A Career of Japan
Baron Raimund von Stillfried and Early Yokohama Photography

LUKE GARTLAN

A Career of Japan is the first study of one of the major photographers and personalities of nineteenth-century Japan. Baron Raimund von Stillfried was the most important foreign-born photographer of the Meiji era and one of the few globally active photographers of his generation. He played a key role in the international image of Japan and the adoption of photography within Japanese society itself. Yet, the lack of a thorough study of his activities, travels, and work has been a fundamental gap in both Japanese- and Western-language scholarship. Based on extensive new primary sources and unpublished documents from archives around the world, this book examines Stillfried’s significance as a cultural mediator between Japan and Central Europe. It highlights the tensions and fierce competition that underpinned the globalising photographic industry at a site of cultural contact and exchange – treaty-port Yokohama. In the process, it raises key questions for Japanese visual culture, Habsburg studies, and cross-cultural histories of photography and globalisation.

“Luke Gartlan’s book is a compelling and enjoyable read, and contributes major new perspectives to the growing field of Meiji photography. It will certainly be the authoritative work on Raimund von Stillfried, but it is also impressive for its contributions to other important areas of Meiji cultural studies, including representations of the emperor, photography of Hokkaido, and world’s fairs.” Brett Winter-Tamaki (University of California, Irvine)

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Luke Gartlan

Luke Gartlan (PhD 2004) is a lecturer at the School of Art History, University of St Andrews. He is editor of the peer-reviewed international quarterly History of Photography, and co-editor, with Ali Behdad, of Photography’s Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation (Getty Research Institute, 2013). He researches contacts photography and cultural exchange in the nineteenth century, especially with reference to the camera’s role in colonial visual cultures, histories of travel and exploration, and non-Western responses to photography.
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and Early Yokohama Photography

BY
LUKE GARTLAN

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Introduction

With Argus Eyes

At some stage in the mid-1870s, the Austro-Hungarian photographer Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz arranged his easel, props, cameras, and equipment in his Yokohama studio in preparation for a self-portrait (fig. 1). With his Japanese assistant at his feet, he placed himself at the center of the composition, dressed in the neat attire appropriate to his social background, and arranged for another assistant to record the scene. While the surrounding equipment provides ample evidence of his photographic profession, Stillfried depicts himself in the guise of a studio painter, with a fine brush in his right hand and a maulstick and palette in his left, poised at a moment between working on the self-portrait before him. Like many nineteenth-century photographers, he adopts the traditional iconography of the painter in his studio to claim the credentials of an artist.

In contrast to the elegant photographs of Japanese subjects that had established his reputation, the cluttered, seemingly random arrangement of objects in this self-portrait suggests the behind-the-scenes mayhem of a successful studio. Above the jumble of props and equipment, two massive cameras loom over the scene with their apertures turned in opposite directions. Beside each camera stands another requisite tool of early studio photography—two headrests used to ensure a sitter’s arrested posture during the prolonged exposure times required for a likeness. Taken together, this complex arrangement of objects suggests an allegorical relationship between visual technologies, the seated photographer and the representation itself. While Stillfried occupies the site at the center of the composition, the apparent master of his domain, the arrangement of the cameras and adjacent self-portrait suggests the intersection of various mechanical, representational, and personal gazes. It is hardly coincidental that the seated artist and the camera directly behind him are aligned in the same direction. Intersecting with these parallel glances, the mammoth-plate camera on the left and the mounted self-portrait face in the opposite direction. Through the painted self-portrait and those mechanical bystanders, Stillfried’s mastery finds expression in the proliferation of his own gaze and its proxies over the studio space. In this sense, this photograph does not merely declare the artistic status of the new medium; it proclaims the visual authority of the photographer over the physical world.

In the nineteenth-century colonizing world, the commercial travel photographer represented the modern profession of observation and supervision par excellence. To adopt Stillfried’s own resonant phrase from another context, the travel photographer viewed the world “with Argus eyes” (mit Argusaugen), ever vigilant for suitable subjects to render before his camera. According to the Greek myth, Argus possessed one hundred eyes, only two of which slept at any one time to ensure perpetual watchfulness. When Zeus transformed the priestess Io into a white cow to conceal his infidelity, his suspicious spouse Hera ordered her servant Argus to guard the animal. In response, Zeus sent the mes-
senger Hermes, who managed to lull Argus to sleep and decapitate him. According to Ovid, Hera honored her servant by setting his eyes in the tail feathers of the peacock. Such a mythic creature of vigilant observation, whose sole task was to supervise another’s behavior, appears a germane metaphor for the European photographer’s role in the nineteenth-century imperial supervision of Asian societies.

Yet this picture of evident command presented in his studio self-portrait belies the complexity and difficulty of his two-decade expatriate career. It renders an idealized notion of cultural and professional authority—of a dutiful servant and a masterful artist—that all too neatly reduces the relationship between photographer and subject to one of command and obeisance. At the site of production, the subjects encountered in the photographer’s travels did not represent carte blanche material for his visual practice. They did not present dutiful subjects before his camera, but in various ways challenged the purported authority of his project. What was the relationship between the expatriate artist-photographer and the Japanese assistant before him? Did this arrangement reflect the master’s authority or present an idealized notion of imperial control that did not reflect the actual state of affairs? This book challenges the visual authority of foreign photographers in nineteenth-century Japan by emphasizing the subtle challenges and transformations in their work prompted by an emerging and confident domestic photographic industry.

2 Josef Popjel, *Baron Raimund von Stillfried on his Deathbed*, August 14, 1911. Albumen print, 10.8 x 15.4 cm (mount 17 x 18.4 cm). Stillfried Family Collection, Vienna.
INTRODUCTION

THE DEATH OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

Whether implicitly or not, any monograph of a painter or photographer invests in the historical or aesthetic significance of that individual’s output. It calls for a reassessment of his or her activities and work, and advocates his or her place in the history of the medium. As the first detailed study of Raimund von Stillfried, one of my main intentions is certainly to reconstruct the parameters of his output and the historical consequence of his career. It is not my intention, however, merely to raise his stature in the canon of early photographers for its own sake but to investigate the reasons, however implicit, for the historical disregard pertaining to his career. Whereas other European travel photographers, such as Francis Frith and Samuel Bourne, have long held a place in the history of the medium, Stillfried has received little systematic attention and his work remains largely neglected and dispersed in archives around the world. This lacuna seems all the more surprising in view of his colorful career, marked by episodes of colonialist adventurism and public scandal. From the loyal officer of Emperor Maximilian in Mexico to the commissioned photographer en tour in northern Japan, Stillfried’s diverse travels and endeavors seem to make his career ideal fodder for biographical study. Moreover, the visual quality of his work would seem amenable to the fine print tradition espoused by the medium’s first institutional advocates. Stillfried’s mastery as a painter and photographer was fully acknowledged by the press. They praised the sharp eye of the educated man, his artistic understanding of picturesque beauty and architectural significance. The ethnographic value of his work was acknowledged by the critics. His masterly technique and brilliant conception were emphasized.

Far from merely a successful commercial photographer, such accounts bespeak his position and prowess in nineteenth-century debates on the medium’s artistic and ethnographic value. From such initial accounts in Vienna, the news of his death spread rapidly throughout Central Europe. In the days thereafter, more than forty obituaries appeared in metropolitan and regional newspapers throughout present-day Austria, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

Yet despite this contemporary fame, Stillfried’s own reputation died with him. With the advent of World War I and the demise of the Habsburg monarchy, the career of an aristocratic member of the old regime quickly faded under modernist concerns and preoccupations. Apart from a few brief dictionary entries and the anecdotal account of his son Alfons, Stillfried’s contribution to nineteenth-century visual practice all but disappeared from European-language scholarship. The situation was little better in Japan, with the exception of the work of a small number of scholars, notably from Hokkaido. In the 1970s, the first signs of renewed attention spurred an interest in his photographs of Japan, and thereafter several studies reproduced purportedly examples of his work alongside succinct outlines of his career. Since these studies often contradicted...
one another in both content and attribution, the first and most fundamental task has been to reconstruct Stillfried’s activities and movements, based on the rich but largely overlooked newspapers, photographic journals, travelers’ diaries, diplomatic records and family archives of the era. With the reconstruction of Stillfried’s itinerant career, an overall picture has emerged that clarifies his role in the cultural exchanges and circles of nineteenth-century Japan, primarily centered on the “contact zone” port of Yokohama.

So what happened to Stillfried’s posthumous reputation? To discern the reasons for his almost complete occlusion from academic attention is to outline the historiographical tendencies that this book aims to challenge in the reconstruction of his career. After his initial fall into obscurity in the interwar years, three general factors have ensured his continued posthumous neglect. Firstly, the implicit Anglo-French bias of many histories of nineteenth-century photography has marginalized the contributions of German-speaking photographers in Asia. The pioneer studies of Beaumont Newhall and Helmut Gernsheim, for instance, emphasized the significance of British and French travel photographers to the exclusion of their Central European counterparts. In the case of early travel photographers, where the suggestion of imperial expansion intersected with the fascist tensions of the early twentieth century, this bias was virtually absolute. Thus Helmut and Alison Gernsheim declared in the preface of their influential study *Orientalism*, Edward Said acknowledged that his analysis could not “do justice to . . . the important contributions to Orientalism of Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, and Portugal.” As James Clifford has noted, Said’s critique of an Anglo-French cultural tradition implicit in the subtle justification of those nations’ colonial projects required him to dismiss the rich Orientalist traditions of Central Europe. Yet even among Said’s list of omitted countries, the Austrian Empire—one of the preeminent European powers of the nineteenth century—is most conspicuous by its absence. Despite its maritime strength, the Austrian Empire had even fewer colonies than the Prussians. It is not merely the case that the suitability of postcolonial approaches requires reassessment in the context of the Austrian Empire, but that its current methodological predominance has further marginalized a consideration of Central European travel photographers. Under the influence of postcolonial strategies, historians have centered their enquiries on those photographers of colonial powers, mainly Britain and France, and have shied away from itinerant photographers from other European nations that had vastly different political relations with non-European societies. In this sense, postcolonial scholars reinterpreted the empirical research of earlier historians of photography, but did not necessarily dispute the subject of enquiry.

Another obstacle, and perhaps the most telling, is the lack of a major archive or primary source on this enigmatic photographer. Stillfried neither wrote his memoirs nor bestowed his archive to any institution. And unlike the Scottish photographer John Thomson, he neither published popular accounts of his travels nor entered into business arrangements for the mass publication of his work. Given the exigencies of scholarship, histories are often written around extant archives of institutions that are able to promote their collections. By contrast, Stillfried’s extant albums reside in little known societies, museums, libraries, and private collections scattered around the world. In those instances where notable holdings reside in major institutions, such as the Bibliothèque
nationale de France or the Tokyo National Museum, their lack of attribution bespeaks the level of disregard that has attended their preservation. Since Stillfried’s activities occurred in several countries and most of his patrons were likewise travelers, his albums were dispersed at the time of their sale. As a result, no single archive hints at the broad scope of his career and output. This book aims to reconstitute this scattered oeuvre and consider the work within the broader context of his itinerant career as well as the shifting market expectations and domestic pressures that shaped and attended his photographic practice in Japan. In the vast majority of instances, I have chosen to discuss works that are either published or attributed for the first time in order to highlight the diversity of his practice and the mass of pictorial materials that still await scholarly attention.

In view of this past neglect, the issue of biography occupies an important place in this study and thus merits some preliminary remarks. Just as the genre of biography supported the model of a coherent artistic subject, so the silence on certain individuals enabled the formation of an artistic canon that had its epicenter in the metropolitan capitals of Europe. However important poststructuralist critiques of authorship have been to demystifying artistic originality and agency, such debates seem rather misplaced for those artists and photographers outside the major urban centers whose careers have never received the sustained attention of visual historians or curators. Aside from a select coterie, the thoroughly researched and appraised photographer of nineteenth-century Japan, whether foreign or indigenous, represents the exception rather than the rule. Much work remains forgotten or misattributed in little-known archives and even the most basic biographical details of major figures continue to elude scholars. From this perspective, the critical interpretation of a neglected photographer’s biography can reveal the presuppositions of an academic field that precluded his or her activities from sustained attention.

While skeptical of conventional biographies that present a coherent narrative of artistic development, some scholars have returned to the monograph in an effort to provoke debate on the historical construction of subjectivity and the contested nature of self-identity. As Jo Burr Margadant has argued “the object of study for the new biographers is not just the construction of identities but also and inevitably, the contested nature of inventing selves.” These “new biographers” neither reduce such concerns to the narration of a unified “life” nor dismiss such efforts for their theoretical naïveté. My commitment to recovering forgotten sources and albums is thus not intended to resurrect a unified and self-evident notion of a neglected photographer, but to enquire into the fissures and shifts in his identity and practice that elicit alternative readings of travel photographers and their operations. In particular, I intend to emphasize the contested nature of visual practice at the site of cross-cultural production and the ambivalent identities of the expatriate photographer in Japan. I am concerned not with the affirmation of a certain imperial world view through the pictorial process (and its correspondent affirmation of a unified and biographized subject), but with the piecemeal erosion of any such ideologies in the face of the realities of Japanese modernity. This book refuses to credit the notion of command proffered in the photographer’s studio self-portrait in favor of readings that emphasize the uncertainty of his practice and the shifts in his cultural allegiances and positions. Biography thus remains a prominent vector in this study precisely because of the ways in which the subject of investigation runs both with and against the grain of current notions of early travel photographers.

OBJECTIVES AND PARAMETERS

During a remarkable international career spanning four decades, Stillfried was active in many regions of Asia and Europe. Indeed, few photographers of the nineteenth century rival either the frequency of his travels or the longevity of his activities. This book focuses on the Japanese period of his career, from his first arrival in Nagasaki in 1864 until his final return to Vienna in 1883. During these decades, primarily based in Yokohama, barely two
consecutive years passed without an excursion or business venture leading him to embark for another destination. In the study of such a photographer, we are therefore dealing with a career in which the infrastructures of nineteenth-century global modernity—the development of international rail and steamship networks, telegraphic communications, commercial trade, and transcontinental tourism—made possible a new relation between travel and visual production. His career constitutes a fertile case study of the professional opportunities and modes of operation that emerged with the rise of a globalizing world.

Stillfried is a key figure in the history of Yokohama’s souvenir photography market. This industry involved both Western and Japanese practitioners and was responsible for the production of hundreds of thousands of photographs—usually, but not exclusively, hand colored and bound in albums—for a voracious international audience in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Although long recognized as a pivotal figure in this industry, the lack of a reliable account of his work and activities has created considerable misunderstanding and confusion both in Japanese- and European-language scholarship. Stillfried’s activities in Japan have received more attention than any other aspect of his career, but major inaccuracies and omissions in the secondary literature have resulted in a skewed understanding of his photography and studio enterprise. Whereas other aspects of his career have simply been overlooked, this study concentrates on the Japanese period in order to dispel some of the errors that have formed the standard picture of his output and activities. A grounded examination of his changing practices, international endeavors, and professional associations will provide an important foundation for ongoing scholarship in the emergent field of nineteenth-century photography in Japan.17

The art historical conception of such European residents and their complex transcultural roles in nineteenth-century Japan is a pivotal area of current, ongoing research. Such foreigners played a crucial role as competitors, advisers, and colleagues in the interpretation and adoption of imported technologies and modes of thought for domestic use in Japan. The challenge, and indeed one reason for the importance of such figures, is that the sheer diversity of their careers in various cultural spheres requires different perspectives and collaborations across various disciplinary fields of study. Central to this examination is an inclusive approach to the study of foreign photographers that remains cognizant of both their international connections and their close everyday associations with their Japanese contemporaries. All too often, scholars have tended to partition the history of the medium into “Western photographers in Japan” as opposed to the hermetic categorization of “Japanese photography.” Such a false dichotomy misrepresents the transcultural history of photography in Japan.18 In short, Stillfried’s photographic practice did not take place in isolation, but shaped, and was shaped by, the broader circles of Japan’s emergent photographic industry. Regardless of their background, many of Stillfried’s colleagues and contemporaries examined in this study have either received little attention (Ichida Sōta, Uchida Kuichi, Michael Moser, Wilhelm Willmann), remained poorly documented as active photographers (Usui Shūzaburō, Hermann Andersen), or were not even previously known to have visited Japan (Edward S. Boynton, Heinrich Hammestede, Franz von Stillfried).

To a significant extent, the lack of basic documentation about these photographers and their clients, as well as their professional networks, business practices and private lives, has limited the debates and issues that have pertained to early photography in Japan. Although the field has a rich history in Japanese- and European-language scholarship extending back to the early twentieth century,29 Western scholars of Japanese visual culture have only recently begun to scrutinize the medium’s significance in nineteenth-century Japan. This book addresses the dearth of critical scholarship on the Yokohama photographic industry, symptomatic of a general suspicion of transcultural visual products, which either devalues its products as derivative or homogenizes the entire industry under the rubric
of export tourist kitsch. Deemed of concern neither to art historians nor to area specialists, Yokohama photographs have often been neglected as the ephemera of globetrotters’ brief encounters with Japan. And yet the scope and diversity of the industry, its range of participants and audiences, its networks of association across cultural boundaries (both local and global) and its interactions with other pictorial media and cultural products necessitate research approaches which pay little heed to the putative borders between diverse disciplines. The challenge for photographic historians is not merely to resurrect these overlooked visual products, but to promote methodologies and approaches which acknowledge their multiple, intertwined histories of cultural exchange and resistance.

The period under investigation was one of considerable social, cultural and political upheaval in Japan, conventionally divided into the Bakumatsu (1853–1867) and Meiji periods (1868–1912). After more than two centuries of relative political stability in Japan, Western nations forced the effective demise of the “isolationist” policy and the establishment of the treaty ports of Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Hakodate in 1859, and Kobe and Niigata in 1868. Western merchants, diplomats, soldiers, and missionaries were permitted to reside within the designated limits of these ports under the protection of their respective consulates. While these new residents brought greater access to foreign technologies and modes of thought, their presence also stoked the fires of domestic discontent with the political management of the Tokugawa family. In 1868 the Meiji Restoration, an effective coup d’état, ousted the old regime and reinstated the emperor as the political figurehead of the nation. In his name, the new political elite instigated a program of widespread modernization that sanctioned the dissemination of introduced technologies, institutions, and cultural practices. Photography, translated as shashin (literally “truthful copy”), appeared a technology well suited to the new epoch of Meiji. The emergence of a Japanese domestic market and industry, and the camera’s deployment for the political purposes of the government pointed to the specific cultural adoptions and adaptations of photography to local circumstances and needs. These cultural uses dissolved foreigners’ assumed imperialist ownership of photography resulting in specific challenges for European professional photographers based in Japan. Stillfried’s career and output were shaped by the challenges caused by these changing domestic circumstances as well as international market tastes.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Throughout this book, I examine specific albums and portfolios to consider the ways in which their presentation and arrangement constructed a notion of their subject that both fulfilled and formulated the wishes of their patrons. Where possible, I consider the production, circulation, and reception of certain albums and the uses that such compilations served for their owners. Given the thousands of photographic albums purchased and exported overseas as souvenirs, often without any identification of the studio or the customer, the sheer magnitude of the Yokohama photographic industry’s output can erase any sense of difference or distinction within these vast archives. In order to counter this tendency, Stillfried’s shifting practices and output are examined through a small coterie of photographic albums that provide the foundation for an analysis of his work. I am keen to emphasize the specific features and aspects of his output—their presentation, targeted clientele, and material features—that are all too readily overlooked in the sheer mass of photographic souvenirs.

Stillfried’s upbringing and formative experiences in mid-nineteenth-century Austria and Imperial Mexico are examined in chapter 1. The primary aim here is to identify the cultural values, acquired skills, and imperial ideologies that established his penchant for artistic and maritime pursuits. That the history of the Habsburg Empire differed in fundamental respects from Britain and France could not be better demonstrated than by the demise of Imperial Mexico. Arguably, the capture and uncere-
ous execution of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico was the most spectacular colonial failure of the nineteenth century. Stillfried’s firsthand experience of the collapse of the regime initiated a crisis in his imperial allegiance that shaped his subsequent identity as an aristocratic artist in self-imposed exile.

Chapter 2 chronicles Stillfried’s early activities as a merchant and diplomatic official in Japan and ultimate emergence as a professional photographer in Yokohama. It analyzes his long neglected topographical photographs and argues that their production reflected the local interests and concerns of foreign residents rather than an international “globetrotter” market yet to assert its primacy. The signs of modernization evident in some of these outdoor scenes acknowledge the prominent changes then occurring on the streets of Japan. The subsequent removal of such outdoor scenes from his stock and preference for studio-based imagery emphasizes a shift in his practice that denied the contemporary prominence of imported fashions and goods in Meiji society. This shift reflected a conscious reorganization of the studio stock in order to cater to those affluent globetrotters in search of visual souvenirs that affirmed, rather than questioned, notions of Japanese cultural isolation and stasis.

Shifting between different geographical locations and audiences, the next three chapters examine specific episodes that occurred in the photographer’s early career. Chapters 3 and 5 trace, respectively, Stillfried’s role in two public scandals that highlight the extent to which commercial photographers ignored social protocols in pursuit of professional success. The first of these scandals concerns Stillfried’s unauthorized photograph of the Meiji emperor, taken on the occasion of the latter’s first public visit at the Yokosuka arsenal; the second centers on Stillfried’s exhibition of a Japanese teahouse at the Vienna World Exposition in 1873. These cases demonstrate, in different contexts, the official suspicion pertaining to commercial photographers and the need to regulate their activities and practices. Both episodes expose the disreputable underside of nineteenth-century photographers’ entrepreneurial endeavors.

Despite such controversies, commercial photographers were also useful proselytizers of the new government’s program of nationalizing initiatives in Japan. Between the respective scandals at Yokosuka and Vienna, Stillfried received an official commission to photograph the northern island of Hokkaido and its indigenous inhabitants, the Ainu, from a government ministry responsible for the “development” of the region. In addition to its foregrounding of photography’s role within the emergent nation-state of Japan, the commission also highlights a theme that weaves through this study—the ambivalent allegiances and objectives of the expatriate photographer as an employee of the Japanese. Rather than mere commercial opportunists, expatriate photographers became useful allies for the indigenous elite in the fruition of their state-building objectives. This is not to suggest that episodes of outright exploitation and imperialist hutzpah did not occur (as this book charts, Stillfried was capable of brazen and even violent acts), but neither were such expatriate photographers fixed in their attitudes toward their adopted country of residence.

In chapter 6, the analysis moves to the middle phase of Stillfried’s Japan career, when his international reputation and influence reached its zenith. This chapter charts the photographer’s expanded business activities and his importance in the promotion of an international market for Japanese imagery and goods. My intention here is to outline Stillfried’s historical significance as a mediator in several fields of cultural activity—as a guide for visiting foreigners, a merchant of cultural objects and goods, an importer of photographic equipment, and a hired teacher of studio techniques, to mention but a few business endeavors. Even when confined to photography per se, Stillfried’s activities with a camera extended well beyond the production of globetrotter souvenirs to comprise, for example, astronomical phenomena and geological subjects. Such pursuits expand on the limited perception of his activities as a commercial photographer for the international tourist market.

Chapter 7 examines Stillfried’s studio-based genre photographs of Japanese society. On the one
hand, I will argue that such studio work had a profound effect on the international perception of Japan; on the other, I contend that his studio aesthetic reflected his unease with the rise of a domestic photographic industry that threatened his own professional authority and market control. As a representative case study of such competition, I compare Stillfried’s studio work with that of his former protégé Usui Shūzaburō. Such comparisons demonstrate the notable differences in the representation of Japanese society that emerged from the Yokohama photographic industry. At a broader level, this chapter exemplifies my argument that Stillfried’s work not only pandered to globetrotters’ desires, but also fabricated notions of a premodern Japan in response to the everyday challenges to the photographer’s visual and commercial primacy. Both inside and outside Stillfried’s studio, the challenges to his business were all too real.

Stillfried’s late phase in Japan, when intense competition and legal difficulties finally ended his market preeminence and forced him to consider other professional options, constitutes the subject of chapter 8. While the camera remained central to his practice, these battles prompted an expansion in his pictorial endeavors that blurred the boundaries between photography and painting. This chapter introduces two hitherto neglected German-speaking photographers active in Yokohama—Hermann Andersen and Franz von Stillfried—and provides a new framework for the attribution of their work. It is my intention in these later chapters not to undertake an antiquarian exercise in the organization of long neglected archives per se, but to enable and promote an examination of the photographers’ contested visual products and roles as cultural go-betweens between nineteenth-century Japan and Europe.

Finally, the afterword briefly considers Stillfried’s return and transition into the Viennese art world. By ending with his retrospective exhibition at the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, I have sought to return to the issue of the photographer’s imperial self-identity raised in the opening chapter. Although brief in its analysis, I also want to suggest the unacknowledged debt that the visual modernity of fin-de-siècle Vienna owed to such expatriate artists and photographers. As such, this study shifts back and forth between the metropolitan cities of nineteenth-century Yokohama and Vienna, neither privileging one before the other nor examining each context in isolation from one another. If such a notion as a transcultural career and life has credence in the era of high colonialism, the “homecoming” can never be one of unalloyed welcome and expectant recognition. Indeed, for the majority of Stillfried’s contemporaries, many of whom died in their adopted country of Japan, their careers and activities have met with historical oblivion. In this respect, the borders between national fields of inquiry—for instance, between Japanese and Habsburg studies—have served to elide the significance of such itinerant, expatriate careers and livelihoods from accounts of nineteenth-century visual history. In examining such interstitial careers and practices, I hope to emphasize the porous and interconnected associations between and across such fields of study. Whatever its strengths and limitations, its points of illumination and blind spots, this book intends to promote such dialogues, to move toward the investigation of such little-studied photographers, and to further scholarship on their cross-cultural interactions and associations.
ABBREVIATIONS
ÉJ: L’Écho du Japon.
HKDP: Hong Kong Daily Press.
HHStA: Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.
JDH: Japan Daily Herald.
JG: Japan Gazette.
JHMS: Japan Herald Mail Summary.
JWM: Japan Weekly Mail.
NSC: Hokkai Shiryōshitsu [Northern Studies Collection], Kaitakushi gaikokujin kankei shokan mokuroku, Hokkaido University, Sapporo.
PC: Photographische Correspondenz.
SFC: Stillfried Family Collection, Vienna.

Introduction
6 Stillfried’s widow Helene, née de Jeszenicze, cut out many of these obituaries and pasted them in a family scrapbook, with obituaries appearing in newspapers in Aachen, Berlin, Bremen, Breslau (now Wroclaw, Poland), Brunn (now Brno, Czech Republic), Cologne, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Grazdenz (now Grudziadz, Poland), Hamburg, Leipzig, Posen (now Poznan, Poland), Prague, Reichenberg, Teplitz (now Teplice, Czech Republic), Vienna, and Wiesbaden. SFC.
8 For example, see Koshizaki Sōichi, Hokkaidō shashin bunkashi (Otaru, Hokkaido: Shinseisha, 1946), 49–56; Saigusa Hiroto, Nozaki Shigeru, and Sasaki Takashi, Kindai Nihon sangyō gijutsu no seiōka (Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1960), 204.
10 On the concept of the “contact zone,” see Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturalization (London: Routledge, 1992), 2–7.
14 Numerous studies could be cited, but representative examples include Gordon Baldwin, Roger Fenton: Pasha and Bayadère (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996); James R. Ryan, Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Douglas R. Nickel, Francis Frith in Egypt and Palestine: A Victorian Photographer Abroad (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). In more recent years, visual anthropologists have been at the forefront in the espousal of non-European, alternative histories of photography.
NOTES TO PAGES 4–12


18 In 2003, for example, a high-profile and otherwise important exhibition at Houston’s Museum of Fine Arts all but ignored the contributions of non-Japanese photographers to the history of Japanese photography. In an acknowledgment of such issues, Kinoshita Naoyuki stated in the exhibition catalog, “This book, and the exhibition it accompanies, are devoted to photographs taken by Japanese, which is clearly one way to define ‘Japanese photography.’ However, at the dawn of photography in Japan, Westerners were the ones who took the photographs, and these images of Japan and the Japanese, too, could be regarded as ‘Japanese photography.’” Kinoshita Naoyuki, “The Early Years of Japanese Photography,” in Anne Wilkes Tucker et al., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 16.


22 The term *shashin* only belatedly became the accepted signifier for photography in Japanese. For an intellectual history of the term, see Maki Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), chap. 5.

Chapter 1


3 Ernst Heinrich Kneschke, *Deutsche Grafen-Häuser der Gegenwart in heraldischer, historischer und genealogischer Beziehung* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1853), 2:513–15; Ernst Hein-
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LUKE GARTLAN

A Career of Japan is the first study of one of the major photographers and personalities of nineteenth-century Japan. Baron Raimund von Stillfried was the most important foreign-born photographer of the Meiji era and one of the first globally active photographers of his generation. He played a key role in the international image of Japan and the adoption of photography within Japanese society itself. Yet, the lack of a thorough study of his activities, travels, and work has been a fundamental gap in both Japanese- and Western-language scholarship. Based on extensive new primary sources and unpublished documents from archives around the world, this book examines Stillfried’s significance as a cultural mediator between Japan and Central Europe. It highlights the tensions and fierce competition that underpinned the globalising photographic industry at a site of cultural contact and exchange – treaty-port Yokohama. In the process, it raises key questions for Japanese visual culture, Habsburg studies, and cross-cultural histories of photography and globalisation.

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Luke Gartlan

(PhD 2004) is a lecturer at the School of Art History, University of St Andrews. He is editor of the peer-reviewed international quarterly History of Photography, and co-editor, with Ali Behdad, of Photography’s Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation. He is currently working on the history of photography, especially with reference to the camera’s role in cultural exchange, histories of travel and exploration, and non-Western responses to photography.

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