asie française, 1904); Claudius Madrolle, *Nord de la Chine: Pékin et ses environs, T'ien-Tsin, la Grande Muraille* (Paris: Comité de l'Asie Française, 1904); Claudius Madrolle, *La Ligne du Yun-Nan, Tonkin - Chine: excursions et itinéraires* (Paris: Hachette, 1913); Claudius Madrolle, *Le Mont O-Mei, lieu de pèlerinage bouddhique : Haut fleuve Bleu, Soui-fou, Tch'ong-k'ing* (Paris: Hachette, 1914).

<sup>383</sup> Édouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris: E.

Leroux, 1910); Claudius Madrolle, *Chine du Nord et Vallée du Fleuve Bleu*. Corée (Paris: Hachette, 1911), 132.

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also worth noting that Chavannes actually visited Confucius' tomb in Qufu and left a fair number of photographs of his trip, foreshadowing the sequential route in Taishan and Qufu that constituted a popular touristic tour up to the 1930s.

Guidebooks frequently utilized photography to illustrate their tours and thus render them more attractive. This resulted in certain specific subject matter being turned into emblems of a particular location, as was the case in this instance with the depiction of the five-arched gateway at the entrance of the Ming tombs site (Figure 92), as well as its monumental sculptures (Figure 93). The photograph on the right shows five foreign tourists posing on a stone camel they have climbed on top of. Similar behaviour of people riding other monumental animal sculptures appeared in various photographs taken by Chinese at that time, so this was not an isolated example. Such images unveiled the changing relationship of tourists with China's heritage, vacillating between incomprehension to awe and amusement.

To put it succinctly, there is reason to believe that a combination of the efforts of guidebooks and the expansion of railway in strategic areas were two essential procedures in the compiling and clarifying of sets of traditional and newly popular scenic attractions. Consequently, it was only at the turn of the twentieth-century that a wider audience could understand in large part – if not fully – what famous sights meant to China's population and history. Previously remote or little known sites finally became reachable to a growing middleclass population of locals and foreigners who sought to pay tribute to the Chinese cultural heritage by visiting and capturing images with such historically connoted sites.

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Figure 92 – (Left) Fei Shi (also known as Emil Sigmund Fischer), *Guide to Peking: And Its Environs Near and Far* (Tientsin-Peking: The Tientsin Press, 1924), no page.

Figure 93 – (Right) Unidentified author, *Tourists on stone camel, Ming Tombs, near Peking, circa 1932*. Black and white photograph [Ph01-081] © Image courtesy of Charlotte Thomas and the Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol.

Apprehending Taishan scenic attractions

An informed eye

Old T'ai Shan! Immortal witness of man's inalienable instinct for worship! Rugged symbol of human aspiration after God! Who hath mind and heart so irresponsible to the pathos of man's age-long struggle for the best, as not to be awed to reverence upon thy mighty altar stones? <sup>384</sup>

If mountains have often been revered for their mystical and/or natural aura in many societies around the world, sacred mountains in China are omnipresent components of society, religion, and visual culture. Amongst the several mountains traditionally classified as sacred in China, Taishan can be argued to occupy a central place as it has been worshipped continuously over the last

<sup>384</sup> Dwight C. Baker, *Tai Shan: An Account of the Sacred Eastern Peak of China* (Shanghai, China: Commercial Press, 1925) unnumbered page. 225

three millennia.<sup>385</sup> Taishan is a large mountain range covering twenty-five thousand hectares and rising abruptly to over one thousand five hundred meters. The ascent of Taishan, with its over six thousand steps, takes four to six hours. This place has been sacred to believers in China's three socioreligious traditions – Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism – while attracting different types of people from political, personal, scientific, and touristic perspectives. More than just a mere natural site, Taishan appears both as a social space and a cultural landscape achieving its full meaning by the agency of culture and customs, which ultimately transform the natural area into a medium.<sup>386</sup>

On account of the great deal of cultural baggage carried by Taishan sceneries, one might wonder how a French amateur operator like Passet apprehended them. In truth he climbed this mountain by following a path similar to those taken by pilgrims or locals, stopping at specific spots, gazing at them from a specific angle, naming them in Chinese, and eventually photographing them. But how did he achieve such awareness? Being originally an amateur photographer not trained in sciences nor in Sinology, Passet had to develop an informed eye in order to approach Chinese famous sights accordingly. Yet despite the Musée Albert Kahn's recent effort to compile an internal document summarizing his life, the known biographical elements of Passet remain quite meagre. What is known is that Passet volunteered in the French Army for fifteen years, settled down in Paris in 1910, and worked for Kahn's Archives de la Planète from 1912 onwards. The circumstances of his previous training as a photographer and cameraman, as well as his recruitment, remain

<sup>385</sup> The Chinese classification of the Five Sacred Mountains is traditionally composed of the

actual mountains called Mount Tai (Shandong province), Mount Heng (Shanxi province), Mount Heng (Hunan province), Mount Hua (Shaanxi province), and Mount Song (Henan

province), along with others of slightly lesser importance. The types of worships practiced

include imperial ceremonies in homage to Heaven and Earth, individual worship of local or

deities (Taoists and Buddhists), and reverence to famous political personalities.

Kiyohiko

Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art* (Champaign, Ill.: Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ; Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1991), 4.

<sup>386</sup> Natsuko Akagawa and Tiamsoon Sirisrisak, "Cultural Landscapes in Asia and the Pacific:

Implications of the World Heritage Convention," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 14.2

(2008): 179. I am also indebted in Dott's conception of Taishan as a social landscape. Brian

Russell Dott, *Identity reflections: pilgrimages to Mount Tai in late Imperial China* (Cambridge:

Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 1;3.

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unknown. The visual archive left to us today reveal that two trips were organised in 1912 (between May and August) and 1913 (between the end of May and the end of June).<sup>387</sup> Passet and his team travelled across China, visiting and recording places such as Beijing (which composes a large part of the archive in China) and northern sites (Great Wall and Ming Tombs), Shenyang, Zhangjiakou, Qufu, Shanghai, places along the Yangtze River, and most importantly to the current research, Taishan.<sup>388</sup>

Similar to the other operators working on behalf of Kahn, Passet received special training in Paris beforehand. When Kahn launched the Archives de la Planète after his first business trip to China, he appointed the geographer Jean Brunhes (1869-1930) as the head of the project. Brunhes was described as 'an active man, young enough, having a good knowledge with travels abroad, and whose skills in geography were recognized.'<sup>389</sup> He was also a skilled photographer and was convinced that photography was a fundamental tool for education. Hence at first he argued in favour of enlisting professional photographers; a suggestion that Kahn refused. Therefore all the operators hired for the trip were exclusively independent, non-commercial and nonspecialist cameramen, including Passet.<sup>390</sup> Brunhes handled the necessary paperwork to obtain funding and authorisation to travel in the countries, while organising 'preparatory meetings' that consisted of intensive courses in Kahn's own private mansion.<sup>391</sup>

<sup>387</sup> An internal document about Passet's biography compiled by members of the Musée Albert

Kahn indicates his whereabouts as the following. Mai-August 1912: China. July 1912: Mongolia. August (?) 1912: Japan. September 1912: Turkey. December-January 1912-13:

Morocco. End of May to end of June 1913: China. July 1913: Mongolia. August-September

1913: Greece. October 1913: Bulgaria (...).

<sup>388</sup> The members of Passet's expedition remain unclear except of the mention of Dr Broquet,

Director of Beijing Bacteriological Institute, who sometimes accompanied Passet and helped

him with administrative and diplomatic issues. See postcards sent from Passet to Broquet

during his journey to China, Musée Albert Kahn digitized archives; *Autour Du Monde: Jean*

Brunhes, 197. According to the catalogue, Passet created a total of 43 autochromes in

Taishan. Musée Albert Kahn, *Chine = Zhongguo = China*, volume 1.

<sup>389</sup> Castro, "Les Archives de la Planète," 60.

<sup>390</sup> There were in total twelve operators working for the Archives de la Planète. Only Passet,

Dutertre and Gachet produced the totality of records in China.

<sup>391</sup> *Autour Du Monde: Jean Brunhes*, 205-216.

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During the long hours of these courses, Brunhes taught operators a country's characteristics and defined all the steps of each expedition. He first gave his publication *La géographie humaine* to all operators and explained to them where to go, and what to record with the assistance of multiple documents, such as Ordnance Survey maps, guidebooks, and photographs. Brunhes trained operators to follow his footsteps by adopting a type of photography he practised for his own research. A photography that involved inventorying any environment through the prisms of human activity, a phenomenon that he called 'human geography'.<sup>392</sup> This geographical input to the production of autochromes can be seen in the ways Passet visually described the topography. He was encouraged to use a gaze (regard in French) that 'showed', 'classified', 'combined', 'demonstrated', offered 'comparison by analogy' and 'captured in detail', amongst other elements that Brunhes conceived as efficient tools of reasoning and examining the 'proper physiognomy (...) that truly represents the type of a region'.<sup>393</sup> Eye catching and aesthetically convincing, autochromes were in fact valued as images offering an 'absolute exactitude' that pertained to academic disciplines.<sup>394</sup> It has been argued that Kahn chose this particular medium in order to produce a ground-breaking archive moving beyond 'out-of-date' guidebooks and 'dull' academic studies.<sup>395</sup> As Brunhes stated:

Autochromes constitute (...) an arsenal of revelations. Such an image tells more than dozens of pages (...). It expresses ideas and enables them to take a concrete and striking shape, which renders these very ideas more living while elevating them to the rank of truth.<sup>396</sup>

<sup>392</sup> Brunhes explained the concept as the following: '[The human geography] is a very special cluster of phenomena occurring on the surface of our planet, which are all these facts prompted by human activity.' Jean Brunhes, *La géographie humaine* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1910), 5-6.

<sup>393</sup> Brunhes, *La géographie humaine*, 143-144; *Autour Du Monde*: Jean Brunhes, 141-151.

<sup>394</sup> Victor Crémier, *La photographie des couleurs par les plaques autochromes* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1911), 86.

<sup>395</sup> Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 38.

<sup>396</sup> Jean Brunhes, *La géographie de l'histoire* (Paris: Libr. Delagrave, 1914), 7-8. 228

These ideals of seizing truth were nonetheless limited, mostly owing to the limitations of the technique itself. Necessitating a significant bulk of fragile and heavy materials composed of glass plates and chemicals, it produced a unique image obtained after a long time exposure. If this technique was claimed to merely require one-second exposure to capture an image, in reality and especially in the climatic context of China, time exposures were significantly lengthened most of the time.<sup>397</sup> Hence any autochrome of Taishan implied a thoroughly conceived composition taken slowly and carefully, using a tripod. This means effectively that the technique prevented any kind of effect of spontaneity. When Passet was afraid of not being able to 'seize the truth' because of technical constraints, he preferred to use film or shoot 'snapshots

in black and white right at the moment when the subject is not aware.'<sup>398</sup>

A letter dating from 8 May 1912 detailed further the visual standards advocated by Brunhes, especially in the context of China:

I gave you one of my 'Geographie humaine' in which you will find a general classification of all the facts of the surface of earth that attest human activity and ingenuity: 1st group; Facts of unproductive occupation of the soil: a) house b) roads. 2nd group; Facts of fauna and flora conquest, c) domestic animals, d) crops and gardens. 3rd group; Facts of destructive economy, e) flora and fauna devastation, f) mineral exploitation.<sup>399</sup>

In order to follow Brunhes' guidelines Passet first scouted a given area to search for the 'interesting elements and views that would be good to capture'.<sup>400</sup> Once the photography was completed, the operator then had the

<sup>397</sup> Notice sur l'emploi des plaques autochromes (Lyon-Monplaisir: Société anonyme des

plaques et papiers photographiques A. Lumière & ses fils, circa 1907).

<sup>398</sup> Passet's answer to Brunhes on 28 June 1912. Fonds Brunhes, Box 615 AP 4. Paris,

Archives nationales.

<sup>399</sup> Letter from Brunhes to Passet on 8 May 1912. Archives Mariel Jean Brunhes Delamarre.

<sup>400</sup> Letter from Passet to Brunhes on 24 July 1912. Archives Mariel Jean Brunhes Delamarre.

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duty to accompany all type of visual records with written summary sheets, which should apply the 'same format' and should:

(...) Indicate with exactitude the three following pieces of information: 1-Date (day and month and, if applicable, lights effects, hour). 2-Place (indicate the name of the village or of the corresponding spot and also information regarding the area, for instance 'Mukden surroundings'. 3-Subject matter (do not hesitate to explain the idea behind your choice, even though your interpretation is later considered as inaccurate, it will be very useful that you note your first impression.<sup>401</sup>

Passet adhered to these recommendations carefully, as demonstrated with the autochrome showing the Hill of the Horse Turning Back Gateway (Huima ling, 回馬嶺) located behind the Hall of the Primordial Sovereign (Yuanjun dian, 元君殿), named 'Hall of the Princess' by Passet (Figure 94). This gate's name alluded to the folk story that told it was impossible to ride a horse after this stage due to the steepness of the slope, forcing horses to turn their back. The painted red gate's inscribed lintel overlooked the viewer. Although placed at the centre of the composition, this simple one arch gateway barely emerged from its skyless surroundings comprised of a steep rocky mountain and large stone stairs. Corresponding with other autochromes, this picture was accompanied by a summary sheet that described the location of the spot by

naming it in both Chinese and French, and by giving some historical comments, or at least notes on the experience of visiting it.

Although letters clearly mentioned these summary sheets, in reality very few have survived.<sup>402</sup> Thus, we cannot know for sure whether they have been lost or were never rigorously compiled. Current conservators of the Musée Albert Kahn posit that the second hypothesis is the most likely.

Furthermore, the contemporary state of the archive indicates that Passet

<sup>401</sup> Letter from Brunhes to Kahn on 5 May 1912. Archives Mariel Jean Brunhes Delamarre.

<sup>402</sup> The original letters and documents exchanged mutually between Brunhes and Passet have

disappeared from the folder held now at the Archives Nationales de France in Paris. 230

possessed a diary or at least wrote a few notes providing information about the places visited.<sup>403</sup> Therefore one might assume he had a similar diary in China, but there is thus far no trace of it. Whether or not Passet possessed a diary in China, he did keep on sending Brunhes letters that reported the outcomes of his journey in the Middle Kingdom, including what he photographed.<sup>404</sup>

Figure 94 - Stéphane Passet, The gateway (paifang) behind the Yuanjundian ('Hall of the Princess'). The lintel bears the inscription:

'Huimaling' ('Hill of the Horse turning back'). This gateway was formerly known as Shiguan ('Stone Pass').

Porters, by their chairs, are resting on a flat landing of the path that leads up to the summit. 9th June 1913.

Autochrome, 12 x 9 cm (inv. A 1364).

Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.

<sup>403</sup> See "Carnet de prises de vues en Inde, 13 dec 1913 – 31 janvier 1914" and his notes

written in Mongolia typed later on. Digitized archives, Boulogne-Billancourt, Musée départemental Albert Kahn.



<sup>404</sup> See Passet's several letters sent to Brunhes in June 1912. Fonds Brunhes, Box 615AP/57.

Paris, Archives nationales.

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The apparent rigour of the recording methods did not exclude a certain degree of flexibility. Brunhes himself described them as embracing both 'artistic characteristics and scientific inspiration'.<sup>405</sup> Perhaps the artistic qualities relate to the fact that autochromes as he said 'accentuated' and somehow 'exaggerated' reality yet 'without altering' it per se.<sup>406</sup> Brunhes expected Passet to be intuitive, to produce photographs that were 'scientific without being systematic'.<sup>407</sup> As an illustration, documents indicate that between 1912 and 1913 Brunhes gave specific 'directives on recording views' (Directives sur les sujets à photographier en Chine) and on the choice of subject matter in China, while encouraging Passet to use his own gaze:

It goes without saying that all the instructions I have given to M. Passet should be laid down on an indicative basis; (...) it is not a sort of limitative rule.

M. Passet should always keep an open eye and shoot everything he believes is worthy of interest; the more he shows thoughtful initiative, the more satisfied with his services we will be.<sup>408</sup>

The picture of the Cloud Step Bridge (Yunbu qiao, 雲步橋) might illustrate this association of a both trained and intuitive eye (Figure 95). Unlike the habitual representations of this place that revolved around the depiction of the imposing one-arch bridge measuring over twelve meters long and six meters high, Passet chose to stand at the beginning of the bridge and framed the nearby waterfall. Despite the difficulty to seize movements and sharp details because of the autochrome technique, Passet succeeded in capturing the erratic shapes of the slope, as well as the whirling waves of water, where the

<sup>405</sup> Quoted from Brunhes' course about the Balkans. Fonds Brunhes, Box 615AP/101, Paris,

Archives nationales.

<sup>406</sup> Brunhes' discourse and projection of autochromes in front of French President, 20 December 1913, typed document. Fonds Brunhes, Box 615AP/101, Paris, Archives nationales.

<sup>407</sup> Jean Brunhes, *Races* (Paris: Firmin-Didot et cie, 1930), 14.

<sup>408</sup> Quotation: letter from Brunhes to Kahn on 15 May 1912. Archives Mariel Jean Brunhes

Delamarre. See documents mentioning 'Directives sur les sujets à photographier en Chine'

sent by Brunhes to Passet in 1912 and the 'Directives de prise de vues en Chine du Nord'

sent by Brunhes to Passet in 1913. Fonds Brunhes, Box 615AP/57, Paris, Archives Nationales.

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profuse spray misted the air. The various colours nicely interacted with one another: the dark green of the moss growing on rocks; the whiteness of the waterfall and sun's reflection on flattened rocks; and the dark grey tones of the rest of the mountain slope.

Figure 95 – Stéphane Passet, At the level of the Yunbuqiao ('Bridge of the Step

in the Storm-Clouds'), the waterfall, some rocks are carved with poetic inscriptions, 9th June 1913. Autochrome, 12 x 9 cm (inv. A 1358). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète. His preliminary knowledge, thanks to the training received in Paris, did certainly help to motivate him to stop at this place, especially in order to capture the carved inscriptions near the waterfall outing. Some are carved and coloured in red on the right side, indicating the name of the spot. Others on the left are simply carved and left in the original colour of the rock. To the eyes of local people, these inscriptions bore historical and cultural meanings as

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they conjured up imperial stories, legends, and even poems. By (fictionally or actually) visiting and compiling poems in this place, historical personalities turned this scenery into a spot one should pay tribute to. Although its legendary and historical stories remained unchanged, the bridge itself experienced significant transformations. Its original wooden structure was rebuilt in stone during the Republican period and it swapped its old name Snowflake bridge (Xuehua qiao, 雪花橋) for Yunbu.<sup>409</sup> Both names however evoke the mist that frequently stuck in the nearby trees and which probably caught the attention of Passet.

Negotiating textual and visual sources

The Cloud Step Bridge like most of the sights Passet captured were already known and present in Chinese visual culture for centuries. Readers familiar with local primary sources would certainly have recognized this image because this spot was traditionally listed and illustrated in Taishan local written sources, which are commonly named local gazetteers (difang zhi, 地方誌). But can we assume that Passet had to access such sources? To what extent did his approach parallel local geographic conceptions of Taishan? As I said, preparatory meetings made by the head of the project, Brunhes, offered operators the chance to get a better understanding of Chinese landscape thanks to disparate sources. Although current archives do not explicitly confirm the ones they might have based their knowledge on, it seems fair to speculate that Brunhes shared contemporary guidebooks and research that had been recently published or shown at that time notably during the Société Autour du Monde (1906-49) meetings. This private society founded by Kahn was a convivial and cosmopolitan organization gathering a limited circle of educated people in Kahn's own private mansion in Boulogne-Billancourt. It provided a networking platform that involved the exchange of intercultural ideas about cooperation and knowledge, displayed the latest operators' outcomes and invited special guests, such as archaeologists. We know for

<sup>409</sup> According to the other picture that preceded the one above, it seems the Cloud Step Bridge was still made of wood when Passet crossed it.

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instance that Pelliot – discussed in Chapter four – presented the findings of his archaeological expedition in Chinese Turkestan on November 1909.<sup>410</sup> On that account one might conjecture that other contemporary archaeologists' works were also known to this elite group, such as the authoritative Chavannes' *Le T'ai Chan: essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* [Taishan: attempted monograph of a Chinese cult] published a few

years before Passet's departure to China (1911). This publication on Taishan was the result of two journeys through the mountain in January 1891 and June 1907.<sup>411</sup> As indicated in the title, this book was a monograph that intended to examine the history of the religious cult associated with this sacred mountain. Composed of a total of six chapters, it chiefly focused on the analysis of religion, folk beliefs, and customs, as well as the epigraphy that was a cherished domain in French Sinology at that time. Of particular interest is chapter two which provided the majority of photographs that captured primarily human imprints to the mountain, including steep paths, stelae, architecture (gates, archways, pavilions, kiosks, temples, and so forth), and artefacts found in shrines or temples (Figure 96).

<sup>410</sup> Musée Albert Kahn, Chine = Zhongguo = China, 23.

<sup>411</sup> The photographs published were taken during the second journey. Chavannes, Le T'ai

Chan, 2.

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Figure 96 –

Édouard Chavannes,

[Shandong,

Taishan]. Les

dernières rampes

d'escaliers avant

d'arriver à Nan

t'ien men

[Nantianmen]

[Shandong, Taishan,

last stairs handrails

before reaching

Nantianmen]. 1907.

After a silver gelatin

glass plate, 06 x 09

cm (AP12783) ©

MNAAG.

Chavannes focused his attention on the steep path leading to the South Heaven Gate (Nantian men) at the top of the mountain edge, offering an almost phenomenological approach to the mountain. The utilization of an extreme low angle view allowed Chavannes to emphasize on the strenuous and unstable stone stairs. The general composition offered an almost unbreathable space, with a sense of spontaneity thanks to the Chinese coolies gazing at us. The photographs were not arranged randomly nor did they function independently. Instead, Chavannes compiled a catalogue of photographs and engravings depicting traditionally recognized attractions that were arranged in sequence from the top to the bottom of the mountain. He accompanied the images with meticulous 'picturesque descriptions' of Taishan through a long  
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enumeration of attractions and their associated stories.<sup>412</sup> Chavannes even compiled his own map that comprised two hundred and fifty two scenic attractions. By doing so, he ameliorated what he considered to be the existing 'poorly engraved' and 'illegible' maps, enriching considerably the type of geographical record that was usually found in local gazetteers (Figure 97).<sup>413</sup>

Figure 97 – Map indicating Taishan’s scenic attractions. Chavannes, *Le T’ai Chan*, no page figure 1. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

On this map, the places considered as noteworthy for their scenery or historic interest (*mingsheng*) are named in cartouches, which are themselves placed accordingly to their geographic localisation.

<sup>412</sup> Chavannes, *Le T’ai Chan*, 44.

<sup>413</sup> Among Chavannes’ sources: Albert Tschepe, *Der T'ai-Schan Und Seine Kultstätten*

(Jentschoufu [China: Druck und Verlag der Katholischen Mission, 1906]; Qi Jin, *Taishan Zhi*:

[20 Juan] (China: publisher not identified, 1808); Qian Huang and Rulin Xiao, *Tai'an Xian Zhi*:

Shi Er Juan, *Juan Shou Yi Juan*, *Juan Mo Yi Juan* (China: publisher not identified, 1782); Wen

Nie, *Taishan Dao Li Ji* (China: publisher not identified, 1878). He found additional information

in travelogues from 1830 and 1902, Taoists treatises, and Western publications.

Chavannes,

*Le T’ai Chan*, 2; 44. Chavannes is not a unique example that engaged in dialogue with

Chinese sources. Around a decade later, the American missionary and explorer William Edgar

Geil (1865-1925) also reproduced illustrated maps found in Chinese local gazetteers. William

E. Geil, *The Sacred 5 of China* (London: C.W. Daniel Co, 1926).

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But what were local gazetteers? This distinct literary genre was established sometime in the Song Dynasty (960-1279) though it originated from the older Zhou Dynasty’s (circa 1045-256 B.C.) requirements to submit geographical information to central government.<sup>414</sup> These written sources were cumulative records of a local area, encompassing chronicles of the history, the taxes, the topography, the state of affairs, the literature, and biographies of noted people published in a book format. They were generally arranged by topic and often offered illustrations and lists of locations regarded as noteworthy, lists from which modern guidebooks might have drawn their inspiration. These noteworthy places were those defined as *mingsheng* (名勝), which is a Chinese word that means place famous for its scenery or historic interest, and what I have commonly termed famous sights since the beginning of this chapter.<sup>415</sup> Illustrations of these famous sights in local gazetteers were generally inserted in a first section called ‘overall picture’ (*quantu*, 全圖), and sometimes also inserted in another section named ‘pictures canon’ (*tujing*, 圖經).

Intriguingly, both the notion of famous sights and local gazetteers were

historically tied to the premises of tourism in China. Gazetteers had long been regarded as a form of travel writing, helping men and women, officials and commoners, locals and non-locals, to familiarize themselves with a local area.<sup>416</sup> Moreover, despite their earlier origins, the compilation of local gazetteers occurred principally in concomitance with the emergence of tourism during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The Ming period in particular

<sup>414</sup> Joseph Dennis, *Writing, publishing, and reading local gazetteers in imperial China, 1100-1700* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2015), 22-24; James M. Hargett, "Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers and Their Place in the History of Difangzhi Writing," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 56.2 (1996): 405-442.

<sup>415</sup> According to the social historian Pál, the term mingsheng is a contraction of mingshan shengdi (名山勝地), literally famous mountains and famous scenic attractions. Pál Nyíri, *Scenic Spots: Chinese Tourism, the State, and Cultural Authority* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 7. Naquin offered an in-depth analysis of guides and local gazetteers related to Beijing scenic spots. Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 251-254.

<sup>416</sup> The historian Dennis indicated that although gazetteers remained non-commercial books with limited distribution channels, its readership extended beyond the elite (albeit representing the majority) to reach also a wider audience. Dennis, *Writing, publishing, and reading local gazetteers*, chapter "Target audiences and distribution". 238

inaugurated the 'vogue for the grand tour' (zhuangyou, 壯游) at the local level for the Chinese gentry, which in turn gave rise to an increase in the production of written travel accounts.<sup>417</sup> The culture of must-see attractions is also argued to be connected to pictorial traditions, such as representations of a place through a set of eight significant scenes – called Eight Scenes (bajing, 八景) – , which was a pictorial genre particularly popular in the Song period (960-1279).<sup>418</sup> Regardless of the locality, the list of famous sights constantly changed throughout centuries, as more places were added. They could be added based on various criteria or on governmental regulations.<sup>419</sup> For instance, in 1928, the Ministry of Interior designated a list of ten articles that defined what constituted 'places of historic interest and scenic beauty' or 'scenic attractions and historic sites' (mingsheng guji, 名勝古跡).<sup>420</sup> According to the official document, the notion of mingsheng guji comprised famous mountains (mingshan, 名山), ancient cities (gudai mingchengguan, 古代名城關), and ancient tombs (gudai lingmu, 古代陵墓). The attentiveness to register

natural and cultural patrimony should also be linked to other sections present in gazetteers, which incorporated detailed lists of 'Mountains and Rivers' (shanchuan, 山川) and 'Antiquities' (guji, 古蹟). This latest additional official

<sup>417</sup> Li-tsui Flora Fu, *Framing famous mountains: grand tour and mingshan paintings in sixteenth-century China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese university Press, 2009), xvii; Siyen Fei,

"Ways of looking: the creation and social use of urban guidebooks in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century China," *Urban History* 37 (2010): 226-248; Timothy Brook, *Geographical*

*sources of Ming-Qing history* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988), 4; 33-34.

<sup>418</sup> Siyen Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space: Urbanization and Late Ming Nanjing* (Cambridge,

Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 150; Andrea Janku, "Landscapes of Production–

Landscapes of Consumption: Famous Views in Linfen, Then and Now" (paper presented for

the First Conference of East Asian Environmental History, Taipei, Academia Sinica, October

24-26, 2011), 6.

<sup>419</sup> A river or a mountain, for instance, previously unlisted could be recorded if a famous

person wrote a commemorative poem about it. Dennis, *Writing, publishing, and reading local gazetteers*, 39-40.

<sup>420</sup> See manuscript *Mingsheng guji guwu baocun tiaoli* 名勝古蹟古物保存條例

[Ordonnance on

the protection of famous sites and antiquities], 1928-1929, 026000015002A. Taipei, Academia

Historica.

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category of 'Antiquities' also included the identification of 'scenic sites' (jingyu, 景物), with some of them even illustrated with engravings.<sup>421</sup>

Mentioning local gazetteers as suitable models that might have informed photographic representations seems justified by the tide of gazetteer publishing that flourished from the 1860s until the Republican period in the early twentieth-century – with a peak in the 1880s.<sup>422</sup> This powerful publishing surge is often attributed on the one hand to Chinese growing antiquarian interest, and on the other to the succession of wars and rebellions' which left a wake of devastation in the second half of the nineteenth-century that encouraged like-minded intellectuals to seek to reconstruct their social world.<sup>423</sup> By reprinting and compiling ancient gazetteers, publishing houses reintroduced a specific way of moving in and reading the landscape.<sup>424</sup> Overall the notion of famous sights was conceived as a given place being divided up into a series of attractions, which the reader/viewer was assumed to acknowledge. It corresponded to a governmental and social tool for placemaking that offered codes of behaviour in face of the landscape.

The point of discussing these potential textual and visual sources was to

consider the operators' awareness of pre-existing geographical conceptions and the extent to which they might have responded to them. The first and perhaps most significant issue in answering this question confidently is the clear lack of information. Contemporary archives left between the Musée Albert Kahn, the Archives nationales de France, and the Bibliothèque

<sup>421</sup> The 'Antiquities' category during Yuan period encompassed: Ruins of walls and moats.

Buildings. Graves. Passes. Cliffs and caves. Gardens. Wells and springs. Dams and Levees.

Scenic Sites. Dennis, Writing, publishing, and reading local gazetteers, 41-42.

<sup>422</sup> Janku, "Landscapes of Production," 1; Peter K. Bol, "The Rise of Local History: History,

Geography, and Culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic*

*Studies* 61, no. 1 (2001): 38; Leslie, Donald, "Local Gazetteers," in *Essays on the Sources for*

*Chinese History*, ed. Leslie, Donald, Colin Mackerras, Gungwu Wang, and C P. Fitzgerald

(Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 71-73.

<sup>423</sup> Brook, *Geographical Sources*, 33.

<sup>424</sup> Moving and seeing within a specific landscape might also echoed with the spatial experience in Chinese tradition of garden appreciation. Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden*

*Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Stanislaus Fung,

"Longing and belonging in Chinese garden history," in *Perspectives on Garden Histories*, ed.

Michel Conan (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1999),

205-219.

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nationale de France provide scattered and fragmentary information, with some sources apparently lost. Hence, one should be cautious in suggesting that Brunhes and Passet would have come across Chinese sources. Besides, guidebooks were more likely to have served as a source, especially with a growing number of Chinese guidebooks that must have served as a source of information for Western guidebooks. However, whether or not Passet entered to direct or indirect dialogue with local conceptions, his autochromes' sequence, the shooting angles, and labelling all demonstrate a reasonable analogy with gazetteers. For instance, the South Heaven Gate (Nantianmen, 南天門), the Ten Thousand Immortals Tower (Wanxian lou, 萬仙樓), and the Azure Clouds Temple (Bixia ci or Bixia gong, 碧霞祠 or 碧霞宮) were amongst the attractions depicted by Passet that were similarly listed in a Taishan gazetteer dating from the nineteenth century.<sup>425</sup>

If we were to attempt a visual comparison between photographs of famous sights and their engraved counterparts found in local gazetteers, we would notice a fair number of similitudes but these are accompanied still by inevitable discrepancies. Such a comparison enables us to easily understand that the pictorial space is used in an utterly different manner between the two

sources. The images depicting South Heaven Gate might serve as examples (Figures 98 and 99). They unveiled alternative ways of framing by notably withdrawing the traditional bird's-eye view and focus on mountain peaks, in order to replace it with an eye-level or low angle view.<sup>426</sup> Whereas in the gazetteer's engraving the gate stood out clearly from the mountain's top, as if seen from the sky. Still in both images, the recognizable steep stairs stretching to the gate-tower occupied an important place. In that sense although the angle is totally different, both images included what we might qualify as the compulsory components that enabled readers to identify the place, which was in this case the gate and the stairway leading to it.

<sup>425</sup> Taishan xianzhi (unknown publisher, 1828).

<sup>426</sup> The flattening of the bird's-eye view thanks to photography is an idea informed by Kim's

study that similarly examines famous sights photography in Japan during the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century. Gyewon Kim, "Registering the Real: Photography and the

Emergence of New Historic Sites in Meiji Japan" (PhD diss., McGill University Library, 2010),

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Figure 98 – (Left) Stéphane Passet, Nantianmen ('Heavenly Gate of the South'). Built in 1264, at an altitude of 1,460 m. The vaulted passageway is surmounted by the Mokongge ('Pavilion touching the Void'), with its roof in yellow glazed tiles. The gate is also called Santianmen ('Third Heavenly Gate'). 9th June 1913. Autochrome, 9 x 12 cm (inv. A 1365). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.

Figure 99 – (Right) Taishan tuzhi 泰山圖誌 (unknown publisher, 1774), juan 1.

Source: Shuzi fangzhi 數字方志 Database, Beijing, National Library of China.

In the Figure on the left, the South Heaven Gate was shot from one of the ideal spots that enabled the operator to have a slight view from up high while capturing the nearby mountains slopes. The picture shows the front gate and the extent to which the red wall painting deteriorated over time. The greyish staircase climbed down in front of the massive two-levelled architecture of the gate.

Other examples such as autochromes of the Azure Clouds Temple (Bixiaci) – located at the highest part of Taishan – moved beyond traditional map-like representations of architecture in local gazetteers (Figures 100 to 102). They instead portrayed in series the various components of the architectural complex as one would see them when visiting the site, starting from the stairs leading to the main gate, the inside courtyards, and finally the inside components belonging to the cult. Dedicated to the Goddess of Taishan, this building complex was first erected during the Northern Song dynasty (960 - 1127) around the year 1000 and extensively rebuilt and extended in later times. Like its constant reconstructing, its denomination changed several

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times over the centuries until the Qing Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (reign 1736-95) set it.

Figure 100 – (Left) Stéphane Passet – Bixiaci ('Temple of the Coloured



Clouds'). View of the south-west part of the site and of the monumental stairway that leads to Xishenmen ('Divine Gate of the West'). The temple is the principal sanctuary devoted to Bixia Yuanjun ('Princess of the Coloured Clouds'). It was built during the Dazhong Xiangfu era (1008-1016), and modified under the Ming, then under the Qing. 9th June 1913. Autochrome, 9 x 12 cm (inv. A 1366). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.

Figure 101 – (Right) Stéphane Passet, Bixiaci ('Temple of the Coloured Clouds'). Main courtyard. Yubeiting ('Pavilion of the Imperial Stele'). In the foreground, a tripod incense-burner and two recipients for incense sticks. To the left, Songshengdian, one of the secondary pavilions, with a roof covered in iron tiles. 9th June 1913. Autochrome, 9 x 12 cm (inv. A 1368). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.  
Figure 102 –

Taishan tuzhi 泰山

圖誌 (unknown

publisher, 1774).

The Azure Clouds

Temple is circled in

blue. Source: Shuzi

fangzhi Database,

Beijing, National

Library of China.

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If local gazetteers' impact remained limited to a Chinese-speaking audience, the wide international diffusion of photographs representing famous sights allowed the local concept of famous sights to widen its scope. In regards to Passet's autochromes, back in France, the first function of these collected images was to render them accessible via the formal gatherings of the Société Autour du Monde, whose members convened every Sunday for informal luncheons, private autochrome projections and film screenings.<sup>427</sup> As an example, Kahn organized a celebration of Chrysanthemums on 6 November 1912, in which he showed his guests Passet's autochromes depicting Manchuria and Beijing.<sup>428</sup> Moreover, it is also known that autochromes of China were shown to numerous Chinese guests specially invited by Kahn during the 1920s.<sup>429</sup> Hence, borrowing the scholar Stanislas Fung's concepts, it may be argued that such landscape photographs – the kind informed by culturally fixed scenic attractions – offered the possibility of thinking in terms of a 'polar relation'. Moving beyond oppositional relationships, this concept conveyed a form of 'mutuality, interdependence, diversity, and creative efficacy (...)' with foreign operators being informed by Chinese conceptions, and vice versa.<sup>430</sup>

Outside the walls of Kahn's mansion, the autochromes were shown in conferences organized in prestigious institutions, such as the Collège de France where Brunhes was teaching, at the Société de géographie, the Ecole Polytechnique, the Royal Society in London, at the University of Cambridge, and in various conferences held in other countries like Canada, Spain and Switzerland.<sup>431</sup> To offer one relevant example, Chavannes included some of Passet's autochromes depicting Taishan during his conference held at the

<sup>427</sup> Amad, Counter-Archive, 32.

<sup>428</sup> Jeanne Beausoleil and Pascal Ory, Albert Kahn, 1860-1940: réalités d'une utopie (Boulogne: Musée Albert Kahn, 1995), 241.

<sup>429</sup> See the catalogue of portraits of Chinese guests, whose descriptions mention they attended autochromes projection. Musée Albert Kahn, Chine = Zhongguo = China, 59-82.

<sup>430</sup> Stanislas Fung and Mark Jackson, "Dualism and Polarism: Structures of Architectural and Landscape Architectural Discourse in China and the West," *Interstices* (Auckland) 4 (1996): 3-4.

<sup>431</sup> Internal records divulged that around fifteen projections were planned between 1913 and 1931. Boulogne-Billancourt, Musée départemental Albert Kahn. 244

Sorbonne on 20 December 1913.<sup>432</sup> This attests to the extent of the circulation of information and images as well as the unceasingly shifting functions that these photographs played.

Passet's autochromes of China were also published in popular illustrated periodicals, such as one issue of the *National Geographic* in May 1922 (Figure 103). Entitled "In the Land of Kublai Khan" several pages displayed a total of sixteen autochromes which presented a selection of diverse locations in Mongolia and China, with their accompanying captions describing succinctly the subject matter. Although this issue did not include Taishan pictures, it enables the viewer to gain an idea of the type of topics depicted in the archive, namely landscape, people, garden, sculpture, key monuments such as the Summer Palace, and stereotyped views of punishment. Two years later the French periodical, *Science et voyages*, gave Passet the opportunity not only to show his pictures, but also to write about his journey to Confucius' tomb in Qufu. In response Passet explained and illustrated, step by step, how one would visit the place. Passet's photographs thus attest to the dual nature of local and global interest in popular tourist attractions established in the early decades of the twentieth-century.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>432</sup> Édouard Chavannes, "De quelques idées morales des Chinois," *Bulletin de la société*

*Autour du Monde* no.1 January-May (1918): 47-53; Musée Albert Kahn, Chine = Zhongguo =

China, volume 1, 19.

<sup>433</sup> Stéphane Passet, "Une Visite au tombeau de Confucius," *Sciences et voyages* no.233

February 14 (1924): unknow pages.

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Figure 103 - Stéphane Passet, "In the Land of Kublai Khan: Sixteen Illustrations in Full Color, Autochromes," *The National Geographic Magazine* May volume XLI number 5 (1922): plates VI and VII.

Despite these occurrences of diffusion and the original ideal to 'spread in France exact knowledge about countries abroad (...) and work towards a better understanding and appreciation of everything we can call international civilization', it has also been argued that the Archives de la Planète remained largely isolated from a general audience.<sup>434</sup> First, the archive had never been

the subject of public exhibition or public consultation. Second, it was argued that the discreet behaviour of Kahn himself and the seizure of his possessions during the French Occupation in World War II (1939-45) amplified such limitations.<sup>435</sup> One might ask if this is the case why is it important to study such an archive if it remained mainly private? I would like to argue that despite their somewhat restricted diffusion the content of the archive are retrospectively reflective of a change in photographic practices, specifically the emergence of coherent bodies of landscape photographs concentrating and elaborating on Chinese local conceptions of famous sights. Whether or not photographs did consciously or unconsciously refer to Chinese customs, they entered into a 'correlative thinking', in which a foreign operator borrowed views traditionally

<sup>434</sup> Statuts de la Société Autour du Monde. Archives du Musée Albert Kahn 1 January 1913, 7.

<sup>435</sup> Flora Blanchon, *Banquier, Savant, Artiste: présences françaises en Extrême-Orient Au XXe siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 11. 246

enlisted as worthy to look at in Chinese culture, while ascribing their own cultural and personal standpoint that consequently enriched the traditional schemata.<sup>436</sup> Besides the fact of naming accordingly granted a 'sense of exactness' to the image while legitimizing the viewer.<sup>437</sup>

#### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued in favour of an emerging cross-cultural dimension bestowed on landscape photographs of famous sights during the first half of the twentieth-century. In order to dig into this shift, I have focused on landscape representations of Taishan, the celebrated mountain. First I situated the photographs within a broader context of the democratization of Chinese scenic attractions by analysing the interconnections between the production of photography and the development of railways and guidebooks. In other words, I connected the images with the emergence of modern tourism. Following this, I interpreted the trained amateur Stéphane Passet's autochromes of Taishan, taken within the framework of the privately funded project *Les Archives de la Planète*. I evaluated the extent to which this body of material could have been informed by Chinese cultural-habits, which proceeded from a methodical training based on pre-existing sources. Amongst such sources, there are good reasons to believe that Chinese local gazetteers helped the operator to clarify which scenic attractions were traditionally valued and where they were located.

Adopting this argument eventually enabled me to connect all the Sections of this thesis together. Landscapes of famous sights of this period drew in some respects upon earlier practices. They pertained both to candid souvenir images (Section I) and academic surveys (Section II). However, what changed was not solely the subject matter addressed, but also the operators' capability to read the landscape by knowing how to move within space, how to name a spot, and how to depict it. This phenomenon mainly owed to the democratization of knowledge about Chinese history and culture. As a result, since operators knew how and what to represent, there was no necessity to

<sup>436</sup> Fung and Jackson, "Dualism and Polarism," 4.

<sup>437</sup> Edwards, "Photography and the Material Performance," 144.

compile an exhaustive quantity of photographs and instead they made a selection based on an existing knowledge. The next chapter and the conclusion will further develop this analysis of famous sights photographs as a 'medium of exchange' between local and international audiences by scrutinizing its peculiar involvement in Chinese publishing culture.<sup>438</sup>

<sup>438</sup> The concept of landscape as medium of exchange is informed by: W J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5. 248

Figure 104 - Yanpei Huang and Yu Zhuang, *Zhongguo Mingsheng - Taishan* [Scenic China - Taishan] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1915), unnumbered page. Page showing pictures number 20 and 21:

(20) 日觀峰。在玉皇頂東南，夜半可以眺見浴日，故名。

Sun viewing peak. To the southeast of the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang) summit, we can contemplate the sun [rising from the sea] in the early morning, thus it was named as such.

(21) 泰山頂觀雲海。四望如洪波掀涌，萬峰僅露其頂，若海島孤立，可謂極宇宙之奇觀。

Sea of clouds at the Taishan summit. We see towards four directions, clouds agitated like waves, ten thousand peaks are hidden below [this sea of clouds], which are like isolated islands in the ocean. It is truly a unique view in the whole of creation.

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## CHAPTER SIX – ENTERING THE REALM OF PUBLISHING CULTURE

### Introduction

In the preceding chapter I have sketched out the formation of a photographic genre elaborating on the concept of famous sights (mingsheng) by paralleling it with possible intercultural referencing and broader processes related to the democratization of sightseeing in China. In order to pursue the discussion on what I argue constitutes another visual pattern in the evolution of landscape photography in early-twentieth century China, I would like in this chapter to examine the maturing of the genre in Chinese publishing culture and assess its relationship to local and international audiences.

Here again the focus on what I have termed French archives goes beyond the exploration of merely material connected to French operators. Instead, it aspires to delve into material attesting to French interest and awareness of photographic activity in China as – in many regards – it enables one to grasp the larger framework. This is how paying attention to the photographic collection of the French literati and journalist Le Roux (mentioned in Chapter two) enabled me to uncover another significant case study, which provides a fair number of analogies with French operators' photographs. This case study examines in particular the series of publications published by the Commercial Press of Shanghai which were richly illustrated by photographs of famous sights or scenic views, namely *Scenic China* (*Zhongguo mingsheng*, 中國名勝).<sup>439</sup> Le Roux owned two volumes and donated them to the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 1927, attesting to a certain level of awareness amongst the French audiences of the changing nature of publishing culture in China. It is not surprising that someone like Le

Roux collected such publications. Being a prolific writer, he also compiled travelogues of his journeys across the world and illustrated them with his own  
<sup>439</sup> This chapter was presented as a conference paper. "Publishing landscape photography:

The Commercial Press of Shanghai and its books series 'Scenic China"', Between Region and Discipline, National Taiwan University and SOAS Postgraduate Conference, SOAS, University of London, United Kingdom, October 13, 2014.

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photographs.<sup>440</sup> Primary sources written by the author confirmed that he travelled to China, where one might speculate he came across and eventually bought the two volumes of Scenic China.

Published between 1914 and 1936 (including re-editions), this series of twenty-two volumes offers around thirty pages of photographic prints taken in places across China – mostly mountains – noted for their historical and/or picturesque interest. Yet Scenic China has received surprisingly little scholarly attention thus far.<sup>441</sup> Although there is an existing literature about the general history of the Commercial Press of Shanghai, the series Scenic China is entirely absent in these studies.<sup>442</sup> This might be due to the lack of primary sources covering the totality of the Commercial Press' production.

How is it possible to argue that the formation of a coherent genre radiated from this specific book series? How did Scenic China photographs connect different producers and audiences with one another? And what does an attention to Scenic China teach us about changing practices and functions in landscape photography in the early twentieth-century-China? The analytical framework of this last chapter has been formed in the process of reconstituting

<sup>440</sup> In addition of his own writings Le Roux had collected throughout his life a profusion of articles related to the Far East, which he eventually donated to the Bibliothèque nationale de

France. Hugues Le Roux, *Au Sahara* (Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1891); Hugues Le Roux,

*La France et le monde* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1917), 201. See also his archive held at the

Bibliothèque nationale de France. Archives Hugues Le Roux [Document d'archives]: copies

dactylographiées d'articles parus dans diverses revues et concernant principalement l'Extrême-Orient. Far East: volumes 1 to 7, 1 and 2 bis. SG COLIS- 93-101.

<sup>441</sup> Only a few scholars have provided limited preliminary studies while calling for further

research on the topic of photographs of scenic sites. For instance, Gu and Chan allude to the

Scenic China series, and Yang offers a complete study of the volume about 'West Lake'. Gu,

"Scientizing Vision in China," 56; Pedith Chan, "The Representation of China's Natural

Heritage: Nationalism, Tourism and Picturesque Landscape" (paper presented at the 20th

Biennial European Association for Chinese Studies, Portugal, July 23 - 26 2014); Wang, "Perceptions of Change," 73-122.

<sup>442</sup> Among the plethora of studies, the following ones are regarded as seriously documented and/or up-to-date. Yang Yang, *Shangwu yinshuguan: minjian chubanye de xingshuai* (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000); Guo Chen, *Shangwu yinshuguan Shanghai yinshua changjian chang 100 zhou nian: 1897-1997* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan Shanghai yinshuachang, 1997); *Shangwu yinshuguan dashiji* (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1987); Jean Pierre Drège, *La Commercial Press De Shanghai, 1897-1949* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1978). Reports published in the early twentieth century by the Commercial Press also supply detailed information regarding the history of the publishing house, its distribution services, its organizational structure, its regulations, and its published volumes. See all the *Shangwu yinshuguan tushu huibao*; Yu Zhuang and Shengnai He, *Zuijin sanshiwu nian zhi Zhongguo jiaoyu: Shangwu yinshuguan chuangli sanshiwu nian jinian kan* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1931); *Shangwu yinshuguan chengji gailue* (Buxiang: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1914).

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the integrity of the Scenic China series, while simultaneously analysing a particular case study that directly connects with the previous chapter. Specifically, by exploring the volume in Scenic China dedicated to Taishan. The primary goal of this chapter then is to complete the characterization of famous sights photography in the first decades of the twentieth century, while gauging how it participated in changing the practices and functions of the photographic image at that time.

The modelling of a coherent photographic genre

Figure 104 shows a delicate grid-like composition, composed of two black and white photographs that were superimposed on one another with shamrock leaves drawn as if they were growing from the photographs themselves, while going partly out of the frame on the top left corner. Focusing on the photographs themselves, the viewer discovers on the right hand side of the page a rocky mountain peak filled with what resembles stela bearing Chinese inscriptions, and on the left hand side of the page a high angle view spanning a walled groups of buildings facing one another, opening on to a dense clouds zone. Red captions circumscribe the images, contrasting with the black tones of the pictures. Mingling Chinese and English, these captions were numbered and identified the place depicted, the Jade Emperor Peak (Yuhuang, named after the eponymous temple nearby), which is the tallest spot in the mountain. This Figure was actually one page of an illustrated volume, which in turn belonged to a whole series of publications entitled

Scenic China. This series contained a total of twenty-two soft-cover volumes that dealt with what was regarded as significant sceneries in China, with a particular emphasis placed on revered mountains.

The volume dedicated to Taishan was amongst the volumes that were re-edited a number of times. It was also the only volume that was used to form a special 'not-for-sale' (feimaipin, 非賣品) volume combining both Taishan and Confucius tomb's photographs.<sup>443</sup> The Taishan volume was first edited in 1915  
<sup>443</sup> Amongst the Scenic China volumes that were re-edited more than three times there are:

Xihu (re-edited seven times); Putuoshan (re-edited five times); Konglin (re-edited five times);  
and Taishan (re-edited four times).

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and then re-edited four times until 1926. Its re-editions involved a minimal reorganization of the photographs.<sup>444</sup> One of the main motivations to study this specific book series was its strong visual connections with the photographs of Taishan I presented in the preceding chapter. Amongst several comparable depictions, there is the Daizong archway (Daizong fang, 岱宗坊) both appearing in Chavannes' monograph and in Scenic China – Taishan (Figures 105 and 106). Built in the Ming Dynasty, this arch was rebuilt around the 1730s under the reign of Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (1723 - 1735) during the last Qing Dynasty. Inscribed with golden characters that evoked the older name of Taishan (Daizong), this arch marked the starting point of the ascent. The two photographs offered a frontal shot of the gate whose straight stone structures counteracted with the diagonal angle of the tree and its fuzzy foliage on the left side. The identification of this spot was facilitated by the representations of its distinguishable components, which included the bending over tree with its tortuous trunk and the three arches gate that opened out onto a paved path. A discrete human figure was placed in front and to the right of the gate arches in Chavannes' picture, in order to give a sense of scale while adding a snapshot effect, which evaded Scenic China's picture. In a similar fashion, several of the subject matters of Passet's autochromes were analogous to Scenic China's photographs (Figures 107 and 108). If these differing collections of photographs completed their visual portrayal of Taishan distinctly, they all followed a path with a similar sequence of attractions located along a route leading either to the top or the bottom of the mountain.<sup>445</sup>

<sup>444</sup> Later re-editions of Taishan volume, for instance, include slightly more photographs; some

were re-taken in slightly different angles, while being arranged in slightly different sequence.

These observations were made on volumes currently held in Beijing National Library, Fudan

University Library (Shanghai), Shanghai Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

<sup>445</sup> Scenic China and Chavannes' monograph closed by depicting the Temple to the God of

Taishan (Dai miao, 岱廟), whereas Passet ended with a record of the Azure Clouds Temple (Bixia ci).

Figure 105 – (Left) Huang and Zhuang, Zhongguo Mingsheng - Taishan, unnumbered page. Page showing picture 2:

(2) 岱宗坊。在泰安城北門外約一裡，登岱者必經此。

Daizong archway. Located around five hundred and seventy meters to the northern gate of Tai'an city, one who is climbing the Daizong [Taishan] must pass this.

Figure 106 – (Right) Édouard Chavannes, [Shandong, Taishan]. Arc de triomphe T'ai tsong fang [Taizongfang], 1907. After a silver gelatin glass plate, 06 x 09 cm (AP12790) © MNAAG.

Figure 107 – (Left) Stéphane Passet, Duisongshan ('Mountain facing the Pine'), also called Wansongshan ('Ten-Thousand-Pine Mountain'). Situated below the Nantianmen ('Heavenly Gate of the South'). 9th June 1913. Autochrome, 9 x 12 cm (inv. A 1364). Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée Albert-Kahn, collection des Archives de la Planète.

Figure 108 – (Right) Huang and Zhuang, Zhongguo Mingsheng - Taishan, unnumbered page. Page showing pictures number 25 and 26:

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(25) 後石塢東望。此在後石塢向東遠望，峰峰皆落雲霧中。

Looking to the east at Rear Rock Precipice (Houshi wu). Looking eastward from Rear Rock Ravine, the mountain peaks disappear into the mist.

(26) 後石塢外景。此為後石塢外面之景，松石倚立，極饒勝致。

Scenery from Rear Rock Precipice. This is a scenery nearby Rear Rock Ravine, [where one can see] crooked pine trees and rocks, this is a very interesting site. The aim in contrasting these pictures is not to imply who might have inspired whom, but instead to suggest a practice in landscape photography in China that was becoming increasingly cross-cultural and coherent in terms of visual aspects. But to what extent can Chinese and foreign photographic approaches to famous sights be considered comparable? While providing a conclusive answer is difficult, paying close attention to the photographic arrangement in the Scenic China series unveiled a repetitive visual pattern, which I believe participated in the modelling of a coherent genre of landscape photography grounded in the theme of famous sights.

Each volume measuring 19 x 27 centimetres was fashioned in the same way, which enabled the viewer to recognize the series at first glance.

The general graphic design was composed of a cover arranged in two columns, one indicating the title – written in both Chinese and English – next to another showing an illustration of the famous place (Figure 109). This was then followed by a preface written by the compiler – or one of the compilers of the volume – that provided general comments about the place visited. Mostly written in Chinese, there were a few written in English. A table of content then provided a list of scenic attractions that had been photographed in sequence. Such a list might evoke those published in the genre of local gazetteers discussed in the previous chapter. The volume finished with a catalogue of black and white photographs accompanied by red-ink bilingual captions (Figure 110). There were two types of framings. The first offered single fullpage format photograph, mostly of panoramas. The second showed two superimposed photographs of smaller format accompanied by elegant graphic motifs like those displayed in Figure 104. There was little variation between



the re-editions and the first edition, except that they sometimes offered an additional or longer preface that included a traveller's guide, and additional or new photographs shot in slightly different angles.

Figure 109 – Covers of Scenic China – Taishan (top left), Tomb and Temple of Confucius (top right), Laoshan (bottom left), Putuoshan (bottom right)

Figure 110 – General graphic design of Scenic China series. From top left to bottom right: preface, list of attractions, and catalogue of photographs.

From a technical perspective, the Commercial Press of Shanghai continued to endeavour to produce refined photo-books making use of the most up-to-date equipment and printing processes. Hence most of volumes were collotypes (keluoban, 珂羅版), whereas only a few were copperplate (tongban, 銅版)

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printed on either silk (juanmian 絹面) or cloth (bumian 布面).<sup>446</sup> Collotype was a photo-mechanical technique that was eagerly sought in publishing culture in early twentieth-century China because it allowed for the creation of a high quality image.<sup>447</sup> This improvement of printing technology had become a forefront concern of the Commercial Press, enabling them to possess the most advanced printing facilities in Shanghai by the turn of the twentieth century. In fact while the publishing house was best known for its widespread school textbooks at that time, it also paid particular attention to the promotion of Chinese culture through popular magazines and of foreign culture through translations and most importantly photography.<sup>448</sup> The Commercial Press of Shanghai had an entire sub-category of publications dedicated solely to photography. Furthermore, it set up a photography research centre within the publishing house and purchased pioneering printing equipment, mainly from Japan.<sup>449</sup>

Several business opportunities allowed the publishing house to achieve a high level of photomechanical technique. First, the purchase in 1900 of a Japanese publishing house.<sup>450</sup> Second, the sponsorship of the Japanese investors of Kinkôdô Press that allowed the Commercial Press to hire Japanese photo-engraving technicians, who supervised the colour-lithography

<sup>446</sup> The last pages of some Scenic China volumes gave further information about the price

depending on the printing technique used. Each collotype album costed one yuan (meice yi

yuan, 每册一元). Copperplate editions were more expensive: four yuan for those printed on

either silk (juanmian si yuan, 絹面四元), three yuan for those printed on cloth (bumian san

yuan, 布面三元).

<sup>447</sup> Collotype was patented in Germany in 1868 by Josef Albert (1825-1886). It was first known

as 'albertype'. A collotype was a reproduction on paper, which was obtained by a printing

process involving a (photographic) matrix on glass plate. The transfer was operated by

applying the matrix onto a sheet of paper. Lavédrine, Gandolfo, and Monod, (Re)connaître et

conserver les photographies anciennes, 192-197.

<sup>448</sup> Amongst the best known magazines published by the Commercial Press of Shanghai:

Dongfang Zazhi 東方雜誌 [Eastern Miscellany] (ran between 1904 and 1948); Jiaoyu zazhi 教

育雜誌 (1909-48); Shaonian Zazhi 少年雜誌 (1911-31); Xuesheng zazhi 學生雜誌 (1914-47);

Funu zazhi 婦女雜誌 (1915-31).

<sup>449</sup> Drège, *La Commercial Press de Shanghai*, 13.

<sup>450</sup> Scholarships disagree on the name of this Japanese publishing house. Drège wrote it is

the Xiuwen yinshuasuo (修文印刷所) whereas Meng said it is the Shubun Shokan.

Drège, *La*

*Commercial Press de Shanghai*, 10; Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires*, 37. 257

and collotype workshops.<sup>451</sup> Third, its collaboration with international professional photographers such as Francis Eugene Stafford (1884-1938) – an American missionary hired by the Commercial Press to manage its printing division from 1909 to 1915 (Figure 111) –<sup>452</sup>; the German F. Heinicker who helped to print covers and develop photogravure; and also the American L.E. Henligner who introduced colour photolithography.<sup>453</sup>

Figure 111 - Francis E. Stafford, still image from the Album C: Photographs of the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the Shanghai Commercial Press, circa 1909-1915.<sup>454</sup>

This photograph shows the devices that the Commercial Press staff had to use in order to turn the small photographic negative into a printed image suitable for their illustrated publications. On the left device, we recognize the multiple arches gate located in the Ming Tombs in northern Beijing area.

<sup>451</sup> Kinkôdô publisher invested 150,000 Yuan in the Commercial Press. Christopher A. Reed,

*Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press,

2004), 60; Ellen J. Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early*

*Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 72.

<sup>452</sup> Meng, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires*, 34; 37. Today a great number of Stafford's

photographs and albums are held at Stanford University Libraries. His own photographs also

appeared in books published by the Commercial Press at that time, such as in Horatio B.

Hawkins, *Commercial Press Geography of China* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1915).

<sup>453</sup> Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*, 62; 314.

<sup>454</sup> Source: Stanford University Libraries, Accessed March 12, 2015, <http://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/th998nk0722>

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Such an emphasis on the various printing techniques was particularly visible

within their own annual reports (niankan, 年刊), in which the Commercial Press boasted of its advancements displaying various types of paper and printing at the end of the report. Scenic China exemplified the attention paid to refine printing techniques in so far as the annual report of 1931 displayed a page abstracted from Scenic China – Taishan to demonstrate the extent to which the press had mastered collotype.<sup>455</sup> The collotypes found in Scenic China were praised not only for their aesthetic appeal but also for their assumed capability to render reality. As asserted in a small colophon at the end of some volumes, such as the one dedicated to Wuyishan (Figure 112): (...)These [volumes] were published using the technique of collotype, these photographs are as real as those famous mountains and great rivers. If placed on your desk these albums might be a pleasing reading; [these pictures are also] decorations if displayed in a frame and hung on the wall.

<sup>455</sup> Zhuang and He, *Zuijin sanshiwu nian zhi Zhongguo jiaoyu*, unnumbered page. 259

Figure 112 – Jian Xizhao, *Zhongguo Mingsheng: Wuyishan* [Scenic China: Wuyishan] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1924), last page.

The original colophon circled above reads: 上列中國名勝寫真十七種。均系黃炎培、袁希濤、張元濟、蔣維喬、莊俞諸旅行時特別攝影。用珂羅版精印，名山勝水，維妙維肖。置之案頭，可供玩賞。懸之鏡中，可為裝飾品。

Of particular significance, the overall visual aspects of photographs depicting famous sights strongly suggested that the modelling of the genre took shape through specific ‘scenic configurations’ that determined what to see and how to see when one is composing a picture.<sup>456</sup> I have already tackled the what to see in the previous chapter, where I have suggested a correspondence between composing methods and the contemporary vogue for guidebooks and geographical conceptions found in local gazetteers. Interestingly, in some cases the prefaces of Scenic China provided detailed traveller’s guides including practical information, such as train fares, accommodation details, and administrative paperwork following the preface. This attests to a certain extent the increasing interweaving of literary genres and representations of

<sup>456</sup> Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces*, 335.

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famous sights.<sup>457</sup> Additionally, if comparing the scenic views photographed with one of the many Taishan’ maps and engravings available at that time in local gazetteers, it is straightforward to recognise that Scenic China’s photographs named and depicted accordingly the attractions one would come across while climbing the mountain. Yet the goal here is not to reiterate the argument that Scenic China’s operators had the capability to read the landscape while responding to these established visual codes.

Instead, I would like to focus here on the issue of how to see. The action of thoroughly framing a view as one could do through the camera viewfinder (qujing, 取景) became increasingly discussed in art circles.<sup>458</sup>

Operators were encouraged to utilize a variation of angles that enhanced the dynamism of representations while adding another dimension to the usual tableau-like conception of Taishan landscapes. For instance in this volume the

operator(s) utilized a variation of angles, ranging from a majority of eye-level angles to low angles that monumentalized the subject matter.<sup>459</sup> It is notable as well that images went from macroscopic to almost microscopic view. Hence, this volume started with a panoramic view of Taishan valley and finished with a close up depiction of trees inside the main temple.

The image entitled *The Five-Bureaucrat Pines* (*Wu daifu song*, 五大夫松) seems to illustrate such visual strategies (Figure 113). It depicts a low angle shot of a stone archway that visitors had to pass while climbing the mountain. This archway is located to the north of the Yunbu Bridge and opened out over a stonewalled platform where there grew pines, the oldest

<sup>457</sup> Among the volumes that include a traveller's guide written both Chinese and English: Wu

Jin and Jiang Weiqiao, *Scenic China – Yuntaishan* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1924);

Wu and Jiang, *Scenic China - Dafangshan* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1923); Wu and

Jiang, *Scenic China - Panshan* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1920); Wu and Jiang,

*Scenic China - Wutaishan* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1919).

<sup>458</sup> Gu, "Scientizing vision in China," 103-110.

<sup>459</sup> We cannot assert for sure who were the operators of *Scenic China* photographs as the

company worked with a team of photographers. Authors might have compiled a selection of

pre-existing photographs. This uncertainty is underpinned in Taishan's preface where Huang

wrote: In spring time of the year 1913 I visited Huangshan and Lushan mountains, where I

took several photographs (...). When I came back, a friend of mine showed me tens of

photographs of the Taishan, because I have just seen the beautiful landscapes, and [my

memory of the landscapes] are fresh and detailed, [so he asked me] to arrange these photos,

and add comments [on these pictures]. Huang and Zhuang, *Zhongguo Mingsheng – Taishan*,

preface, unnumbered page.

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being nearly five hundred years of age. These Bureaucrat Pines represented a recurrent theme in literati painting as they were classified as one of the significant Eight Scenes in Taishan. Their other appellations – Qin Pines (*Qin song*, 秦松) or Elegant Qin Pines (*Qin song tingxiu*, 秦松挺秀) – referred to the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.E.) from which their story originated. According to the historian Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (circa 145/135 – 86 B.C.E.) *Records of the Grand Historian* (Shiji, 史記), the first Emperor Qin Shihuang once took shelter under these pines while trying to climb the mountain during a severe storm. In order to thank them for their protection, the Emperor nominated them to the rank of bureaucrat.

While incorporating this historical story, this picture somehow stood out

from the other photographs of the volume as its framing evokes a spontaneous shot. The archway was partly cut as one's gaze might do by quickly looking above while walking. Two porters on the right were about to enter or exit the frame, enhancing the impression of a direct experience of climbing these steep stairs. A person in the middle ground gazes at us while resting nearby the pine tree. The overall image possesses an emphatic tonality with the greatest contrasts reserved for the fore and middle ground. Such an arrangement draws the eye to significant areas of the image, the most obvious being the archway's tympanum. Yet despite this almost snapshot-like dimension, the use of a compressed space did not restrain the viewer to be able to recognize the spot through key elements, namely the gate, the stairs, and most importantly the pine tree.

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Figure 113 – Huang and Zhuang, *Zhongguo Mingsheng* - Taishan, unnumbered page. Page showing pictures number 10:

(10) 五大夫松。松在坊後，今存其一，或云後世好事者所植。

The Five-Bureaucrat Pines. These pines are located behind the archway, only one has survived, people said that as generations have gone it has kept being replanted by keen people.

The stonewalled platform where the pine is located in the picture is actually placed on the left side after the gate. The technique of collotype printing inevitably created a mirror effect (left-to-right reversed).

A cultural ambiance in favour of photography

The establishment of this coherent and consistent visual pattern went hand in hand with drastic socio-historical changes and visual experiments of that time. In many respects, Scenic China photographs resonated with the Republican era's desire for modernity, wealth, and a new cultural movement in search of national essence (guocui, 國粹). This started with the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911 – that marked the end of two thousands years of imperial rule – and was followed by the May Fourth movement, which arose in the 1910s and reached its heights in 1919. Growing out of student's demonstration in

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Beijing, this political movement denounced the decision of the Paris Peace Conference that bequeathed territories in Shandong to Japan. This popular wave of dissatisfaction laid the foundation for the concept of national identity (previously alien to China), which took shape through political and intellectual discourses seeking power for the nation.<sup>460</sup> In this atmosphere of domestic discontent and growing Western influence, a wave of reforms swept the nation, hoping to break free from Confucian traditional conceptions while paradoxically rejuvenating them with new ideas, including those from abroad. Under these conditions of social and cultural transformations, a new phase of Chinese visual culture emerged from the 1910s and matured from the 1920s onwards, impacting the practices and functions of art in general, and most importantly photography. The wave of nationalism mixed with the increasing open-mindedness of the Republican era intellectuals and the accessibility of new ideas coming from abroad, provided inspiration for a new generation of amateur photographers. They engaged in a wide range of experiments that elaborated on photographic modernism and pictorialist aesthetic. What is now commonly termed pictorial photography relates to an

international style and aesthetic occurring from the last decades of the nineteenth century and mainly during the first half of the twentieth century, in which the photographer manipulated a regular photo in order to produce a creative image. There was notably a particular emphasis on abstract forms and exaggerated contrasts and shadows. The Americans Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) and László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) were two frequently mentioned pioneers in such visual experimentations.<sup>461</sup> Chinese amateur photographers were aware of the work of European and North American photographers and modernist interest thanks to the diffusion of ideas in newspapers and magazines, and they somehow drew upon those experiments.

<sup>460</sup> Guoguang Wu, "From Post-Imperial to Late Communist Nationalism: Historical Change in Chinese Nationalism from May Fourth to the 1990s," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2008): 467-82.

<sup>461</sup> M. Gidley, *Photography and the USA* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 145; Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910-1955* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Minneapolis Institute of Arts in association with W.W. Norton, New York, 1997). 264

Another factor that facilitated amateur practice was the higher degree of commercialisation and consumption, as well as the importation of more affordable and user-friendly hand cameras that consequently made photography available to the masses. Perhaps the most popular hand camera at that time that reached many countries, including China, is the American brand Kodak (Keda, 柯達) camera. Invented in 1887, this camera was very easy to use for amateurs for the exposure time was only a 1/25th of a second, the device was very light, and the development was taken charge of by the Kodak Company itself as highlighted in its advertising slogan: 'You Press the Button, We Do the Rest' (Figure 114).<sup>462</sup> The conjunction of these factors engendered the popularization of photography, and consequently a need to theorize, organize, and promote photographic practices. It was not surprising then to witness the burgeoning of amateur photography and artist-run photography societies, as well as the development of visual idiosyncrasies.

Figure 114 - "Meishang Keda Gongsi [American Company Kodak]," *Nuqing nianbao*, Volume 12 no.7 (1933): 4253.

Source: Dacheng Database.

<sup>462</sup> Phyllis La Farge, "On the Frontier of Photography: Carl Lumholtz and the Kodak Snapshot Camera," *Journal of the Southwest*, volume 55, no. 4 (2013): 477. See also another study

explaining the success of Kodak, due its easy to use technology and marketing strategies:

Kamal A. Munir, "The Birth of the 'Kodak Moment': Institutional Entrepreneurship and the Adoption of New Technologies," *Organization Studies*, 26.11 (2005): 1665-1687.

Chen Wanli's Anthology of Great Wind (Dafeng ji, 大風集) could embody one of the first manifestations of the idiosyncrasy of photographic modernism and the pictorialist aesthetic. Dafeng ji is argued to be the first monograph in which the author explored Chinese traditional aesthetics through photography.<sup>463</sup> Published in 1924 –ten years after the first volume of Scenic China – Dafengji's pictures advocated formal exploration rather than mere representation of the outside world while continuing Chinese pictorial aesthetics. Chen alternatively used poetic titles and vertical formats evoking hanging scrolls probably as a means to place himself within the continuity of literati painting (Figure 115). Practicing the medium for only a few years, he demonstrated his skills in composition (goutu, 構圖), framing (qujing, 取景), and mastering contrasts, three notions that were particular discussed in the art circles at that time. Chen worked as a doctor at the infirmary at Beijing University (Beijing daxue, 北京大學). But his passion for travels – more specifically visiting mingsheng – and the arts prompted him to establish there a photographic laboratory while setting up exhibitions at the Institute of Studies of Ancient Chinese Civilization (Zhongxue suo, 中學所).<sup>464</sup>

<sup>463</sup> This argument was found in: Warren, Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography, 269; Kris Ercums, "Exhibiting Modernity: National Art Exhibitions in China during the Early Republican Period, 1911–1937," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2014), 110.

<sup>464</sup> Chen declared that Chavannes' studies on Chinese genealogy and bibliography studies as well as his Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale made a strong impression on him and on his works. He borrowed these publications from the last Emperor Puyi's appointed tutor Reginald Fleming Johnston (1874-1938, named Zhuang Shidun 莊士敦 in Chinese).

Chen, Da fengji, preface.

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Figure 115 - Chen Wanli, Da fengji: Chen Wanli sheying zuopin ji zhi yi (Beijing: Wu xian Chen Wanli, 1924), cover and inside photograph, unnumbered page.

Printed in collotype technique, the photographs in Chen's monograph showcased mainly unspecified landscapes bearing poetic titles. This vertical picture evoked the hanging scroll format. It shows an ethereal vision of several crab-like trees, whose thin and tortuous trunks rooted in the dark soil stood out significantly from the blank background.

It was also around that time that a well-known scholar working in Beijing University, Liu Bannong, published the first Chinese study on photography aesthetics. Practicing photography as an amateur since his teenage years and affirming his passion when he studied in Paris and briefly in London, Liu was very active in the photographic scene in China. He translated Western essays into Chinese and championed artistic photography as a mean to express the author's personality and to convey the viewer's emotional response by referencing pictorial principles like the rules of composition, the rejection of

pure realism and a preference for subject matter like still life, landscape and animals.<sup>465</sup> In his study on photography aesthetics, Liu explained:

There are two types of photography — writing-truth (xiezhen, 寫真) and writing-meaning (xieyi, 寫意) (...). Regarding writing-meaning photography, what I mean is (...) that the author expresses his artistic conception (yijing, 意境) through the medium of photography.

Different people have different artistic conceptions, which changes constantly in relation to time and space. But in order to express it, some objects must be used as its medium. The objects that are used as medium are originally dead, but once an author express his artistic conception through the medium, they become animated.<sup>466</sup>

Chen and Liu joined forces with Lang Jingshan, another prominent photographer of that period with whom they launched one of the earliest and longest-lived photographic society, namely the Beijing Light Society (*Beijing Guangshe*, 北京光社). Lang started experiments since the 1920s onwards until his ideals came to maturity in the late 1930s. He advocated a type of creative photography that mingled with national painting's principles (guohua, 國畫) and pictorial principles (Six Laws, liufa, 六法) of the sixth century critic and painter Xie He's 謝赫. His major achievement was his method of

'composite photography' (*jijin sheying*, 集錦攝影), which utilized combination printing and other darkroom methods to assemble disparate photographic fragments into the same sheet of paper (Figure 116).<sup>467</sup> Lang often added seals and calligraphy reinforcing the painterly qualities of the photograph. These pioneer personalities announced a generation of operators that would elaborate on the pictorial qualities of photography, advancing the new notion

<sup>465</sup> Tu, "De l'encre à la lumière," 288; Lai, "Lang Jingshan," 39.

<sup>466</sup> Bannong Liu (Fu Liu 劉復), *Bannong tan ying* [Bannong's Talks on Photography] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1928), unnumbered page. Translation suggested in: Shi Li, "Full

circle in the square: Photography practices in the People's Republic of China, 1976-1989"

(PhD diss., Indiana University, 2015), 5.

<sup>467</sup> Lai, "Lang Jingshan," 165- 167.

of artistic photography (*meishu sheying* 美術攝影 or *yishu sheying* 藝術攝影).<sup>468</sup>

Figure 116 - Lang Jingshan, *Spring Trees and Majestic Peaks*, circa 1934. Gelatin silver print from combined negatives.<sup>469</sup>

This landscape mingled at least two different negatives with one another. The first being the foreground with the crab-like tree, the second being the mountain range in the background. Once fused together, Lang added two colophons and seals. The black and white tone of the photographs was assumed to recall the aesthetic of ink painting.



<sup>468</sup> Richard K. Kent, "Early Twentieth-Century Art Photography in China: Adopting, Domesticating, and Embracing the Foreign," *Trans Asia Photography Review* Volume 3 Issue

2 Spring (2013), accessed 20 January 2016,  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0003.204>.

<sup>469</sup> Source: Sheying dashi Lang Jingshan [Lang Jingshan: Master Photographer] (Beijing: Zhongguo Sheying chuban she, 2003), plate 31.  
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In this sense the rise of amateur photography amongst Chinese practitioners from the 1920s developed as a continuation of existing elite and pictorial culture.<sup>470</sup> The pictures above demonstrate how some of the Chinese operators in the first half of the twentieth century were deeply indebted to Chinese painting codes, the key visual features of which were the utilization of calligraphy and seal, a preference for photomontage, brush-like textures, and the representation of natural elements. A significant number of recent scholarly works have discussed early twentieth century Chinese amateur and pictorial photography and the countless photography societies in China. It is not my intention here to seek to paraphrase what has been already eloquently said.<sup>471</sup>

Alternatively, I am more interested in questioning how the development of amateur and pictorial photography related to the study of Scenic China books. I postulate that they all shared a desire to rework the subject of landscape and revivify Chinese artistic and cultural heritage. If we go back to the publications studied in this Section III, we can notice they also to some extent call to mind artistic standards prescribed in Chinese pictorial tradition and pictorial photography. This proposition is supported by the fact that the majority of Scenic China volumes demonstrate the central attraction of mountain landscapes (Figure 117), a subject matter particularly esteemed in indigenous literati painting. Furthermore, the smooth tones and light black and white contrasts that resulted from the use of collotype printing granted the image pictorial qualities.

<sup>470</sup> Hsueh Sheng Chen, "Art Photography in China before 1949: The Continuation and Transformation of an Elite Culture," (PhD diss., University of Melbourne, 2010), 197; 209.

<sup>471</sup> Roberts, *Photography and China*, 45; 80; Gu, "What's in a Name," 121; Paul Pickowicz, Kuyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Tu, "De l'encre à la lumière," 287-289; Robert A. Bickers, *Picturing China 1870-1950: Photographs from British Collections* (Bristol: University Chinese Maritime Customs Project, 2007), 46; Lai, "Lang Jingshan," chapter one; Scott Minick and Ping Jiao, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 69.

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Figure 117 - Map that indicates which places were depicted in the Scenic

China series. Volumes were chiefly dedicated to mountains (shan in Chinese, indicated in coloured star), with the exception of the West Lake and Confucius' tomb (square). While early volumes gravitated around coastal provinces, later ones gradually explored the hinterlands and frontier areas; but still the publications evaded the far West and North parts of China

Some of the volumes even clearly show brush retouching on rocks, trees, and other details in the landscape. It would be easy to assert that such hand retouching was done on purpose so that to emphasis on the pictorial quality.

However this also might have been done to cope with flaws in the printing press device due to a lack of ink.<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, photographs sometimes evoke sensory experiences by fusing both vision and sound as in image twenty-three showing Crane Washing Bay (Xihe wan, 洗鶴灣) – in which a man dressed in old-fashioned clothes on the foreground is playing the zither under a pine tree, itself placed within a large landscape (Figure 118). The groups of cranes that used to come to wash here gave the place its name. The addition of red inscriptions onto the surface of the page also coincided to a certain extent to the tradition of writing colophons onto paintings. All these

<sup>472</sup> This was the case of Huangshan volume published in 1914.

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elements called to mind a pictorial vocabulary, which might explain the reason why this series was classified under the category of illustrated Art books (yishu, 藝書) according to the publication house.<sup>473</sup>

Figure 118 - Huang and Zhuang, Zhongguo Mingsheng - Taishan, unnumbered page. Page showing picture 23:

(23) 洗鶴灣。在北天門之外，兩崖陡險，蒼松欹臥如梁。

Crane Washing Bay. Located outside the Northern Gate of the Heavenly Palace (Bei Tianmen), two steep cliffs surround it, we can see a verdant pine bent like a beam.

A publishing phenomenon

By clarifying the characteristics of the genre and relating it to the concomitant cultural ambiance, I have attempted thus far to assess why one could consider <sup>473</sup> Scenic China volumes were also placed under the sub-categories Photography (sheying,

攝影) and Photography albums and postcards (sheyingji ji huapian, 攝影集及畫片).

Shangwu

Yinshuguan tushu mulu 1897-1949 [Catalogue of illustrated publications of the Commercial

Press 1897-1949] (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1981), 193-194.

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Scenic China books as a relevant example that marked a shift in landscape photographic practices in early twentieth-century China. I would like now to enquire into the extent to which photographs elaborating on the concept of famous sights in general marked a shift also in the publishing culture. To some extent, this shift fits within a larger publishing phenomenon in regards to photo-books. From the transition of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries onwards, Western military personnels or individuals published their visual experience of everyday life in China at an ever increasing rate.

But on the whole, the wide range of textual and visual material explored thus far revealed that, from the beginning of the twentieth century, a

substantial multiplication of illustrated publications increasingly intersected photography with the concept of famous sights. Of particular relevance was the vogue of photographically illustrated travels writings (youji, 遊記) in local periodicals (Figure 119). Reading the personal account of a journey to a renowned site and accompanying it by photographs became a popular trend in early twentieth-century China. Such accounts were frequently adorned with a patchwork of images positioned and decorated in a wide variety of manners. On the less narrative dimension, another type of articles simply depicted a selection of specific attractions located in one site. For instance in Figure 120, Liang Desuo agglomerated together seven photographs of key attractions along Taishan, including the South Heaven gate, the Jade temple and recognizable pine trees. It should be noted here that Liang was the Editor-in-chief of the popular and longest-running Chinese-English monthly pictorial *Liangyou huabao* (良友畫報) [The Young Companion], in which bilingual texts alongside photographs were frequently used in a manner similar to that found in *Scenic China*.<sup>474</sup> Figure 121 also demonstrates that, by the 1940s, the archaeological site of Dunhuang had become a touristic spot and integrated within the notion of famous sights.

It is interesting to note that, during the Meiji era (1868-1912), the Japanese were also important partakers in the construction of the genre of *Liangyou huabao* ran between 1926 and 1945. This magazine covered a wide range of features, from the realm of culture to leisure, everyday life to modern science and technology.

It gave a preponderant role to photographs by dedicating several pages and articles solely to them.

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'photographic mingsheng' – called in Japanese 'meisho shashin' (名所寫真) – as they produced a significant quantity of photographically illustrated publications on the topic as early as the late nineteenth century. These usually offered conceptions of famous sceneries not only found in Japan but also in conquered territories such as China, Korea and Taiwan.<sup>475</sup> This type of publications would follow a rather similar model of text/image layout, with frequent bilingual captions.<sup>476</sup>

Figure 119 - Lang  
Jingshan, "Taishan Youji:  
shanzhong yi riji,"  
Meishu shenghuo 8  
(1935): unnumbered page.  
Source: Dacheng  
Database.

<sup>475</sup> Gyewon Kim has also asserted this argument in favour of the emergence of a new photographic genre involving famous places. Her paper offers a comprehensive study of this genre in relation to a new conception of historic sites and nation building in Meiji era Japan.

Gyewon Kim, "Tracing the Emperor: Photography, Famous Places, and the Imperial Progresses in Prewar Japan," *Representations* 120, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 115-50.

<sup>476</sup> Other publications that followed rather similar layout: Zhongguo guji mingsheng: Qing-Ri shiyejia jiaohuan zhi jinian (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1911); Guanying Gu, Mingsheng Guji Dagan (Shanghai: Dalu tushu gongsi, 1921); Zhongguo feng jing mei [Chinese scenic beauties] (Shanghai: Liang You Printing & Publishing Co., 1934).  
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Figure 120 – (Left) Liang Desuo, "Taishan mingsheng," Liangyou Huabao, 10 (1926): 6. Source: Dacheng Database.

Figure 121 – (Right) "Dunhuang lansheng [Scenic sights of Dunhuang]," Lianhe Huabao, 181-182 (1946): unnumbered page. Source: Dacheng Database.

The decorative arrangements of photographs in Scenic China bore a resemblance to these contemporary illustrated periodicals. For instance, in the Taishan volume, there were in total eight pages using graphic decoration, which included four different leaf motifs: shamrock, reed, and composite (Figure 122). This created what has been called a 'tabular or art arrangement', in which similarly sized images were grouped by likeness and ornamented with drawings.<sup>477</sup> In general, the layout tended to group images by likeness according to row or column (Figures 123 to 124). This helped the reader to scan the page and discern the images' intended sequence. Such arrangement

<sup>477</sup> Paul W. Ricketts, "Kaleidoscopic Modernisms: Montage Aesthetics in Shanghai and Tokyo

Pictorials of the 1920s and 1930s," in Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai

Global Metropolis, 1926-1945, ed. Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang (Leiden:

Brill, 2013), 26.

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evoked the notion of 'manipulativeness', in other words the playful and aesthetic manipulation of several 'surfacescapes' that coexisted with one another.<sup>478</sup> It enhanced the interplay between the surface of the photograph and the surface of its engraved reproduction presented in the publication, while creating a relation with 'the social space of the viewer'.<sup>479</sup>

Figure 122 – Huang and Zhuang, Zhongguo Mingsheng - Taishan, unnumbered page. Page showing pictures number 14 and 15:

(14) 十八盤。十八盤路陡絕，前人之足 幾躡後人之頂 左右懸鐵鏈引客上下。

Eighteen Bends. The eighteen curves is the craggiest place in Taishan, visitors' feet almost touch the head of the person below, iron ropes on the left and the right help people to climb or descend.

(15) 南天門。十八盤盡處為南天門，泰山於此為最危聳，更上則為絕頂矣。

South Heaven Gate (Nantian men). The South Heaven Gate is located at the end of the eighteen Bends, it is the most dangerous place of Taishan, if one continues to climb one arrives then at the mountain peak.

<sup>478</sup> Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces*, 215.

<sup>479</sup> Summers, *Real Spaces*, 338.

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Figure 123 – (Left) “Zhang Huiru alone at the beach and Tang Xiuhui crossing her hands behind her back and looking at flowers,” Funü Shibao [The Women’s Eastern Times], circa 1914.

Figure 124 – (Right) “Lin Baobao, Chun Yanlou, Lin Yuanyuan,” Xin jinghong ying [New Photographs of graces], circa, 1914.<sup>480</sup>

The dual picture arrangement as well as the flower drawings traversing the portrait photographs of courtesans recalled some Scenic China graphic design seen above.

Another reason why I postulate that photographs of mingsheng, like those printed in Scenic China, represented a publishing phenomenon is because of the extent of their diffusion through time. Scenic China volumes were published and republished over the course of twenty years. Its photographs were re-used in several periodicals and printed as postcards. Moreover, today these books are held in over fifteen international libraries around the globe, while a recent publication entitled Zhongguo mingsheng jiuying [Old famous

<sup>480</sup> Both images of courtesans with flowery graphic design come from: Henriot and Yeh,

Visualising China, 144-145.

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sights photographs of China] has even offered an anthology of its photographs.<sup>481</sup> All of this attests to the massive diffusion of this particular book series.

As early as the 1910s Chinese illustrated periodicals re-printed some of Scenic China landscape photographs, when the first volumes had just been edited. In regards to Taishan representations, the photograph described earlier called the *Crane Washing Bay* (Figure 125) – in which the viewer can see a pine tree and a Chinese person playing the zither – was reprinted several times. Perhaps the playing around with the notion of past and present and pictorial traditions, thanks to the man dressed in old-fashioned clothes playing the zither placed within a large landscape, appealed to a Chinese audience. It is also important to note that reprints altered somewhat the original display by changing the original title and caption according to the new function of the reprinted image. For instance, the original caption was transformed into: ‘playing zither under the pine tree picture – near Xihe bay in Taishan (松下撫琴圖 - 地在泰山洗鶴灣) (Figure 125) or even simplified as ‘Taishan landscape’ (泰山之風景) (Figure 126).

<sup>481</sup> Xiaoming Hu, Yanpei Huang, and Weiqiao Jiang, Zhongguo mingsheng jiuying [Old pictures of famous scenes] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang sheying chubanshe, 2000), preface. 278

Figure 125 – (Left) “Song xia fuqin tu, di zai Taishan xi he wan [Playing zither under the pine tree picture, near Xihe bay in Taishan],” Jinbu zazhi 11 1 (1916): 10.

Figure 126 – (Right) “Taishan zhi fengjing [Taishan landscape],” Huaji Zazhi 1 (1931): 9. Source: Chinese Periodical Full-text Database.

The Commercial Press over the years continued advertising campaigns that enabled Scenic China photographs to be turned into postcards and publicized in Chinese periodicals.<sup>482</sup> It is an arduous task to reconstruct the entirety of postcards collection due to their versatile nature to be sold, exchanged, sent

and scattered around the world over time. Yet, it is known that the Commercial Press started to publish from the early 1920s onwards at least a series of one hundred and ninety-two postcards abstracted from their Scenic China series.<sup>483</sup> Today Taipei National Central Library and the ITH Library at the Academia Sinica possess a fair number of these, including those depicting Taishan and Confucius' tomb.<sup>484</sup> Perhaps anxious about the recognisability of

<sup>482</sup> Often placed at the end of the periodicals, Scenic China advertisements appeared for instance

in: "Zhongguo mingsheng yu chujia wenti," *Meiyu Zazhi* [Mi-yo Magazine] 2 (1928): 55-57;

Ling De, Yixian Chen, and Lengdai Chen, *Qing Gong Er Nian Ji* (Shanghai: Shangwu

Yinshuguan, 1914), 187.

<sup>483</sup> Zhefu, *Lao Mingxinian Xuan*, 45.

<sup>484</sup> *Shandong fengjing mingxinian* [mingxinian] [Shandong landscape postcards]. Taipei,

National Central Library, Rare books rooms, PD 680.24 8657 v.1-2. See also the ITH database collection of Chinese postcards: *Zhongguo Huabei yu Dongbei diqu mingxinian* (中

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the publication house as a brand, the postcards usually adopted the same design as the publications, more specifically employing a good quality image accompanied by red ink captions in English and Chinese. But this was accompanied by a note in green ink on the back that read 'Commercial Press, LTD, Shanghai China' (youju mingxinian shangwu yinshuguan yinxing, 郵局明信片 - 商務印書館印行) (Figure 127).

Figure 127 – Postcards after photographs found in Scenic China – Taishan. Taipei National Central Library Collection.

Connecting local and international audiences

The legacy left by the Commercial Press was as a result of its strong and extended network of over thirty branches located across China, in addition to several printing offices in large metropolises, including Beijing and Hong 國華北與東北地區明信片), accessed July 24, 2014,

[http://tais.ith.sinica.edu.tw/sinicafrsFront/search/search\\_detail.jsp?xmlId=0000085056](http://tais.ith.sinica.edu.tw/sinicafrsFront/search/search_detail.jsp?xmlId=0000085056).

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Kong.<sup>485</sup> The Commercial Press 'publishing empire' also travelled across borders as both primary and contemporary sources confirm that their publications were also distributed worldwide, including in Singapore.<sup>486</sup> The conquest of the international scene perhaps culminated when the company received awards for its high quality photographic publications, such as during the Panama Pacific Exhibition in 1915 in San Francisco.<sup>487</sup> This international dimension was also clearly visible in the cooperation involved between the company and Japanese, German, American, and other specialists coming from around the world.

The wide network of the Commercial Press offices was a tool to reach an international audience. It was supplemented with an engagement in translation, retranslation, and the compilation of bilingual (Chinese-English) publications. As an illustration of this, I have already discussed how each

volume of Scenic China was consistently compiled in both English and Chinese languages. The mingling of both English and Chinese texts in the transmission of the Chinese notion of mingsheng to both local and international audiences purveyed not only translingual but also transvisual modes of representations; ‘trans’ standing for a transformative process.<sup>488</sup> The process of ‘translingual compilation’ has been defined as a transcultural procedure specific to Chinese urban culture in the mid-1920s.<sup>489</sup> From that time onwards, a number of Chinese journals published by other publishing houses – such as the Liangyou huabao, Changyan bao [Journal of Free Speech], Waijiao bao, Kexue [Science], Gezhi xinbao [Scientific Review], New Youth – also started to utilize both English and Chinese as such a bilingual layout became a quality associated with intellectual journals. Still although it is

<sup>485</sup> Yunwu Wang, Jean-Pierre Drège, and Chang-Ming Hua, *La révolution du livre dans la Chine moderne* (Paris: Publications orientalistes de France, 1979), 20; Ma and Hu, *Zhongguo Sheying Shi*, 109-110.

<sup>486</sup> The term publishing empire was used by: Laing, *Selling Happiness*, 71. Most of Scenic China volumes disclosed in the last pages the diverse locations of the Commercial Press bookstores and branches.

<sup>487</sup> *Shangwu yinshuguan zhilüe* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1926), 22.

<sup>488</sup> These transformative modes of representations are indebted in Liu’s study on the translingual practices in early twentieth-century China. Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice:*

*Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity-China, 1900-1937* (Stanford, Calif:

Stanford University Press, 1995), 103.

<sup>489</sup> Meng, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires*, 33; 239.

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true that every caption in Scenic China series was written in both English and Chinese and indicated as being of equal importance on the page layout, the ‘translingual’ dimension should not be overestimated as the prefaces and the descriptions placed below the images remained primarily in Chinese.

The transcultural dimension of the company was perhaps also partly accounted for by the origins of the company, as it inherited the traditions of a late nineteenth century missionary press.<sup>490</sup> The four founders – Xia Ruifang 夏瑞芳 (1872-1914), the brothers Bao Xian’en 鮑咸恩 (? - 1910) and Bao Xianchang 鮑咸昌 (1864?-1929), and Gao Fengchi 高風池 (1864-1950) – had previously studied at the religious school Qingxing Xiaoxue (清心小學) and later worked with an important missionary publishing house of that time called the American Presbyterian Mission Press (Meihua yinshugua, 美華印書館).

Having been trained within such an international religious education and publishing circles the four men decided to open a small street-corner shop on 11 February 1897, at first only hiring Christian workers.<sup>491</sup> This small enterprise would eventually become ‘one leg of the tripod’ composed of two other influential publishing houses in the late Qing-early Republican period China: Shenbao Press and Dianshizai shuju, mentioned in Chapter one.<sup>492</sup>

The Commercial Press of Shanghai not only aimed at connecting different audiences together by establishing a transnational knowledge with bilingual material, but more importantly conveyed an educational commitment and strong patriotic agenda. The printing service also included a section that provided an English correspondence course and other courses such as

<sup>490</sup> Missionaries were very active in publishing circles in China, which facilitated the acquisition of modern technologies and the development of independent enterprises. Drège, *La Commercial Press de Shanghai*, 5; 17.

<sup>491</sup> Scholars seem to disagree on the exact date of creation of the Commercial Press, for instance some assert that it was created on 10 January 1897. Wang, Drège, and Hua, *La révolution du livre*, 17; Drège, *La Commercial Press de Shanghai*, 8. But others write that it

was created in 1886. C. Gros, *Bulletin Commercial d'Extrême Orient* June (1920): 17

<sup>492</sup> James Z. Gao, *Historical Dictionary of Modern China (1800-1949)* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 77. Another scholar argued that the twentieth-century China

publishing world was also dominated by a second generation of publishers, including the

Commercial Press, *Zhonghua Shuju*, and *Shiji shuju*. Christopher Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*, 26.

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economics taught in English.<sup>493</sup> As for *Scenic China per se*, the series was conceived as a tool to promote and teach Chinese customs and traditions of landscape appreciation. According to the reports, the company advocated the use of photography in their own schools while taking advantage of the appointed authors' educational duties to encourage them to photograph the place being inspected.<sup>494</sup> As an illustration, Jiang Weiqiao explained in his preface of the volume on Wutaishan that:

On a day in the early part of October 1917, being on my official tour to inspect the educational condition of Shansi, I took the chance to visit Wu Tai Shan (...).

This enabled me to walk over the snow up to the summit of the East Tai or Peak. While on the mountain I took a few pictures, which I have reproduced from collotype with explanations.<sup>495</sup>

It is not surprising then that *Scenic China* compilers were mostly educators, such as Huang Yanpei and Zhuang Yu 莊俞 (1878-1940) who participated in the Taishan volume. If various authors participated in the compilation of this book series, those who were more involved than others were Huang and Zhuang, alongside Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873-1958), Lü Yishou 呂頤壽 (date unknown) and Wu Jin 武進 (date unknown). A brief consideration of both men's biographies will help us understand their educational stance and its potential impact on *Scenic China*.

Huang Yanpei was one of the key figures in the establishment of the new education system in Republican China. Most notably he founded the



Chinese Society of Vocational Education and was appointed minister of the Jiangsu provincial bureau of education and the head of the Jiangsu Provincial Education Association. Huang received both a classical and a new style civil service education after the classical system had been abolished. Although he

<sup>493</sup> Li Pei'en (1889 - ?) was the head of this English section and collaborated with notable teachers from several universities. The Commercial Press possessed its own teaching units.

Wang, Drège, and Hua, *La Révolution du Livre*, 54.

<sup>494</sup> Shangwu yinshuguan zilüe, 19, 20.

<sup>495</sup> Wu and Jiang, *Scenic China - Wutaishan*, 2. The same applies to his words in the following

volume: Wu Jin and Jiang Weiqiao, *Scenic China – Yuntaishan*, 1.

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worked hand in hand with the state in order to inspect the state of education across China, he was also committed to the local press, such as the periodical *Shenbao* and the Commercial Press of Shanghai, with which he participated in the compilation of several volumes of *Scenic China: Taishan, Huangshan, Lushan, and Xihu*. It is known for instance that Huang – as he explained in an article published in 1908 – organized excursions with students in order to visit famous sites, as he believed school outings: ‘instill love of the country (...), gave students a desirable reverence for heroes (...) and broadened the students’ knowledge of science’.<sup>496</sup> In that sense, we can consider that these publications also fit in the context of claiming back Chinese land (here Chinese landscape) for China.

As for Zhuang Yu, little is known about this author in both European and Chinese scholarship, yet his name is mentioned countless time in Commercial Press chronicles. Zhuang – also named Zhuang Baiyu – was born in the Jiangsu province and died at the age of sixty-two. According to various sources, Zhuang was mentioned as a member of the Commercial Press as early as 1902 or 1903.<sup>497</sup> He entered the company thanks to Jiang Weiqiao’s introduction, another compiler of *Scenic China* series. In a recent article written by Wang Jianhui, Zhuang Yu is introduced as a strong proponent in the establishment of the Commercial Press, where he is said to have devoted thirty years of his life. Over the years he occupied several highranking positions in the company, such as Director of the literature department, chief of the transport section, chief of the confidential affairs section, and chief of the general affairs. Such a succession of positions is argued to be rare and to attest to Zhuang’s value to the Commercial Press. Zhuang is also said to have written school manuals that were among the most influential at the beginning of the twentieth-century. He was also a social activist involved closely with Huang’s movement for pragmatic education and sponsored the educator Cai Yuanpei’s (1868-1940) lectures. He also

<sup>496</sup> Ernst P. Schwintzer, “Education to Save the Nation: Huang Yanpei and the Educational

Reform Movement in Early Twentieth Century China,” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1992), 112.

<sup>497</sup> Hecheng Liu, Renfeng Zhang, Mengxiong Chen, and Shunian Zhang, *Zhang Yuanji*

Nianpu (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1991), 43; Shangwu Yinshuguan Dashiji, unnumbered page.

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recommended people that would contribute to the development of the Commercial Press and was responsible for gathering and analysing historical data held by the Commercial Press. In doing so, he clarified the history of the Commercial Press, the history of publication, and the history of education.<sup>498</sup> It should be noted that in addition to some of Scenic China, Zhuang also compiled another monograph about famous places filled with coloured photographs.<sup>499</sup> However, as with Huang, Zhuang participated in the compilation of several Scenic China: Taishan, Putuoshan, Tianmushan, Xihu, Xishan, and Yushan.

Both men participated in several official delegations that allowed them to visit and survey diverse provinces across China. The deliberate selection of educator-authors and the editorial stance chosen by the Commercial Press indicated that in Scenic China forces for commerce and learning were joined together. Sometimes called 'commercial learning' (shangxue, 商學), this particular way of thinking about knowledge has been suggested to be specific to the transition between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in China, when the state and the new merchants made possible the expansion of a 'commercially driven readership market'.<sup>500</sup>

#### Conclusion

In this final chapter, I assessed the spread of landscape photographs elaborating on the concept of famous sights (mingsheng), forming what I eventually qualified as a genre. I framed this inquiry through the case study of the Commercial Press of Shanghai's publication series named Scenic China, which offered a rare early example of a photo-book series on the topic. First I clarified how the series of volumes modelled a rather coherent photographic genre. Amongst the key characteristics composing this genre, I have identified

<sup>498</sup> Jianhui Wang, "Shangwu Yuanlao Zhuangyu [Zhuang Yu, veteran member of the Commercial Press]," Chuban guang jiao [A vast view on publishing] 11 (2000): 49.

<sup>499</sup> Yu Zhuang, and Yantang Xie, Meishu mingsheng huace [Artistic Pictures of Famous

Places] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1923).

<sup>500</sup> Wen-Hsin Yeh, "Huang Yanpei and the Chinese Society of Vocational Education in

Shanghai Networking," in At the Crossroads of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and

State-Building in Republican Shanghai, ed. Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi (Stanford, Calif:

Stanford University Press, 2008), 32; Reed, Gutenberg in Shanghai, 10.

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the choice of subject matter- chiefly depicting both old and newly established sites or resorts, and the somewhat repetitive photographic arrangement that associate the photograph of a specific spot with its written identification. Each site was conceived as a selected series of attractions, which were shot from comparable angles and encompassed recognizable elements.

I then inquired into the extent to which this type of landscape photograph resonated with the cultural ambiance of that time and suggested

plausible parallels with the rise of a new generation of Chinese amateur photographers that would elaborate on photographic modernism and a pictorialist aesthetic.

Finally, I enquired into the extent to which photographs elaborating on the concept of famous sights also marked a shift in publishing culture that connected local and international audiences with one another. I advanced the conclusion that the multiplication of publications associating photography and mingsheng, the wide diffusion capacity of images and knowledge through diverse publishing channels, their multilingual aspects by including information written both in Chinese and English, as well as the implied educational agendas, constituted elements that distinguished such landscape photographs from earlier ones.

Throughout this final Section III, I have delineated what I believe represents an alternative paradigm shift in the genre of landscape photography in China. A paradigm in which operators, by referencing established local geographical conceptions, turned simple recording of landscape into an experience of reading landscape, as I have entitled this final Section. Although one cannot deny any cultural standpoint engendering differing approaches between local and foreign operators, I have posited that the major goal of such landscape photographs was not a personalized view of a place. Conversely, this type of photographs referred to shared conceptions of topography, which proceeded from an existing knowledge. They ultimately contributed to the construction of a coherent genre, in which photographs were gathered in sequence, identified, and conceived as an organic unity.

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## **FINAL CONCLUSION: (RE)CONSTRUCTING THE SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS OF CHINESE LANDSCAPES**

This thesis has addressed the development of the genre of landscape photography in China during a century after the advent of the medium, more precisely the period between the 1840s and 1930s. Due to the current fragmented and disorderly state of photographic archives, thinking about and with such a morass of material presented the major methodological challenge of this study. I have suggested a possible solution to handling such material by bringing together hitherto isolated bodies of material in different institutions in several countries, which were all related to what I have framed as French awareness in photographic activity in China. To rephrase this, I inspected different types of documents, whether they concerned the production of French operators themselves or any type of Chinese landscape photographs that were available to French audience.

The overall goal of this thesis has been to recognize photography's role in transmitting and transforming perceptions of Chinese landscapes. In order to do so, I have adopted an object oriented-approach while utilising at the same time archival and chronological methods in order to reveal the agency of photographs. I have paid particular attention to the visibility of photographs made possible thanks to diverse local and international channels, such as albums, illustrated publications and public displays, which all have contributed to a progressively better understanding of China. These findings have been evaluated through a threefold thesis structure that has unfolded a selection of case studies regarded as pivotal landmarks.

In Section I ('Seeing landscape 1840s-1890s'), I retraced the early production

of Chinese landscape photography during the second half of the nineteenth century. This corresponded to the moment when operators had to form a cultural imaginaire of a country newly opened to the world. I expounded that representations chiefly revolved around port cities and their immediate surrounding topography. The main reason being that these were the only

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zones accessible to a melting pot population and thus where an economy of photography could develop.

The conceptual framework of chapter one was oriented towards the study of reproducible images (photographs, engravings) that, I believe, triggered a certain impressions of China in France. I clarified how photographs of China entered a visual continuum bonded to the frameworks of diplomatic missions' communications, illustrated journals, and public exhibitions, especially World Fairs. The examples of Jules Itier, Paul Champion, and Louis Legrand published in the periodical *L'illustration*, and the Chinese studio Sze Yuen Ming & Co demonstrated the extent to which these frameworks circulated a type of generic imagery that was persistent throughout the nineteenth century.

Chapter two reconstructed the genesis of landscape photography in China and its commerce by highlighting the wide diversity of practices in port cities areas. Focusing on the microcosm of Wuhan – one of the Yangtze River's ports – I advanced that the emergence of this economy was due to the presence of both a local and international audience willing to consume images. Commercial studios ran by either local or foreigners alongside amateurs were the key producers of photographs. The distribution of their works was helped by postcards companies, local illustrated press, while being supported by private collectors or authorities that at times commissioned albums.

In Section II ('Exploring landscape 1890s-1910s'), I have argued that exploratory expeditions linked to academic disciplines gave rise to an alternative for depicting Chinese landscape. Granted that one of the main objectives of this thesis was to reassemble the landscapes that marked the first century of photography in China, I proposed to focus on the representations of landmarks newly photographed, namely the Great Wall, the Ming tombs, and Dunhuang.

This discussion started with chapter three, in which I related a set of ideas elaborated in late nineteenth century academic publications – especially those related to the various branches of science, such as archaeology – with the concomitant production of landscape photographs in China. More

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specifically, I have explored photographs of ancient monuments in Northern Beijing and characterized these views as constituting a transitional body of photographs that originated from the opening of new territories and a fresh awareness of ancient Chinese heritage. I confronted photographs taken by amateurs and specialists, such as Firmin Laribe and Édouard Chavannes, so as to highlight how landscape photographs were increasingly considered as an accurate piece of evidence of the physical features of an area. Chapter four finalized this argument by focusing on landscape records of Dunhuang taken by Charles Nouette, appointed photographer of the archaeological expedition led by Paul Pelliot in Chinese Turkestan (1906-08).

In order to examine how the production of photographs of ancient archaeological sites positioned themselves within landscape photography transformation, I identified a set of visual methods that differed from previous practices. Methods included notably the choice of specific photographic techniques (preference for glass plate negatives), the need to produce an extensive number of images while using a detached labelling system, and adopting an encompassing way of framing the subject matter. Yet such academic modes of visualization remained open to a variety of visual conventions, since at that time any kind of operator based their knowledge on the same type of studies by reading the existing literature on the medium. I then mapped out the diverse trajectories of Nouette's images through diverse mediums across borders and over time, giving evidence that his pictures went through a wide diffusion. In doing so, I underlined the role of photography in promoting a dialogue and in sharing interest across cultures, despite the irrefutable role of the camera as a technology of colonial expansion.

Assembling such corpus aimed at considering these views as the foundation for an alternative visual grammar while filling a lacuna in current studies about the history of photography in China, which avoids photographs created during campaigns of exploration.

The main argument in the last Section III ('Reading landscape 1910s-1930s') was that during the first half of the twentieth century both local and international operators became increasingly inclined to represent a coherent series of landscapes according to pre-established views. More specifically

289 what was considered in Chinese culture as famous sights (mingsheng 名勝).

Landscape photographs of famous sights formed what I eventually qualified as a genre. In order to evaluate this proposition, this last Section proceeded through a series of case studies that concentrated on the depiction of Mont Tai (Taishan), one of the most celebrated mountains in China.

In chapter five, I delineated the contours of this particular development in the genre of landscape photography by inspecting a large body of autochromes shot by the amateur Stéphane Passet, appointed operator on behalf of the Archives de la Planète (Archives of the Planet). I first situated the photographs within a broader context of the democratization of Chinese scenic attractions by analysing the interconnections between the production of photography and the development of railways and guidebooks, that is to say the development of modern tourism. Then I questioned operators' possible awareness of pre-existing geographical conceptions and the extent to which they might have responded to them because of the notable number of visual and conceptual similitudes.

In chapter six, I continued this inquiry through the case study of the Commercial Press of Shanghai's publication series named Scenic China (Zhongguo mingsheng, 中國名勝), which offered a rare early example of a photo-book series on the topic of famous sights. Collected as early as the 1920s by the French literati and journalist Hugues le Roux, these volumes attest to a certain level of awareness amongst a French audience of the changing nature of publishing culture in China. This is why I have posited that these photographs not only marked a shift within the photographic genre but also within publishing culture. I first clarified how the series of volumes

modelled a rather coherent photographic genre, with a specific choice of subject matter that chiefly depicted ancient and newly established sites or resorts, accompanied by a selected series of spots comparably framed, arranged, and named. I then inferred that the multiplication of publications associating photography and mingsheng, their resonance with photographic modernism and pictorialist aesthetic of that time, their wide diffusion capacity, their frequent multilingual aspects by including information written both in

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Chinese and English, as well as the implied educational agendas, constituted elements that distinguished such landscape photographs from earlier ones. I came to the conclusions that three paradigmatic shifts in the production of landscape photography in China took shape successively over time, without necessarily superseding one another. The changes in subject matter, the way of framing it through the camera viewfinder, the utilization of specific photographic technique, the label format, the scope, and the varying functions and uses are the key elements that allow us to identify the visual development of landscape photography. Each case study I examined changed or developed previous paradigms of landscape, as well as creating new ones.

First, I postulated that during the early phase of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the ways images were printed, gathered, and arranged shaped a somewhat schematic imagery of China. I have discussed these somewhat candid modes of representations under the term of type, as photographs fostered strong conventions that were discernible through the representations of limited range of places (port cities such as Wuhan, case study of Section I), by a tendency to isolate the subject matter from its wider context, by the frequent addition of human figure, and the generic or narrative labelling. In general, images tended to be reminiscent of personal journeys or dictated by the commerce of photography of the time. Photographs seemed to literally present an empirical look at landscape as anyone could see it, denoting a somewhat passive reception and conception of landscape.

Second, by focusing on photographs created during campaigns of archaeological explorations in Northern Beijing sites and especially Dunhuang in Section II, I advanced that what differentiated the production of landscape photographs of this period was a dominant institutional urge to constitute large archives of photographic materials, the need to catalogue methodically and topically. This was due to the continuing improvement of knowledge about China and the growth of scientific methods, which allowed landscape photography to be freed from the frameworks of personal memories, experiences, and text. If landscape photographs produced within exploratory expeditions from the 1890s onwards offered a new visual knowledge to what was unknown, this does not mean that spontaneous and mnemonically

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approaches like those studied in Section I suddenly came to an end. Still I believe the ways of seeing and recording especially ancient heritage sites shifted for it became increasingly informed by academic disciplines. Ergo I argued that photographs of that period constituted an alternative visual platform to explore landscape.

Third, the case of photographic representations of Taishan attested to the blossoming of another paradigm shift as they offered alternative subject matters, specific visual codes, functions, and uses. In particular, the Chinese

notion of famous sights was conceived as the representation of a given place divided up in a series of attractions, which the viewer was assumed to look at in a specific way and acknowledge. In this last Section III, I have suggested operators were informed directly or indirectly by Chinese cultural-habits and local sources, which helped them to clarify which were the traditionally valued scenic attractions and where they were located. This argument eventually enabled me to connect all the Sections of the thesis together. Landscapes of famous sights of this period somehow drew upon earlier practices. They pertained both to candid souvenir images (Section I) and academic surveys (Section II). However, what changed was not only the subject matter itself, but also operators' capability to read the landscape by knowing how to move within space, how to name a spot, and how to depict it. Although one cannot deny a cultural standpoint engendering differing approaches between local and foreign operators, I have posited that this type of photographs contributed to the construction of a coherent genre, in which photographs were gathered in sequence, identified, and conceived as possessing an organic unity. If these three paradigms deployed specific visual procedures closely linked to the mechanical apparatus, landscape photographs did not emerge in a vacuum but rather from an existing visual continuum. Influences and continuities with previous pictorial practices in France and China impacted on photographic practices to a certain level depending on the period.

I have explained for instance in Section I that if the arrival of photography in China as soon as the early 1840s offered assumedly more accurate representations – as it was considered at that time as an 'apparatus to see' –, ways of framing sceneries were not entirely invented from scratch.

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Landscape photographs of the second half of the nineteenth century offered high degree of visual consistency with other nineteenth century images, such as those found in export luxury goods like paintings, porcelains, watercolours, wallpapers, furniture and other objects. When one looks at all images existing at that time, one can notice the conspicuous presence of similar isolated representations; inclined to give prominence to port views, traditional architecture, and genre scenes amongst other images of the Chinese environment.

Following this, I clarified how sketches, rubbings, and engravings amongst other pictorial methods of recording preceded photographic records especially in the context of campaigns of exploration. Therefore, photography fitted neatly with existing practices and protocols concerning how to record a geographical or archaeological site. While the medium of photography appeared as a potential answer to the crisis of representation that the archaeological field was experiencing at that time, it was also discussed as sort of faithful brush with artistic capacities, as a mechanical tool that yet corresponded to one's taste and would enable one to really obtain artistic results.

Perhaps the most conspicuous continuity with previous landscape pictorial representations was that of early twentieth century experimentations. While both foreign and local operators played around pre-existing Chinese depictions of scenic attractions, the emerging generation of Chinese amateur photographers in the 1910s-20s engaged in a wide range of experiments that elaborated on photographic modernism and pictorialist aesthetic. By doing so,

they developed their own version of a type of Chinese imaginary landscape, a visual idiosyncrasy deeply indebted to Chinese painting codes where landscape representation was frequently accompanied with calligraphy, seal, and reference to brush-like texture.

Throughout this dissertation, I made a point of shedding light on both the possibilities and limitations of constructing the type of corpus I used, bringing together material with a different origin, status, volume and circulation. To a certain extent one should keep in mind that what is here to be seen is not what was to be seen when these materials were produced and circulated.

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Hence, although the ideal aim was to constitute a coherent compilation of images that embraces a variety of landscapes photographs, I am well aware that the researcher's agenda is a constituent part of any archive, which makes it by essence selective. The material selected in this research formed the core focal point but not the *raison d'être* of this thesis. It allowed me to work with a coherent group and workable amount of material, which yet offered the possibility to periodize the photographs due to the exhaustive range of images, while understanding overlaps and contrasts among practitioners. In sum, I believe this reconstructed corpus offered a productive avenue for reflecting upon a challenging issue for all those who work with photographic sources.

The findings of this study have build on those of on-going critical questioning of the role of photographic archives in reconstructing China's past, as found in the recent studies by Hung, Roberts, and Henriot among others. Yet I have challenged common thinking that landscape photographs did not play a significant role in both the history and society of China as compared to other genres such as portraiture for instance. My work has thus contributed to the literatures on the history of photography in China by offering the first study of a neglected genre and unveiling its impact on a larger socio-cultural context. This study has addressed a significant gap in the field that has derived from an inclination to work on a limited range of genres and collections.

These finds could be of interest to historians who are, thus far, amongst the major actors in the writing of the history of photography in China.

Undoubtedly this research could also be of interest to art historians, especially in the field of Arts in China that generally exclude photography from general writing. I have attempted to widen the study of art in China by moving beyond the conventional materials and opening the spectrum of landscape photographs, defying assumed categories such as amateur, artistic, professional, and scientific practices. This thesis' results might also be of interest to future studies interested in the valorisation of French archives materials, in the re-collecting of not only China's past but also French perception of the Middle Kingdom.

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While the present research has analysed the variety of landscape photography practices by trying to give a broad picture of this genre, it also opens out rich avenues for further research. A possible subject of inquiry that fits within the timeframe would be landscape photographs during the Communist era as well as photographs depicting wars sceneries. The Opium Wars, the Boxer and Taiping rebellions, as well as the Sino-Japanese wars engendered a plethora of photographic representations, which yet remained



outside the scope of this research. However, I have supplied a first step towards the study of how photography can relate to operators' evolving relationship with Chinese landscapes documenting developments from the first encounter, to a search for knowledge and finally to reaching a real dialogue.

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## ANNEXE

Annotated list of databases cataloguing photographs of China<sup>502</sup>

<sup>502</sup> This list is also available in the following link:

<http://www.photographyofchina.com/databases/>. Photography of China is a personal project

launched in 2011. Its goal is to unearth all relevant photographic material related to China. It

provides interviews of persons involved in the photographic world, timeline of photographers,

and most importantly a collection of photographs - created by both Chinese and foreign artists

- that depicts a common subject matter: China.

TITLE

LINK

DESCRIPTION

Historical

Photographs of

China

<http://hpc.vcea.net> A scholar and collaborative database that aims to locate, archive, and disseminate photographs from the substantial holdings of images of modern China held mostly in private hands overseas

Visualising China

1850-1950

<http://visualisingchina.net/#page=home>

Interactive resource that explores

historical photographs of China from 1850 to 1950

The Virtual Cities

Project

<http://www.virtualcities.fr>

A collaborative enterprise between several international universities. This online platform provides various

types of sources (photographs, maps, documents) about cities such as Beijing, Hankou, Shanghai, Suzhou, Tianjin

International

Dunhuang Project (IDP)

<http://idp.bl.uk> An international collaboration to make information and images of all manuscripts, paintings, textiles and artefacts from Dunhuang and archaeological sites of the Eastern Silk Road freely available on the Internet

Old China

Photography

<http://www.oldchina.com>

photography.com

Website offering a selection of photographs of China from Terry Bennett's collection, which cover the period between 1844 and 1911

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Getty Search

Gateway

<http://search.getty.edu/gateway/search?q=&cat=highlight&f=%22Open+Content+Images%22&rows=10&srt=a&dir=s&pg=1>

The Getty program provides access to thousands of art images - including over 400 photographs of China - from both J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Research Institute

Joconde <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/joconde/fr/pres.htm>

Digital portal gathering a wide range of documents, manuscripts, and images, including photographs of China originally kept in several French museums and institutions

Gallica <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?&lang=EN>

Digital portal gathering a wide range of documents, manuscripts, and images, including photographs, kept chiefly at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)

World Digital Library [https://www.wdl.org/en/search/?regions=eastasia&item\\_type=printphotograph&countries=CN](https://www.wdl.org/en/search/?regions=eastasia&item_type=printphotograph&countries=CN)

Platform that makes available on the Internet, free of charge and in multilingual format, significant primary materials from countries and cultures around the world

Asia and the Eastern Pacific Rim in Early Prints and Photographs (New York Public Library, USA)

<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/asia-and-the-eastern-pacific-rim-in->



early-prints-andphotographs#/?

tab=

navigation

Photographic albums,  
photographically illustrated books,  
and archival photographs related to  
China

Carter Holton Film  
Collection (Harvard-  
Yenching Library,  
USA)

[http://www.digitalhi  
malaya.com/collecti  
ons/films/holton/](http://www.digitalhi<br/>malaya.com/collecti<br/>ons/films/holton/)

This library holds a copy of the Rev.  
Carter Holton's original film, original  
photographs and his 34mm  
Ektachrome slides taken in Western  
China from 1923 to 1949

Tea Industry

Photograph

Collection (Baker  
Library, Harvard  
Business School,  
USA)

[http://hbswk.hbs.ed  
u/archive/2868.html](http://hbswk.hbs.ed<br/>u/archive/2868.html)

#7

A collection of rare photos capturing  
China's 19th Century Tea Trade

Edwards Bangs

Drew Chinese

Maritime Customs

Service

Photographs

(Harvard College  
Library, USA)

[http://hcl.harvard.ed  
u/collections/digital\\_  
collections/edward\\_  
bangs\\_drew.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.ed<br/>u/collections/digital_<br/>collections/edward_<br/>bangs_drew.cfm)

Online collection that shows  
Edwards Bangs Drew's collection of  
photographs taken in China in the  
1860s. It documents clothing,  
customs, and daily life in nineteenth  
century China, as well as Drew's life  
and career.

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The Rev. Claude L.

Pickens, Jr.  
Collection on  
Muslims in China  
(Harvard College  
Library, USA)  
[http://hcl.harvard.edu  
u/libraries/harvardyenching/  
collections  
/pickens/](http://hcl.harvard.edu/u/libraries/harvardyenching/collections/pickens/)

Over 1000 photos of Muslims and  
Christian missionaries working  
among them in Western China in the  
1920s and 1930s

Francis E. Stafford  
photographs, 1909-  
1933 (Stanford  
University Libraries,  
USA)

[https://searchworks.  
stanford.edu/view/9  
615156](https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/9615156)

Hundreds of photographs taken in  
China by Francis E. Stafford, an  
American working as a photographer  
for Asia's largest publishing company,  
Commercial Press in Shanghai in the  
1930ss

Sidney D. Gamble  
Photographs (Duke  
University, USA)  
[http://library.duke.ed  
u/digitalcollections/g  
amble/](http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/gamble/)

Database that supply thousands of  
photographs taken primarily of China  
between 1917 and 1932

East Asia Image  
Collections  
(Lafayette College  
Library, USA)

[http://digital.lafayett  
e.edu/collections/ea  
stasia](http://digital.lafayette.edu/collections/ea)

Open-access archive of digitized  
photographs, negatives, postcards,  
and slides of imperial Japan (1868-  
1945), its Asian empire and occupied  
Japan. Images China are included  
Early Chinese  
Photography

(Northwestern  
University, Chicago,  
USA)

<http://www.mmlc.northwestern.edu/projects/earlychinesephoto/datasetsearch/datasetsearch.php?offset=0&pgnum=1>

Online database set up by the  
Multimedia Learning Center of the  
Northwestern University

AGSL Digital Photo  
Archive Asia and  
Middle East

(University of  
Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee, USA)

<http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/agsphoto>

This archive presents over 20,000  
images from the holdings of the  
American Geographical Society  
(AGS) Library. The selection focuses  
on the countries of Asia and the  
Middle East

Werner von  
Boltenstern

Shanghai  
Photograph and  
Negative Collection

(The William H.  
Hannon Library,  
USA)

<http://digitalcollections.lmu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/sjrc>

Consisting of black and white  
photographs and negatives, this  
collection offers photographic record  
of life in Shanghai, China, in the wartorn  
years from 1937 through 1949

China Through the  
Eyes of CIM

Missionaries (Hong  
Kong Baptist  
University, China)

<http://library.hkbu.edu.hk/electronic/libdb/s/lantern.html>

The Library of Hong Kong Baptist University was given 166 hand-tinted lantern slides by the Billy Graham Centre Archives at Wheaton College. Covering the 1900s to the 1930s  
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Chinese Digital Archive 1966-1976 (Australian National University, Australia)  
<https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/7575>

Provides rare and fragile collections in both print and microfilm relating to the Chinese Cultural Revolution period (1966 to 1976)

Qianchen jiuqing

前塵舊影 (National Library of China, Beijing, China)

<http://mylib.nlc.gov.cn/web/guest/qianchenjiuqing>

An online catalogue of old photographs of streetviews, architecture and others

Shanghai Library, Memory Shanghai

上海年華 (China)

<http://memoire.digilib.sh.cn/SHNH/>

Historical photographs and films currently from the late nineteenth century onwards

Shanghai Library, War of Resistance

Photographs

Collection 上海圖書

館館藏抗戰圖片庫

(China)

<http://memoire.digilib.sh.cn/SHKZ/index.htm>

Collection of photographs taken during the Sino-Japanese war during

the 1930s-40s  
Database of  
Taiwanese old  
photos

臺灣舊照片資料庫

(National Taiwan  
University Library,  
Taiwan)

<http://photo.lib.ntu.edu.tw/pic/db/oldphoto.jsp>

A rich collection of old photographs covering Taiwan related topics during the Japanese Colonial Rule (1895-1945)

Her History in  
Taiwan (Academia  
Sinica, Taiwan)

[http://archives.ith.sinica.edu.tw/collections\\_con\\_en.php?no=35](http://archives.ith.sinica.edu.tw/collections_con_en.php?no=35)

The Archives of the Institute of Taiwan History (ITH) at Academia Sinica holds a wide variety of historical sources pertaining to women of Taiwan dating back to the Qing dynasty

Historical Images of  
Taiwan (Academia  
Sinica, Taiwan)

<http://tais.ith.sinica.edu.tw/sinicafrsFront/index.jsp>

A collection of mainly portraits, family photos, events photos, old postcards and maps of Taiwan

Taiwan Memory

臺灣記憶 (National

Central Library,  
Taiwan)

[http://memory.ncl.edu.tw/tm\\_new/index.htm](http://memory.ncl.edu.tw/tm_new/index.htm)

This database contains a rich source of books and literature, historic documents, images, historical photographs, video, and video records of news, as well as

information on historic figures

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Villages (Academia

Sinica, Taiwan)

<http://ethno.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/en/index.html>

ml

A digital-image database of artefacts,

documents, and photographs related

to China's south-western indigenous

people collected by Academia

Sinica's Institute of History and

Philology between the years 1928-

1943

Women's

Magazines from the

Republican Period

at the Institute of

Chinese Studies

婦女期刊

(Heidelberg

University,

Germany)

<http://www.sino.uniheidelberg.de/womagg/>

g/

Database that gathered information

about as well as digitized issues of

several Chinese Women's illustrated

Magazines published in the Late

Qing and Early Republican Period,

such as Nüzi Shijie 女子世界

[Women's World], Funü Shibao 婦

女時報 [The women's eastern times],

Funü Zazhi 婦女雜誌, and Linglong

玲瓏 [Elegance/La Petite]

Faces of Tientsin,

1946. Photographs

by Harold Giedt

(California State

University,

Northridge, USA)

<http://digitalibrary.csun.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/oldchinahands>

m/landingpage/colle

ction/oldchinahands

Online catalogue that holds the

American enthusiastic amateur

Harold Giedt's photographs of China

in the 1940s  
International  
Mission  
Photography  
Archive (USC  
University of  
Southern California,  
USA)

<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15799coll123>

Historical images of missionary activities in China and other countries from mid-19th to mid-20th century

John Van Antwerp  
MacMurray Photo  
and Film Collection  
(Princeton  
University Library,  
USA)

<http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC094/c01234>

Collections of the Princeton University Library's Dept. of Rare Books and Special, which include John van Antwerp MacMurray's 55 boxes of photographs, dating from 1849 to 1955 and taken or acquired by him. Also in the collection are films MacMurray made in China, Korea, and the Philippines

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China Christian  
Colleges and  
Universities Image  
Database (Yale  
University, USA)

<http://divdl.library.yale.edu/ydlchina/Default.aspx>

This database includes images from the Archives of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia and the Archives of the Trustees of Lingnan University

Robert Henry  
Chandless  
Photographs

(University  
Libraries, University  
of Washington,  
USA)

<http://content.lib.washington.edu/chandlessweb/>

A collection of Robert Henry  
Chandless' travelogue of images of  
China in the early 1900s

Haldore Hanson's  
China Collection  
(1937-1938)

(Carleton College,  
Northfield, USA)

<https://contentdm.carleton.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/China1949>

Online catalogue that gathers  
Haldore Hanson's photographs of  
China in the 1930s

Tiananmen Square,  
1989 (Indiana  
University-Purdue  
Library, USA)

<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/collections/TS>

This collection includes over 400  
black and white photos of 1989  
Tiananmen Square taken by Dr.  
Edgar Huang, who was then a  
university instructor and a  
documentary photographer in Beijing  
"Beijing Spring" -

Memories of the  
Chinese Democracy  
Movement 1978-  
1981

<https://pekingerfruehling.univie.ac.at/en/peking-spring/>

Website whose overall aim of this  
project is to collect and present  
memories and reminiscences of  
participants of the Chinese  
Democracy Movement in the 1970s-  
80s, including avant-garde artists and  
writers associated with the activities.

The East Asian



## Collection

(University of Wisconsin, USA)

<https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/EastAsian/>

This collection presents a visual archive of twentieth century East Asian cultural heritage. The collection includes images that document early twentieth century China, more precisely the Sino-Japanese Conflict (1937-1945), a visual history of Buddhist practices and temples in China, and other images of daily life in both rural and urban China

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The Arnold

Arboretum of

Harvard University,  
South Central China  
and Tibet Collection  
(USA)

<http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/library/imagecollection/southcentral-china-andtibet-hotspot-ofdiversity/>

Photographs of expeditions taken from the 1920s up to contemporary times, which depict China and Tibet's natural and ecological resources, as well as the social and cultural history

The Asia Collection

(Hamilton Library,  
University of  
Hawaii)

<http://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/c.php?g=105700&p=685313>

This collection offers materials that date from 1920, including two digital collections – “Asia at Work” and “Opium in Asia”

Shackford

Collection of

Photographs of

China (University of

Hawaii at Manoa)  
<http://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/shackford/index.php>

These photographs were taken during the late 1920s and early 1930s by John B. Shackford during his travels and tenure as an English teacher in southern China

Sir Robert Hart  
Project (Queen's University, Belfast, United Kingdom)  
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofHistoryandAnthropology/OurResearch/HistoryProjects/SirRobertHartProject/>

Photographs, diaries and other information regarding Sir Robert Hart, who was the Inspector General of the Imperial Customs in Beijing between 1863 and 1908

Chinese  
Photography History  
<http://www.chinesephotography.org>

Non-profit academic exchange platform which aims to explore image materials about China from 1840s till now. The site, published in English and Chinese, features case studies of photographers, excerpts from books, and images culled from the Internet

Asian & Pacific  
Studies – Historical  
Photographs  
<http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVLPages/AsiaPages/Asian-Historical-Photographs.html>

This page keeps track of leading online collections of still images of value/significance to researchers in Asian and Pacific Studies

Asian Art Archive  
亚洲艺术文献库

<http://www.aaa.org>.

hk

Asian Art Archive (AAA) collects, documents and secures the multiple recent histories of contemporary art in the region. AAA's collection encompasses a wide variety of material intended to reflect contemporary artistic practice and developments of Asia within an international context

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National Archives -  
Asia

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/collections/72157631176086816/>

/

Photographs of diverse countries, including China, from The National Archives (United Kingdom) that have been added to Flickr

Archives  
diplomatiques du  
ministère des  
Affaires étrangères  
(France)

<http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/exlphp/cadcgp.php?C>

MD=CHERCHE&QUERY=1&MODELE=vues/mae\_internet\_\_\_images/home.html&VUE=mae\_internet\_\_\_images&NOM=cadic\_\_anonyme&FROM\_LOGIN=1

The Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs possess rich textual and iconographic resources, including photographs taken in China since the late nineteenth century

Archives nationales  
d'outre mer (France)

<http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/sdx/ulyse/re>

sultats?bqid=somme  
aire&type=Photogra  
phie&mode=list&Su  
bmit=Afficher  
French governmental database that  
provides diverse visual documents,  
including photographs of China

Bibliothèque  
nationale de France  
(BnF, France)  
[http://catalogue.bnf.fr/affiner.do?motRecherche=chine&listeAffinages=FacNatDoc\\_i&afficheRegroup=false&trouveDansFiltre=NoticePUB&nbResultParPage=10&triResultParPage=0&critereRecherche=0](http://catalogue.bnf.fr/affiner.do?motRecherche=chine&listeAffinages=FacNatDoc_i&afficheRegroup=false&trouveDansFiltre=NoticePUB&nbResultParPage=10&triResultParPage=0&critereRecherche=0)

The BnF collection holds numerous  
albums and photographs of China  
dating back to the late nineteenth  
century to contemporary times  
Historical Chinese  
Postcard Project:  
1896 – 1920  
(France)  
<http://postcard.vcea.net>

Created under the patronage of the  
Institut d'Asie Orientale (IAO) in the  
city of Lyon, this database primarily  
aims at studying the first wave of  
postcards with a Chinese subject  
China Postcard

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/chinapostcard/>  
Flickr gallery of photographs and  
postcard from China

La médiathèque de  
l'architecture et du  
patrimoine (MAP,  
France)  
[http://www.mediathèquepatrimoine.culture.gouv.fr/fr/archives\\_photo/visites\\_guidees/](http://www.mediathèquepatrimoine.culture.gouv.fr/fr/archives_photo/visites_guidees/)

fondschine.html

The MAP is a French institution that aims to collect, classify, preserve, study, communicate, and promote diverse type of archival material. Its Fonds Chine [China Collection] includes Denise Colomb's journeys in China in the 1930s and mainly anonymous photographs taken before 1914

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Établissement de  
Communication et  
de Production  
Audiovisuelle de la  
Défense (ECPAD,  
France)

<http://www.ecpad.fr/>  
[a-chine-imperiale/](http://www.ecpad.fr/a-chine-imperiale/)

The ECPAD is a French public institution under the tutelage of the Ministry of Defence, which functions as an archive and audiovisual centre. It includes historical photographs of China taken in the late nineteenth century

École Française  
d'Extrême Orient  
(EFEO, France)

[http://collection.efeo](http://collection.efeo.fr/ws/web/app/collection?vc=ePkH4LF74-)  
[.fr/ws/web/app/collection?vc=ePkH4LF7](http://collection.efeo.fr/ws/web/app/collection?vc=ePkH4LF74-)

4-

LkVIACIJOTE1Zd2  
YF5nliUh5we80pzU  
4vyPfpKgCUNWB1I  
OzFpCa4YrAGiEtklt  
EBGSCBFZyZ7FC  
9gUTBPQZzllolngY  
UKcZwGFLib66E7k  
BoAUOcIRBdGP7R  
R\_cQIm2AuVCjAJd  
xWpw\$

The EFEO Library photographic collection offers unstudied early twentieth-century photographs and stereoscopes related to topics such as archaeology, ethnology, and art among others. It includes the following collections: Noël Péri's

photographic records; Joseph Skarbek's mission to Henan in the first decade of the twentieth-century; anonymous stereoscopes taken in Yunnanfou (present day Kunming); and other photographs probably taken in Yunnan province and Tibet

Musée des Arts  
Décoratifs (France)  
[http://artsdecoratifs.  
e-sezhame.fr/index](http://artsdecoratifs.e-sezhame.fr/index)

The Museum holds rare photographic albums of China dating back to the late nineteenth century

Musée d'Orsay  
(France)  
[http://www.museeorsay.  
fr/fr/collection  
s/catalogue-desoeuvres/  
recherchesimple.  
html](http://www.museeorsay.fr/fr/collection/s/catalogue-desoeuvres/recherchesimple.html)

Online catalogue of the museum, which contains photographs of China dating back to the nineteenth century

Musée du Quai  
Branly - The  
Iconographic Library  
(France)  
[http://collections.quai  
branly.fr](http://collections.quai-branly.fr)

The iconographic library of the museum holds nearly 700,000 pieces, gathering images from the photographic library of the musée de l'Homme, the former musée national des arts d'Afrique and d'Océanie, and from the History Collection of the musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. It includes photographs of China dating from the late nineteenth century up to contemporary times

Musée français de  
la photographie,  
Bièvres (France)  
[http://collections.ph  
otographie.essonne  
.fr/board.php](http://collections.photographie.essonne.fr/board.php)

A collection of more than three hundreds photographs taken in China during the late nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries. It includes Jules Itier's daguerreotype taken in China in the 1840s

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Musée de l'Elysée  
(Switzerland)

<http://www.elysee.ch/en/collectionsand-library/thecollections/photographic-archives/>

The museum holds several photographic archives, including the Ella Maillart Collection: a female traveller of the twentieth century that visited Central Asia and China among other places

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (USA)

[http://www.mfa.org/collections/search?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=china&f\[0\]=field\\_collections%3A8](http://www.mfa.org/collections/search?search_api_views_fulltext=china&f[0]=field_collections%3A8)

The Museum photographic collection holds several items ranging from early nineteenth century pictures to contemporary ones

Smithsonian Institution (USA)

[http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?view=grid&dsort=&date.slider=&fq=object\\_type%3A%22Photographs%22&q=china](http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?view=grid&dsort=&date.slider=&fq=object_type%3A%22Photographs%22&q=china)

Group of museums and research centres administered by the United States government, which provides an online catalogue of around 2.000 photographs of China

George Eastman House Museum (USA)

[http://licensing.eastmanhouse.org/GEH/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox\\_VPage&VBID=2744WNBIQ8I4&CT](http://licensing.eastmanhouse.org/GEH/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox_VPage&VBID=2744WNBIQ8I4&CT)

=Search&RW=1104

&RH=662

This international museum of  
photography and film holds hundreds  
of early twentieth century

photographs of China

Chinese-Australian

Historical Images in

Australia (Chinese

Museum Australia)

<http://www.chia.chinese-museum.com.au>

esemuseum.com.au

This database is a catalogue of

historical images of Chinese,

Chinese immigrants and their

descendants held in Australia. It

comes with bibliography, which

provides contextual information about

the images in the database

Swedish National

Museums of World

Culture

(Världskulturmuseer

na, Sweden)

<http://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/en/ostasiatiskamuseet/researchcollections/searchourcollections/?ksamse>

archtext=Sirén%2C

+Osvald&radiogroup=

andmatch&it

emtype=foto&ksam

submit=Search

This museum holds a significant

collection of photographs of China

taken by the Finnish-born Swedish

art historian Osvald Sirén (1879-

1966) during the first decades of the

twentieth century

Rijksmuseum

Collection

(Netherlands)

[https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?q=china%20&f=1&p=10&ps=12&type=photograph&ii=3)

[q=china%20&f=1&p=10&ps=12&type=photograph&ii=3](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?q=china%20&f=1&p=10&ps=12&type=photograph&ii=3)

[=10&ps=12&type=photograph&ii=3](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?q=china%20&f=1&p=10&ps=12&type=photograph&ii=3)

[hotograph&ii=3](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?q=china%20&f=1&p=10&ps=12&type=photograph&ii=3)

The Museum collection holds some



late nineteenth and early twentieth  
centuries photographs and albums of  
China

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Frederick

Williamson

Collection on

Sikkim, Bhutan, and

Tibet (Museum of

Archaeology and

Anthropology at

Cambridge

University, United

Kingdom)

<http://www.digitalhi>

[malaya.com/collecti](http://www.digitalhi)

[ons/williamson/](http://www.digitalhi)

Collection of photographs and reels

of movies taken by the British

Political Officer Williamson, while he

stayed in Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet

in the 1930s

Royal Asiatic

Society (United

Kingdom)

<https://ras.libertyasp>

[.co.uk/library/library](https://ras.libertyasp)

Home.do

Their online Library catalogue

provides much of their photographic

collection, including mid-and-late

nineteenth century albums and

photographs of China taken by Lai

Afong, John Thomson, William Pryor

Floyd, Milton M. Miller and other

unknown operators

Wellcome Collection

Library (United

Kingdom)

<http://wellcomecolle>

[ction.org/johnthomsons-](http://wellcomecolle)

[china-0](http://wellcomecolle)

The photographs shown on this

website are a small sample from the

collection of nearly 700 photographs

in the Wellcome Library which the

photographer John Thomson (1837-

1921) took on his foreign travels,

brought home to London and offered

at the end of his life to the collector

Henry Wellcome  
Joseph Needham  
Photographs  
(Needham  
Research Institute,  
United Kingdom)  
[http://www.nri.org.uk/JN\\_wartime\\_photos/home.htm](http://www.nri.org.uk/JN_wartime_photos/home.htm)

A collection of around 1000  
photographs taken by Dr. Needham  
during Wartime China (1942-1946)

Sha Fei Research  
Center for Chinese  
Image (China)

<http://www.shafei.cn> Research centre dedicated to the  
Chinese professional photographer  
Sha Fei (1912-1950), who was one  
of the most cherished photographers  
in China during the wartime years of  
1937-1949, when China and Japan  
entered into conflict

Everyday Life in  
Mao's China

<https://everydaylifeinmaoschina.org>

This website - run by the academic  
Covell Meyskens - is dedicated  
mainly to photos and paintings of  
everyday life in China from roughly  
1949 to 1989

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Thomas H. Hahn

Docu-Image

<http://hahn.zenfolio.com>

Website – ran by Thomas H. Hahn -  
that provides a bibliography of photoalbums  
and materials related to the  
history of photography in China and  
Tibet before 1949

Bucklin China

Archive

<http://bucklinchinaarchive.com>

Website dedicated to Harold  
Bucklin's photographs of 1930s

China

Reginald Murphy in

China

<http://china.dhpp.org>

g

This website provides digitized images taken by the journalist Reginald Murphy, who visited China in 1972 with a group of western journalist. This website also provides essays written by graduate students from the Digital History and Pedagogy class at NC State University (USA)

Durham Light

Infantry 1920-1946:

The China Album

<http://durhamlightinfantry.webs.com/apps/auth/login?why=pw&next=apps%2Fphotos%2Falbum%3Falbumid%3D10587208>

Website dedicated to the memory of J W S Gibson who was killed in action on June 14th 1944. It is ran by Gibson's nephew

China 1974-76

<https://secure.flickr.com/photos/ibisbill/collections/72157638808474635/>

Over 400 slides taken by Michael Rank when he was a student in China in the 1970s

« Serve the People !

» Images of Daily Life in China during the Cultural Revolution

<http://academics.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/China1972/main.html>

The photographs presented on this website were taken by William A. Joseph, Professor in the department of Political Science, Wellesley College. These images were shot in March-April 1972 when he was a participant in the second delegation of the Committee of Concerned Asian

Scholars (CCAS) to the People's  
Republic of China (PRC)

Nicholas Grindley

Photography of

China

[http://www.nicholas](http://www.nicholasgrindleyphotographyofchina.com)

[grindleyphotograph](http://www.nicholasgrindleyphotographyofchina.com)

[yofchina.com](http://www.nicholasgrindleyphotographyofchina.com)

Nicholas Grindley is an art dealer  
researching Chinese art with  
particular interest in photography of  
China prior to 1900 by both Western  
and Chinese

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Denis George Crow

[http://www.dennisge](http://www.dennisgeorgecrow.com)

[orgecrow.com](http://www.dennisgeorgecrow.com)

Website of an art dealer specialized  
in historic China and Asian  
photography

Old Hong Kong

[http://www.oldhkpho](http://www.oldhkphoto.com)

[to.com](http://www.oldhkphoto.com)

An online catalogue of images that  
depict historical and present day  
Hong Kong

Gwulo: Old Hong

Kong

<http://gwulo.com>

Online repository ran by David Bellis  
that provides a mix of historical and  
current information about Hong Kong  
through photographs, and articles  
among other documents

Hong Kong War

Diary

[http://www.hongkon](http://www.hongkongwardiary.com)

[gwardiary.com](http://www.hongkongwardiary.com)

Project that documents the 1941  
defence of Hong Kong, the  
defenders, their families, and the  
fates of all until liberation through all  
types of images, including  
photographs

Witness Hong Kong

1967

[http://www.witnessh](http://www.witnesshk67.org)

[k67.org](http://www.witnesshk67.org)

A collection of photographs shot  
during the Cultural Revolution in

Hong Kong in 1967  
Shanghai 1937  
<http://www.japanguide.com/a/shanghai/index.html>

Photographs by the Swiss Karl Kengelbacher, who documented the Sino-Japanese War in the late 1930s

Ma famille à Shanghai au temps des concessions [My family during the international settlement of Shanghai]

<http://gfeltin.perso.sfr.fr>

1920-30s Shanghai seen through the lens of a French family  
Beijing of Dreams

<http://www.beijingofdreams.com>

Website providing photographs, paintings, engravings and other images that depict the old Beijing.

This website is a project of The History of Chinese Science and Culture Foundation

Silk Road in Photographs

<http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/photograph/index.html>  
.en

This site archives over 6000 thousands photographs of several sites along the Silk Road, from the past and the present (mainly in Japanese language)

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Chinese photographer

中国摄影师

<http://new.cphoto.net>

Useful website that provides portfolios and information regarding Mainland Chinese, overseas Chinese and even some international photographers  
Chinese-

Photography.net

<http://www.chinesephoto.net>

An online catalogue of Chinese contemporary photographs from a private collection

Gallery of China Top

Photographer

<http://www.fotocn.org>

g

Website that provides Chinese photographers' biographies and artworks from early to contemporary times

FOTEO Images

<http://www.fotoe.com/english/home>

m/english/home

FOTEO (Guangzhou Integrated Image Co., Ltd.) is an encyclopedic picture stock specialized in China. It collects photographs organized chronologically from the 1840s up to contemporary times

Xinhua Multimedia

Database

[http://info.xinhua.org/cn/gailan.do?cid=](http://info.xinhua.org/cn/gailan.do?cid=174&dm=1)

[174&dm=1](http://info.xinhua.org/cn/gailan.do?cid=174&dm=1)

174&dm=1

Online database of the Xinhua News Agency

Shuge 書格

<https://shuge.org/sort/yinxiang/>

Free and open online library of ancient books and ancient photographs

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Zhongguo Mingsheng (中國名勝) **[Scenic China]**: List of volumes

VOLUME TITLE COMPILER(S) YEAR(S) OF PUBLICATION LOCATION(S)

N°1 第一種黃山 Huangshan

黃炎培 (Huang Yanpei also

mentioned as traveler 旅行兼)

呂頤壽 (Lü Yishou mentioned as

photographer and traveler

攝影者, 旅行兼)

1914 (中華民國三年十一月初版)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

Guomindang Party Archives (Taipei)

**British Library (London)**

**N°2 第二種廬山 Lushan**

**黃炎培 (Huang Yanpei)**

**呂頤壽 (Lü Yishou)**

**1915 (中華民國四年二月十六日);**

**1916 (中華民國五年五月);**

**1917 (中華民國六年)**

**Shanghai Library (Shanghai)**

**British Library (London)**

**N°3 第三種普陀山 Putuoshan**

**莊俞 (Zhuang Yu)**

**袁希會 (Yuan Xihui)**

**蔣維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)**

**呂頤壽 (Lü Yishou)**

**1915 (中華民國四年二月初版);**

**1925 fifth edition**

**(中華民國十四年十一月五版)**

**National Library of China (Beijing)**

**Shanghai Library (Shanghai)**

**British Library (London)**

**N°4 第四種 (三冊**

**three albums)**

**西湖 Xihu, West Lake**

**Album 1 第一集**

**黃炎培 (Huang Yanpei)**

**呂頤壽 (Lü Yishou)**

**Album 2 第二集**

**莊俞 (Zhuang yu)**

**Album 3 第三集莊俞 (Zhuang yu)**

**Album 1 第一集: 1915**

**(中華民國四年四月初版); 1929 seventh**

**edition (中華民國十八年四月七版)**

**Album 2 第二集: 1920**

**(中華民國九年五月初版); 1929 seventh**

**edition (中華民國十八年四月五版)**

**Album 3 第三集: 1920**

**(中華民國九年五月初版); 1936 fourth edition**

**(中華民國十五年九月四版)**

**National Central Library (Taipei)**

**Fudan University Library**

**(Shanghai)**

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)  
National Library of China (Beijing)  
British Library (London)

N°5 第五種

避暑山莊 Summer Resort,

Jehol

博增湘(Bo Zengxiang)

袁希壽(Yuan Xishou)

1915 (中華民國四年七月初版);

1916 second edition

(中華民國五年八月再版);

1924 (中華民國十三年十二月)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

National Central Library (Taipei)

N°6 第六種泰山 Taishan

黃炎培 (Huang Yanpei)

莊俞 (Zhuang Yu)

1915 (中華民國四年十二月初版);

1926 fourth edition

(中華民國十五年九月四版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Bibliothèque nationale de France

(Paris)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

British Library (London)

N°7 第七重 衡山 Hengshan

袁希濤 (Yuan Xitao)

將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

1916 (中華民國五年四月)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

British Library (London)

N°8 第八重孔林 Konglin

郁厚培 (Yu Houpei)

張元濟 (Zhang Yuanji)

孫毓修 (Sun Yuxiu)

呂頤壽 (Lü Yishou)

1916 (中華民國五年十一月初版);

1926 fifth edition (中華民國十五年四月五版)

National Central Library (Taipei)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Fudan University Library

(Shanghai)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)



Bibliothèque nationale de France  
(Paris)

N°9 第九種 虞山 Yushan

陈文钟 (Chen Wenzhong)

莊俞 (Zhuang Yu)

朱亮 (Zhu Liang)

吴家煦 (Wu Jiayu)

1915 (中華民國四年十二月初版);

1916 second edition

(中華民國五年六月再版)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

British Library (London)

N°10 第十種 雁蕩山 Yandangshan

蒋希召 (Jiang Xizhao)

張元濟 (Zhang Yuanji)

將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao) as

revisor / editor 校訂者

1917 (中華民國六年五正月初版) National Library of China (Beijing)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°11 第十一種

(二册 2 albums)

天台山 Tiantaishan 將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

Album 1 第一集: 1915

(中華民國四年四月初版); 1930 third edition

(中華民國十九年十一月三版)

Album 2 第二集: 1917

(中華民國六年八月初版); 1924

(中華民國十三年十一月再版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

N°12 第十二種 恆山 Hengshan 將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

1916 (中華民國八年七月初版);

1929 third edition

(中華民國十八年五月三版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°13 第十三種 五臺山 Wutaishan

武進 (Wu Jin)

將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

1919 (中華民國八年八月初版) Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

中國名勝 [Scenic China]. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1914-1926 (re-edited until 1936)

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N°14 第十四

(二册 2 albums)

西山 Xishan

莊俞 (Zhuang Yu)

將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

Album 1 第一集: 1920

(中華民國九年五月初版);

1926 third edition

(中華民國十五年一月三版)

Album 2 第二集: 1920

(中華民國九年五月初版);

1929 third edition (中華民國十八年五月三版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°15 第十五種

(二册 2 albums)

盤山 Panshan

武進 (Wu Jin)

將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

Album 1 第一集: 1920

(中華民國九年四月初版); 1929 third edition

(中華民國十八年五月三版)

Album 2 第二集: 1920

(中華民國九年四月初版); 1929 third edition

(中華民國十八年五月三版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°16 第十六種

(二册 2 albums)

大房山 Dafangshan

武進 (Wu Jin)

將維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

Album 1 第一集: 1921

(中華民國十年四月初版); 1929 third edition

(中華民國十八年五月三版)

Album 2 第二集: 1921

(中華民國十年五月初版); 1924 second

edition (中華民國十三年十一月再版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

National Central Library (Taipei)

N°17 第十七種 華山 Huashan 張登九 (Zhang Dengjiu) 1924 (中華民國十三年十二月)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°18 第十八種 武夷山 Wuyishan 蔣希召 (Jiang Xizhao)

1922 (中華民國十一年十一月初版);

1924 second edition

(中華民國十三年十二月再版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°19 第十九種 天目山 Tianmushan

莊俞 (Zhuang Yu)

王显华 (Wang Xianhua)

高梦旦 (Gao Mengdan)

徐澄秋 (Xu Chengqiu)

1923 (中華民國十二年二月初版);

1925 second edition

(中華民國十四年九月再版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

National Taiwan University Library  
(Taiwan)

N°20 第二十種 雲台山 Yuntaishan

武進 (Wu Jin)

蔣維喬 (Jiang Weiqiao)

1924 (中華民國十三年三月初版) Shanghai Library (Shanghai)

N°21 第廿一種 莫干山 Moganshan 商務印書館編譯所

1924 (中華民國十三年六月初版);

1925 second edition

(中華民國十四年八月再版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

N°22 第廿二種 勞山 Laoshan

吳曾懃 (Wu Cengqin)

刘承植 (Liu Chengzhi)

1926 (中華民國十五年十一月初版)

National Library of China (Beijing)

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Kongzi linmiao

商务印书馆照相製版部

(Commercial Press  
photomechanical department).

Introduction by 武進 (Wu Jin)

and 莊俞 (Zhuang Yu)

1922 (中華民國十一年六月初版) Shanghai Library (Shanghai)\_\_\_