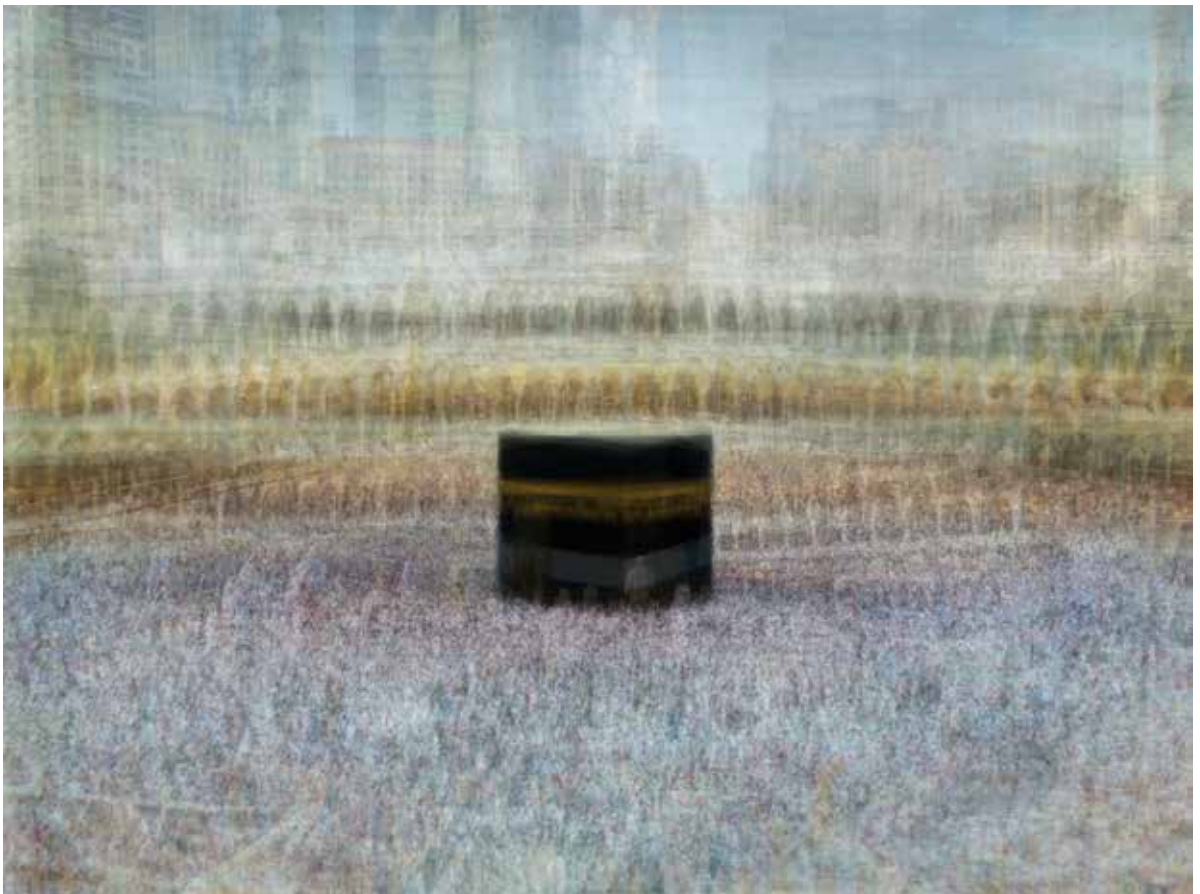


Editorial Aspects of Travel Photography

By its very nature, this magazine is a showcase of the past. In this issue the authors stroll the lands of two past centuries. They observe the photographs that were once laid out in the shop windows and displays of sometimes distant countries. They reflect on the items shown, and why it is that this specific series, this body of work, is to be presented to the – hopefully, at least somewhat – astonished eyes of the *PhotoResearcher's* readers.

Naturally, it is only possible to show a few small segments of the world in images that once conveyed new experiences. And, it cannot be denied that the most-sold motifs have something stereotyped about them. The self-perpetuating canon of the major sights in travel photography of both the past and present can be captured best from certain favourite positions. One actually still has a fantastic view of the Eiffel Tower from the Trocadéro – the distance is also perfect because the angle of the lens makes it possible to capture the tower in

Figure 1
Corinne Vionnet, *makka* (Mecca) 2008,
série Photo Opportunities.
© Corinne Vionnet, courtesy Danziger Gallery.



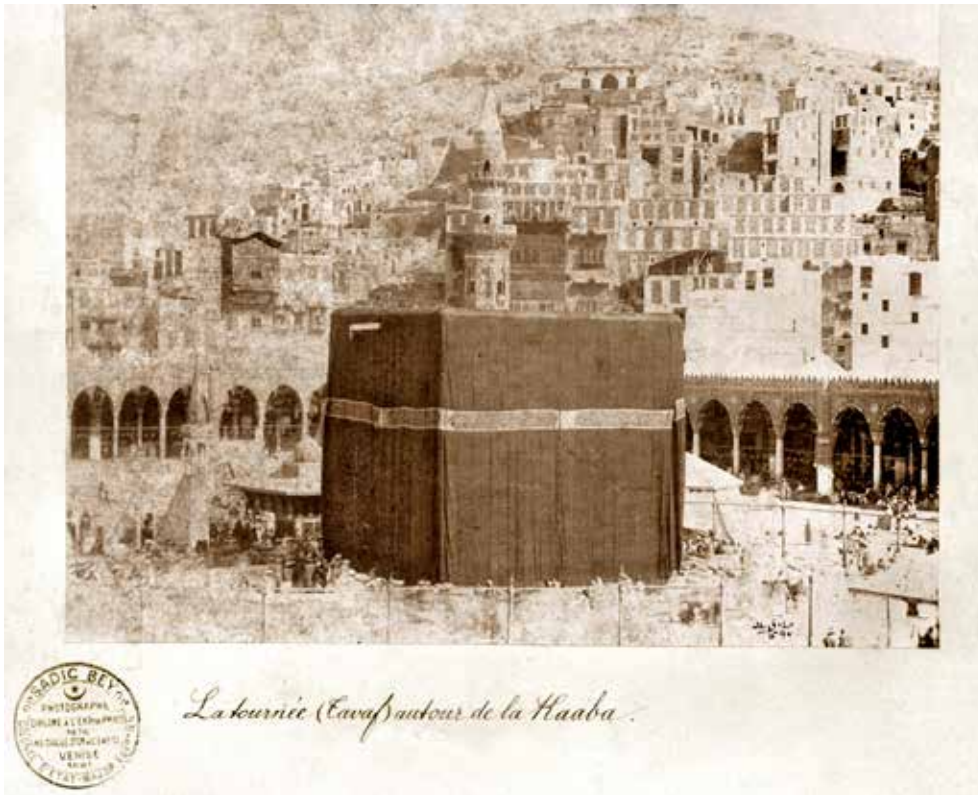


Figure 2
 Mohammed Sadic Bey, *La tournée (Tavaf) autour de la Kaaba*, Mecca 1880, albumen print 16.3 x 22.7 cm mounted on cardboard c. 22 x 28 cm. Courtesy Collection Mulzer.

series *Photo Opportunities*: St. Basil’s Cathedral on Red Square, the Colosseum, Monument Valley, the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Stonehenge, the Brandenburg Gate and the white letters of the Hollywood sign, to mention just a few examples. Weaving together numerous photographic perspectives and experiences, the artist builds her own impressionistic interpretations – “ethereal structures which float gently in a dream-like haze of blue sky.”¹

She used up to 1,000 images found on the net to finally extract her one multiple image which is actually a collective work of, we may assume, a great number of eager and touristy, but possibly less mindful, snapshooters (fig. 1). Vionnet’s contemporary images with their touches of sharpness – from the single images – and constructive vagueness through manifold overlays, have some similarity to the fuzziness and focus of one of the very first images taken by the French-trained Egyptian Colonel Mohammed Sadic Bey in Mekka in 1880²: here, however, the blur resulted from a long exposure time while pilgrims of the Hajj marched

its entirety; by the way, this is quite the contrary with the Cologne Cathedral where the constriction caused by the surrounding buildings makes it extremely difficult to photograph its most spectacular side, the west façade. The Swiss artist Corinne Vionnet has investigated the phenomenon of the cliché-like repetition in travel photography in an artistic manner.

“We travel, we see a monument, we take a picture. Are we all doing the same kind of pictures?” she asks. Framing sites of mass tourism in our viewfinders, we create photographic souvenirs that are integral to the touristic experience. Conducting keyword searches of famed monuments in photo-sharing web sites, Vionnet culled thousands of tourists’ snapshots for her

1. <http://www.corinnevionnet.com/-photo-opportunities.html> (25.01.2015).



Figure 3
Hans Christian Adam,
Selfie with family, Piazza Navona, Rome 2014.

seven times around the sacred building (fig. 2). With modern imaging technology, Vionnet followed an old principle that was called composite printing in the 19th century. In 1877 Francis Galton (1822–1911) asked *what would the average male criminal look like?* Matching the distance between the sitters’ eyes, many glass plate negatives of mug shot portraits were enlarged in layers on a single sheet of light sensitive paper, and – voilà! – there you would have him! These were images produced through means considered as scientific as possible. The research resulted in the representation of an “average type” – one who simply was nonexistent as a person. If many of today’s selfie images (fig. 3) with a specific background were to be arranged compositely on the computer, would we get, say, the face of the average Eiffel Tower tourist of our days? What

good would this amount to? – with the exception of realizing that photography can be a servant to strange concepts?

The imperfection of some photographic views – of a famous building for example – was recognised at an early stage. In 1856, Emile Planat, who called himself Marcelin,³ complained about the impossibility of some photographs to believably transmit atmosphere and feelings in the Parisian *Journal Amusant* (figs. 4-7). He gave his contribution the title of ‘Down with Photography!!!’ – with three exclamation marks indeed. Using a woodcut, the author and draughtsman made fun of a tritely photographed view of St Mark’s Cathedral in Venice. He shows us the front view of the cathedral and, according to Marcelin, that is “[...] three, poorly tin-plated cauldrons, under a grey sky, without any air; a pneumatic machine seems to have surrounded them with a vacuum. And, that is St Mark’s Cathedral (fig. 8), with its golden domes, with walls that are painted with colourful frescoes, chiselled, glittering [mosaics], sparkling like a jewel box under the sun of Italy! And these grey palaces, these gloomy bodies of water [of Venice] that are just as deserted and silent as the Canal Saint-Martin [in Paris] are [in reality] Canaletto’s royal houses and the lagoons enveloped in purple, gold and the light of the sun!”⁴

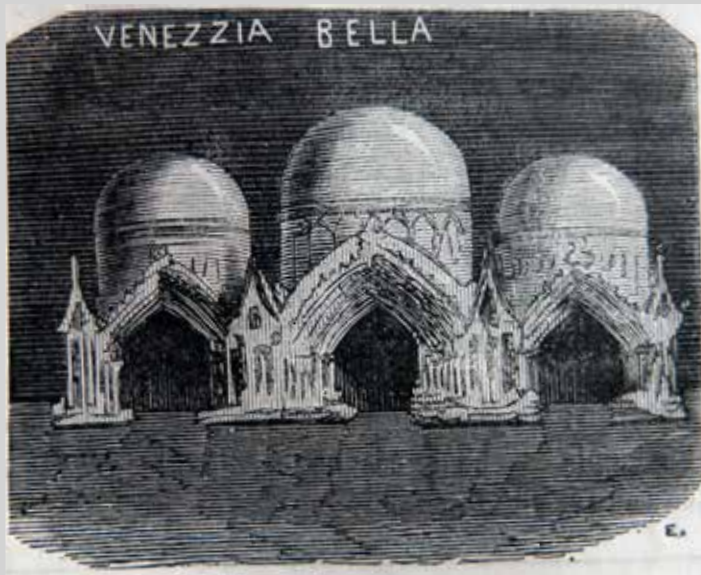
Marcelin drew palm trees as the photographic representation of Upper Egypt (fig. 9); he must have formed his concept of the locality from his own observations or from the salons

2. See in some detail William Facey & Gillian Grant, *Saudi Arabia by the First Photographers*, London 1996 (reprint 2002), especially reference 1, page 23 on Mohammed Sadic Bey (Muhammad Sadiq).

3. Marcelin, pseudonym of the journalist and cartoonist Emile Planat (ca. 1825/1830–1887).

4. “Voici, dans un voyage à Venise, une vue de l’église Saint-Marc: trois chaudrons mal étamés, sous un ciel gris, sans air; une machine pneumatique

semble avoir fait le vide à l’entour. Et c’est là cette Saint-Marc aux coupes dorées, aux murailles bariolées de fresques, cisellée, pailletée, étincelante, comme un écran sous le soleil d’Italie! Et ces palais gris, ces eaux mornes, désertes et silencieuses comme le canal Saint-Martin, ce sont là ces demeures princières du Canaletti, ces lagunes couvertes de pourpre, d’or et de soleil!” Marcelin, ‘A bas la photographie!!!’ In: *Journal amusant* (Paris), no. 36, 6 September 1856, 3. The author would like to thank Dr. Rolf H. Krauss for the information.



Figures 4-7
Marcelin: fig. 4 'Venezia Bella'; fig. 5 'Egypte';
fig. 6 'Thèbes aux cent portes'; fig. 7 'Suisse',
woodcuts of varying sizes, in: *Journal amusant*,
Paris, no. 36, Sept. 9, 1856, page. 3.
Collection. Rolf H. Krauss, Stuttgart.

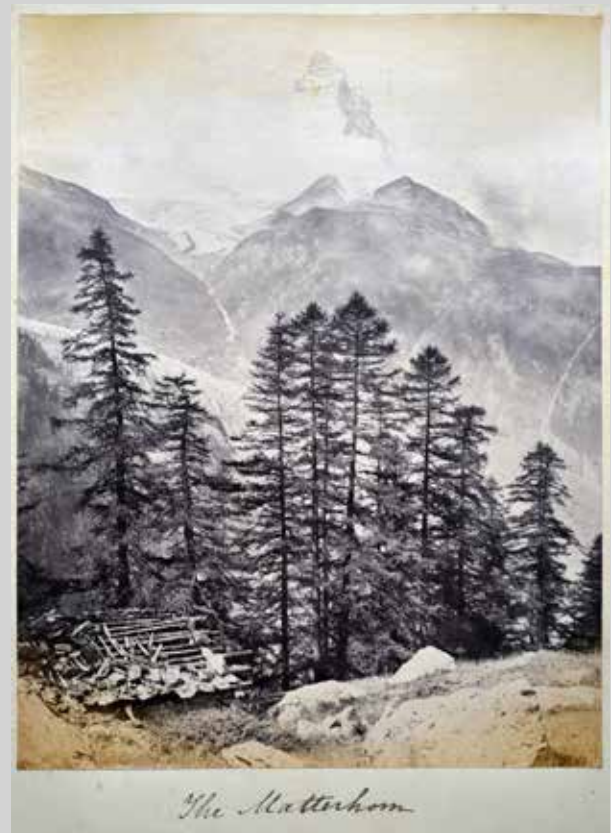


Figure 8
Anon., *St. Mark's, Venice*, undated albumen print 12.5x17.7cm, from an undated album (c. 1875). Collection Hans Christian Adam.

Figure 9
Maxime Du Camp, 'Bris de dattiers et de palmiers doums, à Hamameh, près Dendérah', plate 23 in Maxime Du Camp, *Egypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie*, Paris 1852. Collection Agfa Foto Historama/Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

Figure 10
John Shaw Smith, *Ruins of Baalbek, Syria*, c. 1851-52, modern reversed print from a calotype negative c. 20x25cm. Collection George Eastman House, Rochester, NY.

Figure 11
Anon., *The Matterhorn*, albumen print 21x16.4cm, from a travel album assembled by James William Bryan, dated 1875. Collection Hans Christian Adam.

Figure 12
Hans Christian Adam,
Asian tourists with selfie stick,
Ponte Sant'Angelo, Rome 2014.



Figure 13
Arnold and Helen Hogg, 'Self Taken Oct. 1926',
Rugby, Warwickshire UK.
From a British family album,
reproduced in *The Guardian*
23 September 2014.



Time magazine announced the selfie stick as one of the best inventions of 2014 although it had already been included in the book of 101 *Un-Useless Japanese Inventions* in 1995. As with the "selfie" (since 1839), the idea of a selfie stick had already come up many decades before.

of the Orientalists. In any case, he was now disappointed by the indifferent photographs. It is completely intentional that, in the woodcut, Marcelin's palms in figure 5 have the appeal of two toilet brushes "under the grey sky of Holland" – and hardly have any connection with the mystery of the eastern Mediterranean that the critic yearns for: "[...]the Orient, that land of the mysterious accumulation of colossi, tombs and collapsed temples that stand out against the azure sky in the endless solitude under the burning sun."⁵ On another woodcut (fig. 6), we see a couple of indefinable stumps of stone in the desert to represent Nubia and are supposed to associate these with the power and splendour of Thebes of the hundred gates (fig. 10). The Swiss Alps – another tourist destination – are shown as a white wall of snow without any detail and, as a contrast, equally unimpressive dark pine forests spread diagonally across the picture (fig. 7): "Here we now have a view of the Alps, the glaciers like cheese made out of poorly-churned cream, on rough white with small fir trees and chalets from a cut-out sheet from Nuremberg silhouetted in black as if they were in a shadow play. [...] They [the photographs] have turned this [...] into deserts with dreary, empty huts, with accursed forests where the trees seem to be parched, even burned – pestilential landscapes!"⁶ (Fig. 11)

Travel photography has experienced great changes in recent years in the same way as many aspects of photography have been transformed in the digital age. Depending on the photographer's homeland, the covers of many travel albums once bore the word "Souvenirs",

5. "L'Orient, ce pays aux mystérieux entassements de colosses, de tombes et de temples écroulés, se détachent sur l'azur, aux solitudes infinies sous le soleil ardent." Marcelin 1856 [reference 4], 3.

6. "Voici maintenant des vues des Alpes; des glaciers, fromages à la crème mal battus, sur le blanc cru desquels se silhouettent en noir, comme des ombres chinoises, de petits pins et des chalets découpés à Nuremberg. [...] ils

ont fait des déserts noirs, aux chaumières vides et desolées, aux bois maudits, où les arbres ont l'air desséchés, brûlés, des paysages malades de la peste!" Marcelin [reference 4], 3. – Marcelin's woodcuts and the photographs of similar motifs have been arranged here to contrast the French illustrator's criticism. These are not the specific photographs Marcelin was writing about – he does not tell what those were. He might have seen the photographs

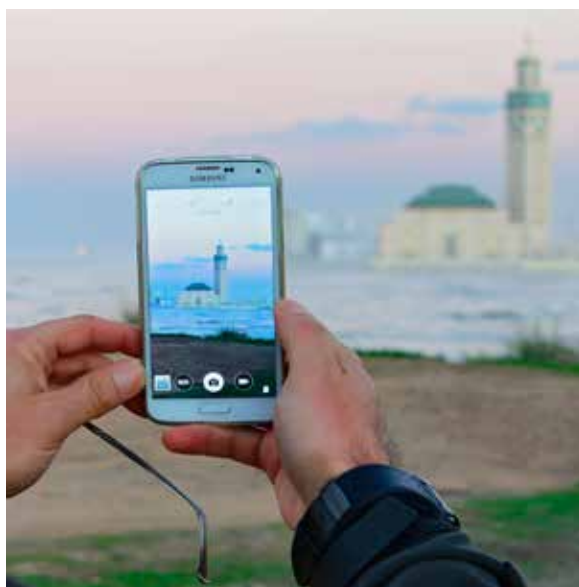


Figure 14
Hans Christian Adam, *Cell phone sight, Grande Mosquée Hassan II, Casablanca, Maroc 2014.*

“Reiseerinnerung” or “Recuerdos” while today most of the photographs taken on trips remain on the digital storage medium. Of course, postcards still exist but their medial peak has long been crossed – posting is decreasing. In former times, one bought a picture postcard and a stamp – something that required a certain amount of effort – while today’s traveller sends a low-resolution picture – and often, a selfie. The word was completely unknown just a few years ago and is now used to describe a global mass phenomenon of taking pictures of

oneself. Whether it is used to snap sights, or – even better – introduce familiar faces in front of an easily-recognisable background as proof that “I was here”, the smartphone has become sufficient to satisfy the needs of the contemporary globetrotter. Previously, one purchased a yellow filter as an important accessory for black-and-white photography but a selfie stick⁷ is preferred today; this apparatus, which is also known as a QuikPod, is related to the old-fashioned monopod and makes it possible to provide the distance necessary for capturing oneself and the peer group on the sensor, preferably in front of a major attraction (figs. 12 & 13). Photographing the sights will remain a never ending enterprise.

However, the majority of photographs taken today do not get printed. Digital pictures hardly ever find their way into an album or the contemporary equivalent product. The image memory of early smartphones soon reached its limit and the oldest photograph was deleted – something that didn’t even disturb the photographer very much. The data produced today do not migrate to ever-new data media over time. Once they have been taken and shown around, they become as good as lost in the digital abysses of current and future hard- and software. The selfie with the famous sight in the background is instantaneously shared with friends around the world, appears briefly on displays far and near – and is already forgotten. Although the omnipresence of cameras within the acceleration of everyday life does lead to an unbelievable flood of images, it appears that 99% of those taken get lost because the originator himself is no longer interested in them. Seeing that the attitudes of our time are almost exclusively anchored in the present – never in the past and rarely in the future – this

of Egypt he referred to [and he mentioned in his text the words “Egypte, Nubie...”) in Maxime DuCamps book *Egypte Nubie Palestine et Syrie. Dessins photographiques recueillies pendant les années 1849, 1850 et 1851 accompagnés d’un texte explicatif et procédés d’une introduction par Maxime Du Camp chargé d’une mission archéologique en Orient par le Ministère de l’Instruction publique, Paris 1852* (see illustrations), but this is speculative. The undefined clutter of

Thèbes aux cent ports is perhaps difficult to match; Marcelin could not have seen the somewhat matching *Baalbek* photograph by John Shaw Smith as Smith kept the photographs of his journey private. Readers and viewers are welcome to supply fitting matches.

7. Cf. Julia Hildebrandt, ‘Foto am Stil’, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, vol.71, no. 14, 17–18.01.2015, 48.

loss of the collective visual memory is not even noticed – it is accepted as a completely natural process. (Fig. 14)

But, there is still no need to fear that future generations will not get to know anything about the photography of our time. Much too much gets stored to allow this to happen but it is less the visual basis of personal memories that were once found in albums. Naturally, the photobook, usually a one-off series of pictures chosen by the originator and printed commercially, has come into existence. Some producers even have the appropriate titles on hand for popular mass-tourism destinations: even templates with professional, non-copyrighted glossy photographs of neutral topographies – such as beautiful, standardised landscapes (beaches, palm trees, etc.) and picturesque city scenes – are already included. In the same way as one's own photographs, they can be placed precisely, their size determined, moved from page to page and also be deleted. The intention is clear; they serve to create a greater number of pages in the photobook that then have to be paid for. If the photographer finds it too tiring to select the pictures he has taken himself, he can switch on an automatic programme for the input. As they see fit, the photobook printer's programme generates a logical layout – organised by date, for example – which occasionally results in a mindless organisation of the motifs. The numerous, extremely colourful, specimens make one question the taste of both the producers and their customers.

This supports the tendency to clichés. The producers of modern “albums” have studied the market and the awareness of traditions of those taking pictures, as well as the commercial users of travel photographs: the remaining illustrated magazines with their travel sections sponsored by travel firms, the brochure producers and those who guarantee a sea view and blue sky from the balcony of a high-rise hotel or a gigantic cruise ship on their internet site. Most of the photographs created for these purposes are completely predictable and nobody – especially not a stranger – would ever look at them. Even when young people race down an ice-covered ski slope with a helmet camera to capture spectacular pictures of their risky endeavour – will anybody really be interested in the long run? In the western world, it is not a problem to make a statement but, faced with the flood of information of the offers, who has the will or time to look, to hear?

From the sixties to eighties of the last century, there was still a certain amount of interest in the holiday photos of others but this has now almost completely disappeared. That is unless the serious amateur is ambitious enough to take his expensive, technically sophisticated, equipment and use it for new interpretations. He will repeatedly capture the same beautiful images with increasing technical brilliance, possibly without even questioning the meaningfulness of a sunset that has been photographed millions of times before and, in this way,

perpetuate what has always been. If he has sufficient patience and the appropriate approach, there will hardly be any photo-technical difference to his professional competition except that the – usually institutional – financial means made available to them for exceptional projects, coupled with lavish travel budgets and professionally planned logistics, makes it possible for the experts to produce, mostly moving, images in high-contrast sharpness and colour saturation (“4K” – but when writing this, the hype maybe over already).

Back to the past, and to the contents of our issue: Sometimes the imaginary display cases of the past were not yet well filled. In some cases, they did not show but a few exquisite gems. Some photographs might be by an anonymous and their viewers may have taken years to identify the originator. This is the case with two small daguerreotypes which have been on a long journey. The plates found their way to remote parts of Yucatán, Mexico, where they were exposed before, years later, entering the hallowed halls of the Austrian National Library. They are the oldest photographs from this area and even predate the famous expeditionary enterprise of John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852) and Frederick Catherwood (1799–1854), who photographed but lost their daguerreotypes in a fire after their return from the same region. Once again, it took a long time to unknot the string of puzzling clues, find facts and finally ascertain that they were taken by a young Austrian nobleman. He was a man eager to search unknown climes to enlarge knowledge about the early cities of the Mayas. His name was Emanuel von Friedrichsthal and, dedicated as he was to his project, he also became the victim of his aspirations. He died young immediately after returning from his strenuous voyage. Over years, **Ulla Fischer-Westhauser** has followed his steps wherever he has left just the touch of a footprint.

Costanza Caraffa devotes herself to a tiny aspect of the huge photo library she heads at the German Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. A small stock of early photographs, made in the eastern Mediterranean region in the years around 1860, that came into the collection at a much later date as the donation of a priest, Father Joseph Croquison, and which – as Caraffa formulates it – exists like a small island in a sea of pictures, can be found among the hundreds of thousands of photographs. In this collection – as in many others that have grown over time – there are possibly small and large, maybe even important, islands lost in the expanse of the ocean and waiting to be discovered; they possibly lie covered or undiscovered beneath the surface waiting for the next earthquake to make them rise to the surface. Just like a trip around the real world, this journey through the archive touches on coasts, seas and islands in the world of images without being able to fully understand their interrelationships. However, we will possibly arrive at an understanding of some small details.

By the time the volcanologists Moritz Alphons Stübel and Wilhelm Reiss returned home

after a decade of exploration and research carried out in the years between 1866 and 1877, they had collected tons of material – much more than they would ever be able to fully analyse. The smallest section was made up of photographs they had purchased – originally, from local photographers. The two researchers themselves attached only little importance to them, considering them merely supplemental visual materials. However, while the data the scientists had collected under great tribulations became obsolete soon after their return, the photographs – collected when hardly anybody collected – are now the materials that have experienced a historical revaluation. Today, some of the photographs are unique specimens, highly-treasured historical documents in their countries of their origin. The fact that so many prints have been preserved – around 1500 – is due more to chance than insight: they managed to survive war and vandalism, attitudes hostile to the collections, bureaucratic mania for order and many other kinds of brainlessness until a small number of people realised that a treasure was stored in them. The essay by **Andreas Krase** investigates the personalities of the researchers and collectors, their work and photographic legacies.

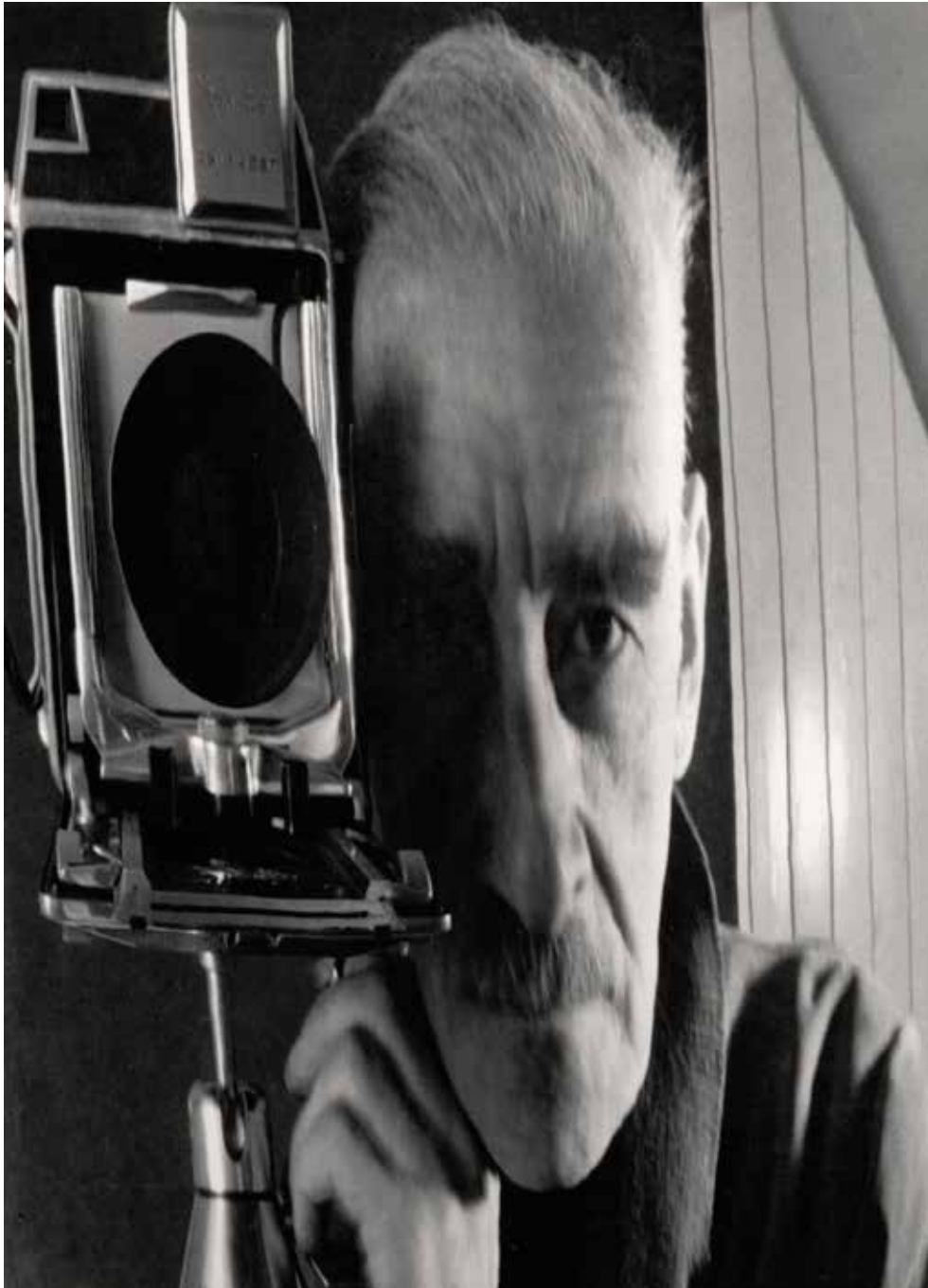
When an enterprising photographer soberly analyses that his extremely successful portrait business will not be profitable in the long run and how he then transforms himself into a just as enterprising travelling photo-journalist is recounted in the story about E.O. Hoppé (fig. 14). In the years around 1920, the naturalised Briton with German roots enjoyed a reputation similar to that of Helmut Newton around 1990 – of being perceived by the public as one of the most famous photographers in the world – if not *the* most famous. Hoppé had Pictorialist artistic roots,⁸ he developed clear modernist tendencies in his book of industrial photographs *Deutsche Arbeit* (1930) but also took traditional photographs of small towns that time had passed by that were appropriate to the subject of his picture book *Romantik der Kleinstadt* (1929) at around the same time. **Graham Howe**, who has been processing Hoppé's estate for many years, reports on his business activities between society portrait, commissioned reportage and the production of photo books.

Christopher Webster van Tonder takes Retzlaff's travel book *Länder und Völker an der Donau. Rumänien, Bulgarien, Ungarn, Kroatien* published in 1940⁹ to throw light on the way political propaganda took advantage of the possibilities of early colour photographs made on an – apparently, non-political – trip along the Danube. The readers were seduced by the – still not very colour-saturated – prints of pretty women in colourful national costumes and portraits of, apparently contented, old men. But, this book, which shows scenes of such tranquillity, was actually published during the Second World War. It was intended to be a sign of the racial and territorial affiliation of the regions travelled through to the German Reich. Soon after the book was released, murderous battles took place in the landscapes

8. An interesting exchange of correspondence exists between Hoppé and Albert Renger-Patzsch who he admired. Heinrich Hoffmann, who later became Hitler's personal photographer, and the Leica pioneer Dr. Paul Wolf were Hoppé's assistants at times. Cf. Phillip Prodger, *E.O. Hoppé: The German Photographs, 1925–1938*, Göttingen: Steidl 2015.

9. Erich Retzlaff, Erich & Franz Thierfelder, *Länder und Völker an der Donau. Rumänien, Bulgarien, Ungarn, Kroatien*, Vienna: Wilhelm Andermatt Verlag 1944.

Figure 15
Emil Otto Hoppé, *Autoportrait*, 1957. © 2015
Curatorial Assistance, Inc. / E.O. Hoppé
Estate Collection.



shown under a blue sky and in dazzling sunshine in the book.

Technically, there is a close relationship between Retzlaff's pictures and the spread of the compact camera in the 1930s and invention of colour film (1936). Disregarding its ideological slant, which was connected with his personal conviction, Retzlaff and other colour pioneers set standards for travel photography that would remain valid into the post-war years.¹⁰ Their traditional visual concept was completely in keeping with the zeitgeist and functioned as a model for many amateur photographers into the 1950s and 1960s.

Many years after the public presentation of colour television in the United States' Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958 – a real crowd-puller – slide shows by travelling amateur photographers (some of which were not even photographed very well) were still considered to be mind-expanding events, in places not very far away from the metropolises.

Hans Christian Adam
Ulla Fischer-Westhauser
Uwe Schögl

Vienna, April 2015

10. E.g., the advertising expert, amateur photographer and travel writer Kurt Peter Karfeld (1906-?) with his close connection to the Leitz Company who has published many books illustrated with colour 35mm photographs.