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A Pioneer of Photography in Algeria

1855-1860

Adnan Sezer / Bruno Tartarin

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Seventy-five calotypes and collodion prints enable us to rediscover Louis Plantet, one of the little-known pioneers of photography in Algeria whose work was singled out by Félix Moulin in 1856. The set comes from the photographer's family and bears witness to the Algeria of the 1850s and to the age of 'distinguished amateurs' which preceded the onset of professional studios there.

The first mention of the calotype in Algeria was in 1846, five years after its development by William Henry Fox Talbot, and a year before the publication in France of the treatise by Blanquart-Evrard¹. To promote "his" photographic technique, Stefano Lecchi² (1803-1863) from Milan took over Room N°14 of the Hotel d'Orléans in Algiers for a week in July 1846³. A first exhibition took place as early as 1849; writer Charles Desprez praised the "two hundred photographs or photographic negatives on paper" presented by Célestin Zacharie Liogier⁴ (1815-1875); the latter, a painter and drawing teacher at a school in Algiers, may have trained with Adolphe Humbert de Molard. Taken in the region of

Constantine, the photographs compose a "tourist portfolio", the best of which was reshowed three years later at the Djenina Palace. "Around the same time", according to Desprez, Mr. Elmore "enchanted Algerian photography enthusiasts with a collection of the most skillful and best produced photographs seen to this day"⁵.

Due to their fragility and to the fact that they were not widely distributed, few calotypes from Algeria have survived, although some appear on the market from time to time; when they do, they are usually attributed to Alphonse Delaunay, Pierre Trémaux, Paul Marés, Paul Jeuffrain, John Beasley Greene or Gustave de Beaucorps.

1. AUBENAS Sylvie and ROUBERT Paul-Louis (dir.): *Primitifs de la photographie, Le calotype en France*, Gallimard-Bnf, 2010.

2. Having studied with Daguerre, Lecchi turned to the calotype, producing during the French occupation of Rome in 1849 the very first war pictures...

3. Akhbar, July 5, 1846. Pierre ZARAGOZI: *Alary-Geiser, la saga d'un studio photographique*, 2019, page 16.

4. Akhbar, May 7, 1865. Quoted by ZARAGOZI: *Claudius Portier (1841-1910), Au temps des hivers*, 2016, page 9.

5. Thomas John Elmore (1823-1896). British Vice-consul in Algiers from 1854 to 1870. Like Liogier, Elmore used equipment from optician Charles Chevalier who was also known to Humbert de Molard (1853 catalog, quoted by Anne de MONDENARD: "L'Algérie, terre oubliée des photographes en Orient", in *De Delacroix à Renoir. L'Algérie des peintres*, Hazan, Paris, page 271). Moulin published one of Elmore's photographs of Lambaesis, (The Temple of Asclepius, *Temple d'Esculape*, Cat Moulin 1859, n° 237).



Portrait of Louis Plantet (unknown studio).

The greatest set of photographs of Algeria in the 1850s, however, remains the one created from glass plate negatives by Félix Moulin (1802-1879). Moulin's celebrated *L'Algérie photographiée* was published in 1858 and copies could be found in the bookshop run by Jules-Auguste Tissier, on the corner of Bab el Oued Street and Galerie Malakoff passageway. To give maximum publicity to his Algerian tour, Moulin addressed a set of letters, most of which have been published, to *La Lumière*. In June 1856, the review concluded the transcription of one of the letters with this note: “*Among the distinguished amateurs whose beautiful prints Moulin has noted, we forgot to mention the names of British vice-consul Mr Lemor and of Mr Plautet (sic) who, like the director of the Museum of Algiers, the deputy superintendent from Miliana, and*

several other French officers, enthusiastically and successfully practice the various techniques of photography, producing remarkable works”⁶.

Family Provenance

This exceptional collection assembled by Adnan Sezer and Bruno Tartarin comes from the family of Louis Plantet (1828-1860) and his brother Hippolyte (1829-1882). Begun in 1853-55, it is an excellent illustration of the type of production that Moulin was referring to, whose praises were sung in *La Lumière*, and which remains relatively unknown. Among the names cited by Ernest Lacan's review we can thus find those of Thomas John Elmore (1823-1896), the “*Lemore*” mentioned by Desprez, Adrien Berbrugger (1801-1869), the director of the museum of Algiers since 1838, Louis Huaut (1814-1871), the deputy superintendent, whose name Moulin spells “*Huant*”. And a certain *Plautet* who is, of course, our Plantet.

In 2019, a calotype portraying an eminent figure from Algiers⁷ was mistakenly attributed to Hippolyte. Hippolyte Plantet, a painter who trained with Gleyre and Félix Ziem, is known to a few specialists of Orientalist painting for his *Courtyard of the Doge's Palace in Venice* which was exhibited in the 1870 Salon and for a landscape held by the Musée d'Orsay⁸. The Plantet family considered Louis a man of learning, but for them Hippolyte was the artist in the family⁹. A careful study of the few paintings of his that we know reveals obvious links with the photographs of Algeria in his possession and that the family also put up for auction¹⁰. A painter who owns a large stock of photographs for use as

6. *La Lumière*, 28 June, 1856, page 102.

7. “*Chef arabe*” (‘Arab leader’, sic). Albumen print from paper negative, 21 x 15,5 cm. *Catalogue Gros-Delettrez*, June 2019, page 78.

8. Galerie Edith Davidson, Saint-Ouen.

9. Xavier Plantet, Email January 9, 2023.

10. Laval Auctioneers, Sale October 20, 2022, Expert Antoine Romand.

documentary material or to economize on sitters is not at all rare, although the order of influence inferred is not always true to reality. Nor is it exceptional that a painter practices photography himself. Daguerre painted and Horace Vernet made daguerreotypes. But Hippolyte Plantet was not just a painter, and Louis Plantet especially had a passion for photography.

Louis and Hippolyte Plantet in Algeria

Marie Louis César Plantet was born in Lons-le-Saunier on January 21, 1828¹¹. And it is to him and not to his brother that his descendants attribute the photographs presented by Adnan Sezer and Bruno Tartarin. From a wealthy family, Louis Plantet lost his father in 1884. He studied law, qualifying in 1851. When he became Tax Collector of the Department of Registration and Estates, he had already received his inheritance. From then on, this man of learning was able to devote himself to his leisure pursuits: music (he composed for the organ) and numismatics (in 1855 he co-authored an essay on currency in Burgundy, *Essai sur les monnaies dans le comté de Bourgogne*)¹². As for photography, it was probably around 1850 that he made the acquisition of his substantial photographic equipment¹³. Photographs by Louis taken in the Jura, the Pyrenees, Strasbourg, and Provence (in Gordes where Louis lived between 1856 and 1857) are kept by the family.

Louis Plantet traveled a lot, therefore. And it was around 1855, in other words shortly before Félix Moulin's mission, that he discovered Algeria and began to join his brother there regularly. Before devoting himself to

11. I would like to thank M. Xavier Plantet for the valuable unpublished information he has kindly provided in addition to Antoine Romand's notice for the sale of the family photographic collection.

12. Edited in Lons-le-Saunier, the volume was re-edited in Dijon in 1865. At the time, Louis Plantet was corresponding member of the Côte d'or archeological commission.

13. ZARAGOZI Pierre: *Felix Moulin & L'Algérie photographiée*, 2014, page 97 (confirmed by Xavier Plantet).



Louis Plantet by his brother Hippolyte (private collection).

painting, Hippolyte had studied law to become a barrister. Called to Algiers around 1853 to defend one of his clients, Hippolyte rented an apartment there at 50bis rue de la Lyre, an apartment he was to keep until his death. At the time, rue de la Lyre, parallel to the rue Bab Azoun, was called rue Napoleon; a long straight street with arcades, it was to become in the 1860s the address of several important names in photography such as Bertrand, Emile, Ferdinand and Portier. Nothing is known of the frequency or the duration of Louis's stays, but it can be imagined that he avoided the discomfort of the extreme heat in summer. Later Algiers would grow into a winter resort for tourists...

Louis Plantet was of poor health, and he died very young on May 7, 1860, at age 32. He had a son called Eugène Plantet (1855-1934), who became embassy secretary

and wrote several works on the relationship between North Africa and France: *Correspondance des deys d’Alger avec la couronne de France* (1889), *Correspondance des beys de Tunis et des consuls de France avec la cour* (1893), *Mouley Ismaël et la princesse de Conti* (1893), *Les consuls de France à Alger avant la conquête* (1930)¹⁴. Eugène kept a large collection of photographs; for instance, to illustrate its *Colonial Atlas* in 1902, he made available to the Larousse Publishing House a picture of the door of the French consulate in Tunis. Certain of the annotations on the bottom right of the pages on which the photographic prints are mounted are in his hand, but most of them were written on the bottom left by Eugène’s son Jean. The state of conservation of the collection is thus greatly indebted to the care with which the photographs were handed down from generation to generation. However, all the questions concerning their attribution are not necessarily settled.

Three of the prints here for example match photographs from Félix Moulin’s catalog. Clearly from collodion negatives, they are ‘ethnographic’ studies of Algerians staged in a familiar way – placed in front of the great draperies that Moulin, in lieu of an actual studio, used to close off his photography space. Two scenes from the Algiers area, one of which is also printed in reverse, bear the following captions by Moulin, *Mauresque et négresse d’Alger (costume d’intérieur)*¹⁵ (‘Moorish woman and Negress from Algiers in interior dress’) and *Négresses marchandes de pain et de poisson*¹⁶ (‘Negresses selling bread and fish’).



Félix Moulin. *Moorish woman and Negress from Algiers* (detail).

Taken in the same location, these are the only photographs of the set where, notwithstanding the incorrect caption by Moulin written on the second, we find a Moorish woman in a veil, in “semi-formal dress” as it was called. These three prints by Moulin were purchased therefore by Louis or Hippolyte. If the Plantet brothers did meet Félix Moulin in Algiers – which is quite likely, through Berbrugger notably – we know that, even before November 1856 and the photographic exhibition in Brussels¹⁷, Moulin sent a large number of pictures to France.

17. Ernest LACAN: “Exposition photographique de Bruxelles” *La Lumière*, December 6, 1856, page 189.



The Mystery of the Blind Stamp: “Marville and Algeria”

The presence of Charles Marville’s blind stamp on the pages of no less than nineteen prints¹⁸ enables us to reopen an old question: are the works by Marville? In 1999, Marie de Thézy identified just seven prints¹⁹. In 2007, Ken Jacobson published another²⁰ – which is to be found in the collection – to be followed by Pierre Zaragozi in 2019²¹. Seven photographs had sufficed to say that Marville, who was necessarily the one who took them, had crossed the Mediterranean in 1851 or 1852; but, such a lot of effort for such a small result nonetheless continued to raise some doubts. We now know that Marville sold calotypes from Egypt by Ernest Benecke (1817-1894) and the reality of his trip to Algeria has been contested²². The hypothesis that Marville went to Algeria to be published by Blanquart-Evrard has given way to a consensus around the distribution with Marville’s Parisian stamp of other photographers in Egypt but also in Algeria.

18. In the case of four photographs of the Blidah area, photographs 19, 84, 85 and 93, the number has been reversed.

19. Marie DE THÉZY: “Charles Marville”, *Photographes en Algérie au XIX^e siècle*, page 26.

20. Ken JACOBSON: *Odaliques and Arabesques*, Quaritch, London, 2007, page 253.

21. ZARAGOZI 2019, page 18.

22. Ken JACOBSON: 2007, page 253 and Pierre ZARAGOZI 2019, p. 19.

For Algeria, the name of Jean-Baptiste Antoine Alary (1811-1899) was initially suggested²³. Alary had indeed vigorously refuted a letter by Moulin published in *La Lumière* implying that no professional photographer from Algiers was selling views of Algeria which had not been purchased in Paris²⁴. The magazine did not judge it opportune to publish Moulin’s reaction, considering it too offensive to Alary, but it is curious that the latter did not argue that far from buying them from Paris, it was he who sent them there. Had he not exhibited at the French Photography Association (the SFP, Société Française de Photographie) as early as February 1856? Moreover, in his reply to Moulin when he talks of his work, he mentions views of Algiers, but no ‘ethnographic’ studies of Algerians, no views of Southern Algeria, nor even any ruins. Later he would say that it was “*in 1857 (at the same time as Mr. Moulin) and every year after that... (that) I made long and tiring excursions through North Africa... in Algeria from Tlemcen, through Laghouat and Biskra on to Tunis*”²⁵. In 2009, comparing Alary’s prints to those distributed by Marville, Frances Terpak added a stylistic argument: “*The photographs are markedly different in tone and character*”²⁶.

After Alary, it was the name of Benecke – whose photographs of Egypt were as we saw published both by Blanquard-Evrard²⁷ and Marville – that held the favor of several specialists, even if this meant putting into doubt the places where some of the photographs were taken.

23. DE MONDENARD Anne: 2003, page 110 and Pierre ZARAGOZI 2019, page 19. ZARAGOZI bases his hypothesis on the seal ‘AM’ to be found on certain prints which he reads ‘Alary-Marville’. But for Gilles DUPONT, this is instead the signature of Alfred Magny, a member of the SFP in 1861: photographesdebiskra.blogspot.com

24. MOULIN: “*Professional photographers, of which there are not many in Algiers, make portraits using glass plates and sell photographs purchased in Paris*” (*La Lumière*, April 5, 1856).

ALARY: “*It is just the bookshops that sell prints purchased in Paris*” (*La Lumière*, May 5, 1856).

25. Akhbar, January 3, 1868. Quoted by ZARAGOZI 2019, page 80.

26. Frances TERPAK: 2009, page 128.

27. Bnf (French National Library) and Getty Center Collections.

14. Translation of titles: ‘Correspondence of the deys of Algeria with the French crown, Correspondence of the beys of Tunis and French consuls with the French court, Mouley Ismaël and the princesse de Conti, French consuls in Algeria before French occupation’. A Knight of the French Legion of Honor and Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, Eugène Plantet also wrote books on charitable work in Paris and on holiday camps for disadvantaged children.

15. The image corresponds to one of these three numbers in the Moulin catalog: 73, 74, 75.

16. Number 98, Moulin catalog 1859.

Hence a photograph by Benecke, today captioned *Jeune nubienne à la jarre*²⁸ (‘Young Nubian woman with a jar’) at the French National Library (BnF), is the print that Marie-Claire Adès and Pierre Zaragozi in their Algerian anthology had entitled *Jeune africaine*²⁹. But in another pose and reframed from the front, this same “young African woman” is part of the Plantet collection; we have the same sitter whose clothes cover her body and head, her left hand delicately emerging, and a worried expression that is particularly poignant – a “black servant” at a time when, despite its abolition in Paris in 1848, the slave trade continued to cross over the borders into French Algeria. For the two photographs seem to us indeed to be of Algeria: in photographs taken in the 1860s³⁰, and already in the work of Moulin, the same piece of clothing can be found on a great number of female figures from sub-Saharan Africa, an item described by Claudius Portier as “*a big cotton mantle with blue and white squares*” called the *mleta*³¹.

Prints of two other photographs in this set were also attributed to Benecke during auctions in Paris, notably the one in June 2014³². These are the outdoor scene with the camelid (to which our set adds a picture with the camel-holder) and a rather unusual portrait of an elderly “couple” (perhaps a rabbi and his wife?). It is true that certain prints are difficult to situate – is this Algeria or Egypt? But in 2002, Sylvie Aubenas stated that it was Benecke who not only took Marville’s Egyptian photographs but also his Algerian prints: “*views of Algeria (1851) must be attributed to Benecke, though they were*

published under the name of Marville”³³. Such an early date would thus rule out Plantet, but, since then, the presence of the latter’s signature on a print at the Getty Center of the *Café des platanes à Alger* may have prompted the BnF to correct the attribution of its print of the same photograph bearing Marville’s stamp³⁴. And despite Sarah Kennel’s great advances on the biography³⁵, we still do not have any biographical element that would attest to a trip to Algeria by Marville – or even by Benecke³⁶.

The collection held by his descendants thus places Louis Plantet at the head of the list of candidates eligible as the photographers published by Marville. We should nonetheless underline the presence of a photograph by Moulin in the present set – is this a Moulin edited by Marville, or a print mounted by the Plantet brothers? It must also be pointed out that the “Marville” prints from the Plantet collection are glass plate photographs. Marville used the blind stamp present on our mounted prints between 1851 and 1858³⁷. A more precise dating of the distribution in Paris of Marville’s Algerian prints would obviously enable us to cross these dates with the beginning of the Plantet brothers’ trips to Algeria but it is likely that Marville gradually took over from Blanquart-Evrard before the latter went bankrupt in February 1856. Finally, just as Blanquart-Evrard published several photographs in the Middle East, the hypothesis that Marville did the same for Algeria seems the most likely. That was the hypothesis suggested by Sarah Kennel as early as 2013 when she already



proposed the name of Plantet³⁸. She also spoke of « *an unidentified calotypist* » – she did not entirely rule out Alary, but why not Liogier, Elmore or Huaut? – « *as well as another maker of Orientalist genre scenes* » whom we now think might be Plantet himself.

Questions of style: On some photographs in the collection...

In the pictures of Constantine and of the Rhumel River, whose gorges offer such varied angles, in the pictures around Blidah, where Moulin had met that other “distinguished amateur” Louis Huaut, or again in the archaeological images of Medracen, Lambaesis or Djémila, certain details distinguish the photographer’s gaze from that of Moulin and others: a slightly different viewing angle, or the presence sometimes of a silhouette in the distance that humanizes the composition or enables the viewer to measure the exact scale

of the monumental ruins without over-romanticizing them³⁹. Certain calotypes belong to the great French tradition in the medium showing a softness and a simplicity that characterize the photographic technique so dear to aesthetes. This is especially true of the remarkably restrained and balanced images of the South: of El Kantara (where we also find Greene in 1856)⁴⁰ and of Biskra, of course, which had already been discovered by the painter Fromentin and whose fort inspired the photographer to create a composition in every respect remarkable. As for Bou Saada, where fighting was still going on in 1849, and which Moulin had not been to, the mausoleum of Sidi Mhamed ben Brahim⁴¹ is

28. http://classes.bnf.fr/iconographie/grand/ico_0082.htm

29. ADES Marie-Claire and ZARAGOZI Pierre: *Photographies en Algérie au XIX^e siècle*, Galerie de la SEITA, Paris, 1999, page 32.

30. Cf. MEGNIN-TARTARIN: *L’album des types féminins, Alger 1860-1870*.

31. PORTIER Claudius: *Guide et catalogue*, Algiers, 1874, page 17. Portier began working in Algiers in 1863.

32. ADER-NORDMANN, Auction June 14, 2014.

33. SYLVIE AUBENAS: *Gustave Le Gray*, Getty Museum, Los Angeles et Bnf-Gallimard, Paris 2002, page 306.

34. Source: Xavier Plantet.

35. KENNEL Sarah: *Charles Marville: Photographer of Paris*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2013.

36. The BENECKE notice published in 2010 in the Bnf catalog on Early Photographers mentions trips to Egypt, Sudan, The Lebanon, Palestine, Grece and Italy but not to Algeria.

37. KENNEL Sarah, 2013: page 227.

38. KENNEL Sarah, 2013: page 29.

39. These photographs of archaeological ruins have often been neglected in favor of those from Egypt of which there are more. It was these photos, however, that as early as 1840 were the inspiration for the first daguerreotypes ever made in Algeria during the two-year mission of the Algerian Scientific Commission led by Amable Ravoisié (1801-1867).

40. Former Zaragozi collection.

41. I would like to thank Barkahoum Ferhati for confirming the hand-written caption. The exact location of the view of the desert bearing the caption “*Dans la région de Bou Saâda*” (‘In the Bou Saada region’) is obviously difficult to determine.



nothing less than the first known photograph of the municipality, no doubt taken thanks to the setting up of a French military circle (1855), shortly before the opening of a French school (1857).

Three other photographs are worth singling out. In *Cimetière maure près de Blidah* ('Moorish Cemetery near Blidah'), doubtlessly carried away by the spectacular view of the gorges of the Oued el-Kébir River, Moulin had provided a wide view devoid of any real character⁴². Planter's variant not only cuts out the gorges and the sky, focusing on the branches with their silky light and bringing out the white of the funeral monuments, but it is also as if there was a ghostly silhouette hovering around the tombs! A truly involuntary *ghost effect*? Other ghosts appear in *Essai de photographie instantanée, arabes en marche* ('Arabs walking, an experiment in spontaneous photography'); even if the building behind them is European, these soft-focused figures are a gripping testimony to life in Algeria at the time; the photograph, which was probably taken in the lower part of the Casbah, is like an artist's on-the-spot sketch. This experimental snapshot, particularly rare even with collodion, testifies to the photographer's inventiveness

in the 1850s. The focus on outdoor figures contributes to the particularly lively rendering of several scenes and demonstrates the photographer's skill at using all the resources of his lens. In a different way, the mastery of a strong binary contrast between light and shade is the key to the success of a scene where a dark-skinned man is dazzled by the sun as he poses in a doorway, the interior behind him furnished with a mere chair; the strong visual construction here invariably recalls the exceptional success of *Porte de maison mauresque dans la Casbah d'Alger* ('Door of Moorish house in the Casbah of Algiers'), an image that appeared on the cover of the old SEITA catalog⁴³ and whose glass plate negative was in the possession of the Plantet family.

For his portraits, as we saw, Moulin created a studio by closing the space with drapes. Plantet adopts the collodion print but also sets himself apart from his colleague – and from the studios of the 1860s – by using natural locations too. A rug with large stripes hanging on a wall next to a window and to a wooden balcony overlooking a patio can hence be seen in three photographs.

Is this the house of the white-bearded bourgeois smoking a long tobacco pipe and posing with what may be his wife? The latter is wearing the *sarmah*, an astonishing headdress that was originally worn by the Jewish women of Algeria during the period of the Ottoman occupation⁴⁴. We have here a very rare photographic representation of a headdress which quickly went out of use after the French took over Algeria, as much for practical reasons – it is eighty centimeters tall! – as for the gradual Europeanisation of the way in which the Jewish community dressed.

On another photograph taken in this house, the man sitting to the left of a young woman in a décor full of Oriental accessories ('too oriental to be true', we would now say) also poses lying down on his own; this is the photograph previously published by Ken Jacobson⁴⁵. It is obviously legitimate to wonder about his quite 'un-oriental' appearance. His partner is found elsewhere next to a baby covered in embroidered blankets lying in a crib as richly ornamented as the walls of the room he inhabits – whether real or completely fake, is this not the very first maternity scene photographed in Algeria⁴⁶?

We are especially struck on three photographs by a man, still young, with very fine features. A well-furnished and rather bushy beard. Long smoking pipe and tobacco. Far more convincing in his elegant bourgeois costume than the previous European sitter, the man is portrayed in front of a large curtain, just like in Moulin, but endowed with a naturalness rarely found in the thousands of visiting-card portraits of the 1860s. Gaze, relationship with



the camera, social status – everything separates this portrait (some took it for a self-portrait) from the young sub-Saharan woman in the *metla*...

The other pictures of women differ both in décor and in 'cast': the 'Moorish' women are always photographed in pairs, creating a costume variation (the long-sleeved *ghlila djabadouli* in brocade woven with silk-thread, the haik, or veils of a simpler cut) or an ethnic contrast that make the scene more picturesque. The photographer even boldly goes as far as to show two women lying down together – are we still in a noble household? Prostitutes, Jewish or 'Moorish' women, these various stand-ins remind us of the difficulty for photographers to approach Muslim women. On three other

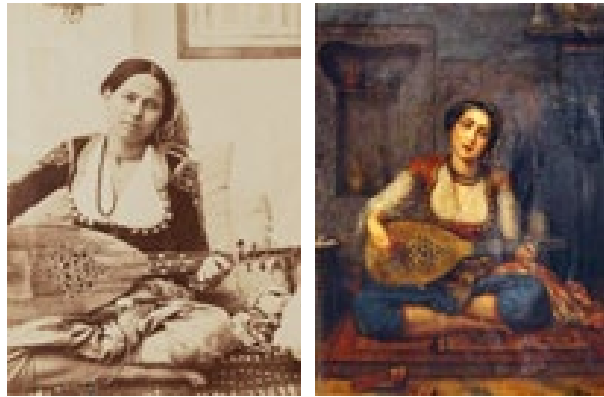
42. *Catalogue Moulin 1859*, n°65.

43. ADES and ZARAGOZI 1999.

44. Sarmahs can be seen in Algiers at the Antiquities and Islamic Arts Museum, and in Paris at the musée d'Orsay and in the Museum of Jewish Art and History.

45. JACOBSON, 2007: op. cit., page 253.

46. Under the signature of Marville, the picture was sold in 2013 with the caption *Juive de Constantine avec son enfant* ('Jewish woman from Constantine with her child').



photographs the setting is also less cluttered – a few pictures hanging on a wall, mats and curtains in keeping. String and percussion instruments join the tea and the siesta to complete the female accessories pertaining to the burgeoning art of photographic Orientalism. One of the musicians, in fact, re-appears in Hippolyte Plantet’s painting *La jeune fille au Kouitra* (‘Young Girl With Kwitra’, 1858)... but then didn’t Louis also compose music?

Over and beyond the various questions of attribution and of style, the Plantet collection illustrates the moment of the decisive switch from the calotype to the collodion print, a transition evoked by Marville in March 1856: “amateurs of photography practice with enthusiasm and skill the various processes of photography”. The 1850s were indeed ripe with invention, and photographers experimented with new processes without always giving up previous ones. Some traces of encaustic can even be found on prints in the collection leading historians to conclude “Le Gray’s circle”. It is true that many travelers continued to practice the calotype until quite late, for esthetic as well as practical reasons. But amateur aesthetes, whose prints were sometimes sold by the first industrialists of photographic reproduction, would soon abandon their practice of the calotype due to the growing number of professional studios aiming at

the greatest possible productivity – did it not take several minutes to develop a calotype in the sun and just some seconds for a collodion plate? Views of Algeria by Moulin can thus be found on photograph cards, the *cartes de visite* invented by Disdéri that would make the fortune of the Alary-Geiser studio and so many others in the 1860s; an esthetics of reiteration that the rareness and delicacy of the calotype could not rival, despite its having established certain codes of representation.

Perhaps one day the names of Liogier, of Elmore, of Huaut and others too, will reappear – could they be here already among our collection⁴⁷? Meanwhile, because one of the pioneers of photography in Algeria, the mysterious “Plautet”, is now back in full view through his photographs and through the Plantet collection, because the body of work distributed from Paris by Marville has sizably grown in calotypes and in collodion prints, and because this collection of seventy-five photographs now comes next after Marville’s catalogue as the most representative of the Algeria photographed in the 1850s, offering some remarkable previously unpublished images, we cannot but rejoice that, thanks to Adnan Sezer and Bruno Tartarin, this invaluable body of work has not been irremediably dispersed.

Michel Megnin

In memory of Pierre Zaragozi

47. “Elmore and Liogier, none of whose prints has turned up” ... as Anne de MONDENARD wrote in 2003. The proximity of the Liogier family with Louis Adolphe Humbert de Molard is attested through notarial documents and by a portrait of Liogier by Humbert de Molard himself (Marc Durand : *De l’image fixe à l’image animée 1820-1910*, Archives nationales, Paris, 2015). Attested too is the proximity of Molard with the optician Charles Chevalier from whom Liogier bought his photographic equipment. This is a line of investigation that has, to my knowledge, and in the absence of visual evidence, not been truly explored as to the links Liogier might have forged with Marville. As for Elmore, one of his photographs was included by Moulin in his 1859 catalogue (*Lambèse, Ruines du temple d’Esculape*, ‘Lambaesis, Ruins of the Temple of Asclepius’, n°237)



Félix Moulin. Moorish woman and Negress from Algiers in interior dress.

I





























Essai de photographie instantanée. Arabes en marche

II

















III



















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