

Three-dimensional archives: the Augier models of the *Museum of Archaeology* (Marseilles, France)

Archivos tridimensionales: Los modelos Augier para el Museo de Arqueología de Marseilles, Francia

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ABSTRACT

In 1863 the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology opened its doors in Marseilles, France. From 1863 to 1889 one of its employees, Hippolyte Augier, conceived of and constructed 79 scale models representing ancient monuments and archaeological sites. This collection was exhibited in the museum with didactical and educational purposes. During the early 20th century these models were removed from the showcases and put into storage. In the last twenty years archaeologists have rediscovered Augier's works, and his models have become archaeological archives. These documents constitute a very relevant source of information for the history of archaeology. The series of 79 models that he made can be considered as a coherent set. Studied in connection with other documents such as archives, collections and publications, the series expresses a particular conception of archaeology at the end of the 19th century.

KEY WORDS: *Museography. Scale models. Reproductions Urbanism. Mediterranean archaeology.*

RESUMEN

En 1863, el Museo de Arqueología Mediterránea abrió sus puertas en Marseilles (Francia). Entre 1863 y 1889, uno de los sus empleados, Hippolyte Augier, concibió y construyó 79 maquetas representando monumentos clásicos y yacimientos emblemáticos. Su colección fue exhibida en el museo con fines didácticos y educacionales. A lo largo del siglo XX, las maquetas fueron retiradas del museo y olvidadas. Sin embargo, durante los últimos veinte años, los arqueólogos han redescubierto el trabajo de Augier y sus maquetas se han convertido en verdaderos archivos arqueológicos. Dichos documentos constituyen una valiosa fuente de información para la historia de la arqueología. Las 79 maquetas que Augier construyó pueden considerarse como un todo coherente. Analizadas en conexión con otras fuentes como archivos, colecciones y publicaciones, las maquetas de Augier expresan una particular concepción de la arqueología a finales del siglo XIX.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Museografía. Maquetas. Reproducciones. Urbanismo. Arqueología Mediterránea.*

1. Introduction

In 1802, a first archaeological museum opened its doors in Marseilles. It gathered important collections that testified to the existence of an erudite and antiquarian tradition in the city since the end of the 16th century. In 1863 these collections, amply enlarged by the acquisition of an important Egyptian series, were set up in the Borély Castle in order to create the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology. The first curator of the museum was a numismatist, Casimir Penon. In this article we will focus on Penon's collaborator, Hippolyte Augier, who created a series of 79 scale models between 1863 and the year he published a catalogue, 1888.

These models represent monuments and archaeological sites, especially funeral and religious architecture, Roman machines of war and some archetypal representations, such as the "lake dwellings" (Inv. 3715, see figure 1) or the "Gallic village" (Inv. 3732). Their chronology is certainly broad, from prehistory – with many megalithic monuments – through to the 16th century. Geographically, they cover four large areas: more than a third of the models represent sites and monuments from the cities of Marseilles and Arles; a second set brings together subjects from the remainder of the South of France; a third set covers the national territory of France and reaches to Great Britain and Switzerland; the

fourth and last set extends across the countries of the Mediterranean basin (Italy, Malta, Cyprus and Egypt). This geographical repartition can also be considered in a very different way because beyond the countries of the contemporary time to which they refer, the models seek to illustrate various civilizations across time.

Hippolyte Augier¹ was 32 years old when he took up his duties at the museum in 1862. He likely entered the museum as a workman (Clerc 1901); his contemporaries, however, mentioned him as "first *attaché* to the *Cabinet des Antiques*", Casimir Penon's "devoted assistant" and "first employee of the museum". He was also described as "assistant curator" (*conservateur adjoint*) among attendees to the 1876 archaeological congress of France, held in Arles (CAF 1877: 6). Augier is similarly described on the front page of the catalogue of his models, published in 1888, and in some of the minutes of the Marseilles town council (*conseil municipal*) regarding municipal decisions.

While the documents that can be directly attributed to Augier are limited to a few models and one catalogue, his role in the development of the museum was significant. Augier assisted the researchers in charge of studying and cataloguing the collections and he played an important role in developing the museum's acquisitions. He valued archaeological research through his promotion of



Figure 1. "Lake dwellings and natural cave", model by H. Augier (Inv. 3715; cl. CETER, ville de Marseille).

traditional practices, such as collecting and buying objects from excavations and especially through the reproduction of archaeological discoveries (the making of scale models). Augier's models can be considered as archives; they constitute a very relevant source for the history of archaeology and its representation in museums.

What can these 79 reproductions tell us about the field of museographic archaeology?

To answer this question, we will sketch the history of these models as museum pieces, from their entry into the collections of the museum of archaeology, then located at the Borély Castle, to their current locations. We will then consider these 79 reproductions as an essential source of information to understand and illustrate the very concept of Mediterranean archaeology at the end of the 19th century.

2. The models and their place in the museum

The Augier models entered into the collections of the museum of archaeology in several stages – in 1870, 1884, 1885 and 1886 – as chronicled by the registers of the town council of Marseilles (Benoit 1956). The first transfer of Augier's work was in 1870 and the models were moved to the Antiques Museum (*Musée des Antiques*). At that time the models had already been exhibited in the Borély Castle, as testified by Mark Twain in 1867 (Reynaud 1989). All 79 models were published in two catalogues during Augier's lifetime. These publications provide invaluable information.

2.1. The models in the catalogues of the museum

A general catalogue of the collections was published in 1876 (Penon & Saurel 1876). At this time, the models were distributed between the first room on the ground floor and the sixth room on the first floor. The ground floor models were dedicated to the Greek, Roman and Christian section of the museum; they presented the archaeological discoveries found during urban construction in Marseilles and Arles. These included the wreck of a ship from Imperial Street, two necropolises from Imperial Street and Lieutaud Avenue in Marseilles and the excavations from the Trinquetaille district in Arles. The catalogue suggests that other models were present, but does not mention the number or the names of these models. The sixth room of the first floor exhibited two models of religious monuments from the Middle Ages that had been destroyed in the renovations of the city during the Second Empire².

Another catalogue, specifically dedicated to the models, was published in 1888 (Augier 1888). It reveals the importance of these documents in the exhibition system and in the pedagogic aims of the museum. A whole room was devoted to a series of 79 captioned reproductions of monuments and sites from various areas; number 80 was attributed to a series of 40 photographs of monuments so as to complete the collection. This catalogue became the last reference concerning the models. The catalogue numbers were written on small labels placed on the models; some of these were preserved and can still be seen today on the models. However, a series of photographic plates show a different reference system, which probably refers to a former classification in relation to the presentation described in the first catalogue, published in 1876³. These photographs also reveal modifications – made by Augier or by someone else – on several of the models.

2.2. From disrepute to rehabilitation

In the decades following the death of Hippolyte Augier, both the models and their creator were discredited. Michel Clerc⁴ and Gaston Vasseur⁵ were among the first to express sharp reservations about H. Augier's integrity. While working at the museum, Augier did indeed trade museum pieces. He bought and sold many objects (archaeological pieces, also religious objects and clothing) and used the museum as a place of storage and exposure for his own collections, waiting for a future purchaser (Benoit 1956: 119). On several occasions he attributed some objects of unknown origin to Marseilles and he also made a number of false restorations.

In 1901 Michel Clerc disputed the status of these models as museum artifacts; however, we do not know the exact moment when they were withdrawn from the exhibition rooms. The substitution of these models by other archaeological collections in the original "room of the reproductions" can be explained by very ordinary circumstances, such as the lack of space in the museum and the necessity to make choices concerning the exhibition. At the beginning of the 20th century, the local and regional collections were singularly increased thanks to the excavations of Gaston Vasseur and Michel Clerc.

There was another researcher who harshly critiqued Augier's management of the collections. Fernand Benoit was an important figure in the history of French archaeology; he was both the curator of the museum of archaeology (from 1942 to 1966) and the director of historical antiquities in Provence (from 1943 to 1965). Benoit denounced Augier's activities and saw him as an antique dealer who misconstrued archaeological data and spread

confusion about the ancient history of Marseilles. Nevertheless, Benoit acknowledged Augier's intuition as an archaeologist and his capacity to collect archaeological objects during construction projects in Marseilles, Arles, Vaison-la-Romaine, Orange, Nice and other areas (Benoit 1956).

After Benoit's retirement in 1966, three of Augier's models were donated to a school that wanted to organize an initiation workshop to archaeology and museography. We have been searching for these models since 2006, but it seems that they have been lost. In 1974 several of the models were restored and loaned to the Town Archives of Marseilles. A list drawn up in 1977 sheds light on how the models of excavations and monuments of Marseilles were preserved in various places – in the cellars and offices of the curator department of the Borély Castle and in the building of the Town Archives of Marseilles.

With the restructuring of the museums in Marseilles and an audit of their various collections, the Augier collection, then in cellars and warehouses, moved again and this took place in several stages⁶. In 1967, the excavation of the *Quartier de la Bourse* brought to light the ancient harbor of Marseilles; this research led to the creation of the Museum of the History of Marseilles in 1983, which was devoted to the collections of local archaeology. The 24 Augier models of sites and monuments from the city have gradually been integrated into the showcases and the storage spaces of the museum (with the exception of the 2 missing models).

From 1989 to 1993, the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology was gradually transferred from the Borély Castle to an ancient hospital, *La Vieille Charité*. An important part of the archaeological collections was settled in the new place, but the models from the storage space and the models concerning Egyptian, Etruscan, Roman, Phoenician and Celtic civilizations were not included in the move. More recently, between 2000 and 2007, the storage of the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology moved from the Borély Castle to a neighboring pavilion, which had been old stables that were transformed in 1953 into a lapidary and maritime museum. It was here that the remaining models were restored in 2006 before they were transferred to a warehouse in 2009.

3. The archaeology of the 19th Century according to Augier models

There is very little documentation concerning the Augier models. However, publications dating from his lifetime and catalogues, correspondences and

archives from the museum reveal information about the way Augier found his documentation and created the models. First, he attended the excavations made in Marseilles that were related to the huge works commissioned to embellish and modernize the city. On this occasion he made a lot of observations and several drawings that he used to conceive and create his models. Today Augier's drawings are lost and the models remaining are the only documents regarding these very important archaeological discoveries. Through his activities as a draftsman and a model-maker, Augier created a very valuable archaeological documentation, which can be used today with a critical point of view (see for example, Moliner 2011).

Second, he maintained relationships with many archaeologists who were working in the Marseilles area, other regions (such as Languedoc, Bretagne) or other countries (such as Switzerland). The Archaeological French Congress gave Augier the chance to collect information about new discoveries. In fact, papers published of the proceedings of this congress (Vigié 2012) directly inspired several of Augier models. Finally, Augier often referred to published sources, especially when he dealt with matters less familiar to him. In this case, he would use popular science books as sources of inspiration.

In the following section, so as to better understand Augier's ideas, we propose a comparison between some of his models, considered as historical documents, and other historical sources such as archives, collections or publications.

3.1. Orientations of research in the second half of the 19th Century

Augier's catalogue summarizes some of the main interests of French archaeology at the end of the 19th century, such as a focus upon funeral and religious matters, an interest in megalithic monuments (figure 2), including those built in natural rocks – for instance, the *pierre branlante* in Autun (Inv. 3722) – and an interest for Roman war machines. Furthermore, the making of models is illustrative of some of the usual practices amongst historic and prehistoric archaeologists.

The Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology opened its doors in 1863 approximately at the same time as the Museum of National Antiquities – today the Museum of National Archaeology – which was first conceived of in 1862 and officially inaugurated in 1867 in the castle of *Saint-Germain-en-Laye* on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition of Paris. Since 1865 the museum of Saint-Germain-en-Laye was equipped with a moulding shop directed by a sculptor, Abel Maître (Douau 1984-85). The discov-



Figure 2. “Part of the alignments of *Carnac*”. Model by H. Augier (Inv. 3763; cl. CETER, ville de Marseille).

eries made in Marseilles, Arles and other localities of Provence from 1865 onwards enriched the collections of the museum of Mediterranean archaeology and led to the opening of a department of national Antiquities (even if these terms do not appear in the catalogue of the Borély museum). This was the precise moment that Augier first began to make his models, which were associated with the collections in the showcases of the museum. A comparison between the roles played by Abel Maître in the Museum of National Antiquities and by Augier in the Museum of Mediterranean Antiquities reveals a number of analogies. Both men participated in the acquisition of archaeological and ethnological objects, using their relationships and contacts with antiquaries, historians and field archaeologists to enlarge the museum’s collections. In this sense, one could say that their activities as model-makers were closely connected to their activities as archaeologists.

The Augier models also evoke the debate concerning the restoration of historical monuments⁷. The Roman temple of *Château-Bas* in the village of *Vernègues* (Inv. 3763) is a paradigmatic example (figure 3). In his model, Augier represented the ruins of the temple without reconstructing the monument in its original state. There is also no reference to the medieval chapel that could be seen in Augier’s time and that still exists today. Choosing to represent the Roman ruins as he found them, Augier made explicit his concerns about the original state of the monument. It may be noted that this model is one of the rare examples to bear Augier’s signature. It is engraved on a square stone laid at the base of the model, as if it had tumbled from the podium wall of the temple (figure 4). The



Figure 3. Roman temple of *Château-Bas* in the village of *Vernègues*. Model by H. Augier (Inv. 3763; cl. CETER, ville de Marseille).

Augier model is very different from the one made by Auguste Pelet a few decades earlier, which is presently preserved in the Saint-Germain-en-Laye Museum of National Archaeology. Pelet’s representation integrates the chapel, but does not represent the column and the sidewall that can be seen in the Augier model.

Some of the models created by Augier were based both on popular science books from the 19th century and on older popular traditions. For instance, the model that represents a *tumulus* (Inv. 3729) was clearly based on a classic painting that was often used to illustrate many scientific books during the 19th century. A small bearded character dressed as a druid (figure 5) gives scale to the



Figure 4. Roman temple of *Château-Bas*, model by H. Augier. Detail of the stone that bears Augier’s signature (Inv. 3763; cl. CETER, ville de Marseille).



Figure 5. “Tumulus”, model by H. Augier. Detail showing the little figure placed at the foot of the monument to give the scale of the model (Inv. 3729; cl. CETER, ville de Marseille).

monument, which seeks to be as impressive as the model of the “pyramid of Egypt” (Inv. 3705).

The model of the “Gallic village: where are located the farm, the township and the place for sacrifice” (Inv. 3732) refers to the interpretation of dolmens as tables for sacrifice, a theory that was probably anachronistic at that time (figure 6). The “Lake dwellings” (Inv. 3715) refers to another archetype, created in 1854 by the Swiss archaeologist Ferdinand Keller and quickly spread all over Europe (Coye 1997; Kaeser 2004). The presence of this three-dimensional model in the collection

is surely a testimony to the relationships between Hippolyte Augier and some Swiss antiquaries, such as Jules Riches, who was the owner of the field in which the dolmen of Auvernier was discovered.



Figure 6. “Gallic village: where are located the farm, the township and the place for sacrifice” model by H. Augier (Inv. 3732; cl. CETER, ville de Marseille).

In their time, these models were conceived of as objects of study, experimentation, popularization and education. They were also considered as the last examples of monuments that were doomed to be destroyed. Today these models can also be considered as archives in so far as they inform us about the first chapters of the history of archaeology.

3.2. Archaeology and cultural heritage

In Marseilles, the second half of the 19th century was a period of unprecedented demographic and economic growth. Between 1840 and 1910-1920, the population of the city multiplied by more than three times its size and the built-up area grew from 400 hectares to more than 2000 (Roncayolo 1997: 13). Beginning in 1850, the city of Marseilles initiated a huge urban development project,⁸ which made evident a number of archaeological sites. An excavation commission was created⁹ with the aim of keeping a close eye on the construction and collecting appropriate objects, writing reports and drawing maps. At the same time, the photographer Adolphe Terris undertook a photographic recording of the constructions, which led to the publication of several albums beginning in 1862¹⁰.

The construction of new districts implied the destruction of ancient monuments. Though they were

considered part of the city's cultural heritage, it is important to remember at that time the demolition of ancient monuments was not considered a loss because the preservation of memory alone guaranteed the continuity of history. For instance, Terris' photographic records had two complementary aims – to keep the memory of the destroyed buildings intact and to testify to the importance of the modernization and regeneration of the city. Augier's models also played an important role in the preservation of the area's memory. For instance, several of his models represented destroyed monuments in the state they were discovered: the “ancient cathedral of Marseilles” (Inv. 3775), the “ancient fort and chapel of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde” (Inv. 3776) and an antique mausoleum from Aix-en-Provence, which had been torn down in the 18th century (Inv. 3761).

The construction of the modern city also led to the rediscovery of the primitive city of Marseilles. The urban renovation was thus not only a destructive affair, it was also an essential component in the process of discovering the local past. The urban character of the city became a constitutive element to the identity of Marseilles, also serving to justify urban development and the renewal of older districts. In this context, city and civilization were closely connected; the urban nature of Marseilles provided the city with an urban mission. The cre-



Figure 7. The excavations in the district of Trinquetaille, Arles (Inv. 3749), represented on a photographic plate probably realized before 1888 (archives of the musée d'archéologie méditerranéenne). This model was loaned by Fernand Benoit in 1964 to the archaeological museum of Arles, where it is still preserved and exhibited today. The archaeological discoveries are presented in close connection with the railroad tracks. This model expresses the importance of the urban and industrial works in the development of archaeology in the 19th century and the closeness between past and modernity.

ation of the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology in 1863 was also part of a global project that celebrated the unity of the ancient and the modern; the museum aimed to promote Marseilles as the heart of the Mediterranean world.

Urban renovation projects ultimately provoked the economic development of the city. This renovation unfolded in two ways: as a maritime project it included the extension of the harbor from 30 hectares in 1844 to 200 in 1920 (Roncayolo 1997: 13), and as a land project it included the completion of the PLM (Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée) railroad in 1856. The first aim of this construction permitted the discovery of some archaeological sites that connected the harbor with the station and the sea with the land. In this context, a featured railroad track on a model took a particular meaning, even if it represented an archaeological site from Arles (Inv. 3749). The composition of this model linked together past and present in the global perception of the familiar space (figure 7).

Marseilles's economic sphere of influence was, above all, the Mediterranean world. From the 1860s on, the city had established a number of commercial relationships with some bordering countries (Italy and Spain) as well as with some Eastern Mediterranean countries. At the same time, the business people of the city had made huge investments in the building of the Suez Canal¹¹. This economic context offers a different perspective on the geographic repartition of the 79 models created by Augier. In geographical terms, the models from the 1888 catalogue can be attributed to three different groups: Egypt, Phoenicia and its colonies, and the Celtic and Roman-Gaul world. A quick glance at a map shows that at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, Egypt and Phoenicia flank both sides of the outlet of the Suez Canal. If we then consider the models of the third group, we can see that the notion of 'Celtic and Roman Gaul' oversteps the program of national antiquities as illustrated by the museum in *Saint-Germain-en-Laye*. The presence in this set – collectively called the "Celtic and Roman Gaul" – of graves from the Etruscan period (Inv. 3735 and 3736) and from the city of Pompeii (Inv. 3737) is rather peculiar. In this case, Augier adopted a very personal conception of historical geography: Italy became a peripheral area of the Roman Gaul, whereas Marseilles constituted the geographic centre. This configuration was not simply a new pattern to explain the past, it was also the expression of a certain perception of the present. At the end of the 19th century, Italians who lived in Marseilles constituted the lower part of the working class; they worked on the docks and in some of the factories settled in the suburbs of the city. The

Italian Peninsula was regarded as a peripheral area providing cheap workmen and was thus necessary to the proper functioning of the city's economy.

This economic analysis reveals an important gap in Augier's collection, the lack of models representing colonial monuments. Given that an important part of the economic activity of Marseilles was based on the processing of raw material from the French Colonial Empire, one could be surprised by this absence. There are two reasons that can partially explain this situation: in the first place, the Augier models are similar to the collections of the Borély museum, and most of these collections were inherited from the pre-colonial period; in the second place, the early organization of a network of museums and archaeological offices in the French colonies and protectorates was very propitious to the holding of the collections in the territories (Gran-Aymerich 1998: 203 sq.).

4. Conclusion: three-dimensional archives

The current interest for the Augier models can be partially explained by the renewed interest during the two last decades of the 20th century in the archaeological excavations in Marseilles and Arles that followed the creation of museums devoted to archaeology and history in these two cities. Archaeologists use the models nowadays as historical documents because they are often the sole source of very ancient and important discoveries. The Museum of the History of Marseilles and the Archaeological Museum of Arles have decided to exhibit these models both as historical documents and as archaeological archives.

The Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology has also decided to study these documents, which had not previously held the attention of curators and were widely unknown to the scientific community. The global study of the collections has revealed new dimensions related to these documents. Augier's collection of 79 models is an excellent illustration of the diversity of civilizations that the museum is willing to exhibit. It also gives a general historic framework to better understand the meaning and the origins of the museum's collections. The study of the models and the collections can be considered as an essential part in the process of reflection about the past identity of the museum and about its current and future orientations.

Augier's models not only constitute exceptional documentation of archaeological sites and monuments in the Mediterranean Basin, but they can also be considered as three-dimensional archives,

for they put the archaeological findings in the cultural, scientific, historical and artistic context of their time.

In some respects these models are connected with the world of the theatre more than with the world of architecture or technique. Curiously, some of them point out the *practicables* made for opera and stage sets¹². To create these sceneries, painters and decorators gathered documentation based on illustrations, drawings, engravings and photographs, not hesitating to travel themselves or to ask for the assistance of photographers. That is exactly the way in which Augier worked. Models of ancient monuments, megaliths and tombs featuring many details and objects such as skeletons, funerary urns, amphoras, ceramics, vases and steles were made in order to create a new reality, which was in close connection with the available documentation. The Augier models try to mix scientific rigor with aesthetic creativity to “give physical form to archaeological knowledge” (Nordbladh 2012, see also Evans 2008). The representation of archetypes gave Augier an oppor-

tunity to express his own ideas; they are not the reproduction of real monuments, but assumptions of restitution on the basis of very fragmentary vestiges. Concerning this type of model, the Augier sources are not scientific documentations but are general ideas, a general picture, from which one must make one’s own to create a new image. This approach allowed him to place his personal conception within a general framework that his contemporaries could understand.

The Augier models are archaeological documents, artistic works and historical sources. They are three-dimensional archives that can be used to understand the position of archaeology in a global conception of the past. These models must be considered as documents and they have to be put in a broad historical context. They help to explain scientific knowledge and they were used to express the thoughts and ideas of 19th century archaeologists in regards to prehistory, antiquity and history. Furthermore, they also constitute a very explicit way to illustrate the history of the conception of the past for a general public.

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NOTES

1. Born and died in Marseilles; February 8, 1830 – October 1, 1889 (Morel-Deledalle, 2004).
2. This room included at least one other three-dimensional map (*plans en relief*) of Marseilles, made by Ducros in 1821.
3. For example, the model representing excavations in the district of Trinquetaille, Arles (Inv 3749), bears the number 15 on a photographic plate (figure 5).
4. Curator of the Museum of Archaeology from 1896 to 1923, Michel Clerc wrote about the Augier models: “*I will not speak about the reproductions of monuments and ancient objects which he made himself (because he was extremely skillful in this way) and donated to the Museum, because I think that such objects are better placed in schools than in the museums*” (Clerc 1901: 16).
5. Geologist and archaeologist Gaston Vasseur was the curator of the Natural History Museum in Marseilles; he carried out many excavations in the city and in the surrounding area.
6. We propose this expression to translate the French concept of *chantier des collections*.
7. We must remember that the works of Viollet-le-Duc on the walls of Avignon (Vaucluse) began in 1860 and are contemporary to the career of Augier at the museum of Mediterranean archaeology.
8. 1850: digging of the basin of La Joliette; 1860: opening of the Imperial Street (the current street of the Republic); 1876: building of the tunnel of the Careenage; 1881: opening of the Empress Street (the current Colbert Street).
9. A first commission was created in 1831 to monitor the digging of the Careenage basin (Morel-Deledalle 1997: 37).
10. The albums were published in 1862, 1866 and 1881 in collaboration with Rogliano (Morel-Deledalle 1997: 41 sq).
11. The construction of the Suez Canal took place between 1859 and 1869 under the direction of Ferdinand de Lesseps. The official opening of the canal took place on November 17, 1869 in the presence of the French Empress Eugénie.

12. William Froehner (1897) had been told that Augier worked as a stagehand in a theatre and even as an illusionist, but we do not know the sources of this information.

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