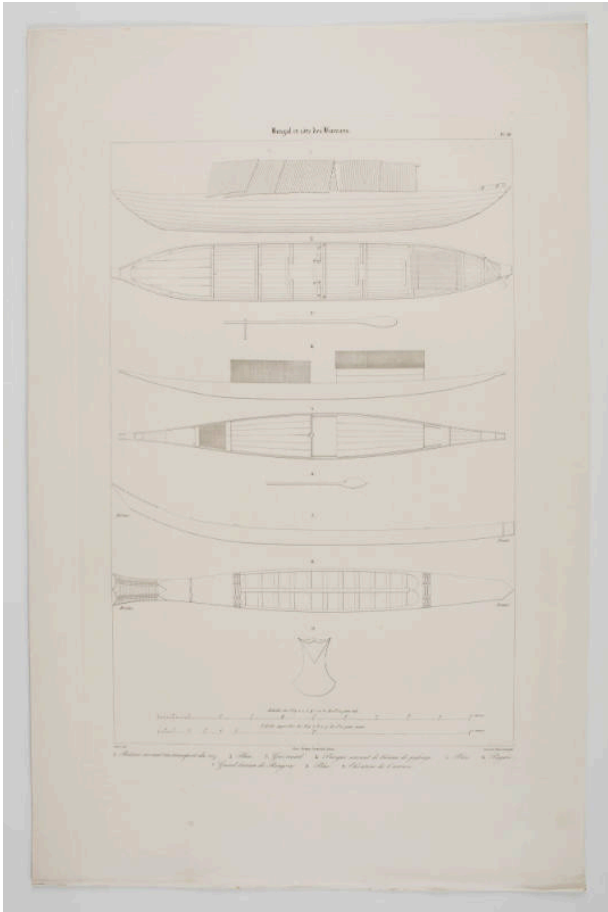


Basic Detail Report



00018640

Title

Bengal et Cote des Birmans

Date

1841-1843

Primary Maker

Admiral François-Edmond Pâris

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Image: 385 x 255 mm Overall: 550 x 360 mm Sheet: 550 x 360 mm

Name

Engraving

History

François-Edmond Pâris (1806-1893), son of a French government administrator, entered the Angoulême Naval Academy at the age of 14 in 1820. Between 1822 and 1824 he studied painting with French Navy artists Pierre-Julien Gilbert (1783-1860) and Pierre Ozanne (1737-1813), both known for their accurate and lively drawings of ships and naval battles. Pâris's long naval career began in 1826 as a young officer or élève with France's last and greatest scientific voyage of discovery, the ASTROLABE expedition under captain Dumont d'Urville. Dumont d'Urville preferred trained navy personnel to 'troublesome' civilian scientists and artists. The official artist on the ASTROLABE was Louis de Sainson, who produced the remarkable Atlas Historique from this 1826-1829 voyage. During the circumnavigation, Dumont d'Urville spent time surveying King George Sound and later Jervis Bay on the east coast of Australia and Pâris was employed in making charts. On arriving in Port Jackson in December 1826, Dumont d'Urville discovered his surveys had aroused suspicion over French colonisation plans. He then sailed to New Zealand, several Pacific islands and Tasmania, before journeying home via Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands where he erected a monument to the great French navigator Comte de Laperoise. The hydrographic results of the expedition were impressive, as were the vast collections of botanical and zoological specimens from all parts of the globe. The next French voyage to the South Pacific was to have quite a different focus. In 1829 Cyrille-Pierre-Théodore Laplace was given command of an expedition to secure further economic opportunities for French colonial interests in the Asia-Pacific region, and to re-establish waning French influence in Indo-China. With his prior experience on Dumont d'Urville's expedition and growing reputation as a hydrographer, Laplace chose Lieutenant Pâris

among his officers on LA FAVORITE. Laplace's expedition left the French port of Toulon in December 1829. Near Madras off the Indian east coast, LA FAVORITE grounded on a mud bank and was assisted by local Indian fishing vessels. Pâris was to note that the masula of the region - despite their construction from planks of mango wood sewn together with coconut coir - were quite suited to their task, precisely because of their very un-European flexibility. LA FAVORITE continued to Singapore and then visited a series of South East Asian ports, including Manila, Macao and Canton, where Laplace secured 'most favoured nation' status with the Chinese for France. Whilst in Indo-China, Laplace noted that Pâris's survey chart of Tourane Bay (Vietnam) was 'as handsome a piece of work as it was useful'. After visiting several other Indo-Chinese ports Laplace continued to the Dutch East Indies, then to Australia. The crew had suffered much illness in South East Asia and two men were buried on Bruny Island, and another three died in hospital in Hobart in July 1832. Laplace continued to Sydney in August - where the French crew was a popular addition to the colony's social calendar - before leaving in September to New Zealand. The warm welcome extended by the colonial authorities in Sydney to the crew of LA FAVORITE quickly changed when they heard the French were making extensive surveys of the New Zealand coastline in an apparent attempt to claim New Zealand for France. This French 'threat' of a corvette off the New Zealand coast, along with some prompting by colonials, led several Maori chiefs to write to King William IV for his protection, ultimately hastening the British colonisation of New Zealand. Laplace left New Zealand and crossed the Pacific to arrive in the Chilean port of Valparaiso in November 1832. He then continued south past Cape Horn and returned across the Atlantic to Toulon harbour in April 1833. During the voyage, Pâris had compiled an extensive portfolio of drawings and plans of various watercraft from all the expedition's ports of call. Despite some trading setbacks in China, Laplace's voyage was regarded as generally successful and the French government authorised the publication of his account, *Voyage autour du Monde par les Mers de l'Inde et de la Chine*, in four volumes, from 1833. Twenty four of the 72 watercolour plates of scenes of various ports and towns included in the first volume were by François-Edmond Pâris. Pâris's increasing portfolio of work was recognised and he was awarded the Légion d'honneur. Pâris then approached the Naval Ministry for permission to go to England to learn English and familiarise himself with the operations of the new steamships. He was later involved in installing the first steam engines on board French naval vessels. After captaining the CASTOR from 1834 to 1836, in 1837 Pâris was attached to the ARTEMISE as executive officer - again under Laplace - for a third voyage of exploration, and Pâris's third circumnavigation of the globe. The voyage this time was primarily political; Laplace was tasked with ensuring fair treatment for French missionaries and traders in Tahiti and Honolulu. The ARTEMISE voyage became an arduous, disease-ridden struggle through the Indian Ocean and South East Asia. For Paris, it was quite tragic. Whilst inspecting an engine in a foundry in Porto Novo in Pondicherry in June 1838, his sleeve became caught in the machinery and his arm was 'mangled'. It was later amputated, but this did little to stop the energetic Paris from continuing his work and career, and his interest in steam engines. The ARTEMISE visited Hobart and Sydney - the third time for the well-travelled Lieutenant Pâris - and finally returned to France in April 1841. Pâris's three expeditions had provided him with such a comprehensive body of work on non-European watercraft that he could claim to have made a definitive study. The King of France agreed and Pâris's drawings were published by royal decree. His *Essai sur la Construction Navale des Peuples Extra-Européens* was printed by the renowned engraver Claude Arthus-Bertrand. Between 1841 and 1843 the various parts of his folio, with individual plates and accompanying

text pages wrapped in their yellow cover papers, were produced monthly. During his Pacific voyages, Pâris had documented every type of sailing vessel he encountered. He drew plans and scenes of indigenous watercraft in such places as Senegal, the Seychelles, India, Malaysia, the Strait of Malacca, Vietnam, China, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, Chile and Brazil. He drew canoes from Greenland, Arab dhows, Chinese junks, Malay proas and Pacific outriggers. Despite the loss of an arm, Pâris continued to actively command in the French Navy. In 1842 he transferred to the new steamship section of the navy, captained the *INFERNAL* and the *ARCHIMEDE*, and was promoted to the rank of captain in 1846. He was given command of several other ships between 1847 and 1854 during a time of rapid innovation and change in naval warfare toward steam driven ironclad ships. At this time, Pâris collaborated with his father-in-law Admiral Bonnefoux on a huge Maritime Dictionary of Sail and Steam, in both French and English. During the Crimean War (1853-1856) Pâris headed the naval division of Dniepr and in 1856 took command of *AUDACIEUSE*. In 1857 he visited England to study the construction of Brunel's great 'Leviathan' steam ship the *GREAT EASTERN*. In 1858 he was promoted to Rear Admiral and from 1860 to 1861, led the 2nd division of the French fleet, with his flag on the *ALGESIRAS*. Made a member of the French Academy of Sciences in 1863 in recognition of his contributions to geography, he continued to write treatises on naval architecture. In 1864, Pâris was promoted to vice-admiral, and headed the naval archives. After retiring from the Navy in 1871 he took up the position of curator of the Musee National de la Marine, a position he held until his death in 1893. Pâris had a significant influence on the direction of the French maritime museum collection, ordering the construction of 120 models of vessels indigenous to different locations of the French Empire. This no doubt gave physical form to his extensive portfolio of images and plans, as well as to French imperial connections.