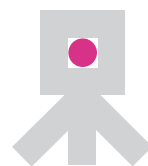


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Fourteen Views of Fernando Po to Save the Colony

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Cover illustration:

Francis W. Joaque, Group of Kru employed
in the service of the Colony, Santa Isabel,
Fernando Po 1875,
albumen print 13,9 x 10,2 cm.

Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de
Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

Fourteen Views of Fernando Po to Save the Colony

Jürg Schneider
Miquel Vilaró i Güell

In December 1873 the Spanish governor on Fernando Po, Ignacio García Tudela, drafted a lengthy report in which he advised the Spanish Government to completely withdraw from all its possessions in the Gulf of Guinea. The reason he put forward was the present and future incapability of the Spanish to curb the influence of the British, the only nation that, in his words, was able to derive benefit from the island's wealth.¹ Tudela's successor Diego Santisteban (in office 22 January 1875–13 February 1877), a delegate of the newly installed cabinet of the Restoration,² stressed on the contrary the great benefit Spain could gain from its neglected and practically unknown colony. In order to support his argument, he sent fourteen photographs from Fernando Po to Madrid which were to bear visual, and hence truthful, evidence of the Spanish possession's wealth and its inhabitant's interest in the economic development of the island.

This article consists of three parts. In the first, we will analyse the wider political and historical context in which the photographs were taken. It will become explicit that Diego Santisteban's initiative indeed fit into a larger framework where colonial administrations in the metropole and in the field and individuals who advocated their nation's colonial aspirations and endeavours used photographs for the purpose of visual communication and propaganda. Evidently, national or individual initiatives were closely intertwined with developments on transnational levels. In the second part, we will take a close look at the photographs and their content. We will be able to follow the photographer on his way through Fernando Po's capital Santa Isabel, turn our eyes on the various important buildings of the town, get a glimpse of the beautiful bay above which the town was built and meet some members of the island's black and white community. The third part will introduce the photographer Francis W. Joaque himself. A native of Sierra Leone, he moved to Fernando Po in the late 1860s. There he took photographs of the local Fernandino community, white traders and the Primitive Methodist Mission before putting out feelers to Gabon where he was to settle probably in the late 1870s or early 1880s.³

Introduction

On 1 July 1875, Diego Santisteban, the first governor appointed by the government of the Bourbon Restoration, sent fourteen views of the capital Santa Isabel's buildings and inhabitants to Santiago Durán Lira, head of the Navy Department, with the purpose of giving his superior "el más exacto conocimiento de lo que es esta localidad tan olvidada y digna de mejor

1. Archivo General de la Administración del Estado (AGA). Fondos África-Guinea (A-G). Caja (C) 81/6939. Expediente (E) 9. *Informe del Gob. de Fernando Poo, D. Ignacio García Tudela, demostrando y encareciendo la necesidad y la conveniencia de abandonar dicha colonia y sus dependencias*. Sta. Isabel, 14 de diciembre de 1873. Este informe ha sido comentado y transcrito por la Dra. Dolores García Cantús en el n. 11 de la colección *Documentos de la Colonización* (Vic: CEIBA Ediciones). [The General Administration Archive, henceforth AGA. Fondos Africa-Guinea (A-G). Box C 82/6939. File E 9. Report by D. Ignacio García Tudela, the Governor of Fernando Po, demonstrating and highlighting in very strong terms the necessity and advisability of abandoning said colony and its dependencies, Santa Isabel, 14 December 1873. This report was commented on and transcribed by Doctor Dolores García Cantús in vol. 11 of the collection 'Documentos de la

Colonización'. Centre d'Estudis Internacionals de Biologia i Antropologia/CEIBA, editors].

2. The Restoration was the name given to the period that began on 29 December 1874 after the First Spanish Republic ended with the restoration of the monarchy under Alfonso XII following a coup d'état by Martínez Campos. It ended on 14 April 1931 with the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic.

3. Jürg Schneider, 'The Topography of the Early History of African Photography', *History of Photography*, vol. 34, May 2010, 134-146; Jürg Schneider, 'Portrait Photography: A Visual Currency in the Atlantic Visualscape' in: John Pepper and Elisabeth L. Cameron (ed.), *Portraiture and Photography in Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2013, 35-65. Jürg Schneider, *Exploring the Atlantic Visualscape. Eine Geschichte der Fotografie in West- und Zentralafrika, 1840-1890*, PhD thesis, University of Basel 2011.

suerte, en la parte que se relaciona con los intereses materiales tan en decadencia hoy por falta de recursos.”⁴ The fourteen photographs sent to Madrid were taken by the Sierra Leonean photographer Francis Wilberforce Joaque who had moved from Freetown to Fernando Po about five years before. Santisteban hoped that the Navy Ministry and the Colonial Ministry together would intercede with the new cabinet of Alfonso XII to remedy the colony’s grave lack of finances and send, as soon as possible, the necessary means for the proper administration of Spain’s possession in the Gulf of Guinea. Madrid’s reaction to this intervention was almost immediate. On 19 August, the Ministry informed Santisteban that the vessel *Prosperidad* would soon bring the sum of 50,000 Pesetas (between 190 and 6,800 euros)⁵ that together with the money already disbursed would sum up to a total of 280,000 Pesetas.⁶

Impressed by these photographs and pushed by additional political and economic factors, the government of the Restoration reassumed the process of colonization which, in the six years between the dismissal of Isabella II and the installation of Alfonso XII, had practically come to a standstill. New capital was subsequently injected definitively shelving previous propositions to get rid of the colony which had at least been taken into consideration in the light of García Tudela’s pessimistic and negative reports.

In order to grasp the significance of Santisteban’s initiative to use photographic images as visual evidence to contradict his predecessor’s negative view, we need to say a few words about the political context in which the photographs were submitted. In a further step we will situate photography in the wider framework of Europe’s colonial expansion in West and Central Africa between 1840 and 1890.

Fernando Po is the largest of a series of island in the Gulf of Guinea. When European sugar growing shifted from the Mediterranean to Madeira and then to West Africa in the early 16th century, São Tomé became the largest sugar plantation economy subsequently providing the model for developments in the Americas and the Caribbean. Fernando Po, however, for reasons which Ibrahim Sundiata expounded in detail in his study of this small African island, stood outside these developments.⁷ Although Spain had laid claim to the island in 1778, there was in fact no Spanish representative until the second half of the 19th century; in fact, British traders – John Beecroft until 1854 and William Lynslager until 1858 – actually acted as “Spanish” governors until 1858. Between 1827 and 1835, the British had used Fernando Po as an anti-slaving base and only a few years after their withdrawal even seriously negotiated with Spain for the purchase of the island for the amount of £60,000.

After years of hesitation and negligence, Spain sent the naval officer Carlos Chacón y Michelena (1816-1863) to Fernando Po in 1858 in an effort to set up a proper colonial administration. He was superseded as governor by José de la Gándara in 1859. In the following years, Spain tried to encourage emigration from the metropole and Cuba to Fernando Po; however

4. “...the most exact knowledge of this place so completely forgotten and deserving a better lot.” Archivo General de la Marina “Álvaro de Bazán” [en adelante, AGMAB]. Sección Expediciones. Legajo n. 356. Oficio del gobernador Diego Santisteban al ministro de Marina. Fernando Poo, 1º de julio de 1875. [The General Archive of the Navy ‘Álvaro de Bazán’, henceforth AGMAB. Section Expeditions. Dossier no. 356. Official letter of Governor Diego Santisteban to the Minister for the Navy. Fernando Po, July 1 1875].

5. <http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/spaincompare>.

6. AGMAB. Sección Expediciones. Legajo n. 356. Despacho del Ministerio de Marina al gobernador de Fernando Poo. Madrid, 19 de agosto de 1875. [Dispatch of the Minister for the Navy to the Governor on Fernando Po. Madrid, 19 August 1875].

7. Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery. The Bight of Biafra and Fernando Po in the Era of Abolition, 1827-1930*, Madison (Wisconsin) and London: The University of Wisconsin Press 1996.

this met with little success and even less sustainability. Hence, at the beginning of the 1870s and after more than ten years of Spanish administration, the process of colonization had reached none of its objectives, neither materially nor with regard to Catholic proselytization, but caused considerable costs to the Spanish government. With the fall of the monarchy of Isabel II in September 1868, the situation – and with it Spain’s colonial endeavours in the Gulf of Guinea – collapsed. The following revolutionary governments, troubled by continuous political and social strife on the Iberian Peninsula as well as in its Caribbean possessions, did not deem it opportune to continue financing the administration of a colony which had yielded no fruits so far. For this reason, and based on the promulgation of the *Tercer Estatuto Orgánico de la Colonia* from 26 October 1872, the metropole decided to scale down its financial support for the island relegating it to a simple naval base. Ibrahim Sundiata observed that “Spain’s mid-century colonial push, of which the Cuban [and metropolitan emigration] scheme was part, was only an episode. The rhythm of Spanish activity in West Africa was out of sync with that of other colonial powers.”⁸

Adopting the new legal framework of October 1872,⁹ the governor asked Madrid’s permission to put up for sale the colonial premises and farms he considered unnecessary under the given circumstances only sparing the church, the building called the stone house and the Jesuit’s mission house, the latter conforming to the instructions regulating the divestiture.¹⁰ The *Gaceta de Madrid* commented that Spain better concentrate on places where the government could hope to establish a stable administrative regime and the situation did not demand direct and continuous protection.¹¹ Between September 1868 and December 1874 eleven governors, mainly in office *ad interim* and only for a very short time, succeeded one another. The last governor during these troubled six years was Ignacio García Tudela who remained in charge for the comparable lengthy period of two years (September 1872 to November 1874).

In the eyes of the republican government, García Tudela was the most reliable person to give such an advisory opinion on the island’s political and economic value with which he incidentally was in clear agreement with Madrid’s attitude. Personal and straightforward as it was, the detailed report he sent to the Ministerio de Ultramar in December 1873 was perceived as a trustworthy balancing of the actual situation on Fernando Po and the other Spanish possessions in the Gulf. Without a solid footing there, wrote Tudela, which in practice meant without military personnel to back the governor’s authority, without missionaries capable of counteracting the influence of the Protestant missions,¹² without entrepreneurs who were ready to invest capital, and without the markets that could absorb the colonies’

8. Sundiata 1996 [reference 7], 54.

9. For details of the politics in the period between 1868 and 1874 [Sexenio Revolucionario or Sexenio Democrático], see, Dolores García Cantus, *Fernando Poo: Una aventura colonial española en el África occidental (1778-1900)*, Valencia: Universitat de Valencia 2004.

10. AGA. A-G. C 675. E 18. *Sobre la formación de inventario de los Edificios del Estado; nombramiento de conserjes para atender a su conservación*. Real Decreto de 26 de octubre. [Regarding the establishment of an inventory of the state-owned buildings; appointment of caretakers who attend to these buildings]. See also Sundiata 1996 [reference 7], 55. AGA. A-G. C 675. E 18. *Sobre la formación de*

inventario de los Edificios del Estado; nombramiento de conserjes para atender a su conservación. Real Decreto de 26 de octubre.

11. *Gaceta de Madrid*, Monday 28 October 1872.

12. The Baptists had established a permanent ministry in the early 1840s. When Chacón arrived in 1858, Roman Catholicism was proclaimed the sole religion whereupon the Baptists decided to depart for Cameroon to found the Baptist mission town of Victoria (today Limbe), Cameroon. In 1870, after the Spanish Revolution had proclaimed freedom of religion, the Primitive Methodist Mission Society resumed Protestant mission work on Fernando Po.

products, it was impossible to resist the British hegemony in the region. In fact, “in the 1870s the Spanish merchant marine went into a steep decline [...] in the face of foreign competition [and] in spite of grandiose plans, West Africa did not attract much Spanish capital.”¹³ A timely and orderly withdrawal was, in García Tudela’s view, the best way to avoid further futile spending.

However, García Tudela’s opinion was not heard any more in the relevant circles of power after the sudden political change that had happened in Spain in December 1874. The new Alphonsine cabinet, heir to the Isabelian colonial and evangelical impulse, considered the colonies’ decadence rather to be the result of the “unjust and disgraceful” civil war than of the reasons governor Tudela had put forward in his report.¹⁴ Consequently, the government expressed its intention to again take up its engagement in West Africa by nominating Diego Santisteban Chamorro, a fifty-five year old navy captain with long experience in the Philippines, as governor of Fernando Po and commander of its marine base.¹⁵

Colonial propaganda in the age of photography

Santisteban’s initiative to send photographic images to the metropole evidently was not his personal invention but well in line with what other governmental officials, travellers and mission societies had done before him to use visual means to illustrate the infrastructure, people and environments in the colonies or places they explored and reconnoitred “for the spectacle of empire, its modes and regimes of visibility were profoundly photographic”, as the British historian and anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards noted in paper she presented at the ESHSS conference 2012 in Glasgow in 2012.¹⁶

The significance photography took on, practically from its invention and subsequent introduction in Africa in the 1840s, in the promotion of colonial and missionary endeavours in the metropole has been described in detail by many scholars. For instance, in his book *Picturing Empire*, historian James R. Ryan emphasized the important role photographs played for the “imaginative geography” of the colonial empires.¹⁷ “The human genre”, as the Franco-Peruvian artist and curator Juan-Carlos Belon Lemoine emphasised, “is constructed through operations in which the imagination plays a preponderant role”.¹⁸ There is no need to fully agree with Belon Lemoine that the “image has replaced words as the material [allowing people] to construct a narrative about their conception of reality” but the photographic image has, without any doubt, considerably changed the way in which we imagine the world and perceive reality.¹⁹

13. Sundiata 1996 (reference 7), 54.

14. AGMAB. Sección Expediciones. Legajo n. 356. Despacho del Ministerio de Marina al gobernador de Fernando Poo. Madrid, 19 de agosto de 1875. [Dispatch of the Minister for the Navy to the Governor on Fernando Po. Madrid, 19 August 1875].

15. AGMAB. Sección Cuerpo General. Legajo 620/1142. Hoja de servicios de D. Diego Santisteban y Chamorro. [Personnel files of D. Diego Santisteban y Chamorro]. Here, we need to underline the fact that the appointment of Diego Santisteban as chief of the naval base of Fernando Po happened on 14 September 1874 while the First Republic was still in force. However, Santisteban took office only on 22 January of the following year, three weeks after the general proclamation that initiated the Bourbon Restoration. Acting governor until Santisteban took office was Jacobo Varela.

16. Elizabeth Edwards, ‘The Invisibility of History: Photography, the Colonial and the refiguring of Nation’, Draft paper presented at the 9th European Social Science History conference ESHSS, Glasgow, April 12 2012, 1.

17. James Ryan, *Picturing Empire. Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*, London: Reaktion Books 1997, 11.

18. Juan Carlos Belon Lemoine, ‘Alterity/World-Image’, in: Gerardo Mosquera (ed.), *From Here. Context and Internationalization*, Madrid 2012, 25-31. Here page 30. See also Arjun Appadurai, ‘Global Ethnoscapes. Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology’, in: *Recapturing Anthropology. Working in the Present*, Richard G. Fox (ed.), Santa Fe (NM) 1991, 191-210.

19. Lemoine 2012 (reference 18), 25-31. Here page 25.

Photographs, we have to bear in mind, did not circulate solely as original prints but were reproduced, first as wood engravings and – as from the 1880s – as half-tone photo engravings, in books and illustrated newspapers. Visual information about Africa had been reaching Europe for centuries before the second half of the 19th century, but it had concerned relatively small geographical areas and usually only reached small educated elites. This changed, however, when new printing techniques allowed for the production of cheap illustrated newspapers and books at the time when European imperialism gained momentum.²⁰

The format of the illustrated newspaper emerged in the 1840s. Among the best known of these titles were the *Illustrated London News*, founded 1842, the German *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* and the French *L'illustration* which both first appeared in 1843. In the years that followed, nearly all of Europe, Russia, the USA and much of Latin America created their own examples of illustrated print media.²¹ The purpose of this new visually attractive format was “durch eine Verschmelzung von Bild und Wort eine Anschaulichkeit der Gegenwart hervorgerufen” (to evoke a vividness of the present through the amalgamation of word and image).²² In the context of what Benedict Anderson had termed “imagined communities”, cheap and easily accessible illustrated print media gained greatly in importance.²³

During the second half of the 19th century cameras became part and parcel of scientific and military expeditions, explorations and missionary endeavours in Africa to the extent that in 1864 an anonymous author remarked, “For the purpose of science, an explorer and a photographer should be convertible terms.”²⁴ Already a few months after the new technology had been made public in France in summer 1839,²⁵ the French naval captain Louis Édouard Bouët-Willaumez (1808-1871), on his reconnaissance mission along the West African coast, “brought his Daguerreotype on shore [...] in order to produce a drawing of [the fort of] St. George [Elmina, today Ghana].”²⁶ “Having felt the importance of obtaining faithful representations of the scenery, natives, animals of these remote countries,” the Franco-American traveller and gorilla hunter Paul Beloni du Chaillu carried along a camera while travelling in the Gabon hinterland in 1867.²⁷ The French Navy officers Paul Serval and Griffon du Bellay, who explored the West and Central African coast from 1861-1864, included photographs “des reproductions fidèles des photographies,” in the account of their journey which appeared in the French journal *Le Tour du Monde* in 1865. Mission societies showed a specific interest in photographic images so that, for instance, as art historian Dalila Scruggs put it, the documents

20. Leila Koivunen, *Visualizing Africa in Nineteenth-Century British Travel Accounts*, New York: Routledge 2009, 2-3.

21. For a list of such newspapers see Bernd Weise, ‘Aktuelle Nachrichtenbilder “nach Photographien” in der deutschen illustrierten Presse der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in: Charles Grivel, André Gunthert and Bernd Stiegler (ed.), *Die Eroberung der Bilder. Photographie in Buch und Presse (1816-1914)*, München 2003, in particular 62-63. Additionally there were also: *Harper’s Magazine* und *Harper’s Weekly* (USA, 1850 and 1857), *Leslie’s Weekly* (USA, 1852), *Gartenlaube* (Germany, 1853), *El Museo Universal* and *Ilustracion Espanola y Americana* (Spain, 1857 and 1869), *Le Monde Illustré* (France, 1857), *Über Land und Meer* (Germany, 1858), *Le Tour du Monde* (France, 1860), *Globus* (Germany, 1862), *Daheim* (Germany, 1864), *Le Journal Illustré* (France, 1864), *The Graphic* (USA, 1869), *L’Illustrazione Italiana* and *Nuova Illustrazione Universale* (Italy, 1873 and 1875). Bernd Weise writes that in Germany in the period between 1850 and

1914 at least 290 different titles of so called Familienblätter were published (page 68).

22. Cited in Weise 2003 (reference 21), 66.

23. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso 1983. See also Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, Princeton (N.J.) [etc.]: Princeton University Press 1997, 112.

24. Anonym: Art. VII. *The Quarterly Review*, October 1864, 498-499, cited in Ryan 1997 (reference 17), 21, FN 37.

25. Vicki Goldberg (ed.), *Photography in Print*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1988, 31-35.

26. Larry W. Yarak, ‘Early Photography in Elmina’, *Ghana Studies Council Newsletter*, vol. 8, 1995.

27. Paul B. du Chaillu, *A Journey to Ashango-Land and further Penetration into Equatorial Africa*, London: John Murray 1867, 2.

from the American Colonization Society were “peppered with visual keywords such as, ‘daguerreotype’, ‘lithograph’, and ‘likeness’, [indicating] that the A.C.S. actively commissioned artwork and used visual propaganda in addition to the written word.”²⁸

The Spaniard José Muñoz y Gaviria (Vizconde de San Javier), as “Administrador General de Rentas en las Posesiones Españolas en el Golfo de Guinea”, the chief of customs and taxes for the Spanish crown’s possessions in the Gulf of Guinea, spent three years, from 1860 to 1863, on Fernando Po. Like the French, Muñoz y Gaviria also considered photography to be the preferred means of visual communication with the Spanish administration and eventually, as reproduced in illustrated newspapers, a broader Spanish audience. A photo album which contains twenty four photographs from Fernando Po and the island of Corisco, showing buildings, people and scenery, bears witness to the Spanish officer’s attempt to promote Spain’s sub-Saharan possessions in the metropole. Evidently, Muñoz y Gaviria had made the photo album intended for the Spanish administration, but a selection of the photographs also appeared in the journal *El Museo Universal*, accompanying his travel account *Viaje al Africa central y la isla de Fernando Poo*.²⁹ In 1883, another Spaniard, Navy Lieutenant Francisco Romero, travelled to Fernando. The fourteen photographs the African photographer W.J. Sawyer took in the interior of the colony on behalf of Romero show “the second king of the island, Bottey Moytade” with his wives, men of his villages working in the yam fields, and the village where the king resided.

Francisco Romero was the spokesperson of the Spanish subcommission responsible for the country’s contribution to the International Colonial and Export Exposition in Amsterdam in 1883.³⁰ Romero’s expedition to Fernando Po and the subsequent display of ethnographic objects, agricultural products and photographic views at the Amsterdam exhibition was, similar to the Vizconde de San Javier’s expedition and subsequent publication of photographs some twenty years earlier, another attempt at pointing to the economic potential and value of Spain’s possession in the Gulf of Guinea both to a Spanish and foreign audience. The Vizconde de San Javier’s grievances that “those possessions [i.e. Fernando Po and its dependencies], so rich in timber, are worthless for Spain because no one goes there to export it, nor has a single commercial house been established, and rare are the boats which arrive from time to time from Spain” still reverberated in the article in *La Ilustración Española y Americana*.³¹

It is in the context of this larger institutional and political framework, where photographic images served as the truthful visual means to convey a specific reality, that the fourteen views of the capital Santa Isabel’s buildings and inhabitants Diego Santisteban sent

28. Dalila Scruggs, *The Love of Liberty Has Brought Us Here. The American Colonizing Society and the Imaging of African-American Settlers in Liberia*, PhD. Dissertation. Department of History of Art and Architecture. Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. 2010. A forerunner was the British Methodist Daniel West who took photographs, most likely ambrotypes, on his inspection tour along the West African coast in 1856. See Thomas West, Daniel West, *The Life and Journals of the Rev. Daniel West: Wesleyan Minister, and Deputation to the Wesleyan Mission Stations on the Gold Coast, West Africa*, London: Hamilton, Adams, and Company 1857.

29. José Muñoz y Gaviria (Vizconde de San Javier), ‘Viaje al Africa central y la isla de Fernando Poo’, *El Museo Universal*, Año VIII, 1864, Nos 19, 149; 21, 165, 168; 23, 180; 24, 189; 26, 204; 32, 253.

30. About the Amsterdam exhibition see Laetitia Dujardin, *Ethnics and Trade: Photography and the Colonial Exhibitions in Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels*, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum and Nieuw Amsterdam Publishers 2007. Théophile Fumière, *L’exposition internationale d’Amsterdam et la Belgique aux Pays-Bas*, Brussels: E. Guyot 1883.

31. Cited in Sundiata 1996 (reference 7), 54.

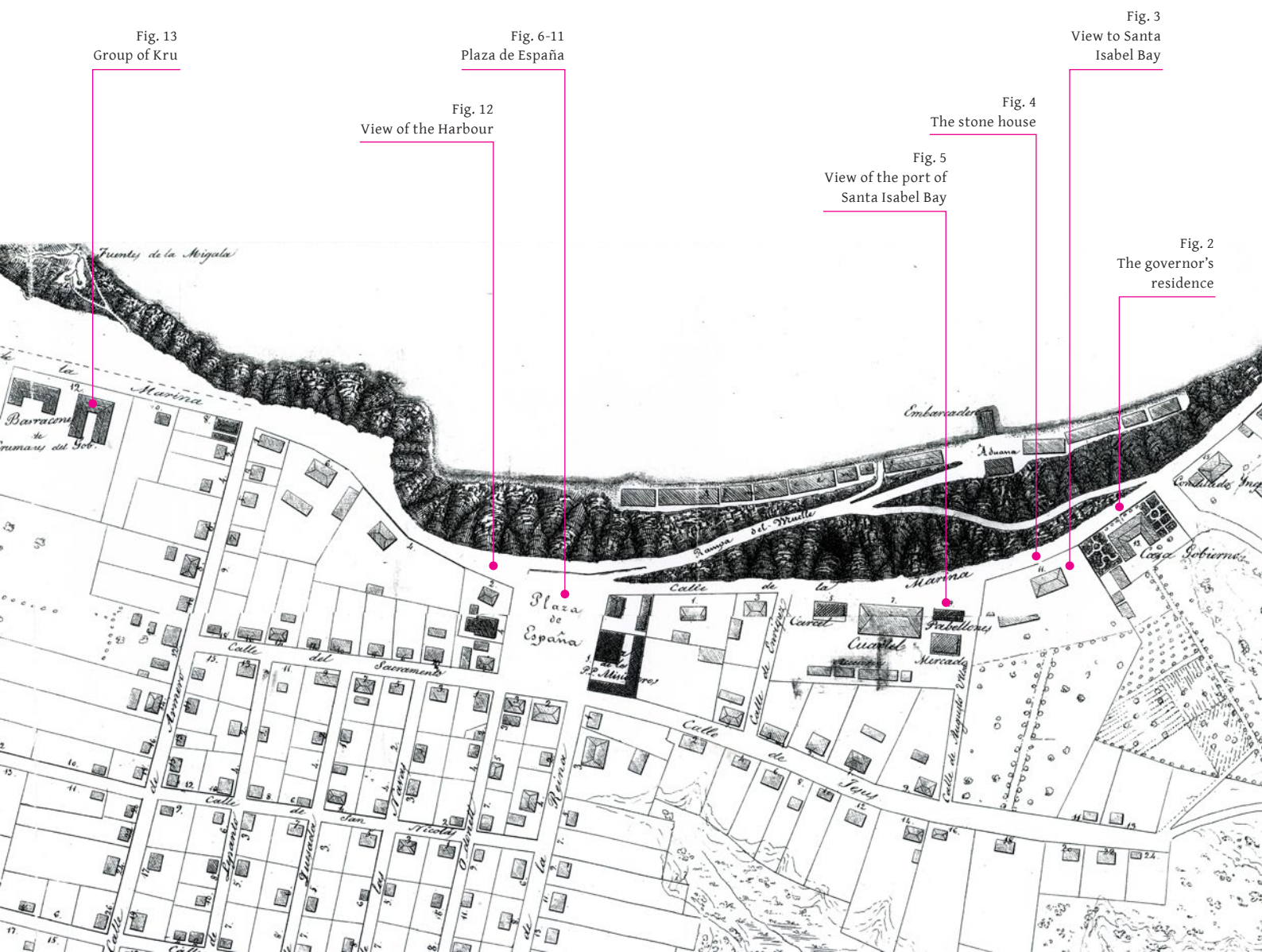


Figure 1
Map of Santa Isabel and the places shown
in the photographs, 1867.
The General Administration Archive,
Fonds Africa-Guinea (A-G),
Box C 81/7050.

to Madrid in 1875 must be understood. The next section will introduce in detail the images Francis W. Joaque took. We will follow him on his circuit through the island's capital.

A walk in Santa Isabel

Santa Isabel was founded by the British in 1827 as an alternative to Freetown, the then centre for British anti-slaving activities in West Africa, and christened Clarence in honour of the Duke of Clarence, the head of the Admiralty. In 1843 Clarence was renamed Santa Isabel by the Spanish. The autochthone population's reaction towards the colonists was not hostile and they engaged in trade in yams and palm oil with them.

According to the census that was sent to London, Clarence had 747 inhabitants in October 1828.³² This reached 873 in 1841, 982 in 1856 and was around 1,100 in 1877.³³ Since its foundation, Clarence continued to thrive attracting migrants from the African mainland and runaways from São Tomé und Príncipe. In the 1860s, several hundred Cuban *emancipados* and political deportees arrived on Fernando Po adding to the ethnic diversity of the town. British Baptists arrived in the early 1840s and laid the foundation for a parish that was to survive even after the Spanish expelled them from the island in 1858. However, in 1870, when the Spanish legislation provided for free exercise of religion, the Primitive Methodist Mission Society returned.³⁴ "Santa Isabel", wrote the US-American historian Ibrahim Sundiata, "was a unique place, one where a black settler population could evolve without the checks imposed by an imperial power. [...] The town contained Western schools, medical care, commercial transactions, and a brothel for visiting sailors."³⁵ Let us now take a stroll and see where the photographer Joaque set his tripod (fig. 1).

Figure 1: Map of Santa Isabel and the places shown in the photographs

The major part of the photographs show the buildings situated along the Marina, the road following the shoreline of the sea in front of the town.³⁶ It seems that they were taken on the same day beginning in the east at the governor's house and then proceeding to the housings of the Kru on the extreme west of the Marina, to Punta Christina. Six of the fourteen photographs were taken at the town's central square, the Plaza de España, which clearly shows Santisteban's intention to concentrate the viewers' attention on Santa Isabel's most emblematic space, a familiar and inevitable feature of Spanish urbanity.

Figure 2: View of the governor's residence

The first Spanish governor, Carlos Chacón, bought the building, which was later to become his and his successor's residence, from an English trader in 1858 (fig. 2). The site is U-shaped with a central section and two lateral wings enclosing a small patio. It was a wood construction but

32. Amador Martín del Molino, *La Ciudad de Clarence. Primero años de la actual ciudad de malabo, capital de Guinea Ecuatorial, 1827-1859*, Madrid y Malabo: Instituto de cooperación para el desarrollo. Centro cultural Hispano-Guineano 1993, 65.

33. Sundiata 1996 (reference 7), 57.

34. Henry Roe, *West African Scenes: being Descriptions of Fernando Po, its Climate, Productions and Tribes: the Cause and Cure of Sickness; with Missionary Work,*

Trials, and Encouragements, London: Elliott Stock 1874. Henry Roe, *Fernando Po Mission: A Consecutive History of the Opening of our First Mission to the Heathen*, London: Elliott Stock 1882.

35. Sundiata 1996 (reference 7), 57.

36. The early years of Santa Isabel (from 1827 to 1859) are described in detail in Martín del Molino 1993 (reference 32), 13-172.



Figure 2
Francis W. Joaque,
View of the governor's residence, Santa Isabel,
Fernando Po 1875, albumen print 13,5 x 10,1 cm.
Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de
Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

featured some cast iron columns set between the poles that supported the upper level. The thatched roof protruded beyond the façade and covered the veranda which runs around the house.³⁷ The house was fenced and we get a glimpse of the garden which stretches along the lateral wing. According to the inventory presented in 1863 by Governor Pantaleón López Ayllón,

the house contained the governor's office and two additional offices for the secretariat and administration, a dining room, a bedroom, a toilet and a bathroom on the first floor and four rooms, two toilets and two storerooms on the upper level. The adjacent buildings contained a kitchen, the cook's accommodation, an additional storeroom and "a darkroom with two windows and a door". We don't know if Joaque used this room to develop his photographs.³⁸ What we know, on the other hand, is that the documents Governor Ignacio García Tudela handed over to his successor Jacobo Varela on November 22, 1874 mentioned "cameras and the respective ingredients which are all in a totally disabled state."³⁹

It seems that the cameras, or at least one of them (actually, we dispose of no information on how many cameras were handed over to Varela), had arrived on Fernando Po in 1859 as part of a larger shipment of scientific instruments. According to the accompanying documents, the camera and some wide angle lenses had cost "450 reales de vellón".⁴⁰ We can assume that the bad state of the equipment in 1874 was due to the fact that it had not been used for quite some time, but it is also possible that it was this very camera which the Vizconde de San Javier used during his period of residence on the island in the early 1860s.

In 1871, Governor Federico Anrich stated that the house was in a good state save the furniture which had been acquired in 1864. Three years later, in December 1874 and hence only a few months before Diego Santisteban sent Joaque's photographs to Madrid, Governor Jacobo Varela reported to the responsible ministry in the capital that the house was in a bad state and a prompt renovation of the roof, the planks of the rooms and the veranda, as well as most of the posts and composite beams of the lower level, was urgently necessary. Indeed, the bad state of the roof where some parts of the roofing have completely disappeared is perfectly visible on the photography.

37. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del gobernador accidental Pedro Ossa al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 20 de septiembre de 1872. [Official letter from the acting governor Pedro Ossa Dueñas to the Minister of Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, September 20 1872. This governor asked for the permission to repair the buildings owned by the state].

38. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6981. Inventario de los edificios propios del Estado que existen en esta colonia. Santa Isabel, 20 de abril de 1863. [Inventory of the state-owned buildings that exist in this colony, Santa Isabel, April 20 1863].

39. AGA. A-G. C. 81/8172. Acta de entrega del mando del gobernador Ignacio García Tudela. Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo, 22 de noviembre de 1874. [Handover documents of governor Ignacio García Tudela, Santa Isabel, November 22 1874].

40. AGA. A-G. C. 81/8172. Relación de los instrumentos y efectos adquiridos para las operaciones científicas de colonización de Fernando Poo. Madrid, 27 de febrero de 1859. [List of instruments and articles procured for the scientific development of Fernando Po. Madrid February 27 1859].



Figure 3
Francis W. Joaque, *View of the buildings that look out over Santa Isabel Bay taken from Government House, Santa Isabel*, Fernando Po 1875, albumen print 13,8 x 10,3 cm. Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

the same time envisaged that he would have to neglect his duties as governor while overseeing the works. 2,753 pesetas were needed for the residence alone and the renovation of the floors of the reception hall and the dining room, as well as for the acquisition of some furniture and a complete set of dinnerware. Without these measures being undertaken, Arias argued, he would no longer be in the position to receive the official representatives of the nearby colonies and the officers of the various vessels calling at Santa Isabel's harbour in decent way.⁴¹ However, the situation only changed in 1900 when Governor Francisco Dueñas transferred the government's headquarters to a prefabricated iron building which had been bought in Belgium. Joaque's photograph is a testimony to the Spanish government's inability and reluctance during the troubled revolutionary years to provide Fernando Po's colonial authorities with the means to maintain the infrastructure.

Figure 3: View of the buildings that look out over Santa Isabel Bay taken from Government House

This view of a part of the Marina (fig. 3) was taken from the residence's garden on the opposite side of the building. We can identify the same fence as in figure two and also recognize the same type of street lights. According to the map of Santa Isabel from 1867 (fig. 1), drawn by the engineer Félix Recio,⁴² the sequence of buildings towards Punta Cristina consists of a wooden house followed by a house called the stone house ("Casa de piedra o de pabellones", see figure 4). The barracks follow and then, hardly visible on the photograph, the gaol. In the distance one can see the bell tower (la espadaña) of the Catholic San José Church and the edifices of the Catholic mission situated on the Plaza de España. Behind the church, the small house of the port authorities and the premises of the Protestant mission surrounded by a white wall can be discerned. We will have a closer look at these premises later. On the right, the terrain plunges down to the shore of the Bahía de Santa Isabel where the roofs of the old customs facilities are recognisable. All edifices visible on the photograph were built before 1863.

41. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6930. Oficio del gobernador Alejandro Arias al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 10 de Abril de 1877. [Official letter from governor Alejandro Arias to the Minister of Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, April 10 1877].

42. AGA, A-G. C 81/7050.

According to Governor Alejandro Arias' letter from March 1877 mentioned above it was the barracks ("la casa cuartel") that needed repair most urgently. The two-storey wooden house planned and constructed by the engineers Manuel Pujol and Luís García Tejero in 1860⁴³ was known as the barracks because it housed the troops on the lower level but the space upstairs was reserved for the colonial officials and public servants.⁴⁴ In 1872, Governor Pedro Ossa had the zinc roofing replaced by much lighter panels of felt in order to avoid the devastating effects the rains had on the high building with the distinctive bullglass windows in its gables.⁴⁵

The harbour shed first served as a customs house and then as a storehouse for supplies for the naval station. According to an assessment by Governor Federico Anrich in 1871, it looked in very poor condition as, due to its location, it was constantly subject to the damage caused by cascading water coming down the side of the mountain and water ingress; this meant that damp not only affected the fabric of the building but also damaged the naval supplies within.⁴⁶ To add to this, following the *Decreto Orgánico* of 26 October 1872, the colony's budget was reduced to the bare minimum, meaning that the amount of money allocated to public works and building repairs was cut even further. This speeded up the deterioration of public buildings and the abandonment of many of the plots intended for the enlargement of Santa Isabel planned by Julián Pellón, and these pieces of land were again overrun by vegetation.

Despite the poor state of repair of some of the buildings due to lack of maintenance, the image conveyed by Joaqué's photographs appears to confirm that Governor Santisteban shared the positive view formed by *Comisario* Pellón in his 1866 assessments regarding the real transformation that the town had undergone in just a few years. In his report, Pellón made it clear that when the first Spanish colonists arrived on Fernando Po in 1859 they had hardly anywhere to stay and did not even have a church to worship in. In fewer than seven years, these problems had largely disappeared. Despite the lack of colonists in Santa Isabel, there were excellent houses laid out in streets and little squares where the highest standards of hygiene and cleanliness prevailed; a church, an inn, a dance hall, three casinos, several cafés and some bakeries had been built; the town was provided with shops that were well supplied with all sorts of articles from Europe, as well as with places to walk and relax. What was more, most of the urban space had been deforested and many swamps had been filled in and drinking water restored to three public drinking fountains; all reasons for the town looking very different from the way it was in 1859.⁴⁷ All the same, Joaqué's photograph bears witness to the

43. In December 1860 Governor José de la Gándara invited the king of Calbar to visit Santa Isabel with the aim of concluding a trade agreement. During his stay the king also visited the barracks which at that time were already finished and for which the king asked for the construction plans. Archivo General del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación (en adelante, AGMAEC), TR 439, Expediente 12. Oficio de José de la Gándara al ministro de la Guerra y Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 27 de diciembre de 1860. [Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, henceforth AGMAEC], TR 439, File 12. Report of José de la Gándara to the Minister for War and Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 27 December 1860].

44. Muñoz y Gaviria [Vizconde de San Javier], *Tres años en Fernando Poo. Viaje a*

África, Madrid: Urbano Maninir 1871, 156.

45. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Informe y presupuesto de las obras de reparación que se consideran necesarias de los edificios pertenecientes al Estado en esta localidad. Santa Isabel, 5 de diciembre de 1872. [Report and cost estimation for the repair works deemed necessary for the buildings owned by the state in Santa Isabel. 5 December 1872].

46. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6930. Oficio del gobernador Federico Anrich, 10 de marzo de 1871. [Official letter from Governor Federico Anrich, 10 March 1871].

47. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7047. Informe del comisario de fomento Julián Pellón Rodríguez. Madrid, 15 de junio de 1866. [Report by Julián Pellón Rodríguez, Madrid, 15 June 1866].



Figure 4

Francis W. Joaque, *The stone house with pavilions for officials*, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875, albumen print 13,6 x 10,1 cm. Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

fact that the Calle de la Marina, the town's main arterial street, was little more than a path.

Figure 4: The stone house with pavilions for officials

It was originally known as "pavilion house" (fig. 4) and considered an annexe of the Santa Isabel market at the front with a view of the sea for the accommodation of officials.⁴⁸ Along with the church and the Jesuit missionaries' house, it was one of the only three brick-built constructions in Santa Isabel.

Although it was referred to as the "*casa de piedra*" (stone house), it was in fact built using Cádiz bricks. Its construction was begun during the governorship of Pantaleón

López Ayllón and completed by his successor, José Gómez Barreda. The plan had been costed in July 1863 and the budget for the sum of 18,268 *escudos* and 80 *céntimos* approved in November that year, but work on it had to stop for five months from October 1864 when they ran out of lime.⁴⁹ With the delay and the modifications introduced while the work was in progress, the original costs increased substantially.⁵⁰ The construction work, together with the wooden building intended as a market, was not completed until March 1866. The builders who did the work were contracted in Accra for 10 *pesos* a month with an additional half *duro* a week each for food.⁵¹ Governor José Gómez Barreda gave it the final push, requesting an additional sum of 2,000 *escudos* for the finishing touches (doors, tiles, windows and paint).⁵² The original basic plan had been greatly modified, with additional accommodation for three employees and space to have tax offices and courts, as well as storehouses, which were built to be separate from the main building. At the time the photograph was taken, the main floor was intended as employee accommodation while the ground floor was to be offices.

48. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6970. E. 9. Informe y aprobación por el Ministerio de Ultramar del proyecto de mercado de Santa Isabel. Madrid, 26 de noviembre de 1862. [Report and authorization by the Ministry for Overseas Territories for the Santa Isabel market project, Madrid, 26 November, 1862]. The market was built on plot number 9, Calle de la Marina, with views over the Calle de Ulloa and the alley leading to the barracks. The pavilion building was built in Calle de la Marina with views over the bay.

49. AGA. A-G. C. 6973. Oficio del gobernador Pantaleón López Ayllón al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 15 de octubre de 1864. [Official letter from Governor Pantaleón López Ayllón to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 15 October 1864].

50. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del gobernador José Gómez de Barreda al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 10 de febrero de 1866. [Official letter from Governor José Gómez de Barreda to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 10 February 1866].

51. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7124. Oficio del gobernador Pantaleón López Ayllón al ministro de la Guerra y Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 28 de marzo de 1864. [Official letter from Governor Pantaleón López Ayllón to the Minister for War and Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 28 March 1864].

52. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del gobernador José Gómez de Barreda al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel 31 de marzo de 1866. [Official letter from Governor José Gómez de Barreda to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 31 March 1866].



Figure 5
Francis W. Joaque, *View of port of Santa Isabel Bay and Fernanda Point, where the streetlamp is located*, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875, albumen print 13,5 x 10,1 cm. Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

ing beams of the vault had rotted, leaving them practically unable to support the tiles with which it was made, was also among the most urgent repairs that Varela mentioned.

Judging by how good it looks in the photograph taken by Joaque, little time can have passed since the roof reconstruction works and the repairs to cornices and walls were completed. Doubtlessly, it was the first of the buildings to benefit from the general repair plan for all of Fernando Po's state buildings, something that was handled by Santisteban himself between 1875 and 1876 and carried out by "*cuatro carpinteros morenos del país*" (four dark-skinned local carpenters) and two builders.⁵³

Even so, on 8 July 1877, part of the roof came away due to heavy rain taking with it the first-floor ceiling. In April 1878 the tile roof had to be replaced with a corrugated-iron one.⁵⁴ In 1900, Governor Francisco Dueñas had some more repair works carried out.⁵⁵ We do not know when the building was finally demolished. Nor do we know of any other picture of this house which was the flagship of the colony's construction works for so many years and whose historical value is therefore exceptional.

53. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficios del gobernador Diego Santisteban al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, Diciembre 1875- junio de 1876. [Official letters from Governor Diego Santisteban to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, December 1875-June 1876].

54. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. E. 12. Reparación en la Casa de Piedra y Misión y aumento de crédito para obras públicas. (Repairs to the Stone and Mission houses

and increase in the provision of money for public works).

55. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6931. Oficio del gobernador Francisco Dueñas al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 30 de diciembre de 1899. [Official letter from Governor Francisco Dueñas to the Minister of Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 30 December 1899].

Figure 5: View of the port of Santa Isabel Bay and Fernanda Point, where the streetlamp is located

From the angle the picture of the stone house was taken, you just needed to turn the camera round and cross the Calle de la Marina to get this splendid view of Santa Isabel harbour (fig. 5), a magnificent and natural circular inlet formed by a sunken volcanic crater and bounded by Fernanda Point to the east and Cristina Point to the west that gave access to the town. The sparseness of vegetation on Fernanda Point revealed by the photograph is due to the deforestation work carried out in 1862 at the behest of Governor Pantaleón López Ayllón.⁵⁶ The whole harbour area was transformed in 1872 with the creation of a solid stone and earth quay and the building of new warehouses for coal and other supplies.⁵⁷

The steamer in the foreground is very probably the schooner *Edetana*, which was not replaced by the *Prosperidad* until February 1876.⁵⁸ The smaller launch in the background could be the *Trinidad*, which was also assigned to the service of the colony at that point. However, on 25 October 1875, Santisteban raised the issue of the presence of two Spanish schooners in Santa Isabel: the *Edetana*, which had been serving the colony since the end of 1872⁵⁹ and the *Prosperidad*, which had come to relieve her when the *Edetana* was unable to return to Spain immediately because of the poor condition of her boilers. The presence of two crews gave Santisteban cause for complaint because it put him in the difficult position of “*tener en estas aguas dos buques a la vez y por consiguiente dos tripulaciones a quien sostener con los escasos elementos con que aquí cuento, especialmente de víveres*” (having two ships in these waters at the same time and so two crews to provide for with the scarce resources that I have available here, particularly when it comes to foodstuffs).⁶⁰

Not long before, his desperation over lack of funds had led Governor Ignacio García Tudela to write an official letter to the Minister for Overseas Territories demanding his relief, complaining that he had little choice but “*que mendigar auxilios para esta pobre colonia como si fuese un pordiosero*” (to beg for aid for this poor colony as if I were a beggar).⁶¹ This governor ended up breaking up a launch on his own initiative to sell its copper and bronze and thereby obtain some money to help the sailors.⁶²

The streetlamp that can just be made out on Fernanda Point is a dioptric device that worked with alcohol and was bought in Paris in 1866.⁶³ It was the first streetlamp to be put

56. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del gobernador Pantaleón López Ayllón al ministro de la Guerra y Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 10 de enero de 1863. [Official letter from Governor Pantaleón López Ayllón to the Minister for War and Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 10 January 1863].

57. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7060. Oficio del gobernador Antoni de Vivas al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 23 de junio de 1872. [Official letter from Governor Antoni de Vivas to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 23 June 1872].

58. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6669. Oficio del ministro de Marina al ministro de Ultramar. Madrid, 20 de enero de 1876. [Official letter from the Minister for the Navy to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Madrid, 20 January 1876].

59. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7035. Real Orden de 10 de septiembre mandando que la goleta *Edetana* sustituya a la *Ligera* en la estación naval de Fernando Po. [Royal Order of 10 September ordering the schooner *Edetana* to replace the *Ligera* at the Fernando Po naval station].

60. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7035. Oficio del gobernador Diego Santisteban al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 29 de octubre de 1875. [Official letter from Governor Diego Santisteban to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 29 October, 1875].

61. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6978. Oficio del gobernador Ignacio García Tudela al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 1 de agosto de 1874. [Official letter from Governor Ignacio García Tudela to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 1 August 1874].

62. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6978. Oficio del gobernador Ignacio García Tudela (o Jacobo Varela) al ministro de la Marina. Santa Isabel, 31 de diciembre de 1874. [Official letter from Governor Ignacio García Tudela (or Jacobo Varela) to the Minister for the Navy, Santa Isabel, 31 December 1874].

63. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6974. E. 4. *Construcción de una Farola en el muelle del Puerto*. [Construction of a light on the harbour pier].



Figure 6
Francis W. Joaque, *View of Plaza de España*,
Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875,
albumen print 13,9 x 10,2 cm.
Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de
Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

doubtedly the place that Governor Santisteban wanted Francis Joaque to take the greatest pains over and show off from various different angles. This was both because it was the town centre and also represented the best developed part of Santa Isabel and so a total of six photographs were taken for this purpose. The deforestation and levelling, the water drainage system and the levelling of the Plaza de España were carried out by *emancipados* and Kru people employed by the government at the end of 1862, shortly after the construction of the church was completed.⁶⁴ It was not until 1901 that it would be concreted over for the first time.

Figure 7: View of San José's Church and the Plaza de España gardens that look out over the bay

Of all the buildings around, the one most photographed by Joaque was San José's Church (fig. 7). It was brick-built (even the foundations, which were 4.5 ft deep by 3 ft wide) with a 45 ft long by 30 ft wide nave. Two steps led up to it at the front. The church was in the Tuscan style, with six windows, two at the front and four at the sides, with coloured glass and a floor of fine tiles. The first building in Santa Isabel to be built entirely of brick was designed by Manuel Pujol Olives, a major in the Spanish Corps of Engineers living in Santa Isabel up to the end of 1861.

up in the colony; the others that appear in the various different photographs of the Calle de la Marina date from somewhat later although it was not possible to find out precisely when they were installed. This first one was put in at the behest of Governor José Gómez Barreda to replace an old English streetlight that had been destroyed by tornadoes some years earlier and not replaced for lack of funds for the purpose.⁶⁴ In 1888, it was replaced by a special red harbour light, which could be seen from over six miles away and had also been bought in Paris.⁶⁵

Figure 6: View of Plaza de España

The Plaza de España (fig. 6) was un-

64. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7050. Antonio de Vivar. *Breves apuntes sobre la colonia de Fernando Poo*. Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo, 11 de noviembre de 1871. [Antonio de Vivar: Some short notes about the colony of Fernando Poo, 11 November 1871].
65. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6974. Oficio del gobernador José de Ibarra al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 20 de marzo de 1888. [Official letter from Governor José de Ibarra to the Minister for Overseas Territories. Santa Isabel, 20 March, 1888].

66. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del Gobernador Pantaleón López Ayllón al ministro de la Guerra y Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 10 de enero de 1863. [Official letter from Governor Pantaleón López Ayllón to the Minister for War and Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 10 January 1863].



Figure 7
Francis W. Joaque, *View of San José's Church and the Plaza de España gardens that look out over the bay, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, albumen print 13,9 x 10,2 cm. Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

congregation coming out of church; first with them standing by the church porch and then seated on the benches in the garden.

According to the enthusiastic description given by Father José Irisarri, the head of the Jesuit Mission on Fernando Po who had arrived in early 1858, the floor of the church was made of blue and white Genovese marble and had a coffered wooden ceiling painted in a creamy white.

Both the triangular area above the pediment cornice and the areas between the four pillars were plastered or rendered using Roman concrete; the eight windows with their semicircular arches letting light into the inside were glazed in glass of different colours; the door, cut and crafted in Santa Isabel, was made out of local mahogany. The whole building was encircled by a stone wall rendered with mortar, leaving a ten-foot space between it and the walls of the building for processions, and a railing that was painted green. The space between this and the façade was broader and formed a kind of fairly open and uncluttered atrium. It could be accessed from the street by climbing up three steps, with another step leading into the church; each step was one foot high.

The budgeted cost was 119,020 *reales de vellón*.⁶⁷

If we enlarge the photographs enough, we can tell from the clock on the bell tower at what time and in which order Joaque took them: the first, with the church seen from the front and shown near the centre of the picture, was taken by Joaque at 11:14. The second was taken from the western corner of the square at 11:31. The third would be the one that shows the house of John Holt the English trader, in which only the east side of the church appears.⁶⁸ The fourth might be the one showing the house of trader José Joaquim de Souza, which is on a corner of the square. This is followed by two pictures showing the

67. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7081. *Proyecto y presupuesto de la iglesia en Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo*. (Budget and plans for the church in Santa Isabel, Fernando Po).

68. John Holt settled in Santa Isabel in 1862. In 1867 he created the biggest trading post on the island, known popularly as the "Holty". See Garcia 2004 (reference 9), 6. Peter N. Davies (ed.), *The Diary of John Holt*, St. John's, Newfoundland:

International Maritime Economic History Association 1993. John Holt and Company (ed.), *Merchant Adventure*, Liverpool: John Holt & Company n.d. (ca. 1950).



Figure 8

Francis W. Joaque, *House of Mr. John Holt, the English trader, on the Plaza de España, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, albumen print 13,9 x 10,3 cm.

Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

exactly one year later by his successor, Pantaleón López Ayllón, in honour of Queen Isabel II, who had financed it.⁷⁰ It need hardly be added that this time there were no delays due to lack of materials or funding to complete the work. However, the roof of the building must have deteriorated very quickly since we learn that, in 1868, the tiling had to be completely replaced and, as fate would have it, the roof gave way causing the four workers carrying out the job to fall to the ground; one of them died in a matter of days due to the severity of his injuries.⁷¹

The clock was installed in the tower in May 1871. It had been bought from the firm of Zulueta in London in December 1870 and brought to Santa Isabel on board the English boat *Liberia*. It was initiated by Governor Federico Anrich, on the orders of Governor Zoilo Sánchez so that work in the government workshops might have “*una regla fija para marcar el tiempo preciso de entrada y salida*” (a fixed way of determining precise arrival and departure times) and started by his successor, Federico Anrich, on 18 March 1871.⁷² There is no reason to believe that it performed other than well.

At the beginning of 1880, the tiled roof was replaced by corrugated-iron sheeting to make it lighter as well as waterproof, in this way preventing both deterioration of the walls and water ingress. At the same time, the inside was restored and the outside repainted.⁷³ However, nothing was done about the wooden bell tower, whose woodwork was “*podrida completamente*” (completely rotten) according to a report on the condition of government buildings issued in August the same year.

69. Archivo Histórico de Loyola (en adelante, AHL). Historia de las Misiones de la Comp^a. hasta 1865, de papeles recibidos de Salamanca. *Reseña de los trabajos de la misión de Fernando Poo en el año 1862 escrita por el Rdo. Padre José Irisarri*. [Loyola Historical Archives [henceforth, AHL]. History of the Missions of the Society of Jesus up to 1865, from papers received from Salamanca. Report concerning the work of the Mission on Fernando Po in 1862 written by Reverend Father José Irisarri].

70. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7049. *Reseña de los trabajos de la misión y de algunas circunstancias de las Islas del Golfo de Guinea, sujetas al dominio de España, en el año 1861*. Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo, 18 de Diciembre de 1861. José Irisarri S.J. Superior de la Misión. [Report concerning the work of the Mission and the situation on the Spanish-ruled islands in the Gulf of Guinea, in 1861. Santa

Isabel, Fernando Po, 18 December 1861. José Irisarri, Society of Jesus, Mission Superior].

71. AHL. Carta del P. Berasain al P. Taverner. Sta. Isabel, 30 de diciembre de 1868 [AHL. Letter from P. Berasain to P. Taverner, Santa Isabel, 30 December 1868].

72. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6981. E. 26. *Sobre la adquisición de un reloj para Fernando Poo*. Oficio del gobernador Federico Anrich al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 27 de marzo de 1871. [Regarding the purchase of a clock for Fernando Po. Official letter from Governor Federico Anrich to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 27 March 1871].

73. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del gobernador Anselmo Gazulla al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 5 de febrero de 1880 [Official letter from Governor Anselmo Gazulla to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 5 February 1880].



Figure 9
Francis W. Joaque, *House of the trader D. José Joaquim de Souza*, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875, albumen print 13,4 x 10 cm.
Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

ed with the bell tower, which was wooden, and the windows on the south side, and ended with the roof and its zinc-covered wooden framework. By ten o'clock that night, the Holt House had disappeared completely and the church was a blazing furnace, despite attempts by the crew of the pontoon *Ferrolana* and some of the sailors from the British boat *Landren* to put out the flames.⁷⁴ After the fire, all that survived were the masonry walls, which were 60 cm (24") thick, surrounding the open church space, which was 8.30 metres (27 ft) wide by 19.90 metres (65 ft) long, as well as another area behind that was designed as the presbytery and vestry and measured 6.25 by 6 metres (21 x 20 ft).

In 1889 religious services were moved to a new, more modern and somewhat more spacious prefabricated church made of sheet iron, ordered from the Belgian firm *Forges d'Aiseau* and erected on the other side of the *Plaza de España* on the seaboard side of the Catholic mission.⁷⁵

In its session on 4 August 1890, the colony's *Junta de Autoridades* (planning committee) approved the reconstruction of the building as a venue for the *Consejo de Vecinos*, *Juzgado municipal* and *puesto de policía* (community council, municipal court and police station), sending the report and plans for the redesign, in which they were looking at raising the floor a metre above the ground using a simple mahogany structure, to Madrid. The redevelopment works, signed by the forestry official Germán Garibaldi, were budgeted at 13,123 *pesetas* and 68 *céntimos*.⁷⁶ This church was taken down in 1930 and moved to the west of the capital, as, at the beginning of the 20th century, the present-day Santa Isabel's Cathedral had been built on the exact same spot where San José's Church had originally stood.⁷⁷

Figure 9: House of the trader D. José Joaquim de Souza.

This house was located on one of the corners of the *Plaza de España* (fig. 9). We can not provide any more details about it.

74. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficio del gobernador Antonio Moreno Guerra al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 13 November 1888 [Official letter from Governor Antonio Moreno Guerra to the Minister for Overseas Territories, 13 November 1888].

75. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. E 2. Construcción de una iglesia en Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo. [Construction of a church in Santa Isabel, Fernando Po].

76. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6971. Proyecto de un edificio para Consejo de Vecinos en

Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo basado sobre el aprovechamiento de los restos de la antigua iglesia. Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo, 5 de setiembre de 1890. [Plan for a building for Community Council meetings in Santa Isabel making use of what was left of the old church. Santa Isabel, Fernando Po, 5 September 1890].

77. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6470. Instancia del vicario apostólico de Fernando Poo al Director General de Marruecos y Colonias. Santa Isabel 11 de marzo de 1930. [Official request from the Apostolic Vicar of Fernando Po to the Director General for Morocco and the Colonies, Santa Isabel, 11 March 1930].



Figure 10: View of the atrium of San José's Church on Fernando Po with people coming out of mass

In the first of the pictures taken by Joaque showing people coming out of mass, we can see Governor Diego Santisteban, shading himself under a white parasol, in the centre (fig. 10). The photograph lets us see what the

Figure 10
Francis W. Joaque, *View of the atrium of San José's church on Fernando Po with people coming out of Mass, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, albumen print 13,6 x 10,1 cm. Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

atrium was like, as well as the front door and the windows; at the same time the broken windows bear witness to the lack of maintenance due to the scarcity of available resources. The priest seen in the next picture is almost certainly Camilo Rivera Rodríguez, who was the parish priest for the colony from 1 May 1873 to 12 April 1876.⁷⁸

In a confidential letter to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Governor Ignacio García Tudela mentions the inappropriate womanizing of this priest. According to García Tudela, reliable officials had assured him that, about a month before, Don Camilo had hit his sacristan because "*se negó a permanecer de vigilante mientras alguna mujer estaba encerrada con él en una habitación, y porque no se prestaba a hacer recados a su querida. Uno de los agentes de la Policía de este Gobierno encontró acostado con su propia manceba y en su misma cama a las diez de la noche al enunciado Párroco*" (he refused to stand guard while Don Camilo and some woman were shut up in a room together, and because he would not run errands for the priest's lover. One of the policemen employed by this government discovered this same parish priest in his very bed with his own mistress at ten o'clock at night).⁷⁹

In response to such scandalous behaviour, naval officers refused to attend church services conducted by this lustful and aggressive chaplain who was so lacking in Christian zeal. According to García Tudela, no disciplinary inquiry had been held because making his behaviour public would have meant "*un escándalo mayúsculo para la población y motivo sobrado de burla para los misioneros protestantes*" (a major scandal for the population as well as providing the Protestant missionaries with ample opportunity for mockery).

The reprimand the priest would receive from the decent and respectable governor must have been equal to his sins because, in another confidential letter a couple of months later, García Tudela recognizes that Don Camilo had mended his ways and was trying hard to carry out the duties of his sacred ministry.⁸⁰ On 12 April 1876, Santisteban gave him

78. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6985 E. 52. D. *Camilo Rivera y Rodríguez solicita abono de haberes por el tiempo que prestó sus servicios en la Estación Naval de Fernando Poo*. Instancia de D. Camilo Rivera al ministro de Ultramar. Cuenca, 26 de noviembre de 1879. [D. Camilo Rivera y Rodríguez requests payment of monies for the time he worked at the Fernando Po Naval Station. (Official request from D. Camilo Rivera to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Cuenca, 26 November 1879). It should be added that after sending numerous fruitless official requests for these monies (5,309 pesetas) and the cost of his passage, the Minister for

Overseas Territories rejected his request in 1885, stating that he had absented himself from the colony without permission.

79. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6985 E. 52. D. Oficio reservado del gobernador al ministro de Ultramar. Sta. Isabel, 6 de marzo de 1874. [Confidential letter from the Governor to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 6 March 1874].

80. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6985 E. 52. D. Oficio reservado del gobernador al ministro de Ultramar. Sta. Isabel 4 de mayo de 1874. [Confidential letter from the Governor to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 4 May 1874].



permission to return to Spain “por haber sido multiplicadamente atacado de la fiebre del país” (because of the numerous attacks of local fevers and illnesses he had suffered), and as a result, the governor found himself “en la dura necesidad de cerrar el templo católico” (obliged to close the Catholic church) till another priest arrived.⁸¹

Figure 11
Francis W. Joaque, *Group of Fernandians and colony employees gathered together in the garden arbour at the Plaza de España, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, Albumin 13,8 x 10,3 cm. Archivo General de la Marina “Alvaro de Bazán” en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

Figure 11: Group of Fernandians and colony employees gathered together in the garden arbour on the Plaza de España

In his report *Informe al Gobierno de la República* (Report to the Government of the Republic) in 1873, Governor García Tudela had declared that Fernando Po’s Catholic population was being reduced “a unos pocos peninsulares, a los congos venidos de Cuba, a algunos negros portugueses de la isla de Príncipe, a media docena o poco más de individuos catequizados por los jesuitas y al reducido número de jóvenes o niños educados en su escuela” (to a few people from mainland Spain, the Kongos who had come over from Cuba, some Portuguese Blacks from the island of Príncipe, half a dozen people or so who had received religious instruction from the Jesuits and the small number of young people and children educated in their school); this meant that the church was little used and it was even empty on some holy days.⁸² It therefore comes as no surprise that Santisteban had a particular interest in showing a large congregation coming out of mass to give the lie to what his predecessor had said (fig. 11).

Previously, and for the same reason, the primary school teachers for both boys and girls had also left for Spain; this resulted in the state school for girls being closed on 30 June 1876 and – for want of a more adequate and stable solution – the one for boys having to be run by staff with hardly any qualifications for the task. To resolve this problem, Santisteban offered the teaching posts to the explorer Manuel Iradier and his wife Isabel Urquiola, who held them till 1877. They stopped their work for two reasons: because they wanted to return to Spain after the death of their daughter and because they were unhappy with the pay they were receiving, which fell very far short of the salaries and allowances given to qualified teachers.⁸³

81. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6959. Oficio del gobernador Diego Santisteban al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 8 de julio de 1876. (Official letter from Governor Diego Santisteban to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 8 July 1876).

82. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6939. Informe del Gobernador de Fernando Poo, D. Ignacio García Tudela demostrando y enardeciendo la necesidad y la conveniencia de abandonar dicha colonia y sus dependencias. Santa Isabel, 14 de diciembre de 1873. (Report by D. Ignacio García Tudela, the Governor of Fernando Po, demonstrating and highlighting in very strong terms the necessity and advisability of abandoning said colony and its dependencies, Santa Isabel, 14 December 1873).

83. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6959. Instancias de Isabel Urquiola reclamando el abono del sobresueldo correspondiente a la plaza de maestra de la escuela pública de niñas de Santa Isabel (fechadas en 2 y 8 de septiembre y 16 de octubre de 1876). Instancia de Manuel Iradier solicitando obtener en propiedad la plaza de primer maestro de la colonia. Santa Isabel, 1 de enero de 1877. (Requests from Isabel Urquiola asking to be paid the allowance corresponding to the teacher’s post in the Santa Isabel state school for girls [dated 2 and 8 September and 16 October, 1876]. Request from Manuel Iradier seeking to obtain the permanent post of head primary teacher for the colony, Santa Isabel, 1 January 1877).



**Figure 12: View of the Harbour
Captain's Office
and the Protestant**

Missionaries' house and church

Once he had his pictures of the Plaza de España, Joaque continued along the Calle de la Marina and took the view of the town, which is the stretch that led to the Protestant missionaries' house, going towards Punta Cristina. In the photograph,

the street appears to have already been developed to a basic level; it has streetlamps and a row of recently planted orange trees. The small brick building with a zinc roof that served as the harbour office can be seen in the foreground with the church of the Protestant missionaries and, on one side, half-hidden by vegetation, the missionaries' house, in the background (fig. 12).

It should be noted that the decree relating to religious freedom issued by the Revolutionary Government after the fall of the monarchy under Isabel II allowed British Protestant missionaries, who had been expelled in 1858 at the start of the colonization process, to return to the colony. The Primitive Methodist Missionary Society arrived in February 1870 and once more began services in Santa Isabel, again with great success and this time without being persecuted or having obstacles put in their way.⁸⁴ From Joaque's photograph, we can see the high standard of upkeep of the whole missionary compound with its white-washed perimeter wall. According to García Tudela, when the British ministers arrived, the Protestant mission was re-established in more splendid a manner than ever, since each of them contributed as much as they could to buy everything that was needed, the wives making the sacrifice of "*hasta a vender lo que más estiman las negras, que son sus alhajas de oro*" (even selling what the black women most valued: i.e. their gold jewellery).

However, with the Bourbon Restoration, the situation was overturned and Governor Santisteban, in keeping with the new times, found himself obliged to rein in the spectacular success of the Protestants using various methods in accordance with the *Real Orden* of 23 October 1876, based on article 11 of the new constitution,⁸⁵ in which Methodist schools were once again required to have Spanish head teachers and to teach in Spanish while their form of worship, defined unambiguously as "*culto disidente*" (a non-conformist cult), was banished to the private sector and "*las procesiones, carteles, banderas, anuncios, emblemas y demás símbolos religiosos*" (processions, posters, flags, notices, emblems and other religious symbols) banned.

84. Roe 1872 and 1882 (reference 34).

85. El artículo 11 de la Constitución de la Monarquía española, promulgada el 3 de julio de 1876, establecía que en territorio español nadie podía ser molestado por sus opiniones religiosas ni por el libre ejercicio del su respectivo culto, a excepción del debido respeto a la moral Cristiana. [Article 11 of the Constitution

of the Spanish Monarchy, issued on 3 July 1876, established that in Spanish territories nobody could be harassed on account of their religious opinions nor their form of worship, except where it was a matter of giving due respect to Christian morality].



Figure 13
Francis W. Joaque, *Group of Kru employed in the service of the Colony, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, albumen print 13,9 x 10,2 cm.
Archivo General de la Marina “Alvaro de Bazán” en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

Any preaching among the indigenous Bubi population was also expressly prohibited.⁸⁶ However, it was considered necessary to maintain a certain “*estado de tolerancia*” (tolerance) towards Protestant missions, at least until Catholic ones, which had been suspended in 1872, could be re-established.⁸⁷

In a colony given minimal support, these measures led to nu-

merous protest demonstrations, causing quite some headaches in Madrid – especially in the matter of how to deal with the combative Reverend William Holland, head of the mission and leader of the opposition movement. All in all, a few altercations restarted the so-called “*problema de las misiones protestantes*” (Protestant mission problem), on a scale that was even more of a threat to Spanish sovereignty than that which had been experienced two decades earlier. This was not only because the Fernandians welcomed the new mission with open arms but also because the Bubi people were showing an interest in British missionaries settling in their villages, something which again posed a threat to the colony’s Spanishness.

Figure 13: Group of Kru employed in the service of the Colony

Contracted normally for a year, Kru workers (fig. 13) used to be engaged on the spur of the moment in Cape Palmas and vicinity (an area known as the Kru Coast) by the captains of Spanish ships, or else they would arrive in Santa Isabel on their own initiative on board Portuguese and British vessels. They lived in the so-called “*Casa de Krumanes*” (Kru House), which can be seen in the photograph; it was built in the times of Governor José de la Gándara and was a one-room barracks, with room “*para alojar setenta krumanes, teniendo tres puertas y cuatro ventanas al frente y cinco ventanas y una puerta a cada lado*” (to accommodate seventy Kru, with three doors and four windows at the front and five windows and a door on each side).⁸⁸

In 1872, Governor Antonio de Vivas was complaining about Fernando Po’s only having 97 Kru to do colony work.⁸⁹ We must suppose that, with the cuts to the colony’s budget that were introduced that same year, the number of Kru would have decreased still further.

As can be gleaned from various contracts signed at the beginning of 1876, the Kru had to carry out “*los servicios a que les destine el Sr. Gobernador General*” (the services assigned

86. See the exact words of the *Real Orden* in AGA. A-G. C 678. E 3. *Establecimiento de misioneros en la colonia 1877-1887* [Establishment of missionaries in the colony 1877-1887]. Oficio del gobernador José Montes de Oca al ministro de Ultramar. Sta. Isabel, 25 de julio de 1885. [Official letter from Governor José Montes de Oca to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 25 July 1885].

87. Catholic missions were not re-established until November 1883 with the *Misioneros Hijos del inmaculado Corazón de María* (Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary), a group founded by Antonio María Claret. Claretians were very reluctant to accept any religion other than the one catholic, apostolic

and Roman religion. See Miquel Vilari i Güell, *La colonización de la cruz en la Guinea española, 1804-1904*, Vic: CEIBA Ediciones 2012.

88. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6981. *Inventario de los edificios propios del Estado que existen en esta colonia*. Santa Isabel, 20 de abril de 1863. [Inventory of the state-owned buildings that exist in this colony, Santa Isabel, 20 April, 1863].

89. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7060. Oficio del gobernador Antonio de Vivas al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 23 de junio de 1872. [Official letter from Governor Antonio de Vivas to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 23 June 1872].

to them by the Governor General), for which they would receive 15 pesetas a month and due maintenance allowances according to their station. They were under the orders of a Spanish overseer, whose salary could be as much as 75 pesetas.⁹⁰ Some of them ended up in jail for petty theft or for running away from their employers' houses.⁹¹ Despite this, in his report of 1873 to the Government of the Republic, Governor Ignacio García Tudela had no hesitation in describing them as "*robustos y honrados*" (healthy and honest).⁹²

In various official letters, Santisteban indicates that the few Kru who were in the service of the government carried out general cleaning work in connection with streets, construction sites and roads leading to the outskirts of the town, as well as cleaning and maintenance tasks in government buildings and various jobs on Matilde Farm, an experimental farm for the growing of cocoa and coffee located to the west of the town, opposite Venus or Carboneras Bay.⁹³ García Tudela makes it clear in his report, however, that the Kru were reluctant to take on agricultural jobs, "*trabajando contentos en las factorías y en los buques*" (while being happy working at trading posts and on ships). In Joaqué's picture, they are shown standing in front of palm-oil barrels.

The lack of available funds – eventually even to pay for their return passages – made contracting these workers enormously difficult. The delays and non-payments contributed to a loss of credibility for the Spanish authorities, which itself helped make contracting them back home even trickier.⁹⁴ The problem was not just local, as Santisteban discovered for himself when he made his first trip to the Gulf on board the steamer *San Antonio*, whose command he had to assume when the captain, Manuel Corsini, fell ill in 1862. On that occasion, he was able to see for himself how minor rulers were reluctant to provide manpower on account of the deceptions and bad treatment their people had experienced in the Spanish colony.⁹⁵

In 1861, the Jesuit brother Tomás Araujo wrote in his journal that he had witnessed how some Kru, who were being returned home after serving in the colony, were assaulted and robbed of their savings just after getting off the boat, for lack of any protection from the people who were taking them back to their homeland.⁹⁶ In the opinion of another missionary, the scarcity of women was another reason for the Kru leaving the colony once their contracts had come to an end. It seemed that, given the impossibility of meeting women, "*las aberraciones que*

90. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7958. Contratas a Crumanes firmadas por el administrador de caudales e interventor de la colonia Juan Serón Marengo. Santa Isabel, abril de 1876. [Contracts to Kru signed by the treasurer and financial controller Juan Serón Marengo, Santa Isabel, April 1876].

91. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7958. Estado de los presos existentes en la cárcel. Santa Isabel, 1 de marzo de 1868. [Condition of prisoners, Santa Isabel, 1 March 1868].

92. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6939. Informe del Gobernador de Fernando Poo, D. Ignacio García Tudela demostrando y enardeciendo la necesidad y la conveniencia de abandonar dicha colonia y sus dependencias. Santa Isabel, 14 de diciembre de 1873. [Report by Don Ignacio García Tudela, the Governor of Fernando Po, demonstrating and highlighting in very strong terms the necessity and advisability of leaving said colony and its dependencies, Santa Isabel, 14 December 1873].

93. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6973. Oficios de Diego Santisteban al ministro de Ultramar Santa Isabel, septiembre-diciembre de 1876. [Official letters from Diego Santisteban to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, September to December 1876].

94. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6974. Oficio del gobernador Ignacio García Tudela al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 9 de mayo de 1874. [Official letter from Governor Ignacio García Tudela to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 9 May 1874].

95. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7958. Informe de Diego Santisteban al gobernador General de Fernando Poo. A bordo del vapor San Antonio, 11 de marzo de 1862. [Report by Diego Santisteban to the Governor General of Fernando Po, from on board the steamer San Antonio, 11 March, 1862].

96. AHL. H. Tomás Araujo [1869?]. *Libro de memorias para uso del que lo pone, este libro está hecho por el H. Cirilo López, Coadjutor de la Compañía de Jesús*. [Book of recollections for the use of whoever it may serve, this book is written by H. Cirilo López, Coadjutor of the Society of Jesus]. The complete transcription of this original and extremely rare journal of recollections can be consulted in 'El Legado de los Jesuitas [The Legacy of the Jesuits]' by Miquel Vilaro i Güell, Vic: CEIBA 2010, *Documentos de la Colonización*, 15. [Documents relating to the colonization].

hicieron célebre Sodoma” (the aberrations for which Sodom gained notoriety) often developed.⁹⁷ During Santisteban’s governorship, the island of Fernando Po was turned into a penal colony where political prisoners from mainland Spain – mainly Carlist ones – were confined in the hope that they would also serve as a workforce for the colony and make up for the chronic shortage of Kru. Santisteban was not at all happy about this new situation, arguing that the deportees generated a great deal of expense and disrupted the ways and traditions of the peaceful islanders; moreover he was afraid of having to witness “*el triste espectáculo de verlos sucumbir a consecuencia de las fiebres intermitentes del país*” (the sad spectacle of watching them succumb to the periodic fevers of the area).⁹⁸ The fact that he had a number of Kru photographed showing off their vigorous looks and fine bearing confirms Santisteban’s interest in highlighting them as the ideal workers for the colony.

As a black photographer, Joaque must have inspired trust among the Bubi, the indigenous population of the Island of Fernando Po, as they appear relaxed and completely unafraid in the photograph. It contrasts with the way they reacted some years later when another 14 photographs from various inland places on the island were commissioned for the World Exposition in Amsterdam. In this case, their poor quality was attributed to the lack of resources the photographer found in Santa Isabel, as well as Bubi reluctance to be photographed, even though the photographer was African “*pues no sabiendo lo que significaba aquello, les inquietaba verse delante de la máquina y cuando se les pedía que estuviesen sin movimiento se asustaban y salían corriendo, habiendo pruebas que ha costado más de un día de trabajo, y solo se obtenía a fuerza de constancia y de regalos de tabaco, telas y aguardiente, medio el más hábil para llevar la tranquilidad a sus espíritus*” (since, not knowing what it signified, they were nervous about being in front of the camera and, when asked to stay still, took fright and ran off; there is evidence that it cost over a day’s work, and the photographs could only be taken by dint of keeping on trying and thanks to gifts of tobacco, fabrics and alcohol, the most effective way of calming them down).⁹⁹

Figure 14: Group of indigenous Bubi people

The quality of the print – in which one can clearly make out the expressions on the faces of a heterogeneous group made up of people of both sexes and different ages – is a unique document that confirms the docile character of Fernando Po’s indigenous population (fig. 14). Governor García Tudela himself had no hesitation in declaring that “*los indígenas pertenecen a la raza más pacífica del mundo y no aspiran a otra cosa que vivir tranquilos en los bosques*” (the local people belong to the most peaceful race in the world and have no other wish than to live tranquilly in the bush).¹⁰⁰ However, this same governor was very pessimistic about Spain’s ability

97. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7052. Estado de la colonia de Fernando Poo en el año 1901. [State of the colony of Fernando Po in 1901].

98. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6942. Oficio del gobernador Diego Santisteban al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 13 de julio de 1875. [Official letter from Governor Diego Santisteban to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 13 July 1875].

99. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7070. Oficio del gobernador Antonio Cano al ministro de Ultramar. Fernando Poo, 3 de marzo de 1883. [Official letter from Governor

Antonio Cano to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Fernando Po, 3 March 1883].

100. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6939. Informe del Gobernador de Fernando Poo, D. Ignacio García Tudela demostrando y enardeciendo la necesidad y la conveniencia de abandonar dicha colonia y sus dependencias. Santa Isabel, 14 de diciembre de 1873. [Report by Don Ignacio García Tudela, the Governor of Fernando Po, demonstrating and highlighting in very strong terms the necessity and advisability of abandoning said colony and its dependencies, Santa Isabel, 14 December 1873].



Figure 14
Francis W. Joaque, *Group of indigenous Bubi people, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, albumen print 13,5 x 10 cm. Archivo General de la Marina “Alvaro de Bazán” en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

alcohol or tobacco – all they needed to do was to trade their palm oil with the merchants who came to their villages.

According to the governor, the only possible solution, if one wanted to use them as a labour force, would be to force them into submission using arms, something that was wholly inadvisable, both because of their capacity for resistance in such wild and rugged terrain, and because of the protests such measures would unleash amongst the other European powers, particularly Britain, which was ever ready to find an excuse for reducing the Spanish presence in the Gulf of Guinea.

One striking aspect of the photograph is the scant personal ornamentation and tattoos to be seen on those present; something unusual in their culture. The isolation of their island existence meant that they had kept to their own way of life over many centuries, far from the cultural models found in the Bight of Biafra, which explains the difficulties the Spanish authorities had trying to bring them into the colonization process.¹⁰¹ Doubtless, Santisteban wanted Joaque to show them at their most unadorned and unsurprising, focusing on those Bubi who came from the area around Santa Isabel and were most influenced by European colonialism, with the aim of providing photographic evidence that, in contact with the white man, it was not impossible to civilize them and overturn their disinclination to work.

Figure 15: House of the Protestant missionaries who had settled in San Carlos Bay

In December 1874, Jacobo Varela, the replacement governor, instructed the captain of the *Edetana* to tour the coastal towns and report on the expansion of Protestantism and the extent to which it had taken hold. We can discover more about the contents of this last picture from related documents (fig. 15). It seems that the Protestant missionary, who had settled in San Carlos Bay with his wife, was living in a “*magnífica casa construida sobre pilares de tres metros de altura*” (magnificent house built on pillars three metres high). Next to the house was “*un salón*”

101. Amador Martín del Molino, *Los Bubis. Ritos y creencias*, Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación para el Desarrollo 1993, 21.



de techo de bambú, con torrecilla y campana" (a hall with a bamboo roof, a little tower and a bell) which served both as a school and a church. All these elements are clearly visible in Joaque's photograph.

As the minister showed the captain, there were up to 92 boys and girls from nearby villages enrolled in the school. There, "*la religión protestante y el idioma inglés*"

Figure 15

Francis W. Joaque, *House of the Protestant missionaries who had settled in San Carlos Bay, Santa Isabel, Fernando Po 1875*, albumen print 13,5 x 10 cm. Archivo General de la Marina "Alvaro de Bazán" en Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real).

(Protestantism and the English language) were taught so successfully that the missionary was planning to build a new house in the village of Somo-Somo. When the officer showed the children the Spanish flag, they revealed that they had never seen it before and were not aware what Spain was.¹⁰²

On another visit by the *Edetana* to San Carlos Bay, as he confirmed on his return from Corisco and Elobey, the captain reported that the house that was being built in Somo-Somo had now been finished, and that the missionary had set up a little printing press in his own house where he was applying himself, with the help of an assistant, "*en imprimir cartillas y silabarios en inglés y bubis, facilitando de este modo la instrucción de los indígenas*" (to printing little elementary readers and spelling books in English and the Bube language, facilitating in this way the education of the native population).¹⁰³

According to a subsequent report, issued three years later by the captain of the schooner *Prosperidad*, we learn that the Protestant mission was situated some 1,500 feet up on San Carlos Mountain and occupied a 10-hectare (25 acre) site and had the corresponding property title deeds; there were five buildings: a church, a school, a hospital and two houses providing accommodation. At that time around 60 pupils of both sexes were being educated there.¹⁰⁴

Judging by the long letter of complaint written by the new assistant priest Rafael Joaquín Acosta y Millán, Santisteban's tolerant attitude towards the Protestants was at odds with the more hardline stance of parish priests sent out after the decree. It would seem that the governor refused to allow the priest to give religious instruction to the Protestant children on the upper floor of the former house of the Jesuit missionaries, taking as his defence the principle of religious tolerance that still held sway despite the new provisions. Acosta attacks him, accusing him of meddling in ecclesiastical jurisdiction "*barrenando las leyes vigentes del Estado y obrando de una manera inconstitucional*" (violating relevant state laws and operating in

102. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7069. Parte de campaña del comandante de la goleta de guerra *Edetana* al gobernador accidental Jacobo Varela. A bordo, 7 de diciembre de 1874. [Campaign report by the captain of the war schooner *Edetana* to the replacement governor, Jacobo Varela; on board the ship, 7 December, 1874].

103. AGA. A-G. C. 81/7069. Oficio del gobernador Jacobo Varela al ministro de Ultramar. Fernando Poo, 16 de enero de 1875. [Official letter from Governor

Jacobo Varela to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Fernando Po, 16 January 1875].

104. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6388. Oficio del gobernador Alejandro Arias al ministro de Ultramar. Fernando Poo, 17 de mayo de 1877. [Official letter from Governor Alejandro Arias to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Fernando Po, 17 May 1877].

an unconstitutional manner).¹⁰⁵ This suggests to us that Santisteban's attitude towards the Protestants' success was somewhat ambiguous and we are therefore uncertain about whether his including this last photograph taken one year before the royal order was to provide tangible proof of the threat posed by the establishment of the San Carlos headquarters in a corner of the island where Spain was still not represented in any way.

Francis W. Joaque (ca. 1845 – active until 1893)

On the previous pages we have followed Francis Joaque's wanderings through Fernando Po's capital from east to west. Let us now, on the remaining pages, have a closer look at the photographer's path of life which brought him to the small volcanic island some 25 miles off the Cameroonian coast sometime in the early 1870s.

Francis Wilberforce Joaque was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone around 1845. His father Richard Vincent Joaque was "a prominent member of the offspring of Liberated Africans. [R.V. Joaque's father] had a peculiar experience. He was taken from his native home by Spanish slavers, and carried to one of the then flourishing Colonies of Spain. There he was employed as an able seaman in a vessel trafficking in human merchandise; and in one of her voyages the vessel was met by British cruisers, captured, and brought to Sierra Leone, and the father of Mr. [R.V.] Joaque was among those thus liberated and freed."¹⁰⁶ After some years in the service of a white businessman, Francis W. Joaque's grandfather started business on his own account as a licensed auctioneer, a profession which was continued by his father Richard Vincent.¹⁰⁷ Clearly, R. V. Joaque had established himself as a distinguished member of Freetown's Krio community and it was he who presented an address on "The Liberated African Inhabitants of the Colony and their Descendants" to Queen Victoria's second son Alfred who paid a visit to the colony on his way back to England in 1860.¹⁰⁸

Francis W. Joaque attended the Church Mission Society's Grammar School in Freetown. In the early 1860s he was admitted on board the *HMS Rattlesnake* to acquire practical training in navigation.¹⁰⁹ Joaque served on the ship for two years and after – although it is not clear when – became purser on the *Corra Linn*, the three-masted screw steamer of the British governor in Sierra Leone. In 1869 he disappeared from Sierra Leone.¹¹⁰ He must have gone to Fernando Po shortly afterwards, since Henry Roe of the British Primitive Methodist Missionary Society mentioned him in his account of his work on Fernando Po. Most likely Joaque had been on the island before, since close connections existed between the Krio communities of Santa Isabel (the Fernandinos), and Freetown. Family members from the two places visited each other frequently. Fernandinos sent their children to the CMS Grammar School in Freetown and business partners met both here and there to do business.

105. AGA. A-G. C. 81/6959. Instancia de protesta de Rafael Joaquín Acosta al ministro de Ultramar. Santa Isabel, 16 de septiembre de 1876. [Complaint from Rafael Joaquín Acosta to the Minister for Overseas Territories, Santa Isabel, 16 September 1876].

106. *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 24 June 1899, 2.

107. Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, London: Oxford University Press 1963, 293.

108. Christopher Fyfe, 'A Royal Visit in 1860', *Sierra Leone Studies*, New Series, vol. 12, 1959, 260-272.

109. Magbaily C. Fyle, 'The Grammar School and Education in Sierra Leone, 1845-1942', <http://regentoniansobauk.org/history.html> [29.4.14].

110. Fyfe 1963 (reference 108), 343.

111. Roe 1882 (reference 34), 41.

In February 1870, Henry Roe reported on Joaque's wedding to Drucilla McAulay, "one of the choicest daughters of the African settlers here".¹¹¹ One month later he mentioned Joaque playing the harmonium during church service.¹¹² We are ignorant of whether Joaque had already worked as a photographer while still in Sierra Leone or if he started his profession only after arriving on Fernando Po. It seems however, that his first photographs stem from the very late 1860s and he might have already taken up his business when the Primitive Methodists arrived in 1870 since Henry Roe used some of Joaque's photographs to illustrate his book "West African Scenes" from 1874.

Most of the early African photographers worked as itinerants along the West African coast and Joaque too, though based in Santa Isabel from the early 1870s, soon started to travel to Libreville to explore work options there. Successfully, as it seems. In 1878 the US-American missionary Robert Hamill Nassau mentioned that Joaque had taken his photo in Libreville, and then again, some years later, in 1883.¹¹³ On various occasions Nassau bought photographs from Joaque which he sent to friends and relatives in the United States. Another regular was the French explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza who wrote from Libreville that the local anglo-phone photographer had taken his and his consorts' portrait.¹¹⁴ Indeed, Joaque photographed de Brazza and parts of his entourage during his expeditions in 1875–1879 and 1879–1882.

The German journalist Hugo Zöller, who, on behalf of the German *Kölnische Zeitung*, travelled in West and Central Africa in 1884, spoke of Joaque twice in his richly illustrated four volume travel report. Zöller wrote that "Joki"¹¹⁵ was permanently drunk and no longer worked as a photographer, or at least sold his photographs only to a few selected patrons. The reason for this, so Zöller gossiped, was that "Joki" had drunk all the chemicals necessary for the development of the photographs. However the photographer had done a good job for a good price for him simply because he had listened to Joaque playing the song "Die Wacht am Rhein" on a "terribly mistuned harmonium".¹¹⁶

Joaque had broadened his sphere of action to Gabon because the mid-1870s were a time when trade intensified in the region attracting traders and explorers like the French Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza and the region's urban centre Libreville developed from a neglected outpost of French colonialism to the starting point of the Congo Basin's exploration and exploitation. The small town featured a cosmopolitan community made up of local M'pongwe and other Gabonese, West African workers, as well as white traders, missionaries, and visitors. It was a place "where every language [was] heard."¹¹⁷ The appearance of steam ships and the establishment of regular liner traffic between Europe and Africa in the mid 1850s had greatly enhanced the mobility of people, goods and technologies in a way that the

112. Roe 1874 [reference 34], 85–86.

113. Robert Hamill Nassau, *My Ogowe. Being a Narrative of Daily Incidents during Sixteen Years in Equatorial West Africa*, New York: The Neale Publishing Company 1914, 238.

114. Napoléon Ney, (ed.), *Conférences et lettres de P. Savorgnan de Brazza sur les trois explorations dans l'Ouest Africain de 1875 à 1886*, Paris: Maurice Dreyfous 1887, 270.

115. I argue here that "Joki" is a malapropism or corruption of Joaque.

116. Hugo Zöller, *Die deutschen Besitzungen an der westafrikanischen Küste*, vol. 2: *Forschungsreisen in der deutschen Kolonie Kamerun*, part 2: *Das Flussgebiet*

von Kamerun. Berlin und Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Spemann 1885, 103–104 as well as vol. 2, part 3: *Das südliche Kamerun-Gebirge*, 108. The song is a German patriotic anthem.

117. Jeremy Rich, "'Where Every Language is Heard': Senegalese and Vietnamese Migrants in Colonial Libreville, 1860–1914, in: Toyin Falola and Steven Salm (ed.), *African Urban Spaces*, Rochester NY 2005, 191–212, 191.

118. Martin Lynn, 'Technology, Trade and "a Race of Native Capitalists": the Krio Diaspora of West Africa and the Steamship, 1852–95', *Journal of African History*, vol. 33, 1992, 33. 421–440. See also Kenneth O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830–1885. An Introduction to the Economic and Political History*

late British historian Martin Lynn described this development as a “radical break in the history of the region’s external commerce”.¹¹⁸

However small it might have been in the 1870s, there was clearly a market for photographs in West and Central Africa and Joaque was certainly not the only African photographer in the region in those days. There were others like Shadrack Albert St John, Fred Grant, Gerhardt Ludwig Lutterodt and John Parkes Decker, and hence there must have been a certain competition between them. Joaque, however, was an extremely good businessman. He consistently printed his company logo on the backs of his photographs as his European – but practically none of his African – colleagues did. And, very obviously, as the records in various European archives show, he socialized easily with Europeans who bought his photographs for their personal collections or with the purpose of giving them away to relatives, friends and acquaintances. However, even though Joaque took such images by order of traders, missionaries, or colonial authorities, he evidently also anticipated the needs of a future clientele. This was, for instance, the case with a series of about forty photographs which Joaque took of buildings (mission and trading stations, and premises of the colonial administration such as the post office) in Libreville and further up the Ogowe River in Lambaréné and Talagouga. These photographs were later donated to the Paris Société Géographique in 1886 by Noël Ballay who had accompanied de Brazza during his expeditions to Gabon and the Congo.

A screening of Joaque’s photographs shows that his most prevailing topics were people and buildings. There are also a few landscapes that were taken in the Gabonese hinterland, but they do not quantitatively stand out of the material, and there are no images of plants or animals. Evidently nature was not good business. There are quite a number of portrait photographs showing groups and individuals. A substantial number of these photographs is carte-de-visite sized. Africans – men and women – prevail rather than Europeans. The buildings Joaque photographed were mission and trading stations, churches, many of them in Gabon, as well as the infrastructure of the French colonial administration in Libreville. Francis Joaque was a very talented portrait photographer who prepared the setting meticulously before exposing the glass plate. Only rarely did he take his clients’ likenesses in a studio fully equipped with props (such as a painted backdrop alluding to a bourgeois parlour); he worked mainly outdoors or in front of a bright and neutral backdrop.

The historian Christopher Fyfe found that Joaque returned to Freetown in about 1890.¹¹⁹ We learn from newspaper sources that, in February und September 1891, as well as in November 1893, Francis W. Joaque sold plots of land in Freetown which had belonged to his father.¹²⁰ Some years earlier, on 26 November 1890 Joaque had performed at the “Juvenile Volunteers Concert” in Freetown. The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* reported that “Mr. Joaque’s songs were the good old ones in Christy’s Books, which we have often listened to, but rarely

of Nigeria, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1956, 114, as well as Martin Lynn, (ed.), *John Langdon. Three Voyages to the West Coast of Africa, 1881-1884*, London: Cambridge University Press 2002, 182-183.

119. Fyfe 1963 [reference 108], 343.

120. *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 February 1891, 1; 12 September 1891, 8; 26 November 1893, 8.

121. *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 29 November 1890, 5.

heard them better rendered. ‘Hold your Horses’ and ‘Hen Convention’, accompanied by Mr. Joaque himself on the banjo were thunderingly encored.”¹²¹ Joaque already had performed during a CMS Grammar School concert in 1889; “An old boy”, as the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* reported, “hardly known to the majority of the old boys, and no wonder, seeing he was away from home twice ten years, I mean Mr. Francis Joaque, next gave ‘Rock me to sleep Mother’.”¹²² On November 9 November 1890, the same newspaper reported on the death of “Mr. Francis Joaque, Surveyor [who] died on Friday 1st and was buried on the 2nd. Mr. Joaque was one of the young men who were trained by the Government of this Colony in England.”¹²³ It might be that Francis Joaque was Francis W. Joaque’s son, who like his father, had been trained by the British for some time. In any case we lose track of Francis W. Joaque after 1893.

122. *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 4 January 1890, 2.

123. *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 9 November 1895, 6.