

# Explorers and Entrepreneurs behind the Camera

THE STORIES BEHIND THE PICTURES AND PHOTOGRAPHS  
FROM THE IMAGE ARCHIVE OF THE IBERO-AMERICAN INSTITUTE

GREGOR WOLFF (ED.)



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**Ibero-Amerikanisches  
Institut**  
Preußischer Kulturbesitz



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# INTRODUCTION

GREGOR WOLFF

The images presented in this volume, taken from the holdings of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI), date back to the early phase of photography – more specifically from 1856 to 1939 – and were taken in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Peru.

The order of the essays more or less follows the historical development of photography and traces an arc from early studio photographs and expedition and travel photography to images that documented early film productions.

This publication also maps out the technological development of photography from the middle of the 19th century to the start of the 20th century. While in the early days of photography, it was only possible to take pictures in photo studios, it was not long before photographers took to the road and scientists began to use the camera as a research instrument.

Initially, the photographs were sold as single shots, then compiled into photo books and later sold as postcards. As printing techniques improved, the images were distributed more widely in newspapers and journals and the profession of the press photographer or travel reporter emerged.

One of the aims of this publication is to present the different types of photographers in their historical contexts. Many of these photographers were commercial photographers who owned one or several photo studios (Biel, Brehme, Dietze, Hübner, Ferrez, Laurent, Vargas). They

generally made their livings by selling their images and portrait photography. The more successful among them published their own volumes of photographs or sold their pictures to publishing houses and journals. They expanded their business models by importing and distributing photographic equipment and accessories from Europe, selling photo and postcard series to travelers and, in some cases (Ferrez), even made forays into the film industry at the start of the 20th century.

These commercial photographers also received frequent commissions from companies and public institutions. They documented the processes of modernization and mechanization, above all by taking numerous photographs of railroads, bridges, railroad stations, port facilities, factories and machines, and thus helped various governments to project a particular image to the outside world. Today, rather unjustly, a number of these commercial photographers may have faded into obscurity. However, during their careers as photographers, their images were showcased at international exhibitions, symposia and even world fairs, where they frequently won awards (Biel, Brehme, Dietze, Ferrez, Laurent).

A second key group are the scientific expedition photographers (Ehrenreich, Frisch, Kroehle & Hübner, Maler, Ule). They embarked on journeys lasting many months and covered thousands of kilometers, often contending with extreme conditions, such as rowing through the Amazon tropical rainforest. Their photographic expeditions were ground-breaking achievements. Working in the early days of photography, they took a whole host of heavy

technical equipment on their trips, such as photographic glass plates, mobile photo laboratories, chemicals and darkroom tents, and needed numerous assistants to do their work. On occasion, a number of commercial photographers (Ferrez, Matteson) also joined these scientific field trips, meaning that there was some exchange between these two groups.

The first half of the 20th century saw the emergence of the first travelling press photographers, who sold their pictures to newspapers and journals. Thanks to major technological developments in the fields of transport and photography (roll-film cameras), they were able to set off on their own and report on the countries they visited. However, their trips were no less adventurous, as illustrated by Matteson's bicycle tour, which took him nearly 1,000 kilometers across Cuba.

Working together with the film industry, which was also in its early days, photographers took the first images of film productions. These, too, are interesting historical sources, and not only for research into film history and production: they also depict the towns, villages and landscapes that formed the backdrops of these films.

In light of these different groups, it is also interesting to consider the varying circulation and impact of the photographs. While the "scientific photographs" were often only destined for publications with low print runs and circulated in specialist circles (not to mention the photographs that remained solely in the possession of the researchers). The commercial photographs, by contrast, were published in photo books, newspapers and journals and thus reached a far broader audience and had a much more long-lasting impact on the perception of other countries and cultures, even if over the decades the names of these photographers gradually disappeared from the publications featuring their works. What both types of photogra-

phers have in common is the way they staged their images and constructed a reality, which may seem surprising considering science's claims to objectivity.

Each in their own individual way, the photographers presented here are pioneers of photography, in terms of their working methods – which were ground-breaking in their day – their ambitious photographic expeditions and their inventive spirit. They experimented with photographic chemicals and invented photochemical formulas that allowed them to take photographs in warm and humid conditions. They worked on new types of photographic paper and developed special equipment and modes of transport to ensure that the fragile photographic plates did not get damaged on the long journeys.

Among the recurring themes of the photographs are the fauna and flora and natural resources of the various regions the photographers visited. Another major motif is modernization, mechanization and infrastructure. The inhabitants of the regions were a further focal point of the photographs, which depicted both European immigrants and the native population in urban and rural areas, along with their working environments. A number of essays in this volume focus in particular on photographs of indigenous people. They are mostly carefully staged portraits or group shots in which the indigenous people have been fitted out with clothes and objects and placed in front of neutral backdrops, either in a studio or in their living and working environments. These shots were taken for "scientific" as well as commercial purposes. Indigenous people were a favorite subject of commercial photographers and these pictures sold well among travelers and researchers. Scientists even shared recommendations on photo studios where they could add to their "collections of type portraits". They were mainly interested in the physical and anthropological features of the subjects photographed and the factors that shaped these

features. From today's perspective, both groups of photographers were equally inconsiderate in their pursuit of interesting subjects, in their thirst for images of "[...] completely naked savages [...]" (Ehrenreich).

Another fascinating field that has yet to be fully researched are the photographs by academics whose activities encompassed a variety of different disciplines, represented in this volume by the archaeologist Maler and the botanist Ule. In addition to their main areas of research, they also took pictures of festivals, ceremonies, individuals, landscapes and cities on their trips, thus creating important records of socio-historical and ethnographic phenomena that have yet to be examined. This also applies to the photographic materials they purchased while on their travels, which go beyond their actual fields.

Furthermore, the essays examine how the images were transformed through photo manipulation and retouching techniques (e.g. reprography, photomontage). These methods were already used in the early days of photography to adjust the content of a picture or to give it a particular aesthetic.

The authorship of the photographs is another pertinent question for the history of photography. It is a well-known fact that many photographers bought images taken by third parties and then distributed them under their own names (e.g. Brehme) or employed other photographers in their photo studios, who took images that were sold under the name of the studio owner (e.g. Laurent).

Successful photographers generally tried to capitalize on their success by turning their photographs into postcards, either by publishing the postcards themselves or by using postcard publishers. These were specifically aimed at travelers and tourists and were also popular

among scientists, who purchased them to expand their image and research archives. The picture postcard was an emerging medium towards the end of the 19th century and this volume features six photographers (Biel, Brehme, Dietze, Ferrez, Matteson, Vargas) who integrated it into their businesses.

Furthermore, the postcards provide a good basis for examining the circulation of objects and visual information. The postcard series created by Vargas and Lehmann-Nitsche demonstrate how postcards were manufactured in Europe (in this case in Leipzig and Passau in Germany), but sold in South America. Up until the First World War, Germany was the center of the postcard industry. Pictures that were taken in the Andes or the Tierra del Fuego were sent to the metropolises in their country of origin, where images were then selected for commercial use. They were subsequently shipped to Germany to be made into postcards. These postcards were then re-imported and sold in the countries of origin. European travelers and scientists purchased the picture postcards and took them back to Europe or sent them to their families and colleagues. Travelers not only bought individual images, but often entire series featuring typical scenes for that particular country (landscapes, buildings, views of cities, portraits of important figures and images of indigenous people).

These collections were part of scientists' papers and manuscripts and thus later found their way into museums, libraries or the hands of private collectors. This ensured that they were preserved for posterity, while some of the collections that remained in the countries of origin were lost.

However, it was not only commercial photographers who used the emergence of the picture postcard to expand their businesses. The example of Lehmann-Nitsche



illustrates how scientists also used the photographs they took on research trips for commercial purposes and sold them via postcard publishers.

Comparing the postcards with the original photographs on which the postcards were based is a further potential field of research. How were the shots changed, retouched and manipulated before being published and sold? Which people and objects were removed or even added to the pictures? Which collection were they part of before being selected for publication and compiled as series, and which photographs were rejected?

It was not possible to include all of the image archive's holdings in this volume. The IAI's collection consists of over 100,000 photographic documents, including 60,000 photographs, 36,000 slides, 8,300 photographic glass plates, 1,100 negatives and 2,300 postcards. The collection features images from Spain, Portugal and the whole of Latin America, in particular Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Peru. The collection dates from 1860 to 2000 with the majority of the material originating from the late 19th and early 20th century. These photographic documents are excellent sources for research projects in the fields of ethnography, social history and the history of science. The fact that the photographic materials are part of the IAI's papers and manuscripts is a major advantage for researchers. They have access to travel diaries, manuscripts, lists of photographs, correspondence and the institute's unique library and are able to categorize and interpret the photographs, compare the images with the published photographs and make use of comprehensive secondary literature. This is an incredibly valuable resource for any project. Analyzing the photographs out of context would not allow such extensive findings.

It was not possible to include all of the well-known photographers that feature in the IAI's collections, such as

Leopoldo Batres (Mexico), Augusto Malta (Brazil), Martín Chambi (Peru), Guilherme Gaensly (Brazil), Fernando Garreaud (Peru), Perry Kretz (Nicaragua), Eduard Seler (Mexico), Cäcilie Seler-Sachs (Mexico) and C. B. Waite (Mexico), to name a few.

This volume brings together authors who have spent the last ten years conducting research and publishing papers on the IAI's image archive. We would like to thank them for their invaluable insights on the materials and for all of their hard work in helping us to identify the historical photographs. Their essays not only examine the lives and works of the photographers, but also put the images into their historical contexts and are a source of inspiration for future research projects. The authors also provide information on photographs housed in other archives, with the aim of making this volume a starting point for further research.

Two final points should be noted with regard to the presentation of the pictures in this volume: For aesthetic reasons, they have been minimally edited and do not, therefore, reflect the original state of the photographs. Wherever we have used the photographers' original captions, we have placed them in quotation marks.

## JEAN LAURENT – PHOTOGRAPHER TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ("FOTÓGRAFO DE S.M. LA REINA")

GREGOR WOLFF

Alongside the British photographer Charles Clifford (1821-1863), French-born Jean Laurent (1816-1886) is viewed as the most important photographer in Spain in the second half of the 19th century. Laurent, however, achieved far greater commercial success. His images reached a wide audience in Europe, particularly in France and England, where they shaped public perception of Spain until well into the 20th century.

Laurent left France in 1843 and moved to Spain, deciding to settle in Madrid where he initially focused on manufacturing boxes and luxury paper. He won awards for his paper and cardboard packaging at fairs in 1845 and 1850.

In 1856 Laurent opened a photo studio in the Spanish capital and within just a few years he had made a name for himself as a first-rate photographer, which translated into considerable commercial success. In the early years, his studio mainly produced portrait shots of politicians and artists from Madrid. In 1857 he took his first outdoor photographs. In 1858 the Spanish government commissioned Laurent to photograph the construction of the railroad line from Madrid to Alicante (published under the title: *Camino de Hierro de Madrid a Alicante. Vistas principales de la línea*) and from 1863 to 1864 he photographed work on the route between Madrid and Zaragoza. In order to create images of the railroad lines, bridges, stations and signal towers, Laurent developed special equipment which enabled him to transport the fragile cameras and heavy glass-plate negatives by train (Teixidor Cadenas 2003: 17). He published this extensive visual documentation in five photo albums (*Álbumes de*

*Obras Públicas*), which were showcased at the world fair in Paris in 1867. Photographs by Laurent were exhibited in London and Paris as early as 1858 and published by the Spanish press from 1858 onwards (*La Época, La Crónica*).

Laurent had a particular interest in manufacturing and improving the quality of photographic paper. In 1866, together with José Martínez Sánchez (1808-1874) who worked in his photo studio for many years, he developed an innovative photographic paper (*papel leptográfico*) which was a huge commercial success in Spain and further afield in France.

From 1861 to 1868 Laurent held the title of "Fotógrafo de S.M. la Reina". His photo studio in Madrid was one of the best known of its day. He produced portrait photographs of the royal family, of clergymen, military officers and politicians. After the queen was deposed in 1868, Laurent's excellent reputation as a photographer allowed his photo studio to stay in business and he photographed members of the provisional government. He did, however, cease using the title bestowed on him by the queen. At the peak of his career, he opened a gallery in Paris, which exhibited and sold premium-quality prints of his photographs from Spain and Portugal. Some of his most commercially successful works were his photographic reproductions of paintings and objets d'art in Spanish museums, especially an album published in 1866 featuring 164 images of artworks from the Prado, which sold particularly well in England and France.



View of the port of Cádiz (between 1868 and 1886)

In 1872 Laurent released his first catalogue of works, which comprised over 3,000 images of various subjects in Spain and Portugal. The years that followed saw the publication of twenty more catalogues. With its portfolio of some 20,000 photographs, the company *J. Laurent* or *Laurent y Cía* became Spain's largest photographic publisher in the last third of the 19th century.

In 1879 J. Laurent published *Nouveau Guide du Tourisme en Espagne et Portugal*, which featured over 5,000 images (views of cities, monuments, inhabitants, traditional dress, famous figures), making it the most comprehensive photographic record of Spain and Portugal at that time. Even today, it is still an important resource for projects exploring urban development, modernization, art and sociology in the Iberian Peninsula.

Research has shown that Laurent also employed photographers from all over Spain, most notably the renowned photographer José Martínez Sánchez.<sup>1</sup> As a result, an unspecified number of images sold under Laurent's name were in fact taken by other photographers, a practice that was common in the early days of photography. However, this does not pose major obstacles to analyzing his body of work, as all of the photographers were trained by Laurent or worked according to his precise specifications.

There is no verified information available on the death of Jean Laurent, but today he is generally believed to have died in 1886. The photo studio he founded in Madrid was subsequently run by various photographers until 1899 (biographical information according to: Fontanella 1982: 41-45; López Mondéjar 1989: 35-39; López Mondéjar 2005a: 32-34; López Mondéjar 2005b: 40-45; Teixidor Cadenas 2003: 15-20).

Jean Laurent aimed to reach a broad audience with his photographs and his work was particularly tailored to the

commercial market. His images paint a seemingly contradictory picture of Spain: on the one hand, they depict Spain at the dawn of the modern age; on the other hand, they portray the country's traditional, historical side.

At a time when Spain was still very much shaped by the agrarian system, the Spanish royal house aimed to use photography to convey an image of a modern, economically flourishing and progressive country. The pictures taken by Laurent and the other photographers he commissioned, depicting streets, bridges, railroads, train stations and cityscapes, were exhibited at world fairs, thereby helping to communicate this image. Today, these photographs are viewed as historical records of Spain's early technological advances and provide valuable insight on the image the Spanish government aimed to project to the outside world (Lucas 2007: 94-95).

Laurent's other photographs, however, which reached an even greater audience in Europe, contradicted this vision of modern Spain. They portray the country's deep catholic roots, the key influence of Arabic culture, farmers in traditional dress, markets and street scenes, carts and bull fights. These are all motifs that Europeans would expect to see and which created a stereotypical image of Spain: staged, folkloristic images of local inhabitants, the mythical legacy of the Moorish culture and profound religiosity. These images were, in fact, mainly taken in the region of Andalusia and did not reflect the entire spectrum of Spanish culture (Lucas 2007: 29-37).

Alongside his work commissioned by the Spanish royal house, Laurent's considerable commercial success can be attributed to his choice of motifs, which both appealed to and shaped the tastes of the international audience. His photographs of the Alhambra in Granada (a World Heritage Site since 1984) and Spain's Moorish heritage (*alhambrismo*) attracted particular interest in France and



CORDOUE... 633... L'absolution, chez les ermites de la Sierra. (d'après nature). J. Laurent Madrid

Granting absolution (Córdoba) (between 1868 and 1886)

England. Today, reproductions of these images still have great artistic merit: they are striking compositions, imbued with incredible depth through a subtle use of light and shade. At a time of great change driven by technological and industrial innovation, the romanticized and idealized view of Spain's Moorish heritage was a common motif which was reflected in literature, in travelogues, in painting and also in photography (Canogar 2003: 31). Laurent capitalized on the popular perception of Spain at that time and used it to his economic gain.

The majority of Laurent's photographs preserved today are spread across various institutes in Madrid: *Archivo Ruiz Vernacci, Biblioteca Nacional, Museo Naval, Museo Palacio Real, Colección Juan Naranjo*.

The collection of photographs at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) comprises 176 large-format (up to 43 x 26 cm) images, most of which have been mounted on cardboard. The pictures reflect almost the entire spectrum of Laurent's body of work, mainly featuring shots of the Alhambra (116 photos), views of cities (24 photos) and folklore-related themes (19 photos). A special feature of the collection is the six-part panoramic view of the city of Granada and the Alhambra.

<sup>1</sup> The new edition of the large-format photo album *Álbumes de Obras Públicas* dating from 1870 no longer makes any mention of the fact that Martínez Sánchez contributed half of the images.

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Group shot of Basque farmers (Navarra) (between 1868 and 1886)



MURCIE. 715<sup>bis</sup>. Charrette chargée de tinajas ou cuves en terre (d'après nature. J. Laurent, Madrid.

Cart transporting large earthenware jugs (Murcia) (between 1868 and 1886)





"Ajimez" window in the "Sala de Embajadores", Alhambra (Granada)  
(between 1868 and 1886)

# MARC FERREZ (1843-1923). PHOTOGRAPHER, ARTIST AND ENTREPRENEUR IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BRAZIL

MARGRIT PRUSSAT

Marc Ferrez was one of the most renowned photographers in Brazil in the 19th and early 20th century. His magnificent views of landscapes, his photographic documentation of the process of mechanization in the empire and his artistic studio portraits shaped the image of Brazil far beyond its own borders. Even today, Ferrez's images are featured in exhibitions and publications, bringing them to a wide international audience.

## Background

Ferrez was born to French parents in 1843 in Rio de Janeiro and was exposed to the visual arts at a young age in his family. In 1826 his father, the sculptor Zéphérin Ferrez (1797-1851), co-founded the *Academia Imperial de Belas Artes* (the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts) in Rio de Janeiro. After the premature death of his parents in 1851, Marc Ferrez lived in Paris for several years in the care of the sculptor and engraver Joseph Eugène Dubois (1795-1863) and his son Alphonse Dubois (1831-1905), who both took charge of young Ferrez's artistic education (Turazzi 2000: 112; Turazzi 2005: 293; Kossoy 2002: 201-206).

In 1863 Ferrez returned to Rio de Janeiro and started his training as a photographer at the influential publishing house and lithography workshop *Casa Leuzinger*. It was here that he met a number of Brazil's other outstanding photographers, such as Franz Keller, Paul Théodore Robin, Revert Henry Klumb and Théophile Auguste Stahl. From the outset, Ferrez thus became part of a loose network of 19th century Brazilian photographers, illustrated

by numerous collaborations between photo studios (Kossoy 2002; Vasquez 1990). The subjects of the photographs also reveal how the photographers frequently referenced each other and adopted each other's ideas (Burgi/Kohl 2005).

Marc Ferrez opened his first photo studio in 1867 in Rio de Janeiro. Alongside portrait photography, his portfolio also encompassed a wide range of other fields, including not only landscape, architecture and still life photography, but also scientific photography. Ferrez took part in major scientific expeditions and was responsible for creating a photographic record of these trips. Alongside the pictures he was commissioned to take while on these expeditions, which took him through various regions all over Brazil, Ferrez also produced his own photographs. His well-known works include images taken during the geographical and geological expeditions led by Charles Frederick Hartt in 1875 and 1876 (Freitas 2001). Ferrez was also appointed court photographer and official photographer of Brazil's imperial navy. His work was regularly showcased at world fairs and other national and international exhibitions in the 19th century and won him numerous awards (Turazzi 2005).

In 1905 Marc Ferrez joined forces with his sons Júlio and Luciano and ventured into the film business. They opened a cinema in Rio de Janeiro, worked as film distributors and produced their own films. Ferrez died in Rio de Janeiro in 1923.



Photo series for travelers: The Avenue of Royal Palms at the Botanical Garden,  
Rio de Janeiro (c. 1890)

### **Ferrez as a chronicler, artist and entrepreneur**

Ferrez's body of photographic work covers a diverse range of subjects and is unique in both technical and artistic terms. He also achieved considerable economic success, not least because he had several different sources of income. He was, for example, a licensed dealer of photographic equipment and accessories from France and England (Turazzi 2005: 298-299). The travelers of the 19th century represented another lucrative market for photographers at a time when amateur photography was still in its early days. As well as selling these photo series in his own studio, Ferrez collaborated with publishing houses such as *Casa Leuzinger*. Some travelers purchased entire series of typical views (*vistas*) of Brazil, which depicted landscapes, buildings, streets of houses and city squares, as well as portraits and group shots of Brazil's diverse population. The many portraits of the indigenous population and African slaves or liberated slaves that Ferrez took on his expeditions through Brazil reached a huge audience and are today spread across numerous collections and archives (Ermakoff 2004: 136-145; Prussat 2008: 103-112). They clearly appealed to the vision of "picturesque Brazil" so frequently evoked in travel literature and the media (Debret 1834; Rugendas 1835; Ribeyrolles 1861).

The holdings of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) mainly comprise views of landscapes and city scenes in Rio de Janeiro and its surroundings. A number of these photographs have captions in several different languages, which would suggest that they were mass-produced images aimed at 19th century European travelers in Brazil. Many of them also depict the tamed natural beauty of the city, such as Rio de Janeiro's Botanical Garden, the ostentatious and perfectly aligned Avenue of Palms or the urbanized coastline of Guanabara Bay. Painters and graphic artists had already transformed many of these motifs into emblematic images of

Brazil. Travel literature and other illustrated works from the 19th and early 20th century regularly used photographs as sources of inspiration. Photographers such as Ferrez adopted these established motifs in their own works and reproduced them in photo series and later in picture postcards, thus ensuring they reached a mass audience. Ferrez's choice of angles, the outstanding quality of his images and the unique arrangement of people and movement in his compositions enabled him to take these virtually standardized picture formats and imbue them with his own aesthetic.

Another of Ferrez's hallmarks were the specially made glass-plate negatives he used to expose numerous landscape photographs as part of the collodion wet plate process. They measured up to 40 cm x 110 cm and weighed up to 8 kg, enabling an incredible depth of field and richness of detail, which accounts for the outstanding quality of these pictures even today (Turazzi 2000: 98 & 116). Ferrez clearly took many of his elaborate panoramic shots using these large-format negatives. He gives his landscape photographs an added aesthetic charm by positioning one or several figures in his compositions. While it is possible that Ferrez initially included these people to highlight the dimensions of the surrounding geological formations, they appear to become one of Ferrez's personal trademarks and also play an aesthetic role in later images.

A particular highlight of the IAI's holdings is a series of ten cyanotypes<sup>1</sup> based on photographs by Ferrez. They depict panoramic shots of Rio de Janeiro, scenic views and also cityscapes such as the aqueduct in Lapa. These images were clearly designed to be picture postcards and made using the cyanotype process, although it is not known whether they are the work of Ferrez himself or were produced at a later date. Other archives and collections also feature enlargements of the same motifs;<sup>2</sup> the cyanotypes are, however, a rare find.



Beach promenade in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro (c. 1900)

## Photographic legacy

Ferrez's early photographs were completely destroyed by a major fire that engulfed his photo studio in 1873 (Turazzi 2000: 114). Nevertheless, many institutions in Brazil still have extensive collections of his photographs. A large part of Marc Ferrez's photographic legacy is stored at *Instituto Moreira Salles*<sup>3</sup> in Rio de Janeiro. The photographs come from various sources, mainly from the collection of Gilberto Ferrez (1908-2000). Gilberto Ferrez was Marc Ferrez's uncle and a historian and pioneer of Brazilian historiography of photography (Ferrez 1985, 1988; Vasquez 1995). He wrote seminal works on various Brazilian photographers and examined Marc Ferrez's oeuvre in great depth. Other major collections of Ferrez's photographs can be found in the *Biblioteca Nacional*,<sup>4</sup> Rio de Janeiro. They were originally part of the imperial house's collection, today known as the *Collecção D. Thereza Christina Maria* (wife of Emperor Pedro II) (Biblioteca Nacional 1987, 1997).

Many European institutions, archives and collections are home to works by Ferrez, demonstrating just how widely his photographs have been circulated since the 19th century. They were often purchased by travelers and then bequeathed to public archives. Compared to the photographic holdings of many archives in tropical Brazil, Ferrez's photographs in Germany are often better preserved, presumably due to the mild climate. Bremen Overseas Museum and the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, for example, are home to a large number of Ferrez's portraits of former slaves, as well as photographs that document typical labor done by slaves.<sup>5</sup> Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography has a particularly large collection of Ferrez's photographs documenting geographical and geological phenomena.

## Outlook

There is a wealth of secondary literature on Marc Ferrez, as well as photo books, exhibition catalogues and academic papers and materials which examine and throw light on his body of work. Nevertheless, Ferrez's outstanding photographs provide ongoing impetus for a whole range of new approaches to both historical visual culture studies and source research.

Awareness of and access to Ferrez's photographs has increased significantly in recent years. The digital collections of the *Biblioteca Nacional Brasil* or the *Instituto Moreira Salles*, for example, house several hundred freely accessible digital copies of photographs, some of which are accompanied by detailed metadata. In order to conduct specific source research, it is essential to work with original sources and it is still possible to access these sources, at least in public institutions. Continually expanding these online collections and increasing the number of digital copies available from archives and collections in Germany and elsewhere will significantly boost the range of materials available to research and advance the field of comparative visual culture studies. In terms of content, creating closer links between research findings and image sources – a task which has also been greatly simplified by the possibilities offered by the digital humanities – will give a significant boost to visual culture studies research on Marc Ferrez and the historiography of photography in Brazil.



Horse-drawn streetcar on the coast of Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro (c. 1890)

<sup>1</sup> The cyanotype process is a photographic printing process which dates back to the 1870s. The process was also used to reproduce technical drawings (e.g. blueprints).

<sup>2</sup> For example, the *Instituto Moreira Salles* 2005: 126-127, 137.

<sup>3</sup> The *Instituto Moreira Salles* is a private collection and is home to around 5,500 photographs by Ferrez. Around 100 of these pictures can be viewed on the institute's website, accompanied by details on the photos and Ferrez, <http://ims.uol.com.br/hs/marcferrez/marcferrez.html> (accessed on 31 March 2014).

<sup>4</sup> 216 of Ferrez's photographs from the holdings of the Biblioteca Nacional plus detailed metadata can currently be viewed online in the Biblioteca Nacional Digital, Acervo Digital, <http://bndigital.bn.br/acervo-digital> (accessed on 31 March 2014).

<sup>5</sup> The digital picture archive of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin contains 38 of Ferrez's photographs, <http://www.smb-digital.de/> (accessed on 31 March 2014).

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Ipanema Beach, Rio de Janeiro. Panoramic picture postcard (c. 1895)

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Aqueduct between Lapa and Santa Teresa (Arcos da Lapa), Rio de Janeiro.  
Panoramic picture postcard (c. 1895)

# ALBERT FRISCH AND THE FIRST IMAGES OF THE AMAZON TO GO AROUND THE WORLD

FRANK STEPHAN KOHL

Albert Frisch was a pioneering photographer, yet remains relatively unknown to this day. He died in Berlin on 30 May 1918 during the First World War and his passing went virtually unnoticed at first. It would be several weeks before the photochemist Adolf Miethe recalled the services of his deceased colleague, who even then was only known as a reprography specialist in expert circles. In his obituary, Miethe described how Frisch “spent part of his life in the tropics and carried out the most outstanding studies of vegetation at a time before the invention of dry plates and when other photographic devices were simplistic to say the least” (Miethe 1918: 51). However, Frisch not only produced vegetation studies in the tropics. During a photographic expedition in the Upper Amazon lasting many months, he took over 120 photographs of fauna and flora, the local population and their settlements.

After falling into obscurity for a number of years, several of the photographs from the Amazon were rediscovered by Brazilian photography historians in the 1970s. They did not, however, manage to establish the identity of the photographer, who had merely signed the images “A. Frisch”, nor did they determine the context in which they were taken and the total number of pictures sold by the Swiss art dealer Georg Leuzinger (1813-1892), who was based in Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, Frisch was viewed as the first successful expedition photographer in the region. The images he captured in 1867 and 1868 earned him the status of a pioneer of photography in Brazil and, above all, the Amazon region (Ferrez/Naef 1976: 76). He was seen as a forerunner of anthropological photogra-

phy for his portrait photographs of the indigenous population of the Amazon, even though there are very differing views on the scientific value of his images, which were clearly staged and often manipulated using photomontage techniques (Ferrez 1990; Vasquez 2000; Kossoy 2002; Kümin 2007). However, the pictures, which were sold in Rio de Janeiro from 1869, are undoubtedly the first photographs of the largely unknown western part of Brazil’s Amazon Basin and its people, flora and fauna to be seen the world over.

## Albert Frisch

Albert Christoph Frisch was born on 31 May 1840 in Augsburg. Following the early death of his mother, he grew up in an orphanage in the provinces of Middle Franconia, where he initially trained and worked as a confectioner (Kohl 2005, 2006 and 2012).<sup>1</sup> At the end of the 1850s, he moved to the Bavarian capital Munich and tried his hand at art dealing. With the support of his employer at that time, he completed an internship at a renowned lithography workshop in Paris, where he hit upon the idea of selling colorful printed images featuring religious motifs in South America. Frisch travelled to the Argentinian capital Buenos Aires at the beginning of the 1860s, but failed to realize his business idea and initially eked out a living as a private tutor and manager for a German livestock breeder in the Pampas before returning to Buenos Aires in 1863. It was here that 23-year-old Frisch embarked on his career as a photographer. After a chance meeting in a tavern, a German photographer recommended Frisch to



"Caixanas. A peaceful ethnic group with a very pale complexion." (1868)

his employer, the American Arthur Terry, who ran a studio where a position had recently become vacant. The inexperienced but clearly talented Albert Frisch received his training and was given his first job in Terry's renowned portrait studio, where the high society of Buenos Aires came to be photographed. After just a few months as a photographer, he was dispatched to neighboring Paraguay to set up a photo studio in the capital Asunción at the personal request of the dictator Solano Lopez (1827-1870). However, following the outbreak of war between Paraguay and its three neighbors Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil<sup>2</sup> in 1864, Frisch soon had to leave the country and made his way to Brazil's capital Rio de Janeiro, where he continued his career at the *Officina Photographica*, run by Swiss businessman Georg Leuzinger. Leuzinger, who managed a company that made bookkeeping items and graphic art products, made his first forays into the picture trade in the 1840s when he began manufacturing and selling lithographic prints. In 1865 he set up a division within his company that specialized in photographing views of cities and landscapes and appointed Albert Frisch as in-house photographer. Up until his return to Germany in 1870, Frisch mainly photographed cityscapes in Rio de Janeiro and the tropical flora in the surrounding areas. Frisch's body of work, which was sold by Leuzinger, included carefully composed individual shots and panoramic montages consisting of numerous images.

In October 1867, the Brazilian government commissioned Leuzinger's son-in-law, Franz Keller-Leuzinger, to embark on a surveying expedition of the Rio Madeira, one of the Amazon's most important tributaries. Leuzinger used the opportunity to dispatch Frisch on a photographic expedition of the Amazon region. While Keller-Leuzinger and his team set off down the Rio Madeira after a long stop in Manaus, Frisch travelled to the Upper Amazon as far as the Brazilian military outpost Tabatinga, where he began his photographic expedition.

On a rowboat, accompanied by two indigenous rowers, Frisch covered a route of some 1,600 kilometers back to Manaus. The expedition lasted five months and Frisch produced over 120 glass-plate negatives, which he developed into a series of 98 images after returning to Rio de Janeiro. The series was marketed by Georg Leuzinger from 1869 under the French title "*Resultat d'une Expédition Photographique sur le Solimões ou Alto Amazonas et Rio Negro*" (Andrade 2007; Kohl 2012).

Frisch returned to Germany in 1870 and continued his training under Joseph Albert, the inventor of the colotype process. At Albert's workshop he learned the most modern photo-mechanical reproduction technique of the time. He was subsequently employed by Albert and continued his career as a photographer in the U.S. However, on his return to Germany in 1872, he set up his own business. In 1874 Frisch collaborated for a short period with the photographer Johannes Nöhring from Lübeck, before moving to Berlin in 1875 and opening the "*Kunstanstalt Albert Frisch*", which specialized in producing premium quality, photo-mechanical reproductions. The workshop worked in various capacities for the numerous collections, libraries and museums in the Prussian metropolis and Frisch's son – also named Albert – carried on the business after his father's death (Frisch 1925).

Albert Frisch was already 23 years old when he left his original profession to try his hand at photography in Argentina. He went on to have an unparalleled career, working in four different capital cities and becoming the first person to complete a successful photographic expedition on the Amazon.



"Malocca. Dwelling of wild indigenous people from the Ticuna tribe." (1868)

## The first photographs of the Upper Amazon

Between 1867 and 1868 Albert Frisch produced over 120 negatives on his expedition through the Upper Amazon region (Kohl 2012). This is an extraordinary, ground-breaking achievement if only from a logistical and technical perspective. Frisch worked with the collodion process, which had been developed in 1851. It involved preparing the glass plate negatives in darkroom conditions immediately before the shot was taken and then exposing and developing the images while the plates were still wet. This meant that it was absolutely essential to have a portable photo laboratory, consisting of a darkroom and an extensive arsenal of photographic chemicals, bowls and working utensils. Together with the heavy photo equipment and the fragile glass negatives, all this was transported on the rowing boat along the Amazon during the expedition and throughout the entire 10,000 kilometer journey from Rio de Janeiro to Tabatinga and back, without suffering any damage. Frisch also managed to develop his own photochemical formulas suited to the light-sensitive coating and processing of the glass negatives, which enabled him to take excellent photographs in the humid climate of the Amazonian lowlands.

Another striking feature of the entire series of negatives produced by Frisch is the incredibly wide range of themes and motifs. These transform his images into a historical photo-reportage which, even today, provides valuable insight on the European perspective of the Upper Amazon region at the start of the last third of the 19th century.

The first major theme in Frisch's series focuses on the inhabitants of the Upper Amazon. As well as shooting images of the four different ethnic groups he referred to as "wild" (Ticuna, Miranha, Caixana, Umpqua), Frisch also

took photographs of "half-civilized indigenous people" and the hybrid population known as the "Tapuyas". On the one hand, he took carefully staged portraits of these people, either with weapons and body jewelry or with their everyday working implements. On the other hand, he photographed individual huts or village settlements, thus always documenting his subject's immediate living environment.

A second major motif are the fauna and flora of the Upper Amazon, i.e. the natural resources of the tropical rainforest. He photographed river species such as Amazon crocodiles, giant pirarucu fish or sea cows and always did so from two different angles to produce a detailed study of his subjects. In his numerous pictures of palms, shrubs and trees, which also have the air of portrait studies, Frisch removes elements that disrupt the image or skillfully positions the camera angle with the aim of detaching the plants from their environment.

The third major motif of the Amazon photographs can be described as "modern infrastructure" or "civilization". It comprises shots of the provincial capital, Manaus, and other smaller towns and villages, which also map out the stops of the steamship liner that travelled along the Upper Amazon River. The image of a group of Bolivian rowers boarding their boat in the port of Manaus while a small steamship goes past in the background not only gives a glimpse of the facilities of the port in the largest city at the center of the Amazon basin, but also documents Brazil's trading links to neighboring Bolivia.

Before being sold in Leuzinger's workshop in Rio de Janeiro, 98 images were selected, edited and given short, descriptive captions. The portrait shots of the "wild" indigenous people underwent a particular transformation, involving an elaborate process to replace the blurred backdrops of the original pictures with sharp background





"Jacaré. Amazon crocodile on a sandbank of the Rio Solimões." (1868)

images. In some cases, the painstakingly manipulated elements of these “combination photographs” (Kümin 2007: 78) are barely noticeable.

The anthropological and ethnological images clearly had great appeal, if one takes the number of photographs housed in various collections and archives as an indication of popularity. The shots of flora and fauna, however, feature less frequently, and the views of towns and cities, hardly at all. The huge level of interest in Frisch’s anthropological photographs was directly linked to the emergence of the field of ethnology in the last third of the 19th century. Albert Frisch himself undoubtedly also played a significant role in the distribution of his images: when the reprography specialist moved to Berlin, the center of German-speaking ethnology in the 19th century, he sold prints of his pictures from the Amazon series. The collection of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI), comprising 24 shots of the Amazon, is part of the papers and manuscripts of German anthropologist Paul Ehrenreich (1855-1914),<sup>3</sup> who was probably given these pictures by Frisch himself. The 37 prints that have been identified as Albert Frisch’s work in the Ethnological Museum of Berlin are also from the papers and manuscripts of collectors and institutions that Frisch personally supplied with photographs. By contrast, the 65 pictures of the Amazon by Frisch in the papers and manuscripts of researcher Alphons Stübel, which are housed at the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography in Leipzig, and the 98 prints<sup>4</sup> archived at the World Museum in Vienna were acquired from Leuzinger, Frisch’s employer in Rio de Janeiro.

Numerous scientific and popular science publications in the fields of regional geography and ethnology from the late 19th century feature illustrations which are based on Frisch’s images of the Amazon, yet they do not credit the man who pioneered Amazon photography.

It can only be hoped that raising the profile of the series of Amazon photographs and the biography of their author will initiate a new debate on the various players involved in the processes of production and distribution, which will take a more detailed look at the role of “commercial photographers”. Frisch’s images of the Amazon also provide extensive visual source material for researchers to analyze how scientists and publicists in the late 19th century made use of photographs of the tropics.

<sup>1</sup> Until recently, little was known about the biography and influence of Albert Frisch, the first person to successfully capture the Amazon on film.

<sup>2</sup> The War of the Triple Alliance, 1864-1870.

<sup>3</sup> See the essay by Paul Hempel in this volume for more details on Paul Ehrenreich.

<sup>4</sup> The 98 prints have been mounted on the original cardboard, complete with captions in French by Leuzinger’s atelier, and are bound together in an album entitled “Amazon”.



"Popunha. Very rare palm trees without spikes, near Rio Jutahi." (1868)

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"Bolivian rowers boarding their boat in the port of Manáos." (1868)

## TEOBERT MALER: AN EMPATHETIC VIEW OF MEXICO

CLAUDINE LEYSINGER

The Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) houses the papers and manuscripts of 19th century German expedition photographer Teobert Maler. They offer a wealth of insight into ancient American studies and Mexican archaeology at a time when they were developing into professional disciplines. Maler spent many a decade travelling around, researching and photographing Mexico. His photographs bear testament to a genuine interest in the country, its landscapes and its people, earning him a special status among 19th century explorers in Mexico. In light of his professional background, he painted an unusually empathetic portrait of the country, its people and antiquities, a view that is enhanced by the artistic skill and perfectionism of his photographs.

Teobert Maler was born in Rome on 12 January 1842 into a family of civil servants. His mother died before he was even two years old and he and his sister subsequently lived with their father, who Teobert mentions in his autobiography “Leben meiner Jugend” (“My younger years”) with more than a hint of bitterness. Aged 17, he left his home in Baden-Baden and headed to Karlsruhe to study engineering and architecture at the polytechnic university. In 1862 he moved to Vienna, where he worked at Heinrich von Ferstel’s architectural studio, which made a name for itself with the Votive Church and other public buildings on Ringstrasse. Two years later he travelled to Laibach, where he enlisted as a cadet in Maximilian von Habsburg’s Austro-Belgian volunteer corps. In November 1864 he left Europe and set sail for Veracruz on board the “Boliviana”.<sup>1</sup>

Maler’s manuscripts neither explain why he decided to head to Mexico nor why he spent most of his life in the

country. His texts do, however, indicate that he held a deep fascination for Mexico which led him to stay there and spend a large part of his life exploring the country. In “Leben meiner Jugend”, for example, he mentions the ruins of Papantla and his desire to learn Nahuatl, revealing a particular interest in Mexico’s ancient history.<sup>2</sup>

As a soldier, Maler was mainly active in today’s state of Puebla, where he received numerous military awards and ultimately fought as a captain in the imperial army until news of the death of Maximilian and his generals reached the city. In 1868, after the situation in Mexico had begun to settle down, Maler set off to tour Mexico’s central states. From 1874 he travelled around the *Mixteca baja*, part of the *Sierra Madre del Sur* in the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca. He spent several years in this area, photographing the local population, antiquities and landscapes. He then continued his travels in the state of Chiapas where he explored the famous Mayan ruins of Palenque and conducted his first major archaeological research project. From 1868 to 1878 Maler explored large parts of central and southern Mexico and collected materials for his first scientific articles. During this period, he also honed his skills as a photographer. Maler subsequently went back to Europe, where he brought a case against the Prussian state concerning his father’s inheritance which lasted many years. In 1885 he travelled to Yucatán and settled in Mérida. Over the next eight years, he embarked on numerous extended expeditions on the Yucatán Peninsula; the photographs featured in this volume were taken during this period. Around the turn of the century, he set off on an expedition funded by Harvard University’s *Peabody Museum* to explore the area around the Usumacinta River.<sup>3</sup>



"Territorio Maya de Xkanhá – La Aguada de Sáhbecan" (between 1885 and 1893)

Maler started out as a photographer at a time when photography was being used to document all kinds of journeys – imperialist, exploratory, scientific, artistic or merely for leisure. Since its invention in 1839, photography had undergone rapid changes and improvements. It soon became the medium of choice for depicting archaeological monuments (Heilbrun 1998: 149). It was now possible to create images of monuments, glyphs and sculptures with precision and speed. The first recorded photographs from Mexico are by the Frenchman Désiré Charnay, who took these pictures during his research trip from 1857-60 (Debroise 1998: 118-119).

Even though Maler was best known for his archaeological photographs, antique monuments were not all that he documented on camera during the many years he lived and worked in Mexico. Maler's photographic works stored at the IAI's archive cover a wide spectrum, clearly demonstrating his interest in the country and its people. He often photographed local inhabitants – indigenous people from the middle or upper classes – and catered for the commercial market, generally using the standard methods of 19th century studio photography. However, he also depicted the beauty of Mexico's natural landscapes and, of course, archaeological monuments. Maler's work reflects a genuine interest in the country, its inhabitants and its cultural and historical heritage.

His picture of a lagoon in the territory of Xkanhá is a prime example of how he strived to portray Mexico's natural beauty. Maler described the stunning landscape he aimed to capture as realistically as possible as follows:

Leafless and resplendent with pink blossoms, soaring high above the emerald green shrubs under a sky of azure blue, the Macuilshuatl bordered this solitary stretch of water which, lit up by the rays of the tropical sun and reflecting the manifold hues of its vibrant

surroundings, afforded such an indescribably exquisite view that my colorless photograph – no matter how accomplished – could not begin to encapsulate its magic. (Maler 1997: 257-258)

The striking quality of this shot lies in the symmetry created by the reflection in the water and the leafy trees framing the image. Even though the flowers described by Maler are barely discernible in black and white, the picture is still an excellent example of Maler's artistic aspirations as a photographer.

Towards the end of his expedition of the Yucatán Peninsula in 1894, Maler explored the independent Mayan territory of the *Pacíficos del Sur*, a group who occupied an area between the states of Campeche and Yucatán, which also included Xkanhá.<sup>4</sup> Maler's accounts of traveling around this territory depicted the dangers "he faced on a daily basis [...], living in fear of being stabbed by one's own people" (Maler 1997: 267). He described his perseverance and dedication in adverse circumstances with more than a hint of pride. Despite these difficult conditions, Maler still felt enough at ease to organize a group photograph in a studio featuring General Eugenio Arana, the chief of the independent Mayan *Pacíficos del Sur*, surrounded by his men. With its painted backdrop, small pillar and ornate chair, this photograph conforms to many of the standards of 19th century studio photography. The centerpiece of the image is General Arana, the oldest man in the middle, flanked by three men to his right and three to his left, all positioned according to height. Like so many of Maler's studio portraits of indigenous people, this group photograph has all the trademarks of 19th century portrait photography. However, it differs from the anthropometric photographs of the day, which highlighted the specific features of ethnic groups, positioning them next to measuring sticks to illustrate their otherness from a scientific perspective and to em-





"General Arana" (between 1885 and 1893)

phasize the links between physical features and personal characteristics.

The picture on the following page is also firmly in the tradition of 19th century studio portrait photography. Teobert Maler's papers and manuscripts in the IAI's archive contain an oval-shaped print of this photograph and a larger print, which Maler captioned "Tomasa Santa María, bella jóven hispano-maya de Ticul".<sup>5</sup> The picture is not unlike his studio photographs of indigenous women from the *Mixteca Baja* area in that Maler also focuses on his subject's festive clothing and jewelry (necklace, earrings and rings).<sup>6</sup> In contrast to other studio portraits, however, this photograph's backdrop is neutral and it does not feature any pillars or chairs, leaving nothing to distract from Tomasa Santa María and her beautiful attire.

Artfully staged compositions are a trademark of Maler's photography. His manuscripts reveal how he would wait until the sun shone on a building at precisely the right angle and choose the optimum field of view in order to create an artistically composed image of a ruin instead of merely an exact reproduction. Maler would stop at nothing to capture ruins in their most enchanting light. He and his assistants often chopped down bushes and trees that obscured the view and then waited until the sunlight accentuated particular details of the ruins and their surroundings. Clouds often form a backdrop in Maler's pictures of ruins, which is all the more surprising given that he generally embarked on expeditions during the dry season. Maler liked to include clouds in his images because they created a contrast in the sky. In one of his notebooks on photographic techniques, he describes how he often manually added clouds to negatives in the darkroom to enhance the artistic effect. He created special "cloud negatives" at "different times of day" so that "they would match the main negative".<sup>7</sup> This manipulation indicates how much Maler valued the artistic quali-

ties of his photographs. However, this was not his only concern: he was also careful to ensure that his images fully captured the ornate features of a stela or an interior chamber, and often used magnesium lamps to illuminate these details.<sup>8</sup>

The photographs included in this volume demonstrate the significance of Maler's work in a variety of ways. He was unique among the expedition photographers of the 19th century and not only for the incredibly high standards he set himself when producing his photographic work, which he viewed as art, and for his portraits of indigenous people, which were not designed to be anthropometric studies. More than any other photographer of his day, he devoted himself to exploring Mayan ruins. He spent over 30 years travelling around Mayan territory in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize. He discovered more than 100 ruins and came to be one of the most important explorers and photographers of Mayan territory (Kutscher 1971: 9). American studies scholars from Maler's day, such as Eduard Seler and later Walter Lehmann, greatly valued his detailed and meticulous research of Mayan ruins and often relied on his photographs, descriptions and drawings in their own work. Maler was commissioned several times by Harvard University's *Peabody Museum* to explore the region around the Río Usumacinta and the Petén Basin (particularly Tikal), which also demonstrates his status among specialists in American studies. Maler was aware that his work was held in high regard by the research community of his day. Charles P. Bowditch, benefactor and treasurer of Harvard University's *Peabody Museums*, wrote to Maler expressing his wish to have ten explorers like Maler to complete the archaeological projects in Chiapas, Guatemala and Yucatan before all the monuments fell to ruin. Bowditch assured him that the academic community "benefited from every step [he] made and that the museum would gladly publish all of the findings of his expeditions".<sup>9</sup> Teobert Maler's work still



"Tomasa Santa María, bella joven hispano-maya de Ticul" (between 1885 and 1893)

plays an important role in Mayan research today. Maler's photographs and descriptions are the only remaining sources on many monuments that were destroyed by the climate, vegetation or deliberately by human hand (Prem 1997: XiV-XV).

The story of how a large part of Maler's papers and manuscripts came to be at the IAI in Berlin is an interesting and convoluted tale that would go beyond the scope of this article.<sup>10</sup> Other European institutions such as the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and Lippe Regional Museum in Detmold also house pictures, texts, drawings, letters and other objects from Maler's papers. Furthermore, Harvard University's *Peabody Museum* is home to an album of small portrait photographs and also owns numerous other photographs, letters and manuscripts from Maler's three expeditions funded by the *Peabody Museum*. In Mexico itself, however, there are surprisingly few photographs and texts, which is all the more striking considering that Maler bequeathed over 1,000 of his photographic negative plates to the *Museo Nacional*.<sup>11</sup> The *Instituto Cultural de Yucatán* houses three photo albums featuring photographs of Mayan ruins on the Yucatán Peninsula, which were undoubtedly part of Maler's plan to produce an atlas of Yucatán.<sup>12</sup> The IAI has an unparalleled collection comprising a vast number and huge range of original prints of ruins, people and landscapes, negative plates, manuscripts and plans. They make it possible to reconstruct the incredibly productive and artistic life and work of this enigmatic character and are an invaluable resource for exploring the history of Mexican archaeology and photography. They illustrate the body of work produced by a 19th century explorer, photographer and traveler with a boundless fascination for his host country.

<sup>1</sup> For details on Maler's biography, see Teobert Maler, "Leben meiner Jugend", volume A73 Teobert Maler, collection of manuscripts, transcripts, Museum of Ethnology, Hamburg (hereafter cited as Maler's papers & manuscripts, MoE, Hamburg); Annual Report of the School of Engineering, academic years 1859/60 + 1860/61, 448/1637 + 448/1638, Grand Duchy of Baden, Administration of the Polytechnic University, Karlsruhe State Archives. For details on Ferstel, see also Schorske 1981: 40.

<sup>2</sup> Maler, "Leben meiner Jugend", 22-24, Maler's papers & manuscripts, MoE, Hamburg.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 67-68. For later biographical details, see Teobert Maler, "Fortsetzung meiner Selbstlebensbeschreibung, Aufzeichnung von Merkwürdigkeiten, u.s.w." in "Teobert Maler: MS. PENINSULA YUCATAN I. Descripciones de las Ruinas antiguas de la civilización Maya," bequest Maler, Papers & Manuscripts, IAI Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> The *Pacíficos del Sur* were former Mayan warriors who opposed the continuation of the Caste War and supported peace talks with the Yucatecan government. The government of the two states of Campeche and Yucatán granted them a certain degree of autonomy, which was heightened by the secluded location of their settlements (de Castro 2001: 1-2).

<sup>5</sup> According to Ian Graham, Tomasa Santa María was a young woman from Ticul with whom Maler is thought to have fallen in love (Graham 1997: XLI).

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed analysis of these photos, see Leysinger 2008: 156ff.

<sup>7</sup> Teobert Maler, "Fórmulas de Fotografía. Tullantzinco 1867. Th. Maler," bequest Maler, Papers & Manuscripts, IAI Berlin.

<sup>8</sup> Teobert Maler to Charles P. Bowditch, Tenosique, 1 May 1898, Box 7:9, Peabody Museum Archive, Harvard University.

<sup>9</sup> Bowditch to Maler, Boston, 18 July 1905, bequest Maler, Papers & Manuscripts, IAI Berlin.

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of how Maler's papers & manuscripts found their way to the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin, see the epilogue to my dissertation (Leysinger 2008: 371-380). In a recently published article, Durán-Merk and Merk point out that Teobert Maler's will was not properly executed after his death (Durán-Merk/Merk 2011: 339-357).

<sup>11</sup> Jorge Enciso to the director of the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, Mexico City, 4 December 1917, Vol. 26, Exp. 36, f. 133-36, Archivo Histórico del Museo de Antropología, Mexico City.

<sup>12</sup> Maler planned to compile the photographs, plans, descriptions and drawings of Yucatán into a major atlas, which would be called *Gran Atlas de Antigüedades Yucatecas* (Leysinger 2008: 218ff.).



"Chichén." "El Templo mayor. Lado occidental" (between 1885 and 1893)

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"Uxmal. Templo del Adivino" (between 1885 and 1893)

# THE COLLOTYPE, THE AUTOMOBILE AND ELECTRIC LIGHT: THE VARIED PASSIONS OF EMÍLIO BIEL IN PORTO

RICARDA MUSSER

## Biography

Karl Emil Biel, born in 1838, left his home in Annaberg in Saxony in 1857 and travelled to Portugal as a representative of the trading firm Henrique Schalk. He firstly settled in Lisbon before moving to Porto, the capital of the north, in 1860. Here he initially also worked for Schalk, as well as representing other German companies. In 1864, he set up his own factory which manufactured buttons and other metal products (Baptista 2010: 111).

Biel followed the development of innovative technologies with great enthusiasm, including the colotype process. It would appear that he learned the technique from Émile Jacobi, who came to Portugal to set up a colotype workshop for Carlos Relvas (Wegemann 2013: 18). Around 1874 Biel acquired *Casa Fritz*, an existing photo studio on the *Rua do Almada*, which he later renamed *Casa Biel*. As early as 1876, he was appointed court photographer and began to showcase and publish photo albums and other illustrated works. His pictures won him numerous medals at various international exhibitions.

In 1880 he married the daughter of the German Consul in Porto, Edith Caroline Katzenstein, who died two years later from tuberculosis, leaving behind a daughter. By this point, he had already fathered three sons, who would later work in his companies.

Alongside his passion for photographic processes, Biel also had a keen interest in the generation of electrical power. He worked as a representative for the Nurem-

berg-based company Schuckert (later Siemens) and was the first person to provide Porto with electricity, initially in several factories. His own photo studio and workshop had an electricity supply as early as 1891, which allowed him to extend his opening hours and take photographs using artificial light. Again in step with the technological advances of his day, he started importing automobiles by Benz and other companies to Porto.

With such a range of entrepreneurial activities, it soon became necessary to create two separate businesses: the company Emílio Biel and the *Sociedade Emílio Biel & Ca.* Biel's sons each managed their own divisions in the company Emílio Biel. Júlio Emílio Biel, who was an engineer, was placed in charge of electrification; Emílio de Almeida Biel was responsible for import business.

The operations of *Sociedade Emílio Biel & Ca.* were divided into two divisions. The first comprised photography, colotypes and lithography. Photographer Fernando Brütt joined the division as an associate. The second division focused on publications and Cunha Moraes, also a photographer, joined as an associate (Baptista 2010: 114-115).

After the outbreak of the First World War, all German citizens in Portugal were viewed as enemies. In 1916, after Germany declared war on Portugal, the government seized all property belonging to Germans and put it up for auction. Emílio Biel died in 1915 and his legacy, which included 100,000 photographic negatives, was also affected by this measure.



PORTUGAL



Antiga Casa Fritz

Emilio Bal & C<sup>o</sup> - Porto

Ponte de D. Luiz 1

Construction of the Dom Luís I Bridge (Porto) (between 1881 and 1886)

## Work and impact

Records of foreign photographers working in the Iberian Peninsula, initially as travelling photographers, date back as early as 1843. In May and September 1845, the journal *O Periódico dos Pobres* mentions three photographers in Porto (Siza 2001: 5). The first permanent photo studios were not set up until the 1850s. Miguel Novaes founded the first studio in 1854, which stayed in business until the end of the 1860s (Baptista 2010: 54). Emílio Biel almost certainly acquired *Casa Fritz* – a photo studio founded by Joachim Friedrich Martin Fritz – before 1874. By 1876 Emílio Biel already had nine employees working under him. That year, Fernando Brütt joined the company as an associate (Baptista 2010: 119-120). The studio operated under the name of Fritz until 1890 when it was renamed *Casa Biel*. By 1891 the company had celebrated its 50,000th photograph (Baptista 2010: 123). However, photography was not *Casa Biel's* only source of profit. It also generated income with its postcards produced using the collotype process: “The whole of Portugal is scrambling to get copies of Biel’s postcards. Their pleasing motifs appeal to one and all” (Wegemann 2013: 19).

Biel’s fascination with new inventions and technological advances had a major influence on the themes and motifs he chose to photograph. For example, he captured on film the construction of both of Porto’s bridges, Ponte Dona Maria Pia (built between 1875 and 1877) and Ponte Dom Luis (built between 1881 and 1886). As early as 1876, he published *Caminhos de Ferro do Norte Ilustrado*. A large selection of his photographs depicting the railroad, as well as portraits and landscape scenes, were published in the cultural journal *O Occidente*, which was established in 1878 and won an award at the world fair in Paris that year. By 1899 more than 100 illustrations had been produced using photographs from *Casa Biel* (Baptista 2010: 129). The journal was illustrated exclusively with engrav-

ings. These were based on drawings and increasingly on photographs. In its fifth year, *O Occidente* featured the work of *Casa Biel*, including two images of a mechanical lift in Braga, published under the company name *Casa Fritz*, and several images of railroad bridges and station buildings<sup>1</sup> (Biel 1882: 101, 244, 245). A number of railroad photographs produced by *Casa Biel* appeared in albums as part of the world fair in Chicago in 1893. In the run-up to the fair, the *Associação de Engenheiros Portugueses* asked various photographers to submit their work, including Bobone, Camacho, Relvas, Roncchini and Biel. This resulted in three albums: *Caminho de Ferro Portugueses da Beira Alta*, *Caminho de Ferro do Douro* and *Caminho de Ferro do Minho*.<sup>2</sup>

Another popular motif in Biel’s photographs, collotypes and publications was the artistic and cultural history of Portugal, the land he had made his home. As early as 1877, Biel began preparations to mark the 300th anniversary of the first edition of *Os Lusíadas* by Luis de Camões with a luxury edition which was published in 1880 and dedicated to Emperor Pedro II of Brazil. This publication also used photographs merely as a basis for the engravings which illustrated the edition. The first major work to include actual images taken by *Casa Biel* was the catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Exposição Districital de Aveiro em 1882*, published by Grémio Moderno in 1883. It featured texts by Marques Gomes and Joaquim de Vasconcelos and 47 collotypes, 45 of which depicted exhibits, plus two views of the city of Aveiro. *Casa Biel* shouldered the risk of this venture, having produced the collotypes without any guaranteed profit. The catalogue is viewed as a milestone for *Casa Biel*, as the company installed the technical infrastructure necessary for industrial photomechanical production (Baptista 2010: 127).

In 1885 *Casa Biel* was thus equipped to produce the collotypes for the four-volume work *A Africa Occidental, Album*

PORTUGAL



Antiga Casa Fritz

Emilio Pich & C. - Porto

Ponte D. Maria Pia (Porto)

"D. Maria Pia Bridge (Porto)" (between 1875 and 1877)

*photográfico e descritivo da Africa Occidental*, which were made using photographs by José Augusto da Cunha Moraes and once again demonstrate *Casa Biel's* outstanding work in the field of photomechanical printing.

From the 1880s, the use of collotypes in Porto for commercial purposes became increasingly common and *Casa Biel* took on commissions from fashion houses and produced calendars and exhibition catalogues. In addition to these projects, it also compiled several other important photo books, such as *Viticultura e Vinicultura* in 1896, featuring 22 collotypes by the studio, and *O Minho e as suas culturas* in 1902, featuring 39 collotypes by *Casa Biel* (Baptista 2010: 149).

At the start of the 20th century, *Casa Biel* was once again focusing its energies on developing an epic work: *A Arte e a Natureza em Portugal*,<sup>3</sup> which was published between 1902 and 1908 in eight volumes and “aimed to create the most comprehensive archive available on our artistic and natural wonders” (Brütt/Cunha Moraes 1902: page unspecified). It has often been cited as *Casa Biel's* most important work:

*A Arte e a Natureza* is undoubtedly Emílio Biel and Cunha Moraes' most ambitious undertaking: the eight-volume publication abounds with views of cities, monuments, landscapes, picturesque scenes, working processes and typical traditional dress. The technical quality of the images is superb. Coupled with excellent texts (in Portuguese and French) by various authors, which describe all of the places, cities and landscapes, this work is far more than a mere collection of stunning photographs – it is a comprehensive and precise record of Portugal and its treasures. (Wegemann 2013: 24)

The publication *Arte religiosa em Portugal*, which came out in 1914 in monthly fascicles, placed a special focus on

Portugal's religious art, featuring photographs from *Casa Biel* and texts by art historian Joaquim de Vasconcelos.

*Casa Biel* was regarded as one of the top photo studios and one of the leading collotype workshops in Porto in the 19th century and the start of the 20th century. Emílio Biel always ensured that his studio had state-of-the-art equipment, enabling it to produce outstanding artistic work. *Casa Biel's* participation in national and international exhibitions and the awards it won at these events demonstrate the outstanding quality of the studio's work, which is still a key reference point in Portugal for the early era of photography and the collotype process.

*Casa Biel* was also recommended to German-speaking travelers. Emílio Biel's company featured in both *Baedeker*, published in 1912,<sup>4</sup> and *Großer illustrierter Führer durch Spanien und Portugal (Major illustrated guide through Spain and Portugal)*, published in 1892 (Baedeker 1912: 530; Hartleben 1892: 496).

### **A visual record of technological innovation**

The work of Emílio Biel and other pioneers of photography in Portugal focused on the modern buildings and technical structures emerging in the 19th century and the start of the 20th century, which were possible thanks to the innovations of that period. Cultural journals such as *O Occidente* and *Ilustração Portuguesa* featured many of these images. It would be interesting to examine these publications in order to understand how their texts and above all their images gave the general public who purchased the journals a better understanding of the technological advances of that time.

COSTUMES



ANTICA CAZA FRITZ PORTO

Penafiel

EMILIO BIEL & C<sup>o</sup>

"Traditional dress: Penafiel" (est. between 1902 and 1908)

## Collections

The holdings of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) contain 29 photographs by Emílio Biel. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to establish how the IAI acquired the images. The pictures depict a variety of subjects, ranging from the construction of the Dona Maria Pia Bridge and traditional dress from the north of Portugal, to street scenes in Porto. The IAI is also home to some of the most important works published by the company Emílio Biel, such as the luxury edition of *Lusíadas* from 1880 and *A arte e a natureza em Portugal*, which came out between 1902 and 1908, as well as the journal *Arte religiosa em Portugal* from 1914. Furthermore, all editions of the journal *O Occidente* are available at the IAI.

The *Centro Português de Fotografia* (CPF) in Porto, which was founded in 1997, houses an extensive stock of photographs by Emílio Biel, along with information on the photographer. The homepage of the CPF features 145, freely accessible digital copies of Biel's photographs. The center's library also has additional material on Emílio Biel and his oeuvre.

<sup>1</sup> The first railroad photographs, which were used as a basis for illustrations in *O Occidente*, were taken by F. Roncchini in 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the albums were not completed in time for the world fair in Chicago.

<sup>3</sup> *Revista Pittoresca e Descritiva de Portugal com vistas Photographicas* by Possidónio da Silva, dating from 1862/63, is thought to be the earliest publication on Portugal's cultural heritage which was illustrated using photographs. As far back as 1883, Emílio Biel had already planned to compile a publication with the working title *Portugal antigo e moderno*, which would be illustrated with approx. 800 collotypes. However, he did not manage to realize his vision.

<sup>4</sup> As in earlier editions.

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COSTUMES



ANTICA CAZA FRITZ PORTO

Porto

EMILIO RIEL & C<sup>o</sup>

"Traditional dress: Porto" (est. between 1902 and 1908)

PORTUGAL



*Antiga Casa Fritz*

*Estúdio Bul & C. - Porto*

*Rua dos Ingleses*

Rua Nova dos Ingleses (renamed Rua do Infante D. Henrique in 1883) (before 1883)



PORTUGAL



Antiga Igreja Feliz

Emilio Bul & C. - Porto

Igreja da Trindade (Porto)

"Trinity Church (Porto)" (year unknown)

# ALBERT RICHARD DIETZE: PHOTO CHRONICLER OF THE PROVINCE OF ESPÍRITO SANTO

RICARDA MUSSER

## Biography

Albert Richard Dietze was born in 1838 in Kaja, located in today's Saxony-Anhalt. After completing his military service and apprenticeship at an agricultural college, he headed to Brazil in 1862. Initially, he lived in Santa Catarina, but soon moved to Rio de Janeiro where he spent 14 months working at the Botanical Gardens. His work at the gardens may have involved cataloguing and photographing the various species.

He subsequently took over the photo studio *Photographia Allemã* and embarked on his career as a photographer. With regard to Dietze's experience as a photographer, Pedro Vasquez writes: "He [Dietze] received thorough training as a photographer in his country of origin, where he already spent a period of time working as a professional portrait photographer for the upper classes, including Kaiser Wilhelm I". There is, however, no record of any photographs from the time before he emigrated to Brazil (Vasquez 2000: 130).

On his numerous trips to the province of Espírito Santo, he discovered a range of subjects for his photographs: he portrayed the lives of the colonialists, the indigenous population and slaves, as well as landscape scenes and views of towns. In 1869 he moved to Vitória, the capital of the province. However, he kept his photo studio in Rio de Janeiro until 1873, when he set up another studio in his new place of residence, again calling it *Photographia Allemã*. At the beginning of the 1870s, he embarked on at least one trip to Europe, which he used to learn about

the latest developments in the field of photography. His main interest appears to have been stereoscopy.

While travelling through the province, Dietze met the Sacht family in Santa Leopoldina and married Frederike Henriette Christine Sacht in 1873. Three years later in 1876, Dietze took all of his photographic equipment and moved to Santa Leopoldina. Here he purchased some land, which he cultivated until he died in 1906.

In the 1880s Dietze ultimately stopped working as a portrait photographer and devoted his energies to his trading company and his estate. However, he continued to take photographs. From that point on, Dietze's photographic work was geared towards realizing his artistic ambitions. This did not, however, bring him significant commercial success.

In addition to his varied professional life, Dietze also worked as a consular agent until the start of the 20th century, which would account for some of his trips across the country. This role involved assisting the colonialists in all matters: representing their interests, ensuring their well-being, giving them guidance and acting as their spokesperson and even as their interpreter (Lopes 2003: 124). He was particularly dedicated to the inhabitants of Santa Leopoldina. On 7 April 1886, for example, he opened a school there, arranged for teachers to be sent from Germany and developed a coursebook: *Leseschule für deutsche Kinder in Brasilien (A guide to reading for German children in Brazil – Lopes 2003: 129)*. He was also committed to improving the cultural life of the town, which was



Albert Richard Dietze's photo studio in Santa Leopoldina (1876)

virtually non-existent. To this end, he set up a gymnastics club and founded a family orchestra to play at religious ceremonies and dances, which were sometimes held at Dietze's own house.

Austrian photographer Moritz Lamberg had the following to say after visiting Santa Leopoldina:

The next day, which was a Sunday, I visited the consular agent who resides in the town, Mr. Dietze. Although he appears to have made many an enemy, I found him to be a friendly, intelligent man whose disposition is, I believe, too idealistic for his environment. (Lamberg 1899: 218)

### Work and impact

From the outset, landscapes and views of cities, which were exotic by German standards, formed the focal point of Dietze's body of work. He made his living, however, by taking numerous portrait shots of immigrants and their families. Up until 1873, he developed these images in his photo studio in Rio de Janeiro and then sent them to his customers or delivered them in person while on the road. In 1873 he set up his own photo studio in the *Rua General Osório* 46 in Vitória and published an advertisement to inform his customers that he had developed his skills as a photographer during a trip to Europe<sup>1</sup> (Lopes 2003: 147). Dietze had good reason to make this known: by that time he already had competition from other photographers in Vitória.

Dietze also continued to make frequent trips in search of interesting subjects for his photographs. He transported his sensitive photographic equipment on foot, horseback or by boat and travelled through various regions of Espírito Santo and into neighboring Bahia. His photo studio, which he ran on his own, was closed during these

trips. Dietze's views of landscapes in particular demonstrate his extraordinary artistic skill. He tried to sell his images to travelers and foreign collectors through specialized dealers. He most frequently used the trading company *Flor da Bahia* in Vitória (Lopes 2003: 155).

However, in his advertisements in the local press, he merely referred to his work as a portrait photographer. In order to attract as many potential customers as possible, he only promoted his cheapest photographic services. His expensive portraits printed in large format or on costly paper were only affordable to a limited number of the local elite and they were not the target audience of these adverts.

On 30 June 1877 Dietze wrote to the Brazilian imperial house for the first time to request their support for his plans to publish a brochure illustrated with his photographs. The publication would aim to encourage people in Europe to emigrate to Santa Leopoldina. To have the desired effect, it would need to be published in various languages and have a sufficient print run. In his letter, Dietze explained that no photographic album had yet documented the cultivation and harvest of coffee. This branch of agriculture was clearly unfamiliar to colonialists from Europe, even to those who had trained as farmers, yet it played a major role in the Brazilian economy. The 24 photographs which Dietze planned to feature in the brochure not only depicted the various stages of coffee cultivation, but also the success and the prosperity of the immigrants. For the second part of this advertising brochure, Dietze proposed five themes: the colony of Santa Leopoldina, its foundation and current status; an overview of the cultivation of key products; a description of common pests in the colony and how to protect one's crops against these pests; the climate and health in the colony; the happiness and prosperity of the colonialists. As Dietze did not have the means to finance this publica-



The Dietze family orchestra (c. 1895)

tion, he wrote to the crown princess and requested the necessary funds (Lopes 2003: 159-161). It would seem that his proposal went unanswered.

The following year, Dietze contacted the imperial house once again, this time addressing the emperor himself, who had visited Espírito Santo while travelling through the empire's northern provinces from 1859 to 1860 (Rocha 1960: 5). He requested financial assistance for a series of photos featuring views of landscapes from Santa Leopoldina and the surrounding area (Lopes 2003: 174). This time he also enclosed 28 photographs, mainly in large and medium-sized formats, which illustrated the work he had produced in this field from 1869 to 1877. His sample photographs also included an image of his photo studio. Again, there is no record of a response to this letter.

In the 1880s Dietze stopped working as a portrait photographer and began submitting his work to international exhibitions. The first conclusive evidence of this dates back to 1882 and was followed by enthusiastic articles in the local press documenting the prizes he had been awarded for his photographs of plants, landscapes and colonialists (Lopes 2003: 176). Dietze also exhibited photographs at the world fair in Paris in 1889. The world fair saw the publication of the book *Le Brésil*, which contained numerous photographs and drawings and became known under the title *Album de Vues du Brésil*. It aimed to document and highlight the participation of Brazil in the fair. The province of Espírito Santo is not a focal point of the book, but it does feature in two of Dietze's photographs. Although neither picture is attributed to Dietze, it has to be his work, as he was the only photographer participating in the world fair from this province (Lopes 2003: 189).

Dietze's photographs proved very popular at these exhibitions, prompting him to compile<sup>2</sup> and sell his work in

albums.<sup>3</sup> Publications as expensive as these would only have appealed to a very small target audience. However, it seems that Dietze was more interested in producing artistic work than making financial profit.

At the end of the 19th century, Dietze was the first person in the province to produce picture postcards<sup>4</sup> of Espírito Santo. The first series was published in 1899, featuring views of Vitória and Santa Leopoldina, among other motifs. Although the series mainly focuses on views of cities and landscapes, it also includes images with cultural and folklore-related themes. Each postcard features a montage of two to four pictures of various sizes. Dietze had stopped working as a professional photographer by this point and these projects allowed him to maintain his ties to the world of photography (Lopes 2003: 195).

### **Documenting the history of emigration**

Albert Richard Dietze's photographs of the colony of Santa Leopoldina provide an interesting glimpse into the history of German emigration to Brazil in the 19th century. His images depict numerous different aspects of day-to-day life, such as farming, the houses of the colonialists, their clothes and their leisure activities. These photographs could provide an excellent basis for a more in-depth exploration of the history of migration.

### **Collections**

The holdings of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) include a photo album featuring numerous photographs by Dietze, mainly depicting scenes from Vitória and Santa Leopoldina, including the famous image of his photo studio. Walter Lehmann's papers also contain a number of Dietze's photographs



Luxembourg waterfall in Santa Leopoldina (year unknown)

(1876-1939). The images discovered in these papers to date depict the Botocudo people from the province of Bahia. It is likely that these papers and the papers of Paul Ehrenreich (1855-1914) contain further photographs by Dietze. Berlin Ethnological Museum also owns a collection of his photographs.<sup>5</sup>

The photographs that Dietze enclosed with his two letters to the Brazilian imperial house are still part of the D. Thereza Christina Maria collection which comprises some 20,000 photographs. Emperor Pedro II donated these pictures to the national library<sup>6</sup> in 1891 when he was already living in exile. Some of the images were also exhibited in the 20th century as part of this collection (Biblioteca Nacional 1997: 51).

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, no further details are known about this advertisement.

<sup>2</sup> It has not been possible to locate any of these albums to date (Lopes 2003: 184).

<sup>3</sup> At this time, there were no companies that published professional photo albums in Espírito Santo, unlike in Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>4</sup> Picture postcards featuring drawings were in circulation in Brazil from 1883; from 1891 they featured photographs (Lopes 2003: 194).

<sup>5</sup> 38 images can be accessed in the digital collections of Berlin State Museums.

<sup>6</sup> The photographs can also be viewed online on the homepage of the *Biblioteca Nacional Digital*.

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The city of Vitória with two churches: Matriz (center), Nossa Senhora do Rosario (right) (year unknown)



"Botocudo" in Sa. Leopoldina, Espírito Santo (year unknown)



"German engineers surveying the land" (year unknown)

# ANTHROPOLOGICAL-ETHNOLOGICAL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM PAUL EHRENREICH'S PAPERS AND MANUSCRIPTS

PAUL HEMPEL

Paul Ehrenreich (1855-1914) was one of the central figures in Amazon research during the German Empire (Kraus 2001). He belonged to a generation of researchers who embraced the philosophy of Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow to equip ethnology “with an armament of facts”<sup>1</sup> and to establish it as an empirical science by creating “faithful depictions of the folk ideas of various peoples”<sup>2</sup> (Bastian 1881). Ehrenreich embarked on his first research trip to the eastern provinces of Brazil in 1884, the same year in which Karl von den Steinen carried out his first ground-breaking expedition to the headwaters of the Xingu River. Ethnological-anthropological research during this era was inspired by a positive spirit and a desire to create a precise picture of the world. This endeavor was spurred on by technical developments in the area of photography.<sup>3</sup> The introduction of dry plates was particularly important as it allowed travelling scientists to take ready-to-use, coated glass plates into the field, making the medium of photography far more mobile and efficient. Paul Ehrenreich was among the ethnologists of this era who recognized the potential of the technology of photography and dedicated his work to depicting and documenting indigenous groups.<sup>4</sup>

Ehrenreich's photography mainly focused on the physical and anthropological characteristics of his subjects and the factors that shaped these features. Ehrenreich was born in Berlin in 1855 and studied natural sciences before obtaining a doctorate in medicine. He began to take a particular interest in anthropological issues under the influence of Rudolf Virchow. He first pursued this in 1884-85 on research trips to observe the “Botocudo” and

Puri peoples in eastern Brazil (Ehrenreich 1887: 1). Even though he only spent a few days by Rio Pancas visiting the “savages who were still virtually untouched by civilization” (Ehrenreich 1885b: 62), Ehrenreich boasted that he was the “first to capture the image of the completely naked, wild Botocudo people in the rainforest” (Ehrenreich 1885a: 376). In addition to group shots, he photographed the indigenous people performing a circle dance and using bows and arrows. However, Ehrenreich obtained most of his scientific data by studying indigenous peoples who had been settled on the Rio Doce and Rio Guandu by the Brazilian government. His work in these settlements focused almost exclusively on creating so-called “type portraits”<sup>5</sup>

Ehrenreich embarked on his second trip to South America from 1887 to 1888. This time he worked as a photographer and anthropologist for Karl von den Steinen on his second Xingu expedition. Once again, his main aim was to conduct an anthropological study of the indigenous population. On this trip, however, Ehrenreich devoted more time to documenting the journey and produced images of landscapes and camp scenes. As with the ethnographic collections, the two researchers depicted their surroundings by creating an inventory of the people and objects they encountered. Tellingly, most of the shots that portrayed specific situations or provided insight into social and cultural contexts were taken outside the actual research area in a Bororo settlement under military control.

After completing the Xingu expeditions in May 1888, Ehrenreich followed Steinen's advice and travelled down



"Male Botocudo. Rio Pancas" (April 1885)<sup>10</sup>

the Araguaia and Tocantins rivers as far as Pará (today's Belém) with the German-Brazilian brothers Karl and Peter Dhein, who had already accompanied the Xingu expeditions. On this trip, Ehrenreich stopped off at Karajá settlements located near the riverbanks and collected further anthropological data and objects of interest to ethnographers. In mid-December 1888, Ehrenreich and the Dhein brothers left Pará and set off on a three-month trip exploring the area around the middle section of the Rio Purú. They planned to continue to the upper reaches of the river, but had to abandon the journey due to bad health (Ehrenreich 1891).

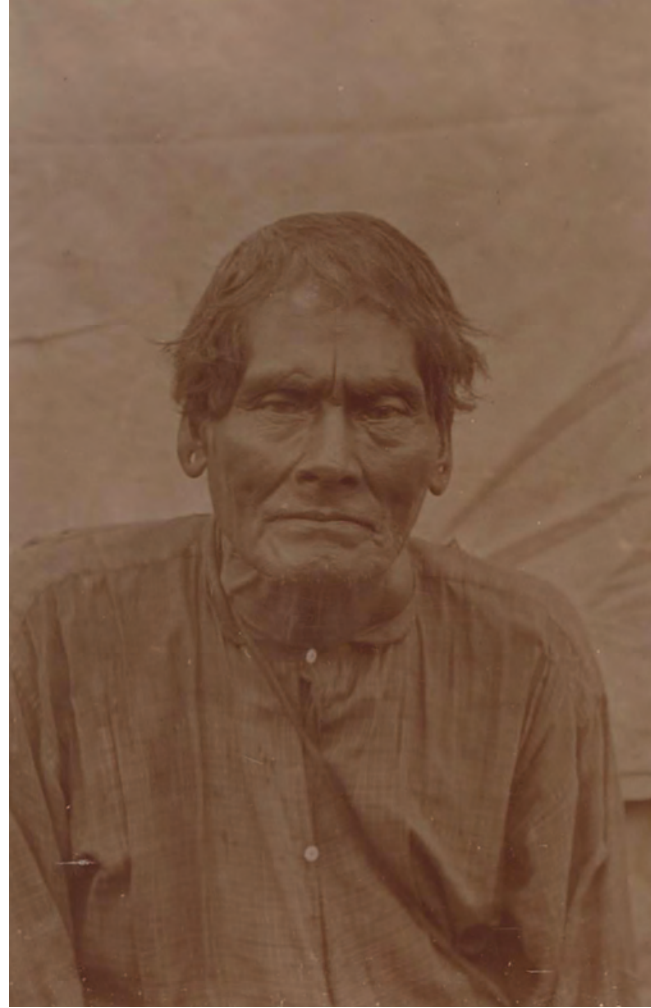
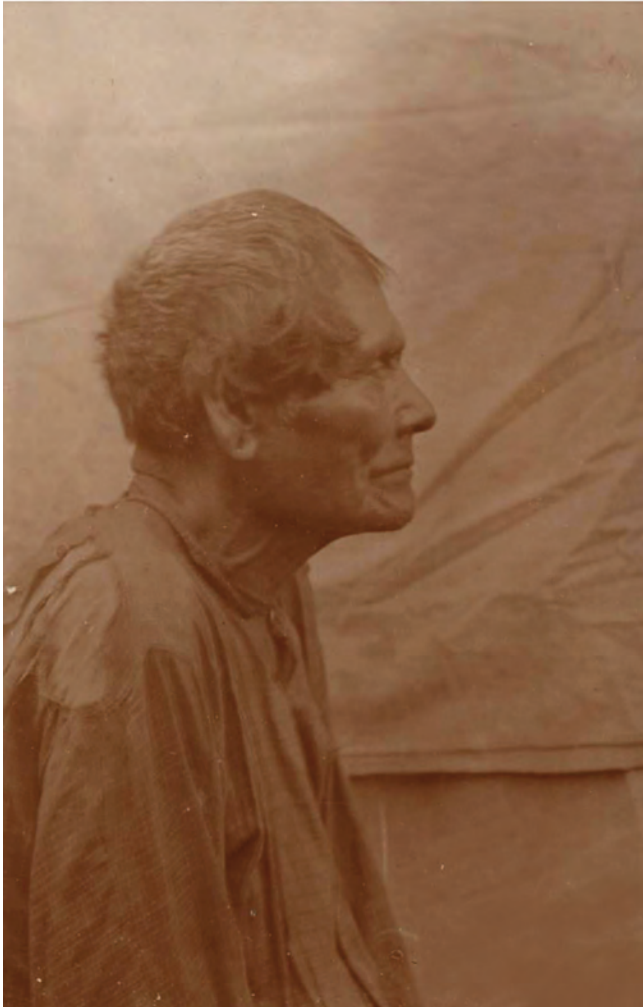
After arriving back in Germany, Ehrenreich was hailed as one of the most eminent specialists in the field of Brazilian ethnography and anthropology. Karl von den Steinen described him as the man who "has undoubtedly seen more of the interior of the vast Brazilian empire than any other German traveler today" (Steinen 1894: unpagged). In 1895 Ehrenreich was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in Leipzig. He obtained his post-doctorate (habilitation) in 1900 and subsequently worked as an associate professor of ethnology in Berlin, where he was appointed full professor eleven years later. In 1914 Ehrenreich died from a heart attack in Berlin at the age of 59.

### **Ehrenreich's photographic legacy**

The collection of photographs by Paul Ehrenreich of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) are part of the scientific papers and manuscripts which his widow, Gertrud Ehrenreich, passed on to American studies scholar Walter Lehmann in 1915. During his time as curator at the Museum for Ethnology in Munich, Walter Lehmann worked with Friedrich Weber to set up a research institute for American ethnology. In a letter to the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and

Prehistory,<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Weber notes that the "handwritten papers and manuscripts" as well as Paul Ehrenreich's "collection of photographs and offprints" already form an integral part of the new research institute.

It is likely that the "collection of photographs" mentioned by Friedrich Weber is the body of work which was passed on to the IAI after Walter Lehmann's death (Morris 1958: 31). Alongside a number of loose photographs, the papers also comprise four albums<sup>7</sup> sorted according to ethnic group, including a total of 436 shots of Ehrenreich's trips through South America, as well as a loose compilation of around 80 duplicates of these photographs. Paul Ehrenreich's original collection of photographs was undoubtedly far more extensive: in addition to his own images, he also purchased pictures on his numerous trips or was given them by colleagues. Around the turn of the century, experts liked to exchange publications and photographs or sent them to each other as a sign of collegial friendship. In his will, Ehrenreich bequeathed this collection along with his library to the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory (anonymous 1914: 524). While he was still alive, Ehrenreich had already given the society a gift of some 600 of his own photographs, mostly taken in Brazil and North America. In his 1914 annual report, Richard Neuhauss, who managed the Berlin Society's photography collection noted an extraordinary increase in the number of pictures, which had created "an infinite workload" (Neuhauss 1914: 105). This was partly caused by the addition of Ehrenreich's papers and manuscripts. Ehrenreich's collection, comprising 1,065 images, was now the fifth largest single holding in the Berlin collection (Neuhauss 1914).<sup>8</sup> The "photography directory of Berlin Anthropological Society" shows that, aside from a few rare exceptions, Neuhauss only accepted pictures from the papers and manuscripts that did not yet feature in the society's collection. In all likelihood, the rest of the



"Botocudo" from Guandú (Rio Guandú) (Dec 1884)

images became part of the collection that Ehrenreich's widow passed on to Walter Lehmann, along with the remaining materials from the papers and manuscripts.

### **Objectivity and interpretative freedoms**

The collection of photographs at the IAI is unique precisely because it is integrated into the institute's papers and manuscripts, which also comprise research diaries, lists of photographs, retouched prints and graphic reproductions for a diverse range of publications. The overall combination of these various elements creates an incredibly valuable resource for contextualizing and interpreting the pictures within the history of science. It provides insight on the life histories of objects and on the transformation of individual photographs that would not have been obvious if the images had been viewed separately from the papers (Edwards 2001). The following example illustrates this point particularly clearly:

The first of Ehrenreich's albums contains a page featuring an original photograph positioned directly opposite its graphic reproduction. The shot was taken during a death ceremony in the aforementioned Bororo colony, Theresa Christina. It depicts the chieftain Moguyokuri and the Bari in ceremonial dress attaching feathers to a skull.<sup>9</sup> Viewing the photograph and the drawing side-by-side reveals how the reproduction techniques of this period provided a great deal of room for interpretation of the photographic source material. Two men dressed in white shirts standing in the background have disappeared from the graphic reproduction. They have been replaced by a group of people who are whiling away their time with no apparent connection to the ceremony. By concealing the men in shirts, Ehrenreich was clearly using photographic technology to rectify the ethnological scene after the fact. With the aid of retouching techniques, non-indige-

nous elements have been removed from the image to evoke a sense of cultural purity and authenticity. Beatrice Kümin referred to this as "manipulated reporting" and took another example from Ehrenreich's papers and manuscripts to demonstrate how this method created "a fictional, unspoiled world that was far from civilization" (Kümin 2007: 137 f.). This interpretation cannot, however, be said to fully apply to the additions made to the death ceremony scene. Ehrenreich's travel diaries and Karl von den Steinen's published travelogues reveal that the manipulation of this original photograph is not necessarily tantamount to image falsification. These written sources describe the extremely lengthy ceremony and note how those present seem to show a striking disinterest in its core rituals:

The attention of a number of those present soon turned to other matters. The children jumped around merrily. Several men nibbled on corn cobs as they worked. A number of women picked lice off each other, but carried on singing devoutly all the while. (Steinen 1894: 508)

This example clearly illustrates that it was by all means possible to combine mechanical objectivity – which was also and above all attributed to photographic images in the 19th century – and other established methods of scientific documentation and verification (Daston/Galison 1992). In the case of this graphic reproduction, the notes provided by the photographer, who was eyewitness to the event, were considered just as important to establishing the authenticity of the image as the supposedly incorruptible camera. By communicating how the image was edited, Ehrenreich and Steinen combined a number of methodologies that served to depict their subjects in an objective light. This synthesis appears to be characteristic of new approaches in the cultural sciences as the field underwent a period of radical change in the first few decades of the 20th century. First and foremost, this





"Bakairi standing at a grill in Pouzo Independencia", Rio Kulisehu (1888)<sup>11</sup>

example illustrates the immense potential of historical photographs and their biographies when stored with papers and manuscripts, allowing researchers to view and examine both the image and the text sources together.

<sup>1</sup> Archive of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, letter from A. Bastian to the general administration of the royal museums; appraisal of Ehrenreich, July 1889, I/MV 1062, act concerning the acquisition of the collection of 1. Karl von den Steinen 2. Paul Ehrenreich, Pars I B., 712/89.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Pinney (1992) highlighted additional lines of development shared by photography and ethnology.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on Paul Ehrenreich's photography, see also Hempel 2005, Kraus 2004, Kümin 2007, Löschner 1993 and Vasquez 2000.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on classifying the type portraits with regard to anthropological and ethnological research, see Hempel 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Archive of the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory, letter from Dr. Friedrich Weber to Berlin Anthropological Society, 11 December 1919, BGaEU-Bib-10.

<sup>7</sup> There is no conclusive evidence to determine whether and to what extent the classification and compilation of the pictures in the four albums was the work of Paul Ehrenreich himself or done at a later date by Walter Lehmann. Nevertheless, it more or less corresponds to Ehrenreich's handwritten lists of photographs, which are also part of the papers and manuscripts.

<sup>8</sup> The ethnological holdings of the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory were later integrated into the collections of Berlin Ethnological Museum. The South American holdings, including the pictures from the Ehrenreich collection, have now been digitized and can be accessed online (<<http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus>>, accessed on 14 April 2014).

<sup>9</sup> To my knowledge, the graphic reproduction in Ehrenreich's papers was not reproduced in any of Ehrenreich's or Steinen's publications. A colorized chromolithographic edition was published in Wilhelm Sievers' overview of the region's geography, history and culture (1894), alongside other images by Ehrenreich. However, it was falsely attributed to Karl von den Steinen. In the second, revised edition (Sievers 1903), Ehrenreich is correctly named as the author or collector of the pictures reproduced in the text. In the second edition, the plate is listed in the table of figures as "Break in the Bororo death ceremony". The graphic reproduction is signed "Wilhelm Kuhnert", who also produced various plates for Ehrenreich's "Anthropological Studies" (1897) (for more on Kuhnert, see also Löschner 2001).

<sup>10</sup> P. Ehrenreich, IAI papers and manuscripts, album 3. The man in the hat and black waistcoat, who is attempting to make a fatherly gesture by standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the indigenous men, is presumably August Adnet, the director of the "Botocudo" settlements on the Rio Doce. He was removed from the picture when it was published as a graphic reproduction (cf. Ehrenreich 1887: Plate I.2).

<sup>11</sup> P. Ehrenreich, IAI papers and manuscripts, case 107. Albumen print on cardboard. This image is one of the few shots where the people being photographed are not looking towards the camera. It bears testament to the level of familiarity between the members of the expedition and their indigenous companions when the picture was taken.

<sup>12</sup> P. Ehrenreich, IAI papers and manuscripts, album 1. In Ehrenreich's day, ethnological-anthropological photography was able to communicate information on various levels. In his description of this image (Ehrenreich 1891: 68, plate 1), Ehrenreich mentions the buriti palm mat, which is both an ethnographic artefact and a neutral backdrop for the "type portrait" of the two women.

<sup>13</sup> P. Ehrenreich, IAI papers and manuscripts, album 1. Graphic reproduction by W. Kuhnert and original print of the photograph.

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"Death ceremony. Attaching feathers to the skull", Theresa Christina, Rio S. Lourenço (1888)<sup>13</sup>

# EASTERN PERU – THE REGION AND ITS PEOPLE (1888-1891), DOCUMENTED BY KROEHLE & HÜBNER

FRANK STEPHAN KOHL

The image archive of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) is home to a compilation of materials containing 83 photographs<sup>1</sup> taken by Charles Kroehle and Georg Hübner.<sup>2</sup> The series dates from between 1888 and 1891 and researchers attribute it to both photographers, although there are varying opinions on their precise roles in the process (König 2000 and 2002; Schoepf 2000; Valentin 2012).<sup>3</sup>

The compilation of materials was not bequeathed to the IAI as a complete collection; it was put together using images that were originally part of the papers and manuscripts of geographer Hans Steffen and archaeologist Max Uhle. In addition to shots in the Peruvian Andes and on the eastern slopes of the mountain range, the compilation includes a range of photographs taken in the Amazon Basin, above all in the river basins of the Rio Ucayali and the Rio Napo. The pictures cover various genres: images of landscapes, shots of settlements, views of buildings and group and individual portraits. The signatures of the photographers can be seen on the majority of the prints. Most of the images have been signed “Kroehle” or with variants thereof, such as “Ch. Kroehle” or “J. Ch. Kroehle”. On a few pictures both surnames, “Kroehle y Huebner”, can be made out at the bottom of the picture margin. In some cases, part of the signature has been cut off the image and several prints show signs of an attempt to remove or distort the signature.

## Charles Kroehle & Georg Hübner

Little is known about the photographer Charles Kroehle. In the 1880s he worked as a photographer in Lima, where he met Georg Hübner and subsequently accompanied him on his travels through eastern Peru. Aside from these facts, there are barely any details available on his life and work as a photographer. The little information compiled by Eva König (König 2000 and 2002) merely throws light here and there on Kroehle’s otherwise obscure biography.

By contrast, there has been a great detail of research on Georg Hübner’s (1862-1935) biography (Schoepf 2000; Valentin 2012). Born in Dresden, Hübner first travelled to South America in 1885 and worked in the rubber trade in Peru’s Amazon Basin before heading to Lima in 1888. After meeting the photographer Kroehle in the Peruvian capital, he subsequently spent three years in eastern Peru. They documented their journey from Lima to Iquitos on camera. After arriving in the trading town on the Amazon River, Hübner and Kroehle ran a photo studio for six months and took photographs of the area and their subsequent journey back to the west coast of Peru through the Andes. Hübner returned to Germany in 1891, joined various scientific associations, started a successful business selling prints of the photographs taken in Peru and used these as illustrative material for presentations and publications (Hübner 1893a; 1893b; 1895).



"Anilacocha. Cordillera in Junin." (1888)

In 1894 he returned to the Amazon, where he embarked on an extended expedition of the Rio Branco, a tributary of the Rio Negro, travelling as far as the headwaters of the Rio Orinoco. As well as amassing a botanical collection, he produced another series of photographs. After returning to Germany, he sold these pictures, just as he had following his first trip to the tropics. They were mainly purchased by the scientific community. Once again, he used the images in presentations and to illustrate his publications (Hübner 1898a; 1898b).

In 1897 Hübner moved to Brazil and established himself as a photographer in Manaus, the provincial capital and trade center located at the confluence of the Rio Negro and Amazon, which had been transformed by the rubber boom. From this point on, he adopted the spelling "George Huebner" and launched his services as a landscape and portrait photographer. In 1899 he opened his own workshop, *Photographia allemã*, which soon became one of the most sought-after addresses for all kinds of photographic services. In 1901 art teacher Libânio do Amaral came on board as a partner in Hübner's growing business. Five years later *Huebner & Amaral* took over a photo studio in Belém which had been run by the recently deceased Italian photographer Felipe Augusto Fidanza. In January 1911 the two business partners opened a branch in the Brazilian capital, Rio de Janeiro.

*Photographia allemã* took classic portrait and studio photographs, mainly for private customers. In addition to this, it produced views of landscapes and interior and exterior shots of factories and offices and captured the emerging modern infrastructure of the city, such as the power supply or passenger and goods transportation. While some of these images were commissioned by companies or public institutions, Hübner also used them to make picture postcards, which were manufactured and sold by *Photographia allemã*.

Hübner also embarked on frequent excursions with his camera, producing botanical and ethnological studies and documenting the development of the rubber tapping industry, the region's main economic sector. Hübner had close ties to scientific organizations in Europe and to a number of researchers, such as botanist Ernst Ule (1854-1915)<sup>4</sup> or anthropologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1872-1924),<sup>5</sup> and made his photographic material available to them for their research projects and publications. He remained friends with Koch-Grünberg for almost 20 years and also assisted him on his research trips.

Following the death of his business partner Amaral in 1920 and faced with the prospect of an economic crisis caused by the dwindling rubber boom, 58-year-old Hübner retreated from his professional life. He sold the studios in Manaus, Belém and Rio de Janeiro and from then until his death in 1935 he dedicated himself to his personal botanical passion: cultivating and selling orchids.

### **Photographs from eastern Peru (1888-1891)**

In May 1888 Georg Hübner left the Peruvian capital Lima and headed for Iquitos, accompanied by photographer Charles Kroehle. Six months later, in November 1888, they had completed their journey, having traveled nearly 2,000 kilometers with various means of transport over land and water.<sup>6</sup>

Before leaving for Iquitos, Hübner set out his aim: to produce photographic images of "partly undiscovered regions and the wild, indigenous tribes who live beyond the Andes" in order to "create a collection which I hope will meet with approval from all those interested in inland Peru" (Hübner 1893a: 10). For Hübner himself, the region was by no means uncharted territory: he had already travelled through this area on his way to Lima and





Portrait of a Cashibo holding a bow and arrow,  
taken in front of a sheet stretched over a hut wall (1888)

had spent a year and a half working in the rubber trade in the river basin of Rio Ucayali. He knew which “wild, indigenous tribes” lived there and exactly where their settlements were located. Furthermore, thanks to his activities during his previous photographic documentation project, he could now depend on the support of the *caucheros* who were active in the region.

On the first stage of the journey, which involved crossing the Cordillera and travelling down into the Amazon Basin, he and his photographer mainly took pictures of the barren mountains and the scattered villages and settlements, sometimes using the inhabitants as staffage. After reaching the “wilderness”, as Hübner liked to call the Amazon Basin, they also started shooting portraits. As they travelled along the river basin of the Rio Ucayali, they focused on documenting the indigenous people working on the rubber plantations on the banks of the main river and its tributaries and influxes, along with their huts and settlements. They took carefully staged group and individual portraits of the Campa, Mayonisha, Xipibo, Conibo, Cashibo and Piro peoples, to name just a few of the ethnic groups they photographed. They often took pictures on the estates of rubber prospectors and dealers, who they then also captured on the photographic glass plates, as can be seen in the group shot of an Italian man and “his Indians”. The last stage of their journey to Iquitos and their return to the west coast of Peru once again focused on views of landscapes and cities.<sup>7</sup>

Hübner’s travelogues reveal that he was aware of the indigenous population’s living conditions and how they were intimidated, mistreated and exploited by the *caucheros*, yet set aside any misgivings and qualms he may have had in order to achieve his goal “of producing an abundant collection of images and type portraits” (Hübner 1893a: 18). When he was again given the chance to photograph a group of “wild” Cashibos who had just

been captured by rubber prospectors, for example, he overcame all obstacles to make the most of this excellent opportunity to produce a series of unique images:

We got straight to work arranging the Indians into a group, but they were very timid and getting them to stand still proved to be an incredibly arduous task. At any rate, they must have thought they were in deep water, because they kept positioning their weapons so as to protect themselves. Any efforts to take individual portraits of them proved futile. Nevertheless, we were able to take satisfactory pictures of them in groups of two, even though they persisted in moving throughout. (Hübner 1893a: 63)

The photographs sold well, particularly among German-speaking ethnologists, illustrating the huge demand for these kinds of pictures and also indicating that they met with “approval from all those interested in inland Peru”, as Hübner had hoped. In addition to the comprehensive compilation of materials archived at the IAI, there are also extensive collections at numerous museums of ethnology in places such as Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna and Geneva. The Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography in Leipzig houses the “Collection Stübel” which features an equally large number of prints. The frequent use of the photographs as a basis for illustrations in both Hübner’s own essays and in various scientific and popular science publications by other authors can also be taken as evidence of the huge interest in eastern Peru’s indigenous population and Hübner’s pictures.<sup>8</sup>

The pictures by “Kroehle y Huebner” are among the earliest photographic records of the indigenous peoples living in eastern Peru at the end of the 19th century. Even today, they provide valuable insight into the conditions facing the local population at the start of the rubber boom. Furthermore, when examined together with Hübner’s written records, the images paint a comprehensive



Italian rubber dealer (with a pistol in his belt) surrounded by Conibo, Shipibo and probably Mayoruna in a settlement on Rio Ucayali (1888)

picture of the production conditions and distribution channels of ethnographic pictures from the South American tropics at the end of the 19th century, which is an area that has been explored little to date.

<sup>1</sup> Kroehle is generally written without an umlaut; various spellings exist of his colleague's name, however. In his early publications, he himself used the variant "Hübner", yet on prints and in later publications, his name is spelt "Huebner". After permanently moving to Brazil at the end of the 1890s, he also adopted the Brazilian spelling of his first name, calling himself "George Huebner".

<sup>2</sup> The 83 prints contain four duplicates, meaning that the compilation of materials comprises a total of 79 different images.

<sup>3</sup> Eva König (2000 and 2002) does not believe that authorship can be attributed to both Kroehle and Hübner. Daniel Schoepf (2000) does not examine the question of authorship in any greater depth and Andreas Valentin (2012) presumes that Hübner played an ever greater role in the photographic process over the course of the journey.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on Ernst Ule, see Michael Kraus' essay in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> Theodor Koch-Grünberg is viewed as one of the most significant ethnologists of the early 20th century. He was also the first specialist in his field to operate the camera himself.

<sup>6</sup> The travelogue (Huebner 1893a) makes it possible to reconstruct the route and the photographs they took along the way in great detail.

<sup>7</sup> The portraits commissioned during the journey to Iquitos, and above all during their time there and their journey back to the west coast, financed the trip and rarely featured in the photographic collections planned by Hübner.

<sup>8</sup> Schoepf (2000) lists a range of publications.



Calle Belem in Iquitos (1889)

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A group of Cashibo referred to as "cannibals", who had been captured by slave hunters  
(est. Santenique, Rio Pachitea) (1888)

# MORE THAN FRIDA'S FATHER. GUILLERMO KAHLO AS A PIONEER OF INDUSTRIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY IN MEXICO

RAINER HUHLE

Guillermo Kahlo, Frida Kahlo's father, was born as Carl Wilhelm Kahlo on 26 October 1871 into the Protestant middle class in Pforzheim. Thanks to the business ties of his father, jeweler Johann Heinrich Jacob Kahlo, Wilhelm was able to travel to Mexico when he was 18 years old. Unlike most German immigrants at that time, Wilhelm – who went by the name of Guillermo after arriving in Mexico – married a Mexican woman in 1893 and became a Mexican citizen a year later. After his first wife died, he married Matilde Calderón in 1898. She would later give birth to Frida.

He was employed by a number of German jewelry companies in Mexico, but soon tired of this work. In 1898/99, the German firm Boker, which still exists today, announced its plans to document the process of constructing and furnishing the luxurious department store in the center of the capital city. A young Kahlo seized this opportunity to demonstrate his masterful talents as an architectural photographer, particularly when taking interior shots, as he would soon announce in his advertisements.

Kahlo quickly became one of the most sought-after photographers in modern Mexico. Kahlo's photographs captured the construction of Mexico's modern quarter, numerous large public buildings and monuments – such as the vast Monument to the Revolution or the Angel of Independence on the Paseo de la Reforma –, the evolution of the railroad network and, not least, the country's industrial facilities.

While his German compatriot Hugo Brehme, the Casasola brothers and many others were in their element

photographing the revolutionary period, Kahlo focused his attentions on inanimate objects. In an advertisement that he placed in various journals,<sup>1</sup> he presented himself as a “specialist for buildings, interiors, factories, machines etc.:". Unlike most of his contemporaries, he had developed little interest in photographing the vibrant life on Mexico's streets or markets. Kahlo's pictures nearly always have a meticulously ordered look to them. People only ever appear in his carefully staged portraits (including numerous self-portraits [Franger/Huhle 2010: 73-125] and portraits of his daughter Frida) or as part of architectural compositions, where the viewer often has to look twice to spot them at all. Using his large-format camera, which he could only carry through the city and country aided by an assistant (often his daughter Frida in her younger years), he captured these carefully composed scenes in long exposure shots, resulting in an incredible depth of field which is still striking to this day. From the start of the 20th century, Kahlo focused above all on industrial photography.

## **La Tabacalera Mexicana, “Salón principal de envoltura”**

This photograph – one of a series of six in total – depicts the atrium of the *Palacio San Carlos* in the center of Mexico, an old city palace built by renowned architect Manuel Tolsá, which today houses an art museum. Kahlo's caption, however, refers to it as part of the tobacco factory *Tabacalera Mexicana*, which rolled cigars. A company founded by a Basque industrialist in 1898 had afforded itself the luxury of manufacturing its cigars in the





"La Tabacalera Mexicana, S.A. - Salon principal de envoltura" (1907)

old palace and decided to use its luxurious premises to promote its products.

Kahlo presumably took the images in 1907 shortly after the inauguration of the *Tabacalera's* new, grand rooms. They depict the space in a clinically clean light, with more the air of a palace than a factory. In 1917 the company was still using this photograph for its advertisements to demonstrate “where ‘Supremos’ brand cigars are manufactured”.<sup>2</sup> Other photos by Kahlo are known to have been used for promotional purposes, yet this case is remarkable as the *Tabacalera* used Kahlo’s photograph to create a sketch for an advertisement ten years later.

#### **Fábrica de cerillos “La Central” – Depart° de tren de cerillos**

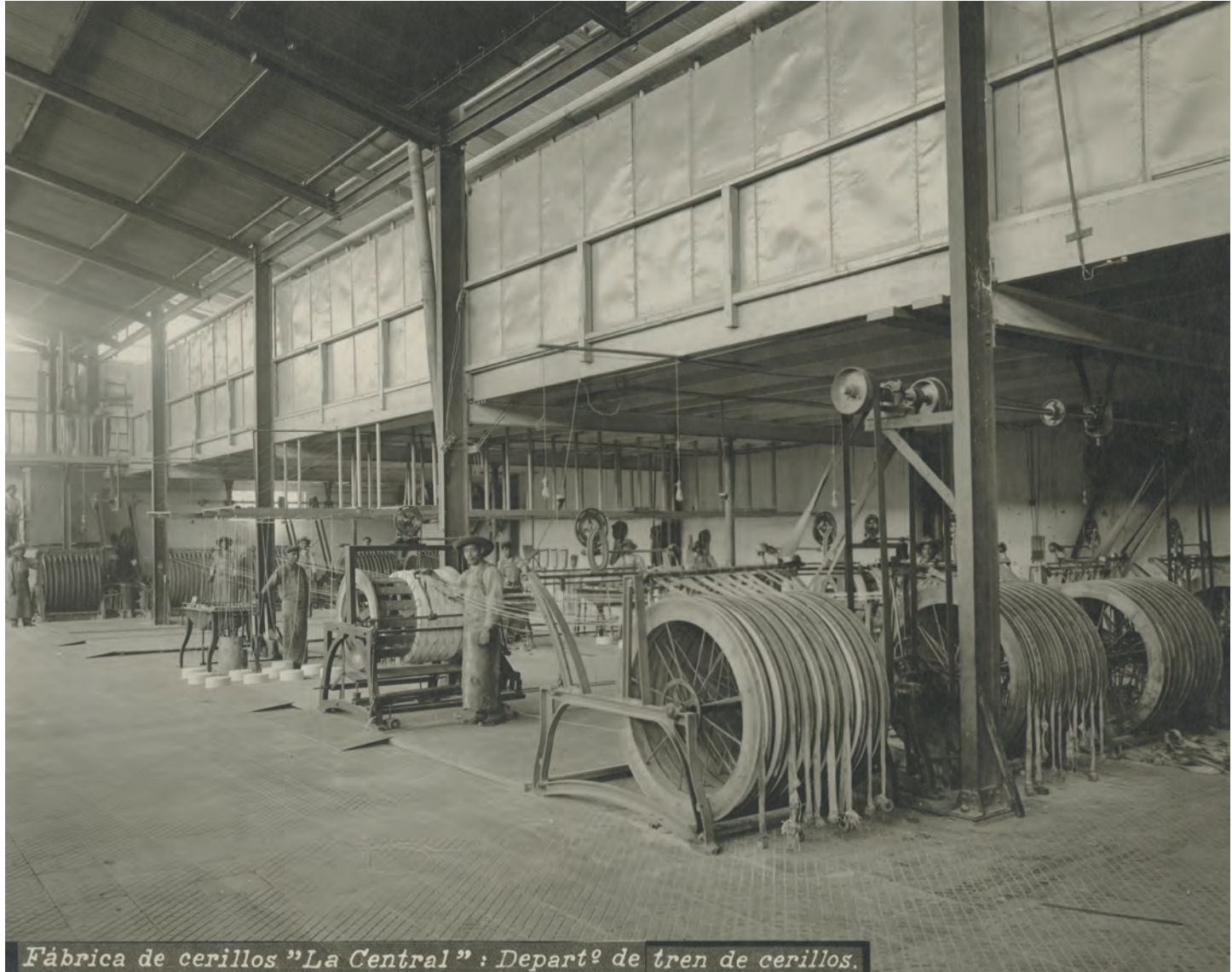
Kahlo’s unmistakable caption informs us that this is the room in the *La Central* match factory which houses the machines used to manufacture matches. The matches here are clearly wax vestas (*cerillos*), which were pulled over cotton threads – as can be seen in the picture – and then cut to size.<sup>3</sup>

Kahlo’s photographs are not dated, but must have been taken around 1911 when the company relocated its entire production facilities to the capital.<sup>4</sup> *La Central* was founded in Veracruz in 1885 and was Mexico’s first match factory and one of the earliest industrial enterprises in Latin America (ProMéxico 2010: 92 f.). The IAI’s collections comprise four photographs of *La Central's* production facilities, which presumably belong to a more comprehensive series. However, only the holdings of the IAI contain any record of this series to date.

#### **C<sup>ia</sup> Fundidora de Fierro y Acero Monterrey,<sup>5</sup> S.A. – Instalación de calderas**

In 1903 an international consortium founded Latin America’s first steelworks in Monterrey, which went on to become one of the most important companies in Mexico before going bankrupt in 1986. Kahlo was commissioned to take photographs for the *Fundidora* from its first years in business until his last active year as a photographer in 1936. From a financial perspective, these commissions formed the core of his livelihood as a photographer. However, a number of the well over 100 photographs still preserved today undoubtedly also represent the pinnacle of Kahlo’s work as a photographic artist. These images are mainly stored in the *Fundidora's* company archives.<sup>6</sup> In the company’s early years, he produced a series of images documenting the various stages of the production process in the steelworks. Kahlo’s later commissions mainly involved documenting the construction of buildings using steel manufactured by Monterrey. This gave rise to a striking series of photographs between 1910 and 1936 depicting the standard method of construction at the time, which firstly involved erecting the steel skeleton of the building and then cladding it with stone or other materials. Quite a number of Kahlo’s most spectacular photos, which he took for the *Fundidora* up until the end of his career as a photographer in around 1936, are artistic compositions of these steel skeletons. As early as 1912, he produced a fascinating image of the completed steel skeleton of a building that was originally destined to become the parliament and today dominates the city skyline as a vast monument to the Mexican revolution.

The Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) houses six prints of images depicting the manufacturing process taken shortly after the foundation of the company. As indicated by Kahlo’s caption and the state of the premises, the undated photo “Instalación de



"Fábrica de cerillos "La Central": Departº de tren de cerrillos." (c. 1911)

calderas" ('Installing the boiler') was clearly taken while the facility was still under construction. The construction workers, including the child laborers, have been positioned rather casually by Kahlo's standards along the side of the factory building, shovels in hand, almost all of them looking toward the camera. In later photos, Kahlo would arrange the workers on the construction sites in far more artificial constellations, almost making them blend into the architecture.

#### **C<sup>ia</sup> Fundidora de Fierro y Acero Monterey, S.A. – Convertidor Bessemer, soplando**

The IAI's holdings also feature one of Kahlo's most well-known photographs from the series on the *Fundidora*. According to the caption, it shows air being blown into a Bessemer converter. This heated up the iron in the converter to the temperature required to produce steel. By looking at the flame, the foreman would know whether the steel was ready to be poured out of the Bessemer. As was standard for Kahlo, he captioned the print with dry technical information and omitted to mention the feature that sets this picture apart from the others in the series: the figure of the foreman, who Kahlo has positioned so that the bulge of his stomach corresponds to the curve of the Bessemer converter. It was extremely unusual for Kahlo to give a person center stage in the foreground of a picture which was actually designed to illustrate a technical process. Whatever the reason for this shot, it demonstrates that he also had a sense of wit and irony, a character trait that was confirmed by accounts from people around him. The company liked the picture so much that it placed the image on the front page of its annual report to the shareholders in June 1910 (Franger/Huhle 2005: 215-233). This enables us to date the photograph back to 1910 at the latest, along with various other shots which were clearly taken under the same circumstances.

Indirectly, the *Fundidora* photographs in the IAI's archives also tell us a certain amount about Kahlo's working methods. The pictures have been numbered as well as captioned, as have similar photographs in the *Fundidora's* archives. However, the numbers assigned do not match up. This would indicate that Kahlo compiled his pictures into series on several different occasions. The six pictures at the IAI belonged to a series that must have comprised at least 32 pictures (this is the largest number of photographs in any of the available series). It is not clear when and for whom the prints were made.

#### **Mexico's cathedrals, D.F. – interior view**

In 1904, just a few years after he had embarked on his career as a photographer, Kahlo was awarded what was probably the largest contract in Mexico at that time. The government commissioned him to photograph all of the key national monuments to mark the centenary of Mexican independence in 1910. On the one hand, the assignment involved documenting all of Mexico's important colonial churches; on the other, it aimed to depict the numerous magnificent buildings that had emerged during the Porfiriato, some of which were still under construction when Kahlo set off on his journey. In spite of his health problems, Kahlo spent the following years making numerous trips across the country in order to create this photographic inventory. Ultimately, the revolution thwarted the grand publication plans of Porfirio Díaz's minister Limantour. However, this mammoth undertaking led to many of Kahlo's best photographs, including the *Palacio de Bellas Artes*, the general post office, various city palaces, and Chapultepec Castle and Park. Kahlo compiled several of these images into his own albums, which are viewed today as some of the most important artworks in his oeuvre.



Fundidora Monterrey [spelled Monterey by Kahlo], "instalación de calderas"  
(year unknown)

His long journeys through Mexico in search of colonial churches did, however, result in a publication many years later. From 1924 to 1927, the government published six large-format volumes featuring Kahlo's photographs of churches, supplemented by watercolors by Dr. Atl (Atl/Benítez/Toussaint 1924-1927).<sup>7</sup> The artistic qualities of his numerous images vary from picture to picture. There is a palpable tension between the responsibility of documenting the architecture and Kahlo's desire to achieve an artistic composition, which he frequently resolved using very effective compromises. The six volumes published by Dr. Atl, however, in no way reflect Kahlo's intentions or the scope of his photographic studies of the churches. Above all, they convey Atl's own aesthetic vision and ideas about art history. He devotes an entire volume, for example, to church domes, yet only features the exterior shots that Kahlo often took from church roofs. Kahlo's far more spectacular images from a photographic perspective, however, are his interior, high-angle shots of numerous domes, which demonstrate his feel for geometrical abstraction and elevate his art to new heights in the truest sense of the term.

Nearly all of the church photographs in the IAI's collection are also part of the volumes put together by Dr. Atl. In technical terms, the quality of the prints is greatly inferior to many other copies that still exist today. Nevertheless, photographs such as the interior view of Mexico cathedral demonstrate a number of the qualities that make Kahlo's images so distinctive. In this picture, Kahlo takes a highly original approach to the challenge of central perspective. In his architectural shots, Kahlo nearly always shifted the camera very slightly – and almost imperceptibly – out of the central perspective in order to soften the rigidity of this angle without undermining its impact on the depiction of space. In this photograph, it is also clear that the camera has shifted slightly to the right of the center of the aisle, looking toward the altar. However, the

daylight casts a shadow of the gates into the aisle and thus also positions the camera at the center of a kind of secondary central perspective. This double perspective brings movement to the entire scene and imbues the austere subject with a unique dynamic, while still objectively documenting the building. These types of effects are certainly no coincidence, rather they bear testament to Kahlo's skill as a photographer and his artistic aspirations even when working on commissions.

Relatively little research has been done on Kahlo's oeuvre, in spite of his famous daughter and the broad recognition his photographic art has received today for its role in developing a modern approach to photography in Mexico, in contrast to the widespread romanticized portrayals of *típicos*. In 1993 Juan Coronel Rivera led the way with his research for the first major exhibition of Guillermo Kahlo's photographs (Coronel Rivera 1993). In 2005 Franger/Huhle produced the first monograph on Kahlo featuring a biography supported by historical sources (Franger/Huhle 2005). His body of work, however, is scattered across many different locations. Although the *Fondo Guillermo Kahlo* at Mexico's *Fototeca Nacional* cites a holding of 2,435 images,<sup>8</sup> it has yet to be divided into themes and also contains numerous pictures that can merely be attributed to Kahlo. The IAI's relatively small, but thematically indexed collection comprises 33 of Kahlo's images. Six photographs can be attributed to the series "Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey S.A.," four to the series "Fábrica de Cerillos la Central," and six to the series "Tabacalera Mexicana". The collection also features 17 interior and exterior shots of churches, some of which were published in "Iglesias de México" (Atl/Benítez/Toussaint 1924). The factory shots and several images of churches were acquired by Hermann Hagen in 1926 in Mexico. Esperanza Velázquez Bringas donated 13 of the church photos to the IAI in 1932. Other larger and smaller private and company archives also house important



Fundidora Monterrey [spelled Monterey by Kahlo], "Convertidor Bessemer, soplando"  
(c. 1910)

holdings which have yet to be examined. While there is no doubt that Kahlo was first and foremost an industrial and architectural photographer, his images frequently feature new and unexpected subjects, illustrating that his body of work is far more diverse than often thought.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. in *El Mundo Ilustrado*, 24 February 1901.

<sup>2</sup> See the images in Franger/Huhle's monograph 2005, p. 170. It also provides more detailed information on the *Tabacalera Mexicana*.

<sup>3</sup> Roberto Ceamanos Llorens (2001-2002) describes this production method in great detail using the example of a Spanish match factory from 1915, i.e. around the same period.

<sup>4</sup> This information can be found on the website of the company, which today operates under the name of *Compañía Cerillera La Central*: <<http://www.lacentral.com.mx/index.php/nosotros/historia-de-la-central/>> (accessed on 25 February 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Kahlo uses this spelling throughout.

<sup>6</sup> After the plant went bankrupt, the facility was transferred to a cultural foundation, the *Fideicomiso Parque Fundidora*, which also manages the archive.

<sup>7</sup> The six volumes are available in the IAI's library. In 1979 *Banco de México* issued a reprint.

<sup>8</sup> <<http://fototeca.inah.gob.mx/fototeca/>> (accessed on 3 March 2014).

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Interior of a church in Mexico (between 1904 and 1910)

# A VISUAL LEGACY OF THE PERUVIAN POPULATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. MAX UHLE'S PHOTO COLLECTION AT THE IBERO-AMERIKANISCHES INSTITUT BERLIN

DANIELA MIHOK

## The life and work of Max Uhle

Max Uhle (1856-1944) was one of Germany's most important archaeologists and specialists in ancient American history. He developed a new chronology of Andean cultures based on the findings of stratigraphic excavations in South America and empirical data (Bischof 1998: 37-78) and is thus often referred to as the "father of Peruvian archaeology" in academic literature (Rowe 1954). He also did a great deal of work on ethnological and linguistic issues (Höflein 2002), compiled data on indigenous languages, such as Aymara, Uru and Chipaya, and collected narrative texts and songs in Quechua (Hartmann 1987: 321-385). Exploring the cultural history of the Central Andes became his "scientific mission in life" (Bankmann 1995: 253), to which he devoted his many years of meticulous research in South America. He played an integral role in creating an institutional framework for archaeology and helping to establish museums in Lima, Santiago de Chile and Quito.

After obtaining his doctorate (1880), Max Uhle worked at the Royal Zoological and Anthropological-Ethnological Museum in Dresden and from 1888 at the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. From 1892 to 1933 he mainly lived in South America, where he embarked on a number of research trips. He was firstly commissioned by the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin to travel to Argentina and Bolivia (1892-1895) to acquire archaeological and ethnological artefacts. He also organized small-scale

excavations and scouting expeditions (Bankmann 1995: 254 and 1998: 14, 19-23). His second and longest research trip took him to Peru (1896-1911, with short interruptions). It was here that Max Uhle carried out his most important excavations for the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) at the ruins of Pachacámac, located south of Lima (Uhle 1906a: 568). During a stopover in Philadelphia (1897-1899), Uhle penned his monograph on Pachacámac (Uhle 1903), which helped establish his reputation worldwide. The University of Berkeley (California 1899-1903) subsequently commissioned him to carry out research in San Francisco Bay (Uhle 1907: 1-106). At the end of 1903, Max Uhle returned to Peru and devoted himself to conducting excavations on the Peruvian coast in Ancón, Chancay and Supe as well as in Cusco (Mason/Krause 1999: 16). In 1906 he became head of the archaeological division of the *Museo Nacional de Historia* in Lima; in 1907 he was appointed overall director. His last two research stations were based in Chile and Ecuador (1912-1933). Max Uhle was invited by the Chilean government to help establish the *Museo de Etnología y Antropología* and also conducted archaeological excavations (Dauelsberg Hahmann 1995: 371-394). In 1919 Max Uhle travelled to Ecuador after the independent scholar and politician Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño offered to fund his research projects; in return, he asked Uhle to help create an institutional framework for archaeology (Larrea 1956: 16-18; Höflein 2001: 329-347). In 1933 Max Uhle returned to Berlin, worked at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) and lectured



A group of fishers and reed boats, Eten (between 1896 and 1911)

at Friedrich Wilhelm University, today's Humboldt University of Berlin. On 11 May 1944 Max Uhle died in Loben (today's Lubliniec/Poland) at the age of 88.

### **Image Archive at the Ibero-American Institute Berlin and other holdings**

#### *Scope and impact*

Due to his constant change of employer and range of different research projects, Max Uhle's papers and manuscripts are spread across the world at numerous institutions, including the Ethnological Museum and the Prussian Privy State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Bancroft Library of the University of Berkeley (California), at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and at various institutions in Peru, Chile and Bolivia. The majority of his materials and documentation became part of the holdings of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin after his return to Germany (Wolff 2004).

The papers at the Ibero-American Institute comprise manuscripts for lectures and presentations, notebooks, plans, drawings, sketches, personal papers, newspaper cuttings, postcards and letters, as well as an extensive photo collection featuring a total of 4,898 photos and 1,951 negatives, divided into 79 thematically arranged compilations of materials (Wolff 2010: 379-384).

The collection contains Uhle's own work as well as pictures by other photographers, such as Paul Félix Bonfils, Heinrich Brüning, H. Ehlen, Pedro Emilio, Fernando Garreaud, Obder W. Heffer, Georg Huebner, J. Charles Kroehle, Gustavo Milet Ramírez, Max T. Vargas and Charles Burlingame Waite.

The photo collection is an impressive example of the varied scope of Max Uhle's projects in South America. As a socio-historical compilation of materials, it is also an invaluable resource for researchers from a range of disciplines. Furthermore, the combination of the photographic documents and Uhle's meticulous accounts of his experiments and experiences with the camera (Mihok 2012: 32-46) makes a key contribution to the history of photography.

#### *The main themes of Max Uhle's photography*

Max Uhle did not work as a professional photographer. However, a look at the notes accompanying his images and his lists of photos reveals that he mastered the technical challenges involved in producing photographs and constantly developed his knowledge in this field (Mihok 2012: 32-46). The first documented images were taken in Argentina and Bolivia, including a number of particularly striking shots of indigenous dances, such as the *Ojesere* and *Auki-auki* dances. Over the course of his travels in various other locations in South America, Uhle frequently captured everyday scenes on camera and collected work by other photographers. In addition to the numerous images of excavations in locations such as Ancón, Sacsayhuamán, Ica, Pachacámac and the Supe Valley, Uhle produced photographs of landscapes, cities, ports, churches, buildings, machines and everyday scenes. He photographed the indigenous population in various regions at work, at leisure and during festivals, and also took portraits and group shots. Uhle's keen interest in photography is particularly illustrated by the wealth of photographs he took in Peru (Mihok 2012: 31-119).

#### *Photographic documents from Peru*

The photographs of Peru, which date from between 1896 and 1911, form the largest part of the photographic leg-



Visitors and stalls at a market, Tarma (between 1896 and 1911)

acy, as Uhle spent most of his academic career in this country. The Ibero-American Institute has compiled Uhle's original photographs from Peru and copies of his work into various folders. The IAI also houses a number of other photo albums in which Uhle recorded his impressions of Peru. Alongside shots of the coast (in Paita, Lambayeque, Chiclayo, Chancay and Lurín), there are also images of inland Peru (in Huamachuco, Tarma and Arequipa) and the cities of Lima and Cusco. Uhle's notebooks add another layer to the images, as he goes beyond the purely "visual" level and discusses background issues, such as the rural, social and political conditions, festivals and rituals, traditional medicines, and the general living situation on the *Haciendas*.

These research photographs were taken at a time when there was barely any photographic record of the country. Photography was an emerging technology in Peru and there were very few researchers and photographers documenting the country and its people (Mihok 2012: 23-26). Uhle's own publications and the research projects of other scientists (Uhle 1903; Masson/Krause 1999) only featured his archaeological photographs. However, his scientific interests went beyond purely archaeological matters. This can be seen in his notes on indigenous languages and cultures and is also clearly illustrated by his photographs of the indigenous population, which had received very little attention from scholars up until then. There is no doubt that Max Uhle's photo collection is an important testimony to Peru's culture and history, providing a glimpse of how indigenous people lived over 100 years ago.

*Seitenblicke. Max Uhles Fotografien aus Peru (Side Glances: Max Uhle's Peruvian Photographs)* (Mihok 2012) was the first publication to examine the sections of Uhle's photographic legacy which document the various stages of his travels and work in Peru. Mihok uses correspond-

ence dating from 1896 to 1911 as well as private records to demonstrate Uhle's passion for photography and interest in Peruvian culture. The selection, classification and analysis of 60 images from Lima, Lurín, Eten, Lambayeque, Chiclayo, Tarma and Huamachuco pay homage to Max Uhle as a photographer.

By capturing everyday scenes with his camera, Uhle revealed striking parallels between the past and the present:

Pero para comprender la vida del pasado nacional es necesario que estudiemos el presente en sus costumbres y usos, en la técnica, en los idiomas, en el folklore y en la música de los indios de nuestro tiempo. (Uhle 1906b: 413)

During his time in Peru, Uhle attended numerous traditional festivals and his images of the people at work and in their everyday lives depicted traditional utensils and objects, making each photograph an important socio-historical and ethnographic record. In his speech at the opening of the *Museo de Historia Nacional del Perú*, Uhle noted that many of the traditional pre-Columbian techniques were still in use and expressed his hope that some of these technologies would survive, in spite of modern industrial developments (Uhle 1906b: 413). At the same time, Uhle used his camera to portray modernization processes, photographing, for example, technical achievements in the fields of agriculture and boat-building. The clothes in his images also demonstrate this back-and-forth between tradition and modernity: the festive clothing worn on special occasions was strongly inspired by European styles, while the majority of everyday activities were carried out in traditional garments.



Musikcorps gebildet aus den gewöhnlichen Mestizen  
des Dorfes Lurín. Der Ortscommandant und der  
Sohn des Besitzers von San Pedro de Lurín im Vordergrund

A group of musicians with representatives of the village of Lurín  
(between 1896 and 1911)

## **A visual legacy of the Peruvian people at the beginning of the 20th century**

Due to Max Uhle's renowned standing as an archaeologist, scholars to date have focused solely on the photographic documentation of his excavations. These include archaeological photographs of burial finds, earthenware jars and excavation sites. The images documenting the everyday lives of the Peruvian population around the turn of the century are unique in that Uhle did not parade his subjects to the public. All available research indicates that he had no intention of publishing these photographs or marketing them in any other way, nor was he commissioned to take the pictures by a museum or a research institution. As Max Uhle's chief aim was not to produce the photographs for publication or for the scientific community, it can be assumed that his interest was mainly a personal one.

The selection of motifs in Uhle's photographs is by no means free of subjective preferences and his images therefore show us his own personal view of Peru's indigenous population. Uhle has been described as a reserved man who did not conduct extensive interviews (Masson/Krause 1999: 22). However, this does not necessarily mean that he did not participate in the cultural life of the Peruvian people. On the contrary, his photo collection illustrates that he experienced numerous everyday situations and special occasions during the long periods he spent in South America.

Max Uhle's photo collection features a wide range of subjects, making it an integral part of the visual heritage of the Peruvian people around the turn of the century.





Image of a religious procession, Chancay (between 1896 and 1911)

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Portrait of a woman with a child (between 1896 and 1911)

## OF PLANTS AND MEN. A BOTANIST DOCUMENTS THE AMAZON

MICHAEL KRAUS

The compilation of historical black-and-white prints by botanist Ernst Ule (1854-1915) at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) are as fascinating as they are diverse and have received relatively little attention from researchers to date. On the one hand, the collection features detailed studies of plants and landscapes scenes, including a few shots of cities and settlements in the eastern part of South America. On the other, it contains photographs of the indigenous population from the Brazilian-Venezuelan border area and images taken during Ule's trip to the state of Acre, which had been transformed by the activities of rubber tappers and traders. The photo collection is therefore not only of interest to the field of botany, which was Ule's actual area of research and work, but also provides an invaluable source of information on geographical, ethnographic, economic and socio-historical matters. The varied themes of the holdings reflect the adventurous life of a man with an interest in many different fields. He was not directly affiliated to any institution, which gave him the freedom to explore the area in and around Brazil more extensively than would otherwise have been possible.

Ernst Ule was born on 12 March 1854 in Halle an der Saale. After attending the horticultural school in Prószków from 1874 to 1876, he spent a brief period working at the Botanical Gardens in Halle. In 1877 he moved to Berlin, where he found employment in the city's parks. As a young man, Ule suffered from a serious "mental illness" which is not explained in any greater detail in biographical literature (Harms 1915a: 151 f.). As a result, he interrupted his schooling on several occasions and was forced to undergo in-patient treatment for two years.

This caused a number of professional setbacks, which prompted him to migrate to Brazil in 1883 in the hope "of making a full recovery in a completely new environment" (Harms 1915b: 1).

After arriving in the New World, Ule initially worked as a private tutor in the state of Santa Catharina. In his leisure time, however, he continued to pursue his botanical passions, amassing collections of various items, such as moss and fungi. Ule worked for the National Museum of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro from 1891 to 1900, but was ultimately removed from this position due to "political activities" (Harms 1915a: 153). In 1898/1899 Ule returned to Berlin and spent time at the Botanical Museum, studying and classifying the collections he had compiled in Brazil.<sup>1</sup>

From 1900 onwards Ule worked as an independent explorer and subsequently embarked on three expeditions to South America, two of which lasted several years. In 1900 he crossed the Atlantic on behalf of the Botanical Museum Berlin and supported by funding from private companies who had an interest in the booming rubber production industry in South America. This trip involved extensive studies on "rubber tapping and rubber trading" (Ule 1905a) and saw Ule travel to the regions of the Rio Juruá, the Rio Madeira, the Rio Negro and finally the Rio Huallaga and the eastern slopes of the Andes in Peru. In 1903 Ule traveled back to Germany to study and classify the botanical collections he had compiled on his travels.

From 1906 to 1907, Ule was commissioned by a Leipzig-based "Bahia rubber syndicate" to embark on another journey, this time aimed at researching the rubber stocks



Flower garden of the ants. Manaus (6 January 1902)<sup>5</sup>

in Bahia. However, the information provided by the syndicate indicating rich deposits in this region proved to be just as unreliable as the promises of payment made to Ule. As a result, he was forced to go through the painstaking process of suing his client in court after arriving back in Germany.

Between 1908 and 1912, Ule set off on a final journey to South America that would last more than three and a half years, supported by funding from various institutions, including Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences. It took him to the border region between Brazil, Venezuela and Guyana, the Brazilian state of Ceará and the rubber forests in the border area between Bolivia and Brazil on the Rio Acre. Ule was in the middle of analyzing and classifying the findings from this trip when he fell seriously ill and died on 15 July 1915 in Berlin.

In his obituary to Ule, Harms describes the botanist as a quiet and reclusive man who at first glance hardly seemed the type to embark on such extensive trips through regions that were often difficult to access. Nevertheless, there were few researchers in his day who had such comprehensive knowledge of vast areas of Brazil and its neighboring regions. In addition to the well-documented collections, Harms also emphasizes the outstanding quality of Ule's photographs.

The images stored at the IAI all date from the period after 1900, i.e. the third major phase of Ule's life in which he undertook the three expeditions. The first trip resulted in some 180 photographs, which mainly documented the local flora. Ule's work on this expedition also often focused on connections within the natural world, such as the relationship between particular plants and ants. In addition to including these pictures in his own publications, in 1904 Ule produced 150 botanical "catalogue shots" for commercial sale. In June 1905 he also show-

cased a selection of his photographs in an exhibition at the International Botanical Congress in Vienna, where he was awarded second prize (Harms 1915a: 162; Ule 1904a: 122; 1904b; 1905b).

Most of the photographs taken by Ule himself date from the second half of the trip. As a result, the majority of the images depict the Rio Negro in the vicinity of Manaus, as well as São Joaquim and the final leg of the trip to Peru. During the earlier stages of his travels on the Juruá and Madeira rivers, Ule did not feel that "he had sufficient practice" as a photographer (Ule 1904a: 122). This explains why Ule's first detailed publications on rubber tapping – aside from one exception – featured pictures by Brazil-based photographer Georg Huebner.<sup>2</sup>

Ule's last trip to South America resulted in some 400 photographs (Ule 1914: 106). The IAI's partial inventory of images from this trip not only includes botanical themes, but also images related to ethnography and social and economic history. What is striking about these pictures is that at least some of the portrait shots of the indigenous population in the northern Brazilian border area seem to have been taken at the request of the subjects themselves. Ule travelled around the area of the Rio Branco twice between September 1908 and March 1910, each time spending several months in the mountainous regions between São Marcos and the northerly, flat-topped mountain, Roraima. Ule made the following remarks on his relations with the indigenous population, several of whom he employed as porters, rowers and assistants during his travels:

The Indians assisted me in my work in many different ways; they flocked from all over to see me and I was in constant contact with them.

Initially, I was exasperated by the hordes of Indians who constantly besieged me. But they were so well behaved that I became accustomed to them in time. I used the opportunity to compile a series of ethno-



Research station Foz de Copéa am Solimões (29 April 1903)<sup>6</sup>

graphic collections. I picked out some of the items myself and other people collected all manner of things for me. (Ule 1914: 83)

Ule later sold these collections to Berlin Ethnological Museum and Saint Petersburg. He noted the following about the production of the images:

The Indians were fascinated by the process of photography. The chieftain Ildefonso once told me that the Arecuna were sad because I had stopped photographing them. So I promised to make up for this by taking a photograph the next day. As a result, they decided to postpone their departure and I took another shot of them. From then on, I took one or several pictures of all visiting groups. (Ule 1913: 284)

Almost without exception, Ule's ethnographic photographs consist of group shots or views of villages. The group shots include both portraits and images of dance festivals. On his photos, Ule generally noted the name of the ethnic group<sup>3</sup> portrayed, as well as the date and place it was taken. Two pictures feature Ildefonso, who organized the transportation of Ule's luggage and acted as his contact person with various villages. Alongside his brother Emanuel, Ildefonso is the only Indian to be mentioned by name and described in detail in Ule's manuscripts. Ule stresses Ildefonso's intelligence, his ability to speak numerous languages and also the special status he enjoyed in the region. Georg Huebner had already taken an earlier photograph of Ildefonso, depicting him in a uniform standing next to seven Makuxis and Wapixanas who were seated (Ourique 1906, fig. 79). Several years later, the ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg painted Ildefonso in a far more negative light, accusing him of procuring his own people for foreign rubber prospectors and using all means to do so, including threats of violence (Koch-Grünberg 1917: 29, 56-59, 343).

Another collection of photographs housed at the IAI were the fruit of an expedition Ule undertook in 1911 on behalf of the *Associação Commercial do Amazonas* to study the rubber territory on the Rio Acre. The photographs paint a vivid picture of how the rapid global increase in demand for rubber had shaped the economy, society and transportation infrastructure in the upper reaches of Rio Purus and the Acre. In addition to the local flora, the images document the entire process of rubber production, from felling the trees and smoking the latex, to transporting the rubber balls on the backs of donkeys from the forest to the river banks and then on to the storage facilities of the vast companies that dominated entire regions, such as *Casa Suárez* on the border with Bolivia. Ule also portrayed the growing settlements, the increase in maritime traffic, the stockyards for firewood and the difficulties involved in transporting materials, such as a steamboat running aground.

Ule published several long essays detailing his research into rubber tapping between 1901 and 1903 in the Amazon, yet he barely had any photographs documenting this period. In 1911, by contrast, he compiled a comprehensive photographic record. However, due to his death in 1915 he only managed to publish a few of these images with his own annotations. This is one of several reasons why these photographs have yet to be studied in greater depth.

The IAI does not have a compilation of papers and manuscripts specifically dedicated to Ule. His photographs are part of the papers of two other explorers and are accompanied by lists, providing useful additional information. Eduard Seler's papers and manuscripts contain 84 prints of the 150 botanical shots that Ule produced for commercial sale between 1901 and 1903. Walter Lehmann's papers comprise another 32 prints. Some of these are duplicates of images in Seler's papers; others add to the





Arekuna from the Rio Caruai (11 October 1909)

collection. Seler's papers also feature a typewritten list of 84 photographs which were taken in Bahia in 1906 and 1907. Eighteen of these pictures are available at the IAI. A handwritten list documents another 228 photographs taken during Ule's last trip to South America (1908-1912). In addition to images of plants and landscapes, these also include the aforementioned shots of the indigenous population in the state of Roraima, as well as the photos of the Rio Acre. All of the photographs listed have been preserved. The number of pictures actually slightly exceeds the total on the list, as several images were allocated the same number. In addition to the collection at the IAI, prints of Ule's ethnographic photographs can be found at Berlin Ethnological Museum and *Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi* in Belém.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As well as housing these collections, the holdings of the BGBM (Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem) also comprise two of Ule's portrait shots. Aside from this, the BGBM has neither correspondence nor any other photographs by Ule (information provided personally by Norbert Kilian).

<sup>2</sup> See the essay by Kohl in this volume for more details on Huebner. I would also like to thank Frank S. Kohl for drawing my attention to Ule's photographs in Walter Lehmann's papers at the IAI.

<sup>3</sup> The images depict the Arekuna, Makuxi, Wapixana, Akawaio and Yekuana (Maiongong).

<sup>4</sup> The photographs in Seler's papers and manuscripts are stored in cases 213 and 214; the images in Lehmann's papers and manuscripts are in case 141 (IAI). The photographs stored at Berlin Ethnological Museum can be accessed online via the internet portal of Berlin State Museums (<[www.smb-digital.de](http://www.smb-digital.de)>). I would like to thank Nelson Sanjad for drawing my attention to the album in Belém. The "Papers and Manuscripts of Theodor Koch-Grünberg", which are part of Philipps-Universität Marburg's ethnological collection, contain several letters from Ule to Koch-Grünberg.

<sup>5</sup> Mature flower garden of the ants with *Streptocalyx angustifolius* and *Codonanthe Uleana* (Ule 1904b: 6; 1905b: plate 6).

<sup>6</sup> Research station Foz de Copéa am Solimões. Right: *Hevea brasiliensis* Müll Arg., *Artocarpus incisa* Forst., *Psidium Guayava* Radd. Bottom left: *Lagerstroemia indica* L. Left: *Mauritia flexuosa* L. f. *Musa sapientum* L. *Calycophyllum Spruceanum* Hook. f. with ant gardens (Ule 1904b: 8).

<sup>7</sup> According to the aforementioned handwritten list, the courtyard in the photograph belonged to the Bolivian company *Casa Suárez*.



Home of chieftain Ildefonso on the lower Cotingo River (26 January 1909)

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Rubber balls in a courtyard in Cobija, Alto Acre (11 January 1912)<sup>7</sup>

# PICTURES FROM AFAR: ROBERT LEHMANN-NITSCHKE AND THE MEDIUM OF THE PICTURE POSTCARD

KATHRIN REINERT

## **Robert Lehmann-Nitsche, researcher and collector**

Robert Lehmann-Nitsche (1872-1938), an anthropologist, ethnolinguist and gatherer of folklore, spent his entire working life in Argentina. In 1897, he began to work at the research institute of the *Museo de La Plata* (La Plata) as head of the *Sección Antropológica* (Farro 2009; Podgorny 2003). Over the years, he developed close links to Argentinian colleagues and to German scholars<sup>1</sup> throughout South America. He brought his knowledge into international circulation by mail and at congresses such as the *Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*, which took place in Buenos Aires in 1910. Through his work at the museum, Lehmann-Nitsche was able to travel extensively in Argentina and study the indigenous people who had survived the *Campaña del Desierto*, a military campaign that had decimated their numbers (Martínez/Tamagno 2006; Reinert 2013).

In addition to numerous specialist publications, these trips also produced large collections of photographs. Lehmann-Nitsche's papers and manuscripts at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) in Berlin include roughly 2,200 photographic prints and photographically illustrated postcards, three photo albums, an album of postcards, and photo-text articles published by popular magazines. All of the papers and manuscripts in Berlin were formally cataloged as part of a project supported by the German Research Foundation (2007-2009). The negatives, whose prints appeared in the papers and manuscripts, were recently digitized. This was for a cataloging project that covered all the glass plates

(over 9,300 of them) in the IAI collection. The *Museo de La Plata* completed a similar project in 2010 (Kelly/Podgorny 2012). This provided the basis for (virtual) exhibitions<sup>2</sup> and for research projects on Argentinian visual memory,<sup>3</sup> popular culture (Bremer 2008; Chicote/García 2008), linguistics (Malvestitti 2012) and history (Canio Llanquinao/Pozo Menares 2013).

## **Photography and picture postcards as historical sources**

Recent years have seen increasing acceptance of the idea that, beyond its iconic content, photography also reveals a great deal about the origins and social function of the images. What were the prevailing technical conditions (Paul 2013: 9-10) at the time, and who decided which person, building or historical moment was "depictable" (Jäger 2009a: 93)? These are just a few of the research questions that historians are considering with the help of historical visual studies (Jäger 2009a) and visual history (Paul 2013).

In the 19th century, photographs were the ideal medium with which to convey visual impressions of distant parts of the world (Jäger 2009b: 97). Very soon after details on the photographic process were first published in 1839, the first cameras reached Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina (Reinert/Potthast 2013: 112). Taking photos had become common practice around the world by the *fin de siècle*, and so too had printing them in the daily press and on postcards. Using modern printing technologies, these

Museo de La Plata



Lehmann-Nitsche in the Museo de La Plata (c. 1897)

images could now be put into mass circulation, and their visual messages could be used to influence the public's perception of, for instance, certain ethnic groups. This happened in countries with overseas colonies as well as countries such as Argentina and Chile that first had to impose their political rule on indigenous groups.

### **Postcards based on photos by Lehmann-Nitsche**

Politicians and religious groups (e.g. missionary societies) commissioned these types of photographs. Commercial players also had their share of the lucrative trade in "Indian pictures". It is no coincidence that anyone searching image archives today will repeatedly stumble across postcards and similar products made by a handful of highly active postcard publishers, among them Rosauer and Peuser, two companies based in Buenos Aires. Pictures taken by photographers such as Benito Panunzi, Samuel Rimathe and Antonio Pozzo in the 1860s and 70s were printed on postcards from the 1880s on.

Scholars such as Lehmann-Nitsche benefited from their work in that their research trips, including photographic materials, were financed. They could use their negatives to produce photographically illustrated postcards that they would then sell, along with pictures of the museums and collections. A photograph that Lehmann-Nitsche took of a group of Yámana people on Isla Bertrand in 1902 was used to make a postcard that was released by Robert Rosauer's publishing company. As was the style back then, senders wrote their message beneath the picture on the front of the card. Lehmann-Nitsche sent the card to his mother in Germany, as we can tell from the address written on the reverse.<sup>4</sup>

### **Postcards of the Chaco**

Guido Boggiani, an Italian painter and ethnographer, was researching and taking photos in Paraguay at the same time as Lehmann-Nitsche was active in Argentina (Frič/Fričová 1997; Rejero 2012). Boggiani spent some time living with the Chamacoco people along the upper reaches of the Paraguay River. Starting in 1896, he took more than 400 photos on glass plates, which he then sent to Buenos Aires for safekeeping. He was in touch with Lehmann-Nitsche by letters. A dispute with a group of Chamacoco ended in Boggiani's death in 1902 (Richard 2006). The Argentinian family magazine *Caras y Caretas* ran a story on it, as did Germany's *Globus*.

Rosauer and Lehmann-Nitsche published the Boggiani Collection posthumously in 1904.<sup>5</sup> From Buenos Aires, they contacted Alphons Adolph, the royal Bavarian court photographer in Passau, and commissioned him to produce 115,000 sets of the series.<sup>6</sup> The cards were then sold in Argentina and sent to other countries, including Germany. The images traveled around the world up to four times before being filed in the collection album. Lehmann-Nitsche wrote an accompanying essay describing the scholarly value of the photographs. The serial numbers on the cards helped organize the pictures, for instance as pairs of anthropometric identification photos (Jäger 2009c: 375-377).

Less attention was paid to the aesthetic value of the photographs. An artistic composition such as the picture of Wèddi, a boy wearing a cap with a feather in it, was easy to recast as an anthropometric photograph because it was taken against a neutral background and head-on. The illumination of a Caduveo woman's body painting and the rotation of the head to show the comb in her hair were of secondary interest to the anthropological viewer. Additional iconic elements, such as the snake





Private postcard sent by Lehmann-Nitsche (c. 1902)

that appears draped over a naked man (Millet) in several photographs, were not analyzed from an iconographic perspective (Masotta 2011: page unspecified).

When the same images were later published in color, a small change to the captions radically changed their meaning: “Identificados simplemente como indios del ‘Chaco’, su edición en argentina los confundía con indígenas de ese, por entonces, ‘territorio nacional’, cuando en realidad eran imágenes de sujetos pertenecientes a grupos de la frontera norte del Paraguay” (Masotta 2001: page unspecified). It took the Argentine Chaco until the 1930s to become fully state-approved provinces. Picture postcards published with misleading titles prior to this, such as the subsequent editions of the Boggiani Collection, led viewers to draw the wrong conclusions. They believed that all the indigenous groups in this region belonged to the Argentinian nation and thus advocated making the indigenous peoples of Chaco undergo politically motivated “civilization measures”.

## Conclusion

Visual media such as the photographically illustrated postcards in the Boggiani Collection are multi-layered sources and interesting objects of study for a variety of disciplines. Thanks to projects that have cataloged visual archive materials, they are now easier to find. In addition to iconographic and photo-historical issues, researchers are also exploring questions related to cultural studies. Methodological innovations (historical visual studies, visual history) mean that the answers will expand our knowledge of the processes of becoming one nation that shaped Latin American countries.

<sup>1</sup> Starting in the mid-19th century, the national governments of many Latin American countries commissioned German university teachers and scholars to organize research and teaching, cf. Carreras 2008; Hoffmann/Wolff 2007.

<sup>2</sup> “¡Al pueblo argentino de 2010! Culturas en movimiento en el Río de la Plata” (Göbel/Lobato 2010) and “Der Archivar des Alltags: Robert Lehmann-Nitsche” on the “Deutsche Blicke auf Lateinamerika” website.

<sup>3</sup> For the German Research Foundation project “Visionen und Visualisierungen. Südamerika in Bildmedien des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts” (2010-2013), the University of Cologne produced a database of historical photographs from Latin America. <[www.visionen-suedamerika.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/18702.html](http://www.visionen-suedamerika.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/18702.html)> (accessed on 4 March 2014).

<sup>4</sup> The General Postal Union approved postcards for global postal communications in 1875 (Jäger 2009b: 98). Writing on the address side of the card was only permitted later, in 1906 in Argentina (Cisilino 2006).

<sup>5</sup> “Die Sammlung Boggiani von Indianertypen aus dem centralen Südamerika (nebst Supplement)”, IAI N-0070 s 42

<sup>6</sup> Cf. IAI, N-0035 b 1089, letter from Alphonse Adolph to Robert Lehmann-Nitsche dated 8 August 1904.



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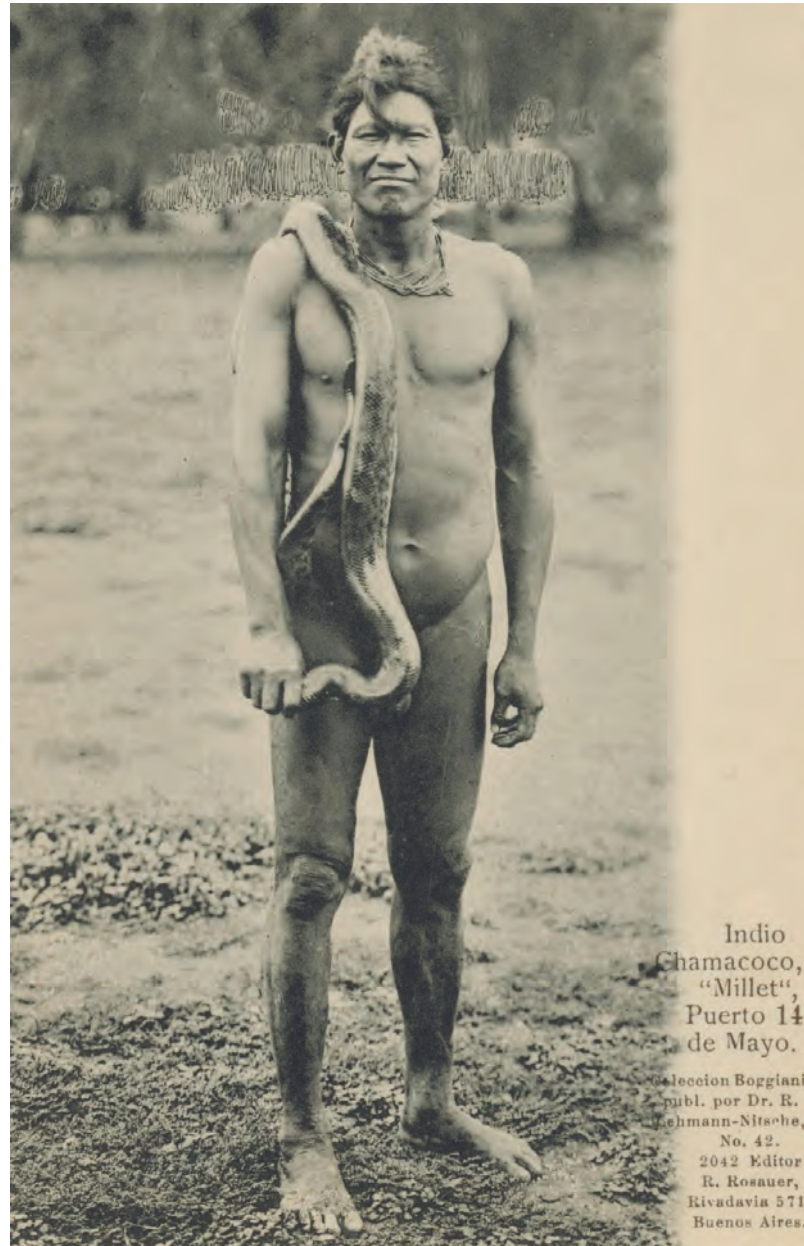
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# PHOTOGRAPHY WITHOUT BORDERS: MAX T. VARGAS' IMPACT AS A STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHER, ARTIST AND ENTREPRENEUR IN SOUTHERN PERU

ANNIKA BUCHHOLZ

Maximiliano Telésforo Vargas – better known as Max T. Vargas – is thought to have been born in the southern Peruvian city of Arequipa in around 1873. There is no documentation indicating where he trained as a photographer or in which studios he may have worked as an assistant before setting up his own atelier in Arequipa in 1896.

In October 1900, as a young, independent photographer, Vargas accompanied the Bishop of Arequipa, Manuel Segundo Ballón, on an expedition to erect a cross at the summit of Misti volcano, the landmark of the city. All of the local newspapers reported on the expedition and Vargas successfully used his ascent to the summit to promote his flourishing studio. He exhibited the photographs of the volcanic crater in his atelier, which attracted plenty of curious visitors, further boosting his profile. It was very important for Vargas to set himself apart from other photographers and build up a large, wealthy clientele as he was not the only studio photographer in Arequipa with a growing artistic reputation.<sup>1</sup>

In 1903 he moved his photo studio to premises in a central location, ushering in a new phase of artistic production and commercial success. One of his photographs depicts the new studio, which was located on a corner of the main square of Arequipa. Its advertising billboard – reading *Post cards and views of Peru and Bolivia* – was mounted high above the rooftops, within clear view of locals and travelers far and wide.

Vargas placed great value on the quality of his technical equipment and the aesthetic design of his premises,

whose furnishings were inspired by the most exquisite studios in Lima and Callao. He soon gained a reputation as a pioneer in southern Peru for his luxurious fittings and unique studio space. A magazine article from 1910 on Vargas' cultural activities, which was illustrated with his images, describes the incredible appeal of the photographs that were displayed in the studio's show window and how they caught the attention of passers-by on the *Plaza de Armas*. In his article, the author Pedro Paulet praised the luxurious photo studio, which "was the largest in Peru" when it first opened its doors "and is still the most artistic to this day".<sup>2</sup>

In addition to his main studio in Arequipa, in around 1907 Vargas opened a branch in Bolivia, located on the *Plaza Murillo*, the main square in La Paz. He had numerous employees in his studios, who represented him while he was away and also assisted him in every stage of the production process.

Max T. Vargas took many pictures of affluent, resplendently decked out families and individuals. They came to his photo studios in Arequipa and La Paz to be photographed in front of lavishly painted backdrops and noble furnishings with the aim of showing themselves in their most flattering light. These images bear testament to Vargas' extraordinary technical skill and his artistic finesse as a photographer. The portraits can mainly be found in family albums, private collections and antiquarian bookstores in Peru and Bolivia. Their outstanding aesthetic qualities and use of the most modern equipment available at that time, plus highly innovative techniques to





The photo studio of Max T. Vargas in Mercaderes Street 2-4, Arequipa  
(between 1890 and 1915)

retouch the photographic negatives and/or positives, set them apart from other work of this period.

Alongside his work as a studio photographer and portraitist, Vargas had a particular passion for travelling with the camera. His *vistas fotográficas* (views) were for the most part taken outside the studio and could be purchased as photographs or postcards. In Vargas' repertoire, the term *vistas* was used to describe panoramic shots of urban and rural areas in Arequipa, Mollendo, Cusco, Puno, Tiahuanaco and La Paz, images of buildings, squares and pre-Hispanic ruins, stereotypical depictions of particular groups of people (known as *tipos*) and photographs of traditional occupations and customs. The discourses of the local elite shaped the production, circulation and reception of these images, which played a role in the construction of social identities and the portrayal of urbanity, modernity and tradition and influenced how people viewed visual records of pre-colonial history and the presence of the indigenous population.<sup>3</sup>

Vargas' frequent travels to different countries and his early acquaintance with photographer Manuel Moral y Vega in Arequipa, who had founded a number of illustrated journals and newspapers in Lima and often used Vargas' photographs in these publications, helped his work reach a wide audience across many regions during his artistic heyday between 1900 and 1915.

Vargas had an entrepreneurial flair and a keen eye for trends. This meant that he not only photographed a wide range of subjects, but also had a varied product portfolio and a broad customer base, which included German academics from various disciplines who were conducting research in the Andes. This fact is illustrated by the approx. 50 photographs and 81 postcards in the image archive collection of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) which can be attributed to

Vargas' photo studio. Diaries from the papers of archaeologist Max Uhle reveal that he knew of the studio in Arequipa and recommended it to participants of a field trip during the International American Studies Congress in 1910. This point is further demonstrated by the papers of Eduard Seler and his wife, which contain various photographic materials by Vargas. His large-format photographs can also be found in the papers of geographer Hans Steffen. All three compilations of papers and manuscripts are part of the IAI's special collections.

Other material also demonstrates that Vargas' contacts and the circulation of his pictures went far beyond the Andean region: the inscription on the back of a number of postcards from a series on southern Peru and the Bolivian highlands state that they were manufactured in Germany.<sup>4</sup> This may appear odd at first, yet it is not particularly remarkable as Germany was the global hub of the picture postcard industry up until the First World War. The large printing houses sent middlemen to far-flung countries to acquire new customers for the German printing presses.

Arequipa played a seminal role in the history of photography in Peru and was the birthplace of well-known artistic developments in and around Cusco from the 1920s onwards. Peru's most renowned photographer worldwide, Martín Chambi (1891-1973), has often been described as the pioneer of artistic portrait photography in southern Peru, the archetype of the commercially successful studio photographer and the figure who led the way in the publication of postcards in Peru. What many do not know, however, is that from 1908 a young Chambi spent several years as an assistant in Vargas' studio and learned the tricks of the photographic trade from Vargas: how to run a photo studio, plus technical and artistic practices and skills. He thus had some of his most important and earliest experiences at the studio in Arequipa, a fact that Chambi was quick to point out himself.<sup>5</sup>



Picture postcard captioned "Tipo indijeno, Cuzco" (between 1890 and 1915)

Chambi liked to be described as a *poeta, maestro* or *mago de la luz* – as a poet, master or magician of light. Many scholars have pointed out Chambi's use of light and shadows as a compositional device to highlight contrasts and structures, as if he were creating a landscape or a portrait with the tools of a painter. This skill is already apparent in photographs by his teacher, Max T. Vargas, who used various lighting effects while taking his shots and a range of techniques to process the resulting exposed glass-plate negatives and to retouch the prints.

When taking the studio photograph of an elderly, indigenous man, he opted for *contre-jour*, which particularly accentuates the man's striking profile against the blurred backdrop. The play with light and shadows also emphasizes the lines on the man's face and the structure of the rough fabric of his simple garments.

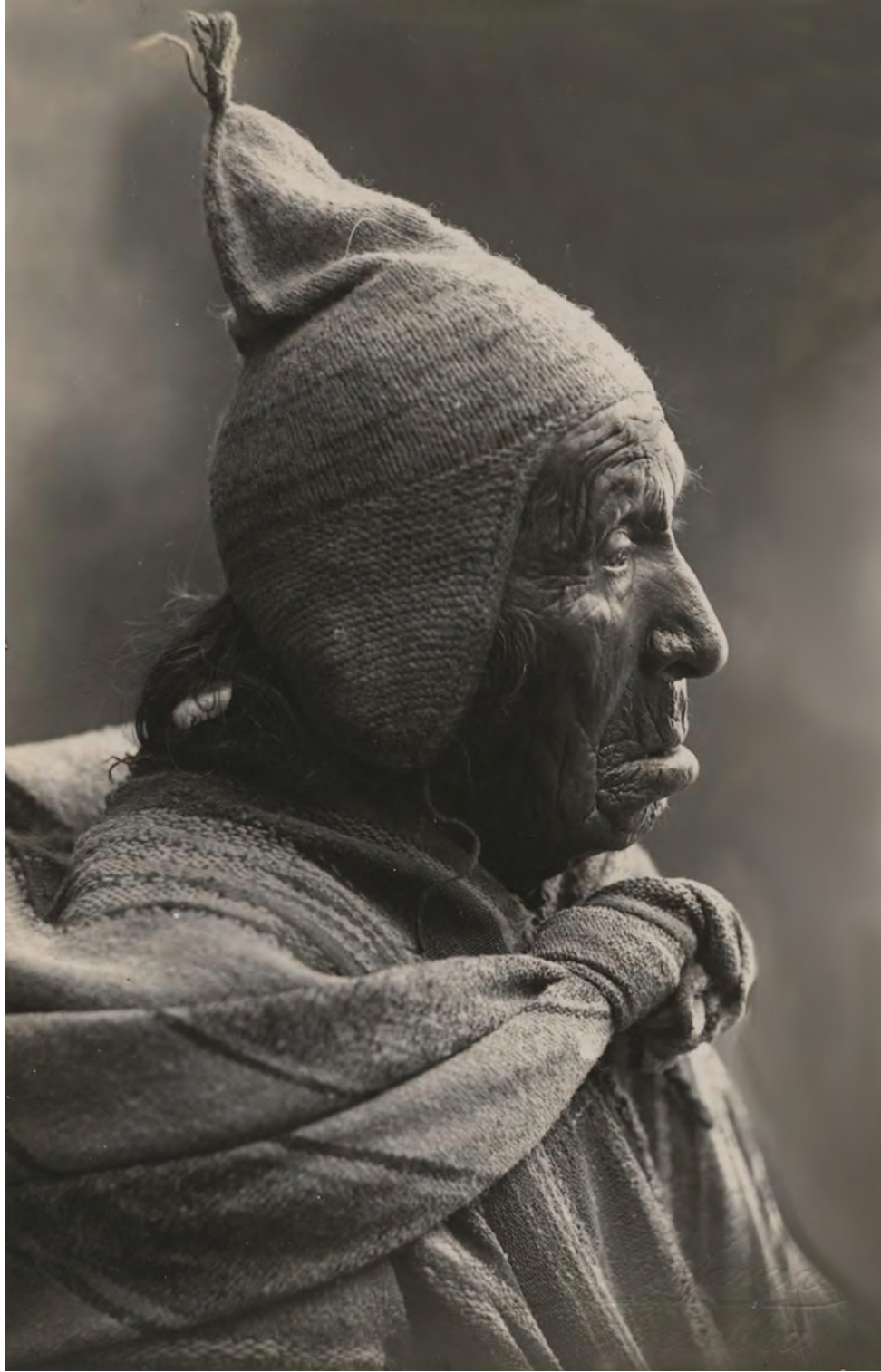
Vargas used editing techniques to dramatic effect on a photograph of Arequipa cathedral, which was taken between 1890 and 1906.<sup>6</sup> In order to bring out the structure of the clouds and in particular the snow-topped mountain peaks, Vargas exposed the top part of the photograph for a longer period than the lower two thirds. He accepted the fact that the cathedral's towers would appear darker than they actually were and was able to achieve a compositional balance by including the dark flowerbeds in the foreground.

Many of the subjects in Vargas' photographs gain their particular aesthetic qualities through the use of reflections, lighting effects and perspectives that create compelling images, balanced compositions and complex haptic structures and surfaces. A large number of Vargas' motifs, such as the narrow street "Loreto" in Cusco, also featured in Chambi's work. Vargas' shot of this street uses a portrait format, an extreme vanishing point perspective and a low-lying vantage point to make the black sil-

houettes of passers-by in the center of the picture appear particularly tiny next to the Incan walls, which soar up towards the heavens on either side.

Vargas' commercial success was short-lived. From 1915 onwards, he was faced with ever greater financial and personal problems, especially due to his marriage, which appears to have broken down around this period. In 1920 he moved out of his grand studio on Arequipa's *Plaza de Armas* and left Arequipa altogether a short while later. He is believed to have spent the following years in Bolivia. He later came to Lima and worked as a photographer for studios in various locations until well into the 1950s. Vargas died in 1959, stricken by ill health and impoverished and soon fell into obscurity.

The mid 1990s saw renewed interest in his work. However, conducting research is a challenging task, as the archive of his glass-plate negatives has yet to be located and may even have been destroyed. In light of this, the discovery of Vargas' photographs at the IAI can play an important role in exploring the work of this multi-faceted artist and entrepreneur.



Elderly man (between 1890 and 1915)

<sup>1</sup> His biggest rival was Emilio Díaz, a young photographer around the same age who opened a studio in Arequipa at almost the same time as Vargas and already had several prizes to his name, including the silver medal from the *Centro Artístico de Arequipa*, which he won in 1893 and 1899.

<sup>2</sup> “Vargas, como todo técnico y como todo artista verdadero es tenaz y, á pesar de mil dificultades, y, saben los dioses son cuantos, sacrificios logró en 1903 realizar uno de sus primeros deseos, instalarse con decencia. Fué así como se vió [...] abrirse en pleno centro de la ciudad, con amplitud, y con lujo, un espléndido Studio fotográfico, el más grande entonces del Perú, el más artístico aún hoy día” (Paulet 1910: 537).

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis of the wealth of motifs and the visual omissions and compositional techniques of Vargas’ *vistas*, as well as the production, circulation and reception of his images, see Buchholz 2012 and Buchholz 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Imprint: “Edición propia de Max T. Vargas, Arequipa y La Paz. Printed in Germany.” The six-figure serial number of the postcards produced using the collotype process indicates that they were manufactured for the Peruvian market at the beginning of 1907 by the Leipzig-based printing company C. G. Röder. Each year, C. G. Röder produced some 35,000 picture postcards for customers around the world. I would like to thank Mr. Helmfried Luers for drawing my attention to this detail.

<sup>5</sup> “Mi arte es arequipeño, aunque nació en un rincón de Carabaya que se llama Coaza.” In: *El Pueblo de Arequipa*, 19 April 1947, page unspecified; source: collection of newspaper cuttings on Martín Chambi, Archivo Peruano de Arte, Museo de Arte, Lima (Peru).

<sup>6</sup> The octagonal flowerbed was planted around the historical central fountain in 1860. The square underwent extensive remodeling work between 1906 and 1908 and the fountain was removed and put into storage in order to give the main square a modern, European flair.

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Arequipa cathedral (between 1890 and 1906)



Incan walls, Cusco (between 1890 and 1915)





## ADVENTURER WITH BIKE AND CAMERA: SUMNER W. MATTESON (1867-1920)

ANJA MÜLLER, GUDRUN SCHUMACHER, GREGOR WOLFF

### Biography

Sumner W. Matteson was born in 1867 in a small town in Iowa. For a while, it looked as if his life was all planned out. As the son of a well-respected banker, he began working for the family bank after graduating from the University of Minnesota in 1888. But a career in finance was not the young Matteson's dream: he wanted to learn as much about life and about people as possible, to feel as much of this life as possible.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore not surprising that, after his father's death in 1895, he left his job as a bank clerk and became an agent for the Overman Wheel Company, a bicycle manufacturer that also sold Kodak's new, easy-to-use cameras. It was not long before Matteson was cycling all over North America, capturing everyday life with his Kodak No 5. He photographed lumberjacks, fishermen, gold prospectors, settlers, festivals, sporting events and much more. In 1898 he began submitting his pictures to magazines and thus became one of the first traveling photo journalists. His inspiration did not so much lie in the artistic goal of composing an aesthetically perfect image as in the desire to tell stories.<sup>2</sup> Over time, Matteson taught himself impressive photographic skills and achieved good results even in difficult lighting conditions (Casagrande/Bourns 1983:199).

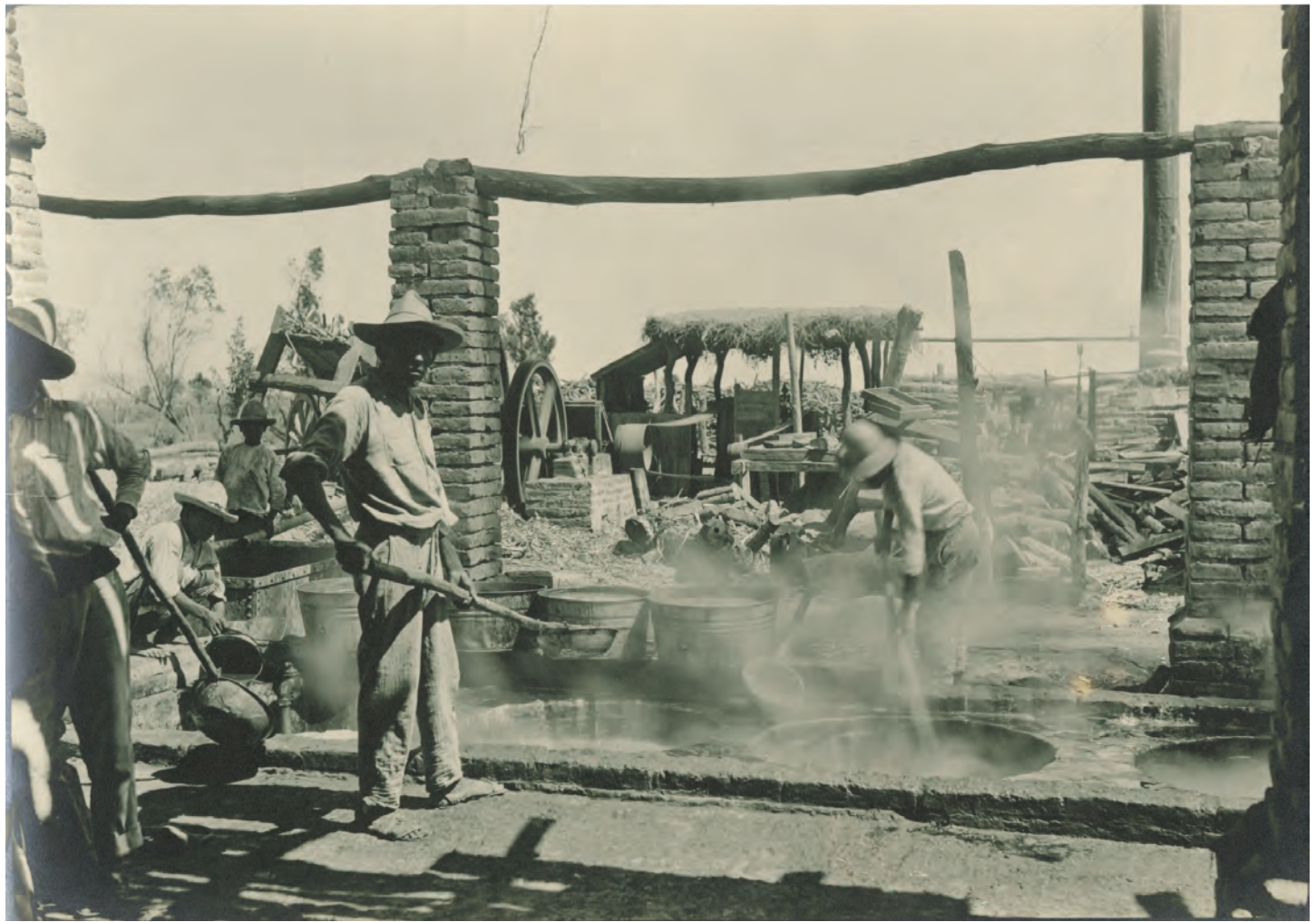
In 1901 Matteson began accompanying the ethnologist George Dorsey (1868-1931) as his photographer on research trips around the U.S. (to the Sioux and Hopi, for example). Matteson's pictures are enormously vivid, taken from within the very heart of the action. He also invari-

ably casts himself as a participating photographer: biting a snake during a ceremonial dance with the Hopi and, later, as a mountaineer on the summit of Mount Popocatepetl.

In 1904, without knowing any Spanish, Matteson spent four months cycling through Cuba.<sup>3</sup> He traveled from Pinar del Río in the west to Baracoa in the east, covering a distance of some 1,000 kilometers. During the trip, he took more than 650 pictures. They provide a kaleidoscopic view of Cuban society at the time and document a side of the country that no one in the U.S. had ever seen before. He photographed people and the world of work, in particular the hard lives of dockworkers and farm laborers. However, he also took numerous group photographs of families and school classes. At a time when strict racial segregation existed in the U.S., Matteson's photos showed (to the bewilderment of American viewers) interracial classes, families and couples. Matteson's work expresses affection for the country and the people living there.<sup>4</sup> This might be one of the reasons why the magazine *Leslie's Weekly* only published seven of his photographs.<sup>5</sup>

Matteson became more widely known in the U.S. between 1905 and 1907. He gave slideshows about his travels, sold postcards featuring his photographs and published ten short articles in magazines.

In 1907 he spent ten months in Mexico and was overwhelmed by how diverse the country was. During that trip, and when he returned to Mexico in 1920, he docu-



A Mexican trapiche (sugar mill) (1920)

mented what he saw: pilgrims, porters, washer women, market women, pottery workers, brickyard workers, dockworkers, bullfights, urban architecture, archeological structures, volcanic craters, and landscapes. Matteson took more than 2,000 pictures on the trip.

Between 1909 and 1920 Matteson put his work as a traveling photographer on hold. Although he had sold in excess of 400 photographs to magazines and had published 18 short articles by this point, it is likely that his financial situation was still very unstable. He moved to Milwaukee, where he worked as a bookkeeper.

Matteson took up his camera again in 1920 and returned to Mexico, but died just seven months later. Having climbed Mount Popocatepetl, a 5,462 meter peak, with some friends, Matteson was on his way back down when he met a group of students and decided to return to the summit with them to photograph the group at the top. This second ascent was too much for his lungs and he died the following day, on 26 October 1920, in Mexico City from a pulmonary embolism. A telegram, written but never sent, that was found in his hotel room read "my lungs are gone" (biographical details from Casagrande/Bourne 1983; Debroise 2001; Galván 2011; Masuoka 1988).

After that, Matteson's photographs, which during his lifetime had appeared in *The Cosmopolitan*, *New York Herald*, *Leslie's Weekly*, *Overland Monthly*, *The Pacific Monthly*, *Sunset* and other U.S. magazines (Aguilar Ochoa 1999: 13; Masuoka 1988: 34; Naggar/Ritchin 1993: 300), faded into obscurity. However, his expressive photos did catch the attention of the famous German-Mexican photographer Hugo Brehme (1882-1954),<sup>6</sup> who bought some of the 1920 Mexican pictures after Matteson's death and sold them under his own copyright. This might be partly why Matteson's name was overshadowed by Brehme's. A

number of collections (including that of the IAI) and the *Archivo Casasola* at the *Fototeca Nacional* in Mexico's *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia*) contain prints by Brehme that bear a stamp saying "negative by Sumner W. Matteson".<sup>7</sup>

Most of Matteson's photographs are now owned by the *Science Museum of Minnesota* in Saint Paul, the *Milwaukee Public Museum* in Wisconsin, the *Field Museum of Natural History* in Chicago and the *Smithsonian Institution* in Washington.

### **The Ibero-American Institute collection**

The IAI owns a comparatively small collection of photographs. It is made up of 51 black-and-white photographs with 49 subjects, including 34 landscapes and villages, e.g. in Hidalgo and Sinaloa, and 15 photographs of agricultural and factory workers.

From the IAI's photographs, it is clear that Matteson was just as interested in landscapes as he was in people and their lives. His preferred way of photographing people was to capture snapshots of them at work. He documented workers in fields, sugar mills, brickyards and potteries, as well as bullfighters, and washer women by the river.

Matteson's landscape shots are often composed in the manner of a painting. In some cases, he includes people who appear to have walked into the picture by accident, such as in *Acueducto de los Remedios*, while others are purely static shots. Aqueducts were a favorite subject among professional photographers, and Hugo Behme also took photographs of them. A question mark hangs over the true authorship of several of these photos today.



Washer women by a lake, Xochimilco (1920)

The prints in the IAI collection are of good quality, and only a few of the pictures have faded slightly.<sup>8</sup> Hermann B. Hagen (1889-1976), a geographer who in 1927 traveled to Mexico on behalf of the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Public Education, bought these photographs in Mexico City from Hugo Brehme, who had acquired some of Matteson's negatives and prints after his death. They are shots of Matteson's second trip to Mexico in 1920. The pictures have comments on the back, some written by Hagen<sup>9</sup> and others by Matteson<sup>10</sup> and Brehme<sup>11</sup>, which indicate the true origins of the photographs. Although Hagen was mistaken about the years the photos were taken, reading his notes and comparing the comments has provided us with a fascinating question for further research: which of the photos in Hugo Brehme's portfolio were actually taken by Matteson?

<sup>1</sup> "Have no idea of where I am going or why except to get all I can". Matteson writing to George Dorsey in December 1906, shortly before he left for Mexico (Casagrande/Bourns 1983: 24).

<sup>2</sup> This is also reflected in the notes he wrote on the back of some of his photos. The long, scenic descriptions take up half the space.

<sup>3</sup> The documentary film *Una mirada amistosa* by Octavio Cortázar (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográfica, 1987) tells the story of this trip.

<sup>4</sup> Matteson did not, however, address the segregation and great social disparities that also existed in Cuba at the time.

<sup>5</sup> Just 14 of the more than 650 photos are known to have been published (Casagrande/Bourns 1983: 16-17; Galván 2011: 434).

<sup>6</sup> For information on Hugo Brehme, see Friedhelm Schmidt-Welle's chapter in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Mayra Mendoza 2002/03: 42.

<sup>8</sup> These photographs were digitized with the kind support of the Friends of the IAI. They are available for research under shelfmark N-0079.

<sup>9</sup> Hermann B. Hagen typed the following information on the back of every photo: "Taken by Sumner W. Matteson, probably sometime between 1890 and 1910. Received in 1927 from the photographer Hugo Brehme, Mexico, D.F., who bought the photos from Matteson's estate". He also added handwritten notes to most of the photos.

<sup>10</sup> Matteson wrote information in ink on the backs of a small number of the photos (about 16). He usually began with a number, occasionally adding the "#" symbol in front. Thirty-nine photos bear an ownership mark in blue ink: "negative by Sumner W. Matteson".

<sup>11</sup> Hugo Brehme added his ownership mark in black ink to 44 photographs: "Hugo Brehme – México, D.F., 5 de Mayo, 27 – Apartado, 5253, Es propiedad. – Copyright."



Acueducto de los Remedios, Estado de México (1920)

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"Mexico D.F., Guadalupe Hidalgo" (1920)



Carmelite monastery, Desierto de los Leones, Estado de México (1920)



On board the "M.S. Mazatlán", view of the port of La Paz, Baja California (1920)

## “SPECIALTY: VIEWS OF MEXICO” – HUGO BREHME (1882-1954)

FRIEDHELM SCHMIDT-WELLE

The title of this essay comes from the header of a letter from Hugo Brehme to one of his nieces. It reads: “Hugo Brehme / photographer / Mexico City / specialty: views of Mexico, postcards, enlargements / services for amateur photographers / importer of industry items”<sup>1</sup> (Nungesser 2004b: 23). When he wrote this letter in 1946, Brehme, who was born on 3 December 1882 in Eisenach, was a successful small businessman in the photography industry with his own studio in the historic center of Mexico City. Reaching this point had, however, been a long journey.

At the end of the 19th century, Brehme trained as a photographer in Erfurt, but quickly realized that he faced huge local competition and his chances of success were very slim. As a result, he decided to join an expedition to the German colonies in Africa (1900-1901) and firstly traveled around Mexico from 1905 to 1907. After marrying Auguste Hartmann, he emigrated to Mexico in 1908. Here he was taken on by the German photographer Brinckmann and is thought to have later worked at Agustín Víctor Casasola’s photo agency. By 1912 he had already opened his first photo studio (Frost 2004: 44).

In 1923 he decided to self-publish his first two volumes of photographs and spent an extended period in Germany overseeing the printing process: *Das malerische Mexiko (Picturesque Mexico)* and the Spanish edition *México pintoresco* (Nungesser 2004a: 56). Two years later, the Ernst Wasmuth Verlag in Berlin published Brehme’s volume *Mexiko. Baukunst, Landschaft, Volksleben (Picturesque Mexico. The Country, the people and the Architecture)* which also appeared later that year in Spanish,

English and French. In 1928 Brehme bought a workshop and set up the studio “Fotografía Artística Hugo Brehme”. The name of the workshop is indicative of how Brehme saw his identity as a photographer: he viewed himself as an artist – at a time when the artistic character of photography was still very much up for debate. At the same time, he saw no contradiction between his aesthetic aspirations and the extensive marketing of his pictures in an age where it was possible to mechanically reproduce artworks. It should thus come as no surprise that Brehme produced volumes of photographs which displayed incredible artistic skill and marketed his images (some retouched or cropped) to journals and newspapers, such as the *National Geographic Magazine*, while also manufacturing huge numbers of postcards, which he mainly sold to tourists.

From 1929 Brehme’s artistic ambitions began to pay off: he was awarded various prizes at events such as the world fair in Seville and the photography competition of Portland cement factory. In 1930 part of his body of photographic work was destroyed in a fire in his workshop; many of the images, however, were preserved for posterity in the volumes he had published. In 1951, Brehme became a Mexican citizen. He died in Mexico City three years later. In 2003 the Brehme collection at Mexico’s *Fototeca Nacional* (National Photo Library) was incorporated into UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” programme. Today, there are a whole host of institutions that house negatives and prints of Brehme’s photographs. The most significant holdings are stored at Mexico’s National Photo Library, which is home to several thousand photographs,



Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City (c. 1932)

the Franz Mayer Museum in Mexico City, the Swiss Foundation for Photography in Winterthur, the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg and the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI).

Hugo Brehme's photographic oeuvre encompasses a range of genres. It focuses on architecture, landscapes and documentary and street photography, although his street shots were limited by the technology available at that time: they are often staged scenes and do not have the spontaneous feel of later work in this genre. It is assumed that Brehme also produced a large portfolio of portrait and studio photographs – if only to make a living – yet the holdings contain relatively few pictures of this genre. As previously mentioned, his chief focus was “views of Mexico”, both the country's geography and its architectural attractions (pre-Columbian ruins; colonial era churches; modern buildings in Mexico City), everyday scenes on the streets or in the world of work, and studies of the social environment in a predominantly agrarian, pre-industrial country.

His landscape shots and – to a lesser extent – his photographs of pre-Columbian and colonial-era architecture, have many of the trademarks of Pictorialism, portraying a timeless, ahistorical space, which is further heightened by the sepia tone used in his volumes of photographs. The images of Mexican volcanoes, which were a favorite subject in Brehme's work, illustrate this particularly well. Whenever people grace Brehme's photographs, they serve to highlight the enormity of nature, thus creating an image of an eternal, unchanging, almost mystical Mexico, which was also reflected in European and American literature in the first few decades of the 20th century. (Schmidt-Welle 2011). However, it should be noted that the staged look of many of the people portrayed in his pictures was due to the technology of the time, i.e. the need for long exposure times.

Brehme's visual language aimed to convey an exotic view of Mexico (Rodríguez 2004: 28) and he was by no means alone in this respect. On the contrary, his work was inspired by photographs of Mexico from the late 19th and early 20th century and – indirectly – by European orientalism, which had particularly flourished following Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. He appropriated “the foreign” in his images with a seemingly romantic idealism – yet always steered clear of conveying erotic fantasies of conquest, unlike other orientalist photographers, such as Brehme's immediate predecessor Charles B. Waite. Despite Brehme's love of the country to which he owed almost all of his professional success (only a fraction of his images preserved today feature non-Mexican motifs), his photographs demonstrate a certain distance to the local population, which cannot be solely attributed to the technical requirements of staging the shots: differences in mentality may also have played a role here.

Brehme was not a political photographer and his images did not aim to highlight social grievances, even if they sometimes became apparent as he documented the world around him. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to say that he failed to depict social reality, as claimed by virtually all critics of his work to date. His numerous portrayals of the Mexican revolution in Mexico City and in the states of Morelos and Veracruz demonstrate most clearly of all how his photographs addressed this reality. They bear striking testimony to the military conflicts and the destruction caused by the revolution. The photographs of the revolution recently reached a wide audience as part of a traveling exhibition through Mexico (2009-2010) (Cabrera Luna et al. 2009). In April/May 2014, they were also displayed at the Ibero-American Institute.

In these photos, too, Brehme maintains a certain distance to his subjects. He took very few photographs of dead people and the images of charred bodies – so popular



Street in Amecameca, Estado de México (c. 1925)

among other contemporary photographers who documented the events of the *Decena trágica* (“Ten Tragic Days”) in February 1913 in Mexico City – do not feature at all in Brehme’s work. To this day, his photos of the revolution are still less well-known than his shots of landscapes and architecture. This is partly because he did not include these images in the volumes of photographs he published in the 1920s. Another reason is that it was not as easy to market these images to tourists and this target group formed the core of his business, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s when the world’s fascination with Mexico had reached its peak.

His portraits of a number of revolutionary heroes (the Zapata brothers, Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Francisco I. Madero) were the only images that quickly reached a wide audience. The most famous portrait of Emiliano Zapata, which achieved cult status and has sold millions of copies in Mexico – without any reference to the photographer – was long attributed to Brehme. However, Mayra Mendoza (Mendoza Avilés 2009) recently established that it is not Brehme’s work; the photograph was taken by an American photographer. At that time, however, it was common for photographers and agencies to buy photographs and reproduce them for commercial purposes under their own names without mentioning the author (and mostly without paying the author a fee). A large number of Brehme’s photographs were thus marketed under name of the agency Casasola, and Brehme himself published images by other photographers (including pictures by Sumner W. Matteson). Brehme did not shy away from occasionally applying retouching or even montage techniques to his photographs of the revolution, once again demonstrating how he viewed himself as an artistic photographer. The aesthetic components of his images clearly took precedence over producing a precise, historical record. Brehme by no means considered himself a reportage photographer.

Hugo Brehme’s photographs – particularly from his early period – display an incredible level of technical skill for his day. This was due on the one hand to the excellent cameras and film material he used, which he mostly imported from Germany. On the other hand, Brehme handled the material with extreme care and knew a great deal about the process of photo development. His images are not only technically outstanding, however: Brehme also had an excellent “photographic eye” and was skilled at finding diverse and interesting subjects and creating aesthetically pleasing compositions. Many of his pictures were composed and staged with utmost precision, following the rule of thirds or the golden ratio, which gives them a balanced and harmonious air. Brehme’s exterior shots, which formed the core of his body of work, are in a different league to his few studio portraits. He was far more skilled at working with the light outdoors than in the studio, a fact demonstrated very clearly by his available-light portraits. Brehme’s indoor photographs of archaeological objects seem rather lackluster next to his shots of pre-Columbian architecture.

Brehme developed a thoroughly unique visual language rooted within the tradition of Pictorialism, yet always remained geared towards the need to market and sell his work, which he achieved with great success. Brehme was acquainted with avant-garde photographers, such as Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Edward Weston and Tina Modotti, who bought some of their materials from his studio. In the early 1920s, these photographers took a radical departure from the prevailing approach to photography inspired by impressionist painting and adopted the photographic realism of straight photography. Brehme, however, remained faithful to the principles of Pictorialism. Images such as the picture of the revolutionary leader Salazar (Cabrera Luna et al. 2009: 127) or the shot of some grounds in Mexico City in which the light creates abstract





The volcano Ixtaccíhuatl viewed from Amecameca (c. 1925)

forms, could be interpreted as a sign of Brehme's interest in this new movement, yet they remained the exception.

Pictorialism's popularity began to wane soon after the First World War and following World War Two its demise continued unabated. Brehme remained loyal to this style throughout his life. As a result, his reputation faded over time, yet he remained economically stable thanks to the other branches of his business, even when sales of his postcards dropped. He did not make the transition from black-and-white photography to color, nor did he use the new 35 mm film and miniature cameras, which sparked a boom in reportage and travel photography after the Second World War. The transition to color film would be left to his only son Arno, who specialized in commercial photography and discontinued the postcard business after his father died (Frost 2004: 54).

The Ibero-American Institute's collection of photographs by Hugo Brehme contains some 500 (glass-plate) negatives and prints. The holdings include vintage prints, yet it is difficult to establish exactly which prints they are, as none of the images are dated. However, Brehme's book publications and the date the institute acquired the materials make it possible to narrow down the period in which the photographs were taken. They were mainly produced in the 1910s and 1920s. The institute also houses the photo books Brehme published himself, plus catalogues from later exhibitions and secondary literature. The IAI holdings comprise a broad thematic cross-section of Brehme's work, yet they feature very few images of the Mexican revolution. The collection is a valuable resource and not only for cultural and architectural historians: it contains a wealth of technically outstanding shots and aesthetically striking compositions which can also provide fascinating material for photo enthusiasts and photography historians.

<sup>1</sup> Author's own translation.



Forecourt of the church on the Pyramid of Cholula, Puebla, looking towards the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Ixtaccíhuatl (after 1925)

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Sports field (Mexico City?) (1920s)

## WHEN OHLSEN FORGOT HIS HAT – PICTURES FROM A GERMAN-CHILEAN ROBINSONADE

KRISTY SCHANK

In 1939 the German director Arnold Fanck travelled to Chile as part of the Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition to shoot his last major feature film “Ein Robinson – Das Tagebuch eines Matrosen” (“A German Robinson Crusoe”). The ambitious expedition was an impressive feat in many respects. And it brought together a group of people whose biographies painted a vivid picture of German-Chilean relations shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

### **Arnold Fanck and the German mountain film genre**

Arnold Fanck was born on 6 March 1889 in Frankenthal in the Pfalz to Friedrich Fanck, an industrialist in the sugar trade, and his wife Ida, née Paraquin. After finishing grammar school in Freiburg im Breisgau, he went on to study geology at the University of Zurich. Fanck’s interest in geology and passion for skiing saw him make frequent trips to the Alps. He initially trained as a photographer (Holba et al. 1984: 88), but soon began working in film under the supervision of cameraman Sepp Allgeier from Freiburg. In 1919 they shot the first film on skiing, “Das Wunder des Schneeschuhs” (“The wonders of skiing”).

Fanck founded the company Freiburger Berg- und Sportfilm GmbH and made numerous films in the 1920s and 30s, which led to the emergence of a new genre: the “German mountain film” (Holba et al. 1984: 88). According to Rapp, German mountain films are feature films set in the Alps, produced between 1924 and 1940 by German companies for a German audience (Rapp 1997: 7).

Other proponents of the mountain film included Fanck’s protégés Leni Riefenstahl and Luis Trenker. Technically, the films were distinctive for their ambitious shoots on location in the high mountains. Fanck often demanded incredible feats of strength from his crew and actors. The plot itself was of secondary importance. Fanck’s most important films include “Im Kampf mit dem Berge” (“Battling the mountain” – 1921), “Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü” (“The white hell of Piz Palu” – 1929), “Stürme über dem Mont Blanc” (“Storm over Mont Blanc” – 1930) and “Der weiße Rausch” (The white ecstasy – 1931).

Fanck’s films certainly influenced the growing Alpine tourism industry and significantly boosted the popularity of leisure organizations such as the German Alpine Club, which would later be controlled by the National Socialists (Bendler 2011: 514). The shots of nature and the valiant protagonists were perfect propaganda for the National Socialist ideal of the healthy individual, who eschewed the modern world and was firmly rooted in their native soil.

Academic literature on Arnold Fanck almost exclusively examines the genre of the classic mountain film, focusing on how Fanck and his films can be interpreted in the context of the Weimar Republic and during the emergence of National Socialism (Amann/Gabel/Keiper 1992; Schenk 2008).

By contrast, very little has been written about his last major film. There is barely any secondary literature on the 1939 Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition to South America



In 1915 the SMS Dresden sank in Cumberland Bay, which was the location for the opening scene of Fanck's Film "A German Robinson Crusoe". (1939)

and the two resulting productions, the feature film "A German Robinson Crusoe" and the documentary "From Patagonia to the Tierra del Fuego". The Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI) houses 49 black-and-white photographs of the expedition. The photos depict the various shooting locations and scenes in the film "A German Robinson Crusoe", some of which also appear in the press materials for the film. The selection of images featured here above all demonstrates the variety of landscapes the film crew encountered on their expedition in Chile.

More information on the venture can be found at the library of the German film archive, Deutsche Kinemathek, which houses the screenplay and press materials on the film. Fanck's papers and manuscripts were donated to Munich Film Museum in 1996 by his grandson Matthias Fanck. A major exhibition showcased some of these papers in 1997.

### **The film "A German Robinson Crusoe"**

At the end of 1938 Fanck had no projects in the pipeline and made a personal appeal to Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda. As a result, he was contracted to direct a film for Bavaria Filmkunst GmbH (Horak 1997: 60).

The idea for the film was based on the true story of Karl Hugo Weber, a German sailor on the SMS Dresden. In March 1915, the Dresden sank during a sea battle with the English navy off the Chilean coast. The crew were interned on Quiriquinia Island at the entrance to the Bay of Concepción.<sup>1</sup> A short while later, a number of officers managed to escape. Weber did not return to Germany until 1921. He then began to equip himself for a longer trip to Chile. He settled on the Isla Más a Tierra, part of the Juan-Fernández Archipelago. From 1704 to 1709 this had

been the home of English sailor Alexander Selkirk, whose story inspired Daniel Defoe to write his novel "Robinson Crusoe". The island was later renamed Isla Robinsón Crusoe. In Germany, Weber was known as "Robinson from Berlin" and featured in several newspaper reports. As a result of this coverage, he began a correspondence with Johanna Stade, the daughter of a German doctor. They married and spent the next 30 years living together in Chile.

The film "A German Robinson Crusoe" retells the story of Weber with the character of head sailor Carl Ohlsen, played by Herbert A. Böhme. The crew of the German cruiser SMS Dresden scuttle their ship in the Chilean Cumberland Bay to stop it falling into the hands of the English. Four men die and the rest of the crew are taken captive by the Chileans. After three years, the crew escape and return to Germany. When the soldiers of the Imperial Army finally arrive in the harbor in Kiel, they are jeered and taunted by mutinous soldiers and angry workers. Ohlsen also faces a personal humiliation: in his absence, his wife has remarried and his son no longer recognizes him as his father. He decides to return to Robinson Crusoe Island and starts to build a new life there cultivating the land, cattle breeding and hunting. Years later, "Robinson" hears about the political changes in National Socialist Germany on the radio and learns that his former comrades have set off on the new "Dresden" to find him. After a first failed attempt to get to the ship, he battles his way through the rugged landscape of southern Chile and reaches the Dresden, where he is taken on board by the crew, which now also includes his son.

### **The Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition**

The Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition set off in September 1938. The film expedition consisted of around 12 people and 250 alphabetically-ordered boxes of materials.





In the film, Ohlsen starts a new life on Robinson Crusoe Island. (1939)

Fanck's family also joined him in Chile: His 20-year-old son Arnold Ernst Fanck Jun. worked as a camera assistant; his second wife Lisa Kind and their five-year-old son Hans frequently accompanied the film crew in Chile.

Robert Gerstmann was the official photographer of the Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition. The photographs featured in this volume can almost certainly be attributed to Gerstmann.

Robert, or Roberto M. Gerstmann Henckel, was a qualified electrical engineer from Germany, who traveled to Brazil in 1924. He started taking photographs on the crossing to South America and spent the next 40 years capturing the continent on film (Odone 2009: 16-17). He was mainly based in Santiago de Chile, but embarked on frequent trips as a photographer, financed by his work as an engineer, and built up his body of work in Bolivia (1928), Chile (1932) and Columbia (1951). His photographs have a striking documentary aesthetic and an almost scientific focus on landscapes and rural and city scenes. The central theme of his puristic and clearly structured images is always the landscape (Alvarado/ Möller 2009: 155-156).

The entire eight-month expedition had a very limited budget. Once they had reached Chile, the Chilean government supported the project, providing the film team with train tickets for the Chilean rail network and a cruiser to travel from the mainland to the Juan Fernández Islands.

The Isla Más a Tierra proved to be a problematic shooting location:

I was incredibly disappointed when I first visited the island. It was almost completely covered in jungle. The landscape in itself was very pleasant, but there were no particular features that had any great visual appeal. [...] Driven by a kind of obsession with authenticity,

we decided to go to the real Robinson Island, which turned out to be a disastrous mistake. Following in the footsteps of the writer Defoe and relocating the story to an island in the Caribbean would have been visually far more interesting. (Fanck 1973: 367)

Fanck subsequently adapted the screenplay: Ohlsen spots the new Dresden approaching the island to pick him up and decides to fetch his sailor's hat from the old Dresden. As a result, he misses the ship as it passes by the beach. He sets off in a small wooden boat to try and catch up with his crew and is caught up in a storm, which sweeps him far away to the south. By making this adaptation, Fanck was able to include shots of natural landscapes in his film, above all scenes in the mountains, in the Tierra del Fuego and in Patagonia, even if these additions make the film's plot seem even less plausible.

The press materials on the expedition paint an exoticized and adventurous picture of life on the island. Fanck Jun. recounts spending a night in the drafty "Robinson cave". The film crew lived off huge, cheap crawfish and lambs, went hunting for pumas, reared spitting llamas and provided the local population with medical care.<sup>2</sup> It was on this island that Fanck first met Weber.

After shooting on the Juan Fernández Islands, the crew continued their trip over the mainland to Puerto Montt and then traveled by schooner through the fjords of the Tierra del Fuego as far as Cape Horn to shoot the aforementioned landscape scenes. On 25 January 1939 Chile experienced the worst earthquake in its history near Chillán, which claimed approx. 30,000 lives. The Bavaria expedition team were fortunate and escaped unharmed.

Albert Pagels accompanied the expedition through the fjords of the Tierra del Fuego. Pagels was a former German sailor, who had lived in Punta Arenas for over 25 years. In his autobiography, the staunch National Social-



The film gave Fanck a chance to portray the Chilean mountains in all their glory. (1939)

ist recalled meeting Fanck's film crew in January 1939. Pagels accompanied the film crew for 22 days, chartered ships for them and helped re-enact the scenes portraying the final days of the Dresden (Pagels 1940: 157-158).

Due to the lack of ships following the earthquake, Fanck seized the opportunity to be picked up in southern Chile by the German passenger ship "Bremen", which had been chartered by a wealthy group of travelers from the U.S. In early summer 1939, the film crew left Punta Arenas and returned to Germany via Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and New York.

Fanck arrived back in Germany on 5 April 1939 and filmed the indoor shots. He claimed that dramatic changes were made to his film during editing – against his wishes. He remarked:

My film 'A German Robinson Crusoe' certainly wasn't as good as the films I'd made before. The 'one-man' theme was too weak for a start, let alone the performance of the lead actor. Nevertheless, it was a pleasant enough film with interesting footage and rare shots of nature. It was when I delivered the material for editing that the real damage was done. (Fanck 1973: 376)

Fanck viewed the film as the low point of his career as a filmmaker. In 1940 he joined the NSDAP. He made ends meet during the war by producing a number of short films for Berlin's General Building Inspection Office. He fled Berlin towards the end of the war and subsequently eked out a living as a lumberjack in Freiburg. In 1946 Fanck made a failed attempt to re-establish the Freiburger Kammerschule; he was unable to relaunch his career in the film business (Horak 1997: 64-66). Fanck died in Freiburg in 1974.

However limited and ideologically biased the documentation on the Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition may be, it

does provide some vivid insight into the work of the film crew and the life of a number of Germans in Chile shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Both Fanck and Pagel's autobiographies and the press materials on the expedition throw light on the trip and its exotic adventures. However, beyond what was permitted and ideologically acceptable, readers can only guess what else happened on the expedition or whether events actually occurred as they were described. Academic discussion of the mountain films and studies on Fanck have omitted to mention the Robinson film to date. From an artistic perspective, the film is mediocre at best; its images and plot are not good enough to warrant rescuing it from obscurity now or indeed in the future. What remains is a propaganda film aimed at the Kriegsmarine, the navy of Nazi Germany, which glorifies German comradeship.

<sup>1</sup> The IAI's Image Archive collection is home to a photo album dating from 1915 comprising 32 photographs of the German prisoners of war from the SMS Dresden on Quiriquinia Island.

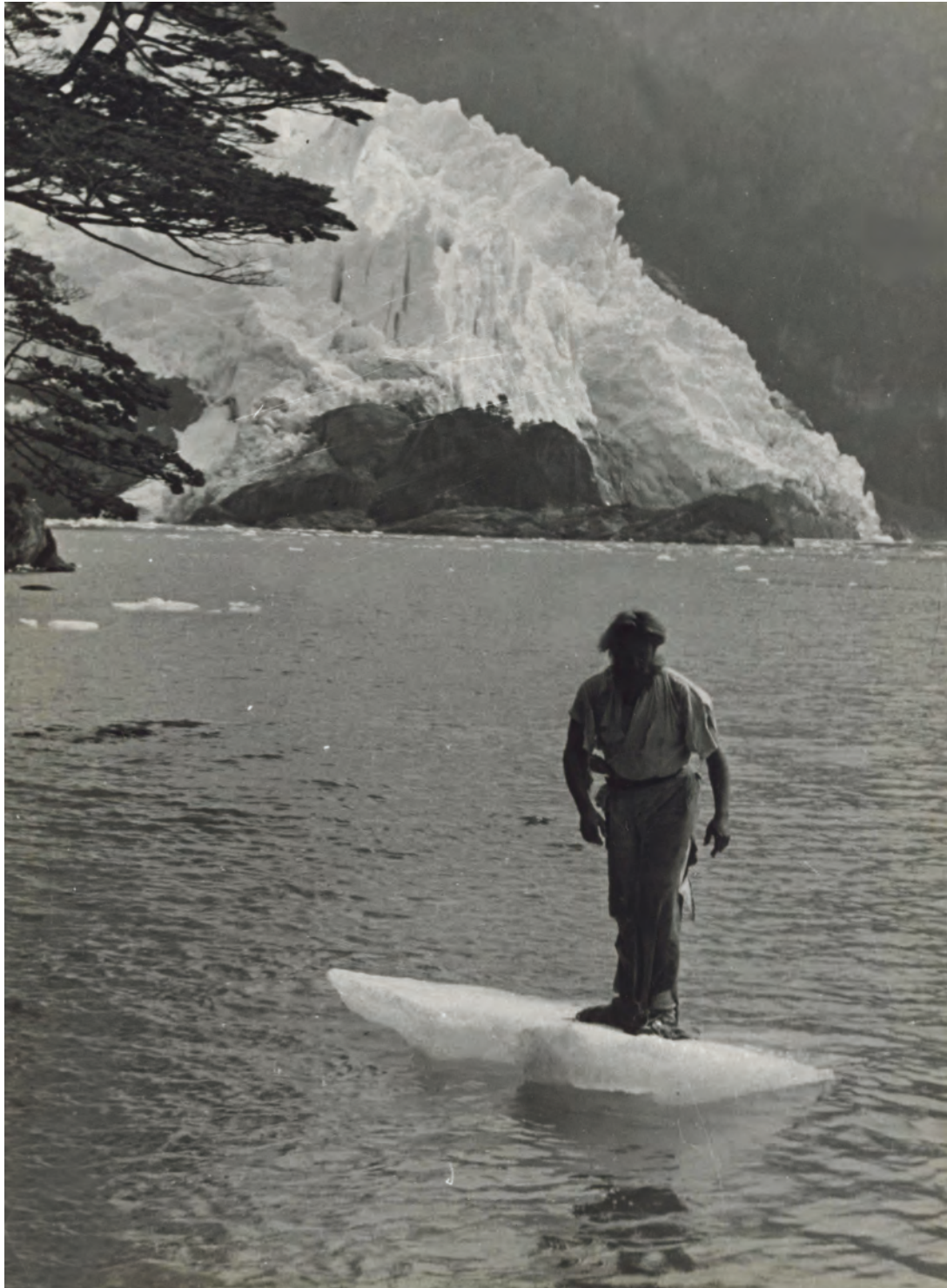
<sup>2</sup> Press materials on the Bavaria-Fanck-Chile expedition "Short episodes from a major film expedition" and "They lived in Robinson's cave", made available by the Deutsche Kinemathek.



Ohlsen's wanderings take him far down south to the fjords of the Tierra del Fuego.  
(1939)

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Ohlsen is drifting on an ice floe when he is finally rescued by the new Dresden. (1939)

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Acueducto de los Remedios, Estado de México.  
Taken by Sumner W. Matteson 1920, cropping and montage by Hugo Brehme

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Упанема



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