

Collecting, reproducing and exchanging: rephotography as a value creation technology in the nineteenth century

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Keywords

Nineteenth-Century Photography, anthropology, photographic archives, photographic networks, publishing history of photography, Aboriginal photography, history of European science

Abstract

This paper explores the creation of scientific value in 19th-century studio portraiture of Aboriginal peoples within European academic networks. In particular, the paper explores the role of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte and its major photographic dissemination project, the *Anthropologisch-ethnologisches Album in Photographien*, published in parts by the Dammann studio of Hamburg between 1872 and 1876, its reception at the time, and some of the anxieties surrounding the reliability of source materials for comparative analysis. The paper examines how the collecting, copying, sale, exchange and distribution of early photographs from Australia within European academia and museums can help us understand the important visual basis for the way value was attributed (or negated) in relation to Aboriginal culture from the 1860s onwards. The sources for one section of the Dammann album, that relating to Australia, are examined in detail, revealing a hitherto unknown major source for the Dammann project in Julius Ferdinand Berini, an expatriate who returned to Germany in 1872 with a collection of studio portraits of Aboriginal people. The unreliability of much of Berini's documentation for his source material is revealed, as are contemporary published accounts questioning his use of visual evidence to support his own travel claims. These historical problems notwithstanding, the paper argues that the replication of Berini's collection as part of the Dammann project has led to their enduring value for reengagement by historians and Indigenous people alike.

A remarkable thing about photographs and their associated texts, captions and inscriptions, is how resilient that relationship can be and how much we invest in it, both intellectually and institutionally. As a museum curator I am frequently struck by this relationship. In museums we seem to value documentation as much as we value photographs, since that is how they are understood to express their own context, and thereby their value as historical information. We try to make sense of the historical relationship between image and caption, in relation to acts of writing and speaking about the past in the present. If the documentation is contemporary with the image's inscription, this process of accruing value is complex, bringing historical voices with the image that need to be accounted for and reckoned with.

In this essay I discuss how photography's role in the way anthropological knowledge was generated in the nineteenth century was equally subject to anxieties

about the relationship between image and documentation. In the 1860s and 1870s these issues came to the fore at a time when anthropological learned societies in the major European centres initiated projects to collect and disseminate photographic imagery. The outcomes of these photographic projects were hailed by leading anthropologists, such as Edward Burnett Tylor, as 'one of the most important contributions ever made to the science of man' since 'Now-a-days, little ethnological value is attached to any but photographic portraits, and the skill of the collector lies in choosing the right individuals as representatives of their nations.' (Tylor 1876: 184) By the beginning of the 1870s the need for objective data upon which the trained judgment of the anthropologist might be deployed enjoyed a widespread consensus in European circles. As Gustav Fritsch wrote in 1874 'There is but one measure to satisfy the anthropologists' rightful demand for as comprehensive as possible a portrait collection of various peoples: it is the photographic production of such a collection, whereby the photographs can also serve as corrective to the individual perception inherent in even the best depictions by artists; photographs alone enable a reliable comparison.' (Virchow 1874)

Whilst the enthusiasm of "armchair" theorists such as Tylor and Virchow for race photography was palpable, these quotes also betray an anxiety that, despite its apparent fidelity of description, photography still required the skill of discrimination and selection when it came to deploying it instrumentally within the discipline as a tool. Tylor's anxiety that unrepresentative individuals might be selected for photography was based on the notion of discrete racial "types", and that some individuals were closer to this than others, and so illustrated the idealised "type" of their race better than others (Edwards 1990).

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Figure 1 Folio of Australian portraits from the *Anthropologisch-ethnologisches Album in Photographien* by Carl Dammann. Photograph by the author. Courtesy Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

Tylor's anxiety about the intervention of the trained eye was well placed for another reason, and that was the potential for complex photographic dissemination projects involving multiple collectors, learned society members, and commercial photography studios, to make errors. A good example of this is the photograph of a man who has proudly represented the Warrego district of southwest Queensland in Australia ever since his publication in the early 1870s by the Hamburg photographer Carl Dammann in his large, multi-part, folio series produced for the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte (Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and World History), the *Anthropologisch-ethnologisches Album in Photographien* (hereafter *AEA*). Here the man of Warrego district takes his place alongside studio images of indigenous people from various parts of Australia in one of the folios (Fig 1). I came across a print of this photograph some years ago at the British Museum, mounted on one of Carl Dammann's carte de visite cards (Fig 2). But Dammann obviously wasn't the photographer of the original studio portrait since his project involved copying material sent to him from a variety of sources. On the reverse of the carte de visite the source of the photograph Dammann copied was revealed in a pencil note: 'Australia, Dr Berini'. It was immediately obvious to me, having worked extensively on nineteenth-century ethnographic photography, that this man was quite clearly not Australian but from southern Africa, and probably a married Zulu man since he was wearing the *isicoco* head ring. But when the British

Museum catalogued and put online much of its Oceania photography, Dammann's documentation stuck to it, meaning that he is still presented today as a 'representation of Indigenous Australian', based on Dr Berini's authority.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2 Carte de visite of a Zulu man printed and mounted by Carl Damman in Hamburg circa 1872, based on an original photograph collected by Julius Ferdinand Berini, probably in South Africa. Courtesy British Museum (oc.a3.46).

It is not necessarily the persistence of incorrect documentation that is significant here of course, it is the way it reveals the mechanics of collecting, networking and disseminating visual data in European science in the second half of the nineteenth century, and how the value ascribed to visual data at that time is re-presented and uncritically recreated today via institutional systems, publications and online resources. Whilst what I am mainly concerned with here are the ways in which value was created through the rephotography process in the nineteenth century, similar processes are at work in the digital age, and we can see parallels and continuities of photography's endless reproducibility as a value creation technology in many different social and historical settings, a theme I return to later.

Rephotography as data dissemination

The 1860s saw the foundation of a number of anthropological organisations, including the Anthropological Society of London and the Berliner Gesellschaft. But whilst anthropological science became institutionally organised in the major European centres, its supply of reliable visual data from the colonial and trading periphery became a pressing concern. As Edwards has written '[t]hey created a form of virtual witness – "what I saw, you too will see" – attesting to the truth value of observation and as a way of amassing analogical raw data and re-presenting material for interpretation in visual form.' (Edwards 2000: 3) At the time the Anthropological Society of London began in 1863, as a break away organisation from the Ethnological Society, photography was already a well-established practice, yet its dominance as a medium of scientific description was only just emerging. Over the course of the 1860s and 70s photography began to play an increasingly important role in the discussions and debates at the Society, which had a particular interest in physical anthropology studies, with corresponding members sending photographic evidence via epistolary accounts of the peoples they encountered, whether as traders, missionaries or colonial officials. An album relating to Society meetings in London exists from this period, apparently begun in 1867, but containing additional material evidently shown at meetings in the years before and after that date.¹

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Figure 3 Page spread from an album compiled by members of the Anthropological Society of London around 1867. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

On one page for instance (Fig 3) is pasted a photograph, one of a number sent in 1867 with letters and a collection of 46 objects from Gabon, by a trader and one of the Society's local secretary's for West Africa, Robert Bruce Napoleon Walker. The page also shows three views of a Frenchman said to be a case of Scaphocephaly (a type of cranial deformation), taken by Society member and local photographer David Gay. On the opposite page are several photographs of a youth being held for the camera, said to be a case of idiocy and microcephaly or abnormally small head, sent by Society member Dr John Shortt of the Madras Medical Services. Below these is a further photograph sent by Shortt, a studio photograph with backdrop and patterned carpet, of a girl from the Juang people of Odisha state in eastern India, sometimes known as "leaf wearers", about whom Shortt sent a paper relating to some peculiarities of their jawline to the Society in 1865, read out at the meeting by J. F. Collingwood (Shortt 1865). Yet whilst the sending of photographic data from distant places to the learned society in London was increasingly seen as vital to any sense of scientific credibility for the nascent discipline, the photographs were not usually reproduced in the Society's journal, but instead were retained in the Society's museum along with artefacts, and made available for members to consult.

Although the Berliner Gesellschaft also collected photographic material from its members, the *AEA* project was the most important European scientific response to the demand expressed both by its own members, as well as more widely, for the dissemination of reliable (that is, photographic) racial type portraits. The *AEA*, published gradually between 1873 and 1876, contains 50 folios with hundreds of photographs of people from the five continents, all copied from originals assembled by the Dammann studio, or sent to it by the Berliner Gesellschaft, and is considered 'the most remarkable collaborative anthropological and photographic endeavour of the nineteenth century' (Edwards 2008: 378). In 1872 it was explained to members in the pages of the Berliner Gesellschaft's journal, the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, that the project would

not yet be without deficiencies, as they always occur during the first attempts, the trials, on a new path. The tribal types will emerge in a disorderly way... [s]ubsequent deliveries of images must hence be organised depending on how, in which form and in what number these are accrued. Some images will then lack the desired acuity or proof of provenance.²

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Figure 4 Negative by Frederick Dammann after 1874, used for printing copies of photographs from various sources. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.479.48).

Probably the best archive relating to the Dammann project is at the University of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, since the Museum bought the residue of the project from the estate of Carl's brother Frederick Dammann in 1901. Frederick Dammann had been living in England for some years, and issued some of the later parts of the project after his brother's death in 1874. Besides a large collection of loose prints made by copying originals from many sources, the Museum's collection includes large full plate negatives on which Frederick Dammann copied prints. In the example shown here (Fig 4) a negative has copied original prints from Oceania, South Africa and Australia, with the faint traces of newspaper print showing between the gaps in the laid out cartes de visite, identifying numbers scribbled alongside. Prints made from these negatives would have been cut up and mounted onto new cartes de visite

mounts for sale by the studio, or else stuck onto the large boards that made up the *AEA* folios, which were printed by Wiegandt, Hempel & Parey in Berlin.

Whilst the Dammann project is fairly well known to scholars of the photographic history of anthropology, little research has so far been done on the sources (collectors) and photographers whose work was copied by the Dammann studio. We do know however how the project was initiated. In January 1871 the members of the Berliner Gesellschaft had asked Carl Dammann in Hamburg to make a series of anthropological portraits of the crew of the Zanzibari ship *El Magidi* which was docked there, and the resulting series of images was subsequently sold to numerous museums and universities. The Berliner Gesellschaft soon after decided to commission Dammann to copy a wide range of material at the society's disposal, as well as in the personal collections of some of its most prominent members such as Robert Hartman, Gustav Fritsch, and Fedor Jagor, as well as from other collections such as the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg as well as German expatriates in Dammann's network or who answered his advertisements for material. The Hamburg-based Godeffroy trading company's museum had begun actively reproducing, advertising, and selling copies of photographs brought back by its collectors in Oceania such as Amalie Dietrich, Johann Kubary, and Andrew Garrett, as well as copies of physical anthropology images taken in Hamburg of native sailors hired to work on its ships. It is likely that the Godeffroy's activity in this area contributed to the Berliner Gesellschaft's decision, soon after its foundation in 1869, to initiate the *AEA* project, but its role in the copying and dissemination of early anthropological photography in European scientific circles has been little acknowledged to date.

The Godeffroy connection

Both through their publication in the *AEA* and by being sold through the Godeffroy Museum, copies of photographs of Aboriginal people brought back from Australia began to find their way into the collections of the leading anthropologists, museums and libraries of Europe and beyond in the 1870s. In 1879 Augustus Pitt-Rivers, at the time well known for his ethnographic collection on display at the South Kensington Museum and having already served as President of the Anthropological Institute, visited the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg whilst on a northern European tour (Morton 2015a) and there bought over seventy-two photographs to add to his collection (Morton 2014). Ten of these photographs were of Aboriginal people, and were most likely exhibited by Pitt-Rivers in a section of his exhibition developed to illustrate the physical anthropology of 'the various races of mankind', until the collection was moved to Oxford in the summer of 1885 (Morton 2015a: 101-2). Also on display in this section were two skulls from Australia. Indigenous Australians were of some research interest to Pitt-Rivers, since their material culture within his typological series had more of an affinity with natural forms than other cultures: 'These people, from the simplicity of their arts, afford us the only living examples of what we may presume to have been the characteristics of a primitive people' (Lane Fox 1875: 505) – a comment that echoed Herbert Spencer's analogy between simple biological and cultural forms.

In 1931 these photographs were pasted onto a single large mount board as part of a project by the curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Henry Balfour, to create a systematic research resource out the photographs that had accumulated by that time within the Museum (Edwards & Hart 2004; Morton 2012). The fact that they were all

kept together in this way suggests that Balfour knew that they were an associated group. The first six are underlined with the title 'Brisbane', although none of the individual prints are labelled such. The lower four portraits are individually labelled, three as 'Rockhampton' and one as 'East Queensland'. In fact, all four have been specifically identified as relating to Rockhampton (Sumner 1986: 158). Published information by Sumner (1986) and Theye (2004) has confirmed that this set of ten photographs are copies of an original set of nineteen cartes de visite collected sometime between 1863 and 1872 in Queensland by Amalie Dietrich for the Godeffroy Museum. Sumner (1986: 159) suggests that the Brisbane set were collected during 1863-5 since this was the period when Dietrich lived there. However, it is possible that they were collected as late as 1872 on her return journey. The Brisbane photographs have also been suggested as the work of the Daniel Marquis studio, whereas those from Rockhampton have been suggested as by Joseph Wilder (Aird 2010). Aird notes that Dietrich visited Rockhampton between 1866-7, thus providing a *terminus ante quem* for the original studio portraits. The fact that these two groupings were archivally arranged by Balfour in this way suggests that both Brisbane and Rockhampton identifications were somewhere documented for these photographs. In general, Balfour was meticulous about recording relevant information from print backs onto the card beside a photograph, and this is suggested by the mixed and patchy data recorded on the card mount.³

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the way in which scientific collections attach value to documentation and transpose it onto new surfaces when photographs are copied, remounted, rebound etc, is of inherent interest for our understanding of the way in which images establish and maintain scientific knowledge over time. The identifiers transcribed on the single large mount by Balfour relating to these ten Godeffroy prints themselves fall into two categories. One set connects them with their former life in Pitt-Rivers's own collection (E/1 – E/10), before it was given to the University of Oxford in 1884. The second set of identifiers (e.g. 189), recorded next to six of the photographs, are Godeffroy Museum numbers, which can be cross-referenced with their published catalogue (Schmeltz and Krause 1881). The original Godeffroy numbers for the remaining 4 photographs were identified using this catalogue, as well as cross-referencing the documentation and images published by Sumner (1986: 158).⁴ It is known that 'duplicates' of the Godeffroy photograph collection were being offered for sale as early as 1874 (Sumner 1986: 157), and the fact that these were advertised in their journal as a set of 150 photographs shows how systematically the Godeffroy began collecting, copying, and disseminating its photograph collection for the scientific market in Europe.

There are several Aboriginal subject photographs elsewhere in the same archival series in the Pitt Rivers Museum that are closely related to the Dietrich set, obviously variations made by the same studio, and which were copied by the Dammann studio from sources seemingly other than the Godeffroy Museum (via Amalie Dietrich).⁵ Yet we also know that Dammann was copying material from the Godeffroy Museum's collections since the Pitt Rivers Museum has several examples of Dammann copies of Godeffroy Museum photographs, including one from the set collected by Dietrich.⁶ This is evidence of the collaboration of the Godeffroy Museum in the project undertaken by Dammann, a fact confirmed by a note in the society's journal that 'Mr Caesar Godeffroy has contributed Polynesian and Micronesian photographs of the rarest kind to form a tableau'.⁷ Dammann obviously had other sources for Australian imagery, since the Dammann archive at the Pitt Rivers

Museum holds prints of around thirty or more other copies made by Dammann of early Australian photographs (i.e. before 1874). One such source, hitherto unknown to historians of the early photography of Australia, was Julius Ferdinand Berini.

Unmasking Berini

The importance of Berini emerged from my research into the Dammann studio and the *AEA*, his connection to which was confirmed by some documentation on the reverse of the Dammann cartes de visite of Australian Aboriginal subjects at the British Museum. Julius Ferdinand Berini, a Swiss or German immigrant to Australia in the early 1860s, is someone whose significance has been completely overlooked, but whose dissemination of early Aboriginal portraiture among scientific circles in Europe has left a vitally important legacy. On the folio page relating to Australia in the *AEA* (see Fig 1), Berini is not mentioned as a source for material, although two traders named Oehlmann and Höling who had lived in Australia are credited as the source for some of them. Just why Dammann doesn't credit Berini as the source for many of the Australian photographs is unclear, given the evidence from other archives that Berini was clearly responsible for them. Of the British Museum's collection of loose mounted Dammann Studio cartes de visite from Australia, 18 of them have the name "Dr Berini" noted on the reverse, making him Dammann's most significant source of early Australian imagery. But just who was Dr Berini, and what was his significance?

FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

Figure 5 Portrait of Julius Ferdinand Berini, surrounded by a group of Aboriginal men from Brisbane. Copied by Carl Dammann around 1872 from an original probably by the Daniel Marquis Studio, Brisbane, circa 1868. Courtesy British Museum (oc.a3.33).

One seemingly important part of the answer was a studio portrait in the British Museum of a European man surrounded by a number of Aboriginal men (Fig 5). On the back is Dammann's usual studio printed design, along with another stamp "Julius Berini MD PHD". Did this portrait show the mysterious Dr Berini himself, and was it his calling card? A further clue came when going back through the Australian Dammann copies at the Pitt Rivers Museum. On the reverse of a carte de visite portrait showing "King Tidy" of Brisbane (Fig 6) was a cropped note in German, which reads roughly in English:

FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

Figure 6 Portrait of 'King Tidy' of Brisbane, copied by Carl Dammann in 1872 from an original owned by Julius Ferdinand Berini, collected in the late 1860s, with caption on the reverse. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.307.387).

King (Chief), living not far from Brisbane, Australia, who although in an entirely savage condition was a patron and friend to the natural scientist Dr Berini on several occasions. He gave Berini particularly a secure escort on his way to areas never before explored or entered by a white man.

It is unclear who wrote this inscription, but given that we know Berini was in Hamburg in 1872 it may well have been Carl Dammann who made the note as a result of a conversation with Berini himself. Although Berini is not mentioned in any scholarly accounts of colonial collecting, other archival traces began to emerge. One piece of evidence came in the form of an 1868 article entitled 'Ein deutscher gruss von Australien her' ('A German greeting from Australia') in the magazine *Die Gartenlaube*. The article starts by recounting an accident that befell Berini and his wife in March of that year when their dog savagely attacked them. It then continues to reprint a rambling letter to the magazine that Berini had sent in January 1868 in which he discusses the indigenous men in the group portrait. And confirmation that the group photograph in the British Museum did in fact show Berini was confirmed by an engraved version of the group photograph that accompanies it (Fig 7). The engraving is titled 'Dr. Berini mit seinem Gefolge im Busch. Nach einer Photographie' ('Dr Berini with his entourage in the bush. From a photograph') – the engraver having removed all signs of the photo studio surroundings of the group so as to enable the editor to fancifully claim that Berini has met this group of Aboriginal men whilst travelling, rather than wandering into a studio in Brisbane.

FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE

Figure 7 Engraved version of the Berini studio portrait, which accompanied his published letter from Australia in *Die Gartenlaube* in 1868.

According to passenger lists, Berini emigrated from Germany to Queensland in 1863 with his wife Caroline. Local newspaper accounts thereafter paint an extraordinary and intriguing picture of his life. In 1864 in Grafton, New South Wales, a letter was sent to the editor of the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* by one C. Zimmer, who was a chemist and druggist, complaining about Berini claiming the qualification MD when he was more than likely not qualified at all. This is a theme that continues. Berini then moves to Brisbane in November 1865 and advertised himself as a physician and surgeon. He seems to have charged heavy fees for services that had at best mixed results, and Berini pursued non-payers doggedly through the Brisbane courts. In 1868 comes the exciting incident of the dog attack. The *Clarence Examiner* reports that one evening Berini's mastiff was let off his leash and set upon him, inflicting 23 deep wounds, and a further seven wounds on his wife Caroline, who tried to help.

Berini's attempts to extract money from his evidently unsatisfied patients seems to have precipitated a decision to leave Brisbane for South Australia in 1869, settling in the German immigrant town of Hahndorf, near Adelaide. A note in the *South Australian Register* in August relates that Berini and his wife had decided to leave Queensland due to the dog attack and their declining health, preferring the 'salubrious and bracing air of South Australia, where Dr Berini contemplates following his favourite studies of the 'Flora and Fauna' of Australia'.⁸ Soon after this Berini again begins to sue patients for non-payment in the Adelaide courts, and in one case against a Mr Frame in 1871 he actually admits to not being a qualified doctor, which was printed in a report in the *South Australian Register*. The following month, sensing the damage to his reputation, Berini published an explanation in the newspaper, stating that 'he wishes to explain that the reason he occupies such a

position is that the Medical Board refuses to recognize Swiss diplomas. He received the degrees of Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Zurich, in which he studied for seven years.' Conveniently, the originals of his certificates were not available, having for some reason been sent by Berini to London 'for approval of the medical authorities there'.⁹

It appears however that the damage to Berini's reputation in South Australia was as bad as it was in Brisbane, and in August 1872 a sensational report in the *Evening Journal* (Adelaide) states that the discredited Berini had visited Europe, where he had entertained audiences with tales of travel in

Borneo, New Guinea and Fiji accompanied by a suite of five natives of Australia, three Mongols and two Malays; that he had several encounters with the natives of those islands, in which he received spear and tomahawk wounds; and that he had succeeded in making wonderful discoveries and scientific observations of a highly interesting nature. His miraculous stories appear to have found belief at London and Berlin, for according to the latest accounts he has been received with enthusiasm. Those who have known Berini in this colony are well aware that he never visited those islands, nor ever had a 'dark suite'. Several authoritative accounts have been sent by the last mail to England and Germany, which will speedily stop the little game of that pseudo-explorer.

One of these 'authoritative accounts' of Berini's character sent to Berlin was published in the magazine *Kladderadatsch* in October 1872, sent from Kapunda in South Australia, saying 'We believe that the mention of Herr Berini in our letters will suffice to warn interested parties of the dangers of a notorious deceiver.'¹⁰ It is clear that Berini was using his collection of Australian photographs as evidence of his exploits to credulous audiences in Europe. The group portrait of Berini with five indigenous men surrounding him was, as we know, taken in Brisbane around 1868, probably at the Daniel Marquis studio. It is highly unlikely that Berini knew the Aboriginal men in the picture personally, despite what he says in the *Die Gartenlaube* article, and much more likely that the studio arranged it all for Berini. And surely the tales of spear wounds from natives are the wounds from his dog, inflicted on a hot night at home in Brisbane, rather than in Borneo or Fiji.

It was presumably during his documented visit to Germany in 1872, where he presumably lectured to members of the anthropological community, that Berini's photographs fell into the hands of the Dammann studio in Hamburg. We know that he was in Hamburg in 1872¹¹ since a note was published then that he had written letters from there to a Prof Ecker claiming to have met a race of half-ape men in the forests of Borneo. The editor goes on to say that:

Dr. Berini seems to have no idea how much the monstrous and untrustworthy nature of his report, in order to be observed by the scientific side, would have required very definite proofs of the correctness of his narrative. Since he has had sufficient time and opportunity to furnish such proofs, but has not brought them so far, he will not be astonished if his report, which in the assembly received more cheerfulness than indignation, was not found worthy by any of the attending members.¹²

Evidence that Berini did try to use his photograph collection to back up his far-fetched claims can be found in some of the documentation passed on to Dammann with the photographs. Under three portraits in the Pitt Rivers Museum collection that were copied by Dammann is the caption 'Hirsute types met by Dr Berini in Borneo' (Fig 8). Are these hirsute men Berini's attempt to persuade the scientific community of his 'Affenmenschen', or half-ape men? We may never know, but it is clear that these men are almost certainly from South Australia where Berini had lived – they are certainly not from Borneo.

FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE

Figure 8 Three portraits of South Australian men, copied by Dammann in 1872 from originals provided by Julius Ferdinand Berini, who described them as 'Hirsute types met by Dr Berini in Borneo'. Courtesy Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.229.11.9-11)

The existence of apelike men in Aboriginal dreamtime stories was certainly a topic of conversation in colonial Australia in the period, as was the search for Darwin's "missing link", and it is likely that Berini's story of encountering such creatures in Borneo emerged from this melting pot of speculation, mixed with his own fertile imagination. There was for example a discussion of Darwin's theories in relation to the hairiness of apes and the relative lack of hair in humans in a South Australian newspaper article published soon before Berini left for Europe.¹³ The centre one of these 'hirsute' men also exists as a Dammann carte de visite in the British Museum collection, also documented as a man from Borneo. Just as with the photograph of a Zulu man (possibly purchased in South Africa en route to Europe) which he passed off as a man from Queensland, Berini is here again using the credulousness of his contemporaries to pass off images of South Australians as inhabitants of Borneo to back up his stories of adventures there. Nonetheless, Berini's purported scientific qualifications and the statement that he had actually met these men in Borneo presumably lent weight, not to mention the fact that in 1872 few people in Europe had ever seen a photograph of an indigenous person from either Australia or Borneo.

Multiple originals, multiple histories

Processes of collecting, exchanging, rephotographing, publishing, marketing and selling can be seen as essential and interconnected elements of just how a body of ethnographic data was to be established for objective study in the centres of learning in 1860s and 1870s Europe, and how validation and value were created around them. Although there was some contemporary scientific anxiety in Germany about the provenance and veracity of photographic images of indigenous peoples, as well as their usefulness to scientific racial studies given their original purpose as collectable cartes de visite, the perceived truth value of such mixed photographic imagery was nonetheless recognised as of the utmost value to those who might glean some scientific value from the indexical trace of the 'other'. The utility of this trace was not considered to be negatively affected by the technical process of replication by rephotography, although the quality of the resulting image was often not quite as good as the original, since any imperfections in the source photograph were amplified by any further imperfections in the copy. In a period where photography was beginning to supplant illustration in academic usage, and even engravings were beginning to attract captions including the phrase 'from a photograph' to increase their scientific credibility, we can see how the perceived value of the medium as a form of objective data led also to an immediate market in ethnographic imagery, with publishers especially in Germany producing expensive sets of photographs for institutions, societies and wealthy amateur anthropologists. In 1881 for instance the Berlin publisher J. F. Stiehm published a boxed set of

mounted photographs of Central African people created by Richard Buchta on a journey through Sudan and Uganda. Although one of these set of Buchta's photographs was 'exhibited' at the Anthropological Institute in London the same year, its expensive format meant that only a few institutions in the UK acquired one, mostly large libraries (Morton 2015b: 34). The *AEA* is also a good example of the elite nature of the scientific market. Virchow recognizes this in his review, asking '[I]et the well-to-do circles view the considerable price, which has to be paid for the issues, as a voluntary contribution to the successful continuation and completion of this endeavour, whose initiation has imposed great sacrifices but has already yielded great achievement.' (Virchow 1874: 68) In April 1874, after producing several sheets of the series, the Berliner Gesellschaft learned of the death of Carl Dammann and yet reported its continuation through his brother Frederick, who worked as a teacher in England. Yet soon after, in 1875, they tried to persuade Frederick Dammann to halt production, citing the high cost of the album at 100 Thaler, making it unaffordable for all but the wealthiest individuals or institutes following the financial panic of 1873 and the subsequent economic depression. By comparison, a labourer in 1875 might earn 30 Thaler annually. In order to mitigate this, argued Virchow, '[o]nce the work has been completed, it should be possible to issue a concise collection at lower prices for the purpose of education' (Virchow 1874: 68), and indeed this was done, a smaller album in English being produced by Frederick Dammann, as well as a version for schools, the *Schul-Album*.

The Dammann's technique of rephotographing original photographs and thereby creating a copy negative from which multiple new prints might be made and pasted onto new mounts, was still the main way in which photographic imagery was published. Others quickly established themselves in the publishing industry, such as photogravure, a photo-mechanical process that could produce an ink engraving direct from a photographic negative, that became more widely used in the later 1870s, as well as the Albertype, a collotype reproduction process. Whilst the rephotography process is often considered to be "copying", and therefore somehow of lesser artistic or historical value than the "original" object that it is based on, we in fact need to question to concept of an "original" photograph and its "copy", and instead think of them as having a more intimate kinship connection, being members of different generations of the same family. As Elizabeth Edwards and I have recently argued, we instead need to conceptualise both sources and their rephotographed copies as multiple or serial originals that have close ties both physically and intellectually. The model of social biography, developed widely in relation to the study of museum artefacts, is of limited usefulness for the study of photograph collections. This is because it is difficult to locate the biographical moment for a medium that is by its very nature constantly translating itself into new formats and instances of its own image. We have instead a complex mesh or network of multiple instantiations of the image, as negative, print, lantern slide, copy negative, modern print, digital scan, etc. This network is characterised by extended but interrupted temporalities of the image as new instances (or performances) are generated and disseminated as part of a family tree of optical reproduction (Edwards and Morton 2015: 10).

Conclusion

Rephotography as a value creation technology in the nineteenth century is something that had both intellectual and economic dimensions, both of which were

interwoven. Value was firstly perceived in the way in which photographs of indigenous peoples were eagerly sought after from those travelling to places distant from the European capitals, such as Australia. In the 1860s it was mostly only locally established professional photographers who were making images of Aboriginal people, nearly always in studio settings, and for a variety of markets. We know very little about the manner in which Aboriginal people were induced to have their portraits taken in studios in towns such as Brisbane, but Michael Aird has suggested that photographers may have taken full advantage of any Aboriginal people visiting these new towns for trading purposes, and that although they probably knew that photographers intended to profit from their portraits, they may well have negotiated some form of payment before posing before the camera (Aird 2014: 136). Returning to Europe with such rare images immediately created a set of values in relation to their scientific utility as racial type portraits, for comparison with other regional 'types', as well as information about their material culture. The Berliner Gesellschaft originally conceived to separate anthropological and ethnological photographs in the *AEA*, but this was quickly abandoned 'since thus far this differentiation was not sufficiently considered in the making of photographs and hence too many images are of a mixed character.'¹⁴ In other words, most source photographs being copied were not made at the direction of anthropologists for their specific needs, but instead by commercial studio photographers for a mixed market. Yet the high demand for such imagery meant that recent travellers with source material were often sought after without the possibility of adequately checking their information. Yet whilst it appears obvious that Berini was a charlatan, whose story is replete with quackery, legal wrangles, forgery, tall tales, deception, and savage dogs, it is also clear that he had a genuine interest in the natural history of Australia, on which he gave talks to the German immigrant community in South Australia. As a result of sharing his photographs with the photographer Carl Dammann in Germany around 1872, Berini became a significant source for the major photographic dissemination project of nineteenth-century European anthropology and thereby one of the most significant disseminators of early Australian Aboriginal photography in Europe, alongside already celebrated figures such as Amalie Dietrich.

The growth of European anthropology as a discipline had established a strong demand for photographic data, which thereby brought economic value in the potential sale of copies or 'duplicates'. The fact that photographic copies of photographs look almost identical to their source increased their value since the replication process became almost invisible, and those scientists consuming the Dammann copies considered them of equal value. I suggested earlier that there were strong historical parallels between the Dammann rephotography project of the 1870s and more recent digitization projects. There are also echoes in the way in which visual resources in academia are mediated by large publishing companies whose digital copying of a wide variety of museum and archival sources for sale on commercial educational platforms is the most current example of the way in which anthropology and commercial rephotography have a long history of creating value together. There are of course huge benefits in making such collections available for scholarly research; this essay made full use of online resources of Australian newspapers for instance. But there are dangers also when unreliable historical documentation associated with collections is recirculated in online catalogues, as the example of the 'man of Warrego district' in the British Museum demonstrates. The question of what value these collections of images in European museums have, with their multiple histories and kinship relations of reproduction and circulation, is a

question whose answer has shifted greatly over time; whilst they entered these institutions as representatives of racial types, they lost this purpose almost as soon as they arrived, and have only in the last thirty years or so become seen as important sources of history, of cultural encounter and Aboriginal experiences of colonialism, as well as hugely valued images of family and community.

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Acknowledgments

Much of the research for this essay was undertaken during my participation as a project partner in the Australian Research Council-funded project ‘Globalisation, Photography, and Race: the Circulation and Return of Aboriginal Photographs in Europe’ led by Jane Lydon at University of Western Australia between 2011-2015. I am grateful to Thomas Theye for his generous sharing of notes about the Dammann studio over the years. An earlier version of this essay was presented at a symposium in 2017 at the Institute of Modern and Contemporary Culture, University of Westminster, and I am grateful to the organiser Sara Dominici and other participants for their feedback. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewer for useful comments on an earlier draft, as well as Howard Morphy and Robyn McKenzie.

¹ It is today in the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum, and it is likely that it was acquired from the Society at an early date, possibly in the late 1870s by Augustus Pitt-Rivers, since he bought many of the items in the Anthropological Society’s collection in this period and this album contains documentation relating to these objects.

² *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, ‘Miscellen und Bücherschau’, Vol. 4 (1872), 392 [quote translated from German].

³ For instance, all but one photograph has an identifier (e.g. E/4) recorded, and half of them have individual locations transcribed. In keeping with Balfour's practice elsewhere in the collection, this suggests that all individual labels were transcribed from the backs of prints at the time they were pasted onto the board around 1931.

⁴ Although Sumner (1986: 160) suggests that two prints in the Archer album in the John Oxley Library (JOL), Brisbane, are likely to be Godeffroy nos 41 and 54 from the Dietrich set, the evidence from the European collections suggests not. The version of Godeffroy 41 in the JOL (Sumner 1986: 162) is slightly different to that purchased by Pitt-Rivers from the Godeffroy (1998.249.5.3), which is probably from the Dietrich set. Likewise, the version of Godeffroy 54 in the JOL (Sumner 1986: 163) is somewhat different to the version in the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, which is presumably from the original Dietrich set. Theye (2004: 260) suggests that a further copy of Godeffroy 54 is held in Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, which should be compared with both versions.

⁵ For instance Pitt Rivers Museum accession number 1998.249.7.14. This print was also purchased from the Estate of Friedrich Dammann in 1901. It is closely related to Godeffroy no. 55 which includes a European man to the right of the group (published in Sumner 1986: 165), copies of which appear in a number of European museums (Theye 2004: 260). This Dammann print is labelled "Bride Capture" on the PRM mount. The original which Dammann copied does not seem to be part of the Dietrich set, but is also possibly the work of the Daniel Marquis studio in Brisbane, and was possibly a print acquired by the Berliner Gesellschaft in the same period. This image was published in the *Anthropologisches-Ethnologisches Album* (AEA) in Table 3 (Australia), with the caption "Australier Brautbewerbung", i.e. "Australian courtship". Another good example is Pitt Rivers Museum accession number 1998.249.7.15, which is almost identical to one in the John Oxley Library, Brisbane (published in Sumner 1986: 163), but with the standing men keeping their heads down instead of facing the camera. It is also thereby probably the work of the Daniel Marquis studio in Brisbane. Sumner proposes that the John Oxley Library print may be the same image as Godeffroy no. 54. In fact there seem to be several slight variations of this scene, including the version in the Archer album in the John Oxley Library, the version in Leiden, and this Dammann copy of an unknown original, possibly collected by the Berliner Gesellschaft. These variations show that several versions of this grouping were produced by the Daniel Marquis studio and disseminated widely. Although it was copied by Dammann, this image was not used in the AEA.

⁶ Pitt Rivers Museum accession number 1998.249.7.13. This print was purchased from the Estate of Friedrich Dammann (Carl Dammann's brother and the continuer of his work) in 1901, and is the same image as Godeffroy no. 53 in the PRM's founding collection (1998.249.5.5). The original image has been suggested as the work of the Daniel Marquis studio in Brisbane. The caption in pencil on the PRM mount, presumably copied from a note on the back of the print, reads "Family at Home". This image was published by Dammann in the AEA (1872-4) within Table 3 (Australia), with the caption "Australier (Familie)". Theye (2004: 260) notes that another copy of Godeffroy no. 53 is in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.

⁷ *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Meeting on 18th April 1874; Vol. 6 (1874), np.

⁸ *Evening Journal* (Adelaide, SA), Wednesday 4 August 1869, p 3 Article.

⁹ *The South Australian Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA), Monday 1 May 1871, p 2 Article.

¹⁰ *Beiblatt zum Kladderadatsch*, Berlin, 20 October 1872 (no. 48 Zweites Beiblatt).

¹¹ A further piece of information about the fate of Julius Berini comes in a short note some years later, in 1881, in *The Argus* (Melbourne), where it is reported that a man called Berini had recently been imprisoned in Switzerland for forgery, and during his trial he had produced a certificate purportedly from the Medical Board of Victoria, although there was no such name appearing on the board's register.

¹² *Die Dritte Allgemeine Versammlung der deutschen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*. Stuttgart, 8 bis 11 August 1872. Braunschweig, 1872, p.49. See also Burkhardt, G. and N. Mackey (1999) *History of the German Community in the Clarence River District of NSW*. Grafton: Grafton Family History Centre, p.105.

¹³ *Kapunda Herald and Northern Intelligencer*, Friday 26 May 1871, page 4.

¹⁴ *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Miscellen und Bücherschau, Vol. 4 (1872), p.392.