

“Faces Drawn in the Sand”: A Rescue Project of Native Peoples’ Photographs Stored at the Museum of La Plata, Argentina

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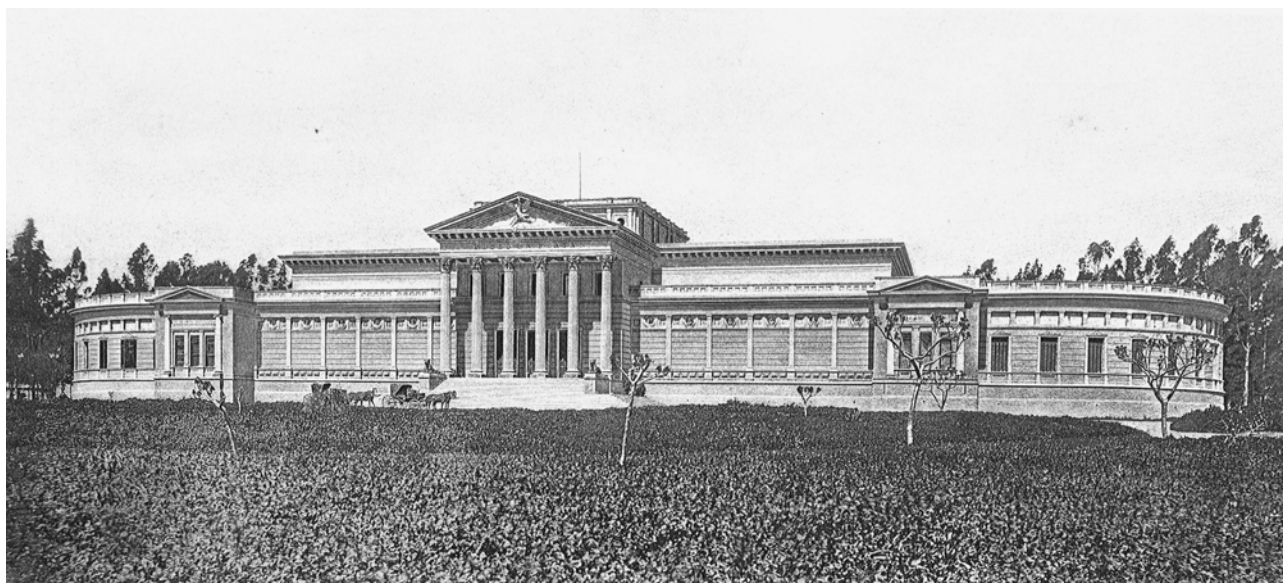
Introduction

The Museum of La Plata, Argentina, was established in 1884 as the museum of the new capital of the province of Buenos Aires. The city of La Plata had been founded in 1882,¹ after the federalization in 1880 of the city of Buenos Aires – former capital of the province of the same name. Several decisions

had to be made regarding the transfer of the archives, the library collections, and the public museum from the city of Buenos Aires. What had to be moved to the capital under construction was determined by which collections belonged to the provincial history and which to the history of the Nation. The lobbying to build a new monumental National Museum in the city of Buenos Aires and to move to La Plata the old “Museo Público” of Buenos Aires, established in 1823, finally failed. The museum of Buenos Aires, with its small building that stored impressive collections of fossil mammals and objects of natural history, became the National Museum in 1884.²

The “Museo de La Plata” emerged as a tour de force of Francisco P. Moreno, who presented his aborted project for the construction of a modern museum to the provincial authorities as a means to replace the “loss” of the collections transferred to the federal administration.³ In that way, the establishment of “Museo de La Plata” also meant the first building in South America specifically designed for that purpose.

Figure 1. Museo de La Plata, ca. 1890



The general museum of the province was devoted during its first years to the "American man," although during this period it also amassed a collection of fossil mammals that soon exceeded those of the National Museum. The first collections resulted from the donation of several anthropological and archaeological collections collected in the Argentinean interior during the 1870s and early 1880s. In a context of rivalry with the city of Buenos Aires institutions, the Museum's director Francisco P. Moreno envisioned a continental scope; to achieve these goals he articulated different strategies to collect and purchase objects which represented the material culture and the societies that, by those years, were perceived to be in the process of "extinction."⁴

In the 1870s and 1880s several campaigns against native peoples from Patagonia and Chaco were carried out as governmental or private initiatives in order to erase "savagery" from the lands to be included in the market economy. Besides, indigenous peoples from Northwestern Argentina were incorporated as labour force into the new industries established in that region, such as the "Ingenios" (sugar refineries) of Tucumán, Salta, and Jujuy. Either to record "vanishing races" or as testimony to the changes experienced by native people in the process of becoming "civilized," travelling naturalists were dispatched to the localities and scenes where this process was taking place. As a result, La Plata Museum became one of the repositories of the visual documents of a history that was not deeply analysed.

One of the characteristics of Museo de La Plata's expeditions was the multiplicity of tasks that travelling naturalists had to undertake. Far from being specific, these expeditions expected that one man had to collect skulls, botanical and zoological specimens, and to record archaeological ruins, fossil beds, or geological deposits. Some of these travelling naturalists, who were in charge of these multipurpose expeditions, were also expert photographers. To compete with the magnificent lithographs that characterised the publications of the former "Museo Público," Moreno promoted photography as a medium for scientific illustration, establishing a photographic lab in La Plata.

The photographic collections stored at Museo de La Plata provide a picture of pre-industrial societies of a wide area of South America during the late 19th-early 20th centuries. They include photographs on paper, albumen prints, and glass plate negatives,

among other formats. The materials, which have been affected by fungi and which were improperly stored, were the subject of two projects funded by the British Library Endangered Archives Programme.⁵ This paper aims to present the results of both projects, as well as to underline the need for rescuing archives threatened by physical conditions and by the lack of care (e.g., the absence of inventories). First, we will briefly describe the state of the photographic archive before the project began. The second part will be devoted to the development and results of the project. Finally, we will discuss the relevance of this kind of initiative for the future of the collections and historical research.

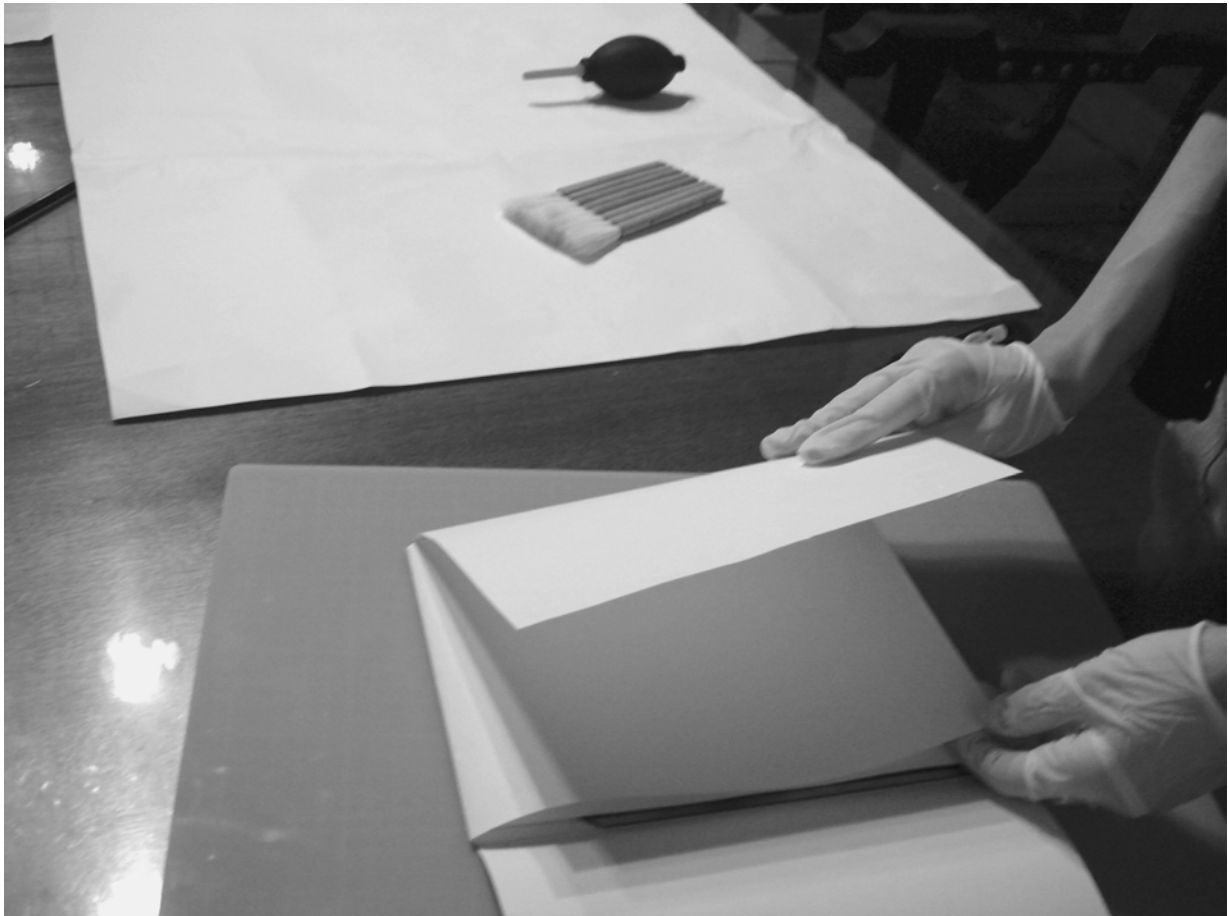
The Archives of the Museum

A resolution from 1937, signed by the geologist Joaquín Frenguelli, while he was in charge of Museo de La Plata, established a Photographic Archive.⁶ This resolution had two purposes: first, to protect the photographic materials and, second, to illustrate the Museum's collection. It established that the archive had to be classified in the following sections, an order that reflected the organization chart of the Museum in the late 1930s: 1) General Interest (Museum building and its dependencies, lectures, ceremonies, etc.); 2) Anthropology; 3) Archaeology and Ethnography; 4) Botany; 5) Geology and Physical Geography; 6) Mineralogy and Petrography; 7) Paleozoology (Invertebrates) and Paleobotany; 8) Paleozoology (Vertebrates); 9) Zoology (Invertebrates); and 10) Zoology (Vertebrates).⁷

The resolution also stated that all photographic materials – the ones that already existed and the ones that would be produced in the future – should be given to the new archive along with information that would help in identification and classification. Between 1884 and 1930 there were several changes in the organization of the scientific disciplines and the museum departments, such as the creation of new scientific sections.⁸ With the reorganization of the museum in the 1930s the materials were "reclassified" according to their subject in the new organization chart. In this way, both original order and provenance information were lost.⁹

The transfer of collections from the scientific departments to the archive had not been recorded, and there are no traces of the implementation of this

Figure 2. Conservation. Moving glass plate negatives from old enclosures to four flap envelopes in acid-free paper.



memorandum. However, this project led us to the conclusion that the resolution was only partially followed. Whereas many scientific departments deposited their plate negatives in the new archive, some others still today store the photographs or the negatives following the organization chart of the Museum's early years. They were never given to the archive, which in fact continued to work as a photographic lab rather than as a historical repository. This fact is connected with two different things: first, the different institutional ruptures connected with political changes at the university level. Every change resulted in new directives and memoranda, which buried in oblivion what had been done by former administrations. Second, the peculiar independence with which the Chief of the Scientific Departments interpreted and reacted to the resolutions of the directors of the museum, which led to the absence of general policies for the museum as a whole.

In such a way, the archive continued producing photographs as a service offered to the researchers

working in the museum, but it did not comply with the procedures set in 1937. However, the photographer Luis Ferreyra was in charge of the lab/archive, knew the historic collections very well, and could find the pieces based on his own expertise and knowledge of the negatives. In the 1990s he created a handwritten list of all the single items that for many years represented the only inventory of the materials. This list was not a descriptive instrument, in the sense that not every piece was identified with a unique reference code or identifier. Therefore, it would be hard, sometimes impossible, to locate single items following that list, particularly since they had no specific location assigned. Access to the materials was mediated in such a way by Ferreyra's memory and advice. When Ferreyra retired in the early 2000s, the collections were threatened by the absence of catalogues, by humidity and fungi, and by individuals who wanted to create picture books from the photographs but who had no concern for preservation or for the spatial organization of the collections.

Figure 3. EAP207-AFO-002-001-022-0001. Deteriorated glass plate negative. It was necessary to reformat such pieces since the images had been seriously damaged. Digitising provided good quality in terms of fidelity to the original. In addition to rescuing the image, digitisation will let us compare how damage evolves.



The photographs and negatives that were never given to the archive had never been the subject of an inventory. They were unknown, a fact that paradoxically protected them from the risks mentioned above.

On the other hand, since the mid 1990s the written records had been reunited and catalogued in the historic archive of the institution, a new section that kept some manuscripts, personnel and administrative files, and the archives of Samuel Lafone Quevedo and Joaquín Frenguelli, two of the former directors of the museum. The historic archive is the locus also for research on the history of science. Access to the documents is offered by appointment with the person in charge of public attention.

The EAP Projects

A Pilot Grant for the development of a Pilot Project was awarded in 2006. Its main objective was to identify the most seriously endangered photographic

collections and to locate photographic material archived in precarious conditions in several sections of the Museum or in personal family collections (scientists' collections and "private" collections). This process included interviewing "private" holders of the photographs: some staff members who were disciples or technical assistants of the people who originally took the photographs. These interviews revealed important aspects of the documents and their history. Another important goal of the Pilot Project was the training of local staff and the organization of a multi-disciplinary team. They were trained by CEHIPE¹⁰ experts during several workshops in subjects such as preservation and manipulation of old photographs, microfilming and archival techniques. There were several meetings with the firm in charge of microfilming during the different stages of the project.

This pilot project discovered "forgotten collections" stored in different departments of the Museum,

Figure 4. EAP207-CDV-001-0015a, EAP207-CDV-001-0015ar. Carte de visite. Front and back. With an inscription in the back “Ami Michel Aimé Ponget” and the stamp “Museo de La Plata Provincia de Buenos Aires.”



exposed to high levels of humidity and, consequently, damaged. Several “misplaced collections” in the hands of private owners or other institutions were identified, and efforts were made to recover them. The most seriously endangered photographic collections were identified and relocated. Over 2,000 glass plate negatives (around 90% of the collection), albumen albums, *cartes de visite* and DOP photographs were all moved to the Historic Archive where they are kept under controlled ambient conditions of 40% RH and 17°C. Every piece was removed from its old enclosures and placed in acid-free archival storage envelopes and boxes.

The most endangered pieces were those identified as ‘Arturo’ and ‘Maish’ collections (Tierra del Fuego inhabitants). These glass plate negatives show an

image which is vanishing and in some cases has almost disappeared, in some cases even flaking off of the emulsion has occurred. The whole of this collection was microfilmed in this pilot project together with a sampled selection. This archival master microfilm of 100 images is deposited in CEHIPE’s archive, with copies deposited in the British Library and in Museo de La Plata’s library.

Summarizing, this grant made it possible to relocate collections, draw up an inventory, set a conservation programme, train staff and try different ways of reformatting. A sample of 100 images, including glass plate negatives, albumen prints and *cartes de visite*, was microfilmed, and the microfilm was digitised. The reformatting had a double purpose, not only for preservation matters but also for

accessibility to the photographic collections which had been buried for such a long time and were almost unknown. Although microfilm presented good results and some advantages, we concluded that digitising the original photographs would allow us to obtain better quality images.

The achievements, the experience, and the good evaluation of the Pilot Project provided the basis to develop a proposal for a more ambitious project, also to be funded with an EAP grant. Despite being relocated, these unique collections have been damaged by years of bad storage conditions. Thus, we determined that reformatting was needed to avoid losing all the information kept in those documents. Moreover, in an effort to maintain the integrity of the collections, different communities and researchers could not be granted access to these materials in their original form.

The corpus in the Major Project was much bigger than the 100 pieces sample of the Pilot Project. It involved all of the collections related to the subject "pre-industrial societies" as was specified by the grant conditions. The complete archival description of the collections was the priority, followed by the reformatting programme which included both microfilming and digitising as a proper way to ensure the survival of the materials and accessibility.

The Major Project. Step by Step

This challenging project had the following key goals:

a) List the materials, providing the cultural, social and political background in which the photographs were created; b) Continue the training of local staff in the Image Permanence Institute of Rochester; c) Microfilm all the photographic collections described in the pilot project. 35 mm microfilm will be used as the archival medium in combination with digital imaging; d) To create an online catalogue of the collection, with access from the La Plata Museum web page; and e) To consolidate a Southern Cone local centre for the preservation of endangered archives with special focus on photography and glass plate negatives. It was necessary to follow a detailed plan since many variables had to be considered.

1. The staff

The project required a variety of skills that only a multidisciplinary team could provide. Three junior researchers (Máximo Farro, Susana V. Garcia, and

Alejandro Martínez) focused on the contextualization and gathering information on the history of the collections; an archivist (Andrés Pak Linares) led archival tasks such as the classification and archival description of the photographic materials; and a librarian (Martha Garrido) and a photo conservator (Tatiana Kelly) covered conservation issues and digitisation. There was also external assistance regarding digitisation as well as microfilming by experts from other institutions, and fluent communication with other professionals from Argentina and abroad. The results presented in this paper summarise the work done by the team as a whole.

Training was also important during the whole project. Specific courses covered such areas as archives and digitisation. Also, there were workshops held at the Museum in photograph conservation, digitisation and archival description.

We participated in the seminar Preserving Photographs in a Digital World held at the Image Permanence Institute, Rochester, USA, which focuses on the preservation of photographic materials and on digitising photographic collections. This program combines lectures and workshops in traditional preservation techniques with the theory and practice of digital imaging, the two main aspects covered by this project. This seminar gave us the opportunity to contact experts from all over the world, learn from their experience, get to know more about the state of the art of digital imaging, and receive very good training in the identification of 19th century photographic processes.

2. Schedule

The project was organized in terms of short-term and long-term objectives. A first schedule was developed when applying for the grant. It was thought to be an 18 months project. The main task during the first period was research in order to describe and classify the photographic materials; the second period involved archival description as well as the first digitisation tries and samples. The third period consisted of both microfilming and digitising all photographic materials, the evaluation of the files obtained, and the submission of the results to the British Library. During the end of the second period and the beginning of the third one the online catalogue was designed, but it wasn't until the listings were completed and all the materials digitised that the IT team began its

Table 1

EAP application	Reclassified as:
Pedro Godoy Album (Tierra del Fuego)	GOD
Francisco Moreno Album (Museo Antropológico de Buenos Aires, 1878-Viaje 1883–1884)	EUP
Samuel Boote Album (Tehuelches)	BOO
Christiano Junior Album (Río Negro-Patagonia)	CJU
Julio Koslowski Collection (Patagonia)	AFO
Carlos Bruch Collection (Yungas, NW Argentina)	AFO
Roland Bonaparte Collection (Collection Anthropologique du Prince Roland Bonaparte – Old and New World)	BON
Natalio Bernal Collection (Altiplano-Bolivia)	CDV
Fernando Lahille Collection (Tierra del Fuego)	AFO
Adolfo Methfessel Collection (NW Argentina)	AFO
Omar Gancedo Collection (Paraguay)	GAN
«Gauchos» Collection (Buenos Aires)	AYE
Hermann ten Kate Collection (Tehuelches)	AFO
«Vignati » Collection (Patagonia)	ARQ
Fuegian Collection (Tierra del Fuego)	AFO

construction. Due to different problems the online catalogue was delayed and is still in a beta stage.

3. Equipment and consumables

The grant gave the Photographic Archive the opportunity to purchase a flatbed scanner, a screen calibrator, and standardised charts. For conservation purposes, acid-free four flap envelopes and boxes as well as a thermohygrometer for an accurate environmental control were purchased.

4. Archival description.

Archival description was done following the British Library's guidelines and the ISAD (G)¹¹ standard, a multilevel description, organised from general to particular.

The description listings produced following this standard include the following fields:

Collection Description

Title: name of the collection

Dates(s): production

Extent: of the collection

Level of description: Section/ Serie

Medium of copies: result of reformatting: microfilm and digital copy

Medium of original material: type of document, format. Photograph, could be glass plate negative, nitrate copy, albumen print, etc

Location of original material: where it is housed, Museo de La Plata

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator: Museo de La Plata

Description:

System of arrangement: EAP Projects Guidelines were used, adding a five field alphanumeric reference given by the Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico, Museo de La Plata: COL/SEC/Serie/Conservation unit./item as follows:

(EAP207/AFO/002/00X/00Y/000Z)

Language(s): Numbers and inscriptions in Spanish.

Access: Restricted access until finishing reprography process (scanning and microfilm). No legal restrictions

Associated documentation:

Publication notes:

Note that there are two possible levels, sections and series, which varied according to each collection.

We faced several problems when classifying the photographic materials. The main problem was lack of information and mistaken information. It was impossible to determine the origin of the photographic collections, since the provenance and the original order were unknown. As we mentioned above, the first known disruption was in 1937 when the photographic collections were reorganized following a subject/section classification instead of respecting the situation under which they were created. Moreover, information about the creation of each piece was lost or didn't exist, making it nearly impossible to reconstruct the history of the photographic materials. This lack of information regarding the origin of the collections was one of the main issues of debate over the classification and organization of the photographic collections. In the end the decision was to build a collection named AFO: Archivo Fotográfico General, which respects the ten sections mentioned in the Resolution within this collection. Thus this

Figure 5. Anagraphix SA was the company in charge of microfilming. They work together with CEHIPE, a leading institution in microfilming historical collections.



collection includes ten sections, yet the original order and provenance were lost. Table 1 clarifies the difference between the list of collections submitted with the EAP application and the present situation, based on archival and bibliographical research.

Research done to contextualize all of the collections has produced relevant information (e.g., the origin of some pieces), yet there is still much to be researched.

5. Reformatting

There were two main reasons for reformatting these collections: preservation and accessibility. There were no backups of the glass plate negatives or of the other photographic materials. Their destruction would have meant the definitive loss of the collections. We decided to digitise and microfilm. Microfilm can be produced quickly, is an excellent format for long-term preservation when kept under correct

environmental conditions, requires only simple hardware (e.g., microfilm reader), and does not require software. One big disadvantage of microfilm compared to digitisation is the fidelity of the image obtained compared to the original piece. Definitely when microfilming results are not the best, it is inevitable to have certain loss, such as not having a complete register of the tonal range.

The main advantages of digitisation are accessibility and the fidelity to the original that can be reached. However, digital preservation demands a long-term plan, not only because of software and hardware obsolescence but also considering the economic resources needed. Digital collections should be checked and controlled periodically, and as technology improves it should be possible to carry on the migration of all the information kept in the digital files. In state-run institutions in countries such as Argentina, this is a critical issue since political interests are not always aligned with preservation

Table 2: Technical details for microfilm and digital copies.**Microfilm****Creator:** Anagraphix S.A.**Date:** December 2009- April 2010**Place:** Museo de La Plata, La Plata, Buenos Aires , Argentina**Hardware:** Kodak MRD2 Camara Hirakawa 35; Nikon lenses 70mm, Kodak film HQ 35, Kodak Intermediate microfilm, Kodak Prostar 2 development.**Digital Copy****Creator:** Museo de La Plata**Date:** December 2009, February, date of copying**Place:** Museo de La Plata, La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina**Hardware:** B-size flatbed scanner Epson Expression 10000 XL; Colour Confidence charts, model DANE 002 and DANE 001**Software:** profile created with MonacoEZcolor with IT8 Target; scanned with Epson scan + Adobe Photoshop CS2

Software used to create checksums: FsumFrontEnd, version 1.5.5.1

policies, and funding is often unavailable. With such uncertainties in mind, it was considered best to produce both microfilm and digital formats.

Back to the digitisation process, the first thing we checked was that the photographic materials would not be put at risk. The starting point was the decision to produce preservation copies and not just access copies. This implied obtaining high quality master copies, which was expected to reduce or eliminate the user's need to handle the original images. This was a main point when deciding the parameters of capture. A rich master opens the possibility of creating derivatives for different purposes like image processing, online databases, printing, etc.

There are several points that must be considered when digitising. As stated in Cornell University's Digital Imaging Tutorial, "Digital image capture must take into consideration the technical processes involved in converting from analog to digital representation as well as the attributes of the source documents themselves: physical size and presentation, level of detail, tonal range, and presence of color. Documents may also be characterized by the production process used to create them."¹² Characterizing the original documents allows setting the parameters needed to obtain that information in the capture process. According to Stephen Chapman and Anne Kenney, "The objective is not to scan at the highest resolution and bit depth possible, but to match the conversion process to the informational content of the original – no more, no less ... We advocate full-informational capture in the creation of

digital images and sufficient indexing at the point of conversion as the surest guarantee for providing long-term viability."¹³ It is important to calibrate and test the equipment before carrying on the digitisation as well as working with charts and scales in order to get not only accurate but also as much information as possible. Both subjective and objective quality control should be done during the whole process.¹⁴ The master copies obtained within this project were .TIFF uncompressed files with the ICC profile assigned (see Table 2).

Summarising, both EAP projects enabled us to accomplish our goals. Not only have we helped to preserve these collections but we have also uncovered new collections and stimulated debate and publications. A good training programme was also delivered. As far as the debate, we would like to underline the following paradox. Although these projects made us aware of both the randomness of the photographic expeditions and the relevance of individual rather institutional decisions,¹⁵ in recent years several authors had linked the Museo de La Plata with the state policies of control and extermination of the Native population. Following this line of thought, they compared the museum with the clandestine centres of detention of the last Argentinean dictatorship. This argument creates a fictitious link between the "desaparecidos" and the Native population and between the military policies of the late 1970s with the science of the late 19th century. This rather provoking argument does not take into account that these images were not secret: they were

intended for publication, and most of them had been published in the Museo de La Plata Annals and Journal following the standards of anthropological photography of those years. Moreover, this argument actually overestimates the role of scientific institutions in the building of the Argentinean state in the 1880s, an idea first promoted by the most traditional historiography and now accepted by this supposedly revisionist interpretation of history. What is certain is that the archive of the Museum, far from storing the evidence of the Museum's complicity with extermination policies, documents the lack of interest in the history of scientific institutions and practices.

Acknowledgements

We want to express our thanks to the British Library Endangered Archives Programme for supporting these projects. Special thanks are owed to Catherine Collins and Lynda Barraclough (EAP) for their feedback and help, and to Prof. Silvia Ametrano, Director of Museo de La Plata, for her enthusiasm and her vision of the future.

Appendix

This is a list of the collections that have been classified, described, microfilmed and digitised and that are now accessible for researchers and public in general.

Archivo Fotográfico (1937)	AFO
Depto. Arqueología	ARQ
Francisco Ayerza	AYE
Príncipe Roland Bonaparte	BON
Samuel Boote	BOO
Carte de visite	CDV
Cristiano Junior	CJU
Exposición Universal de París (1878)	EUP
Pedro Godoy	GOD
Koch- Grünberg	KOG

The listings submitted include general collection descriptions and, when available, series descriptions. Apart from these an item description list was also submitted (see Table 3).

These collections are the ones that were considered as "pre-industrial societies" and represent only

a part of the materials kept in the archive. Currently classification and description of other collections is being done. It should be remarked that the experience gained in describing and classifying throughout this project has been an important step forward in the archive's organization and management. The listings include the bibliographical references used to contextualize the images, which is not quoted in this article.

AFO

Collection description

Title: Museo La Plata. Archivo Fotográfico General (1937) – Sección Antropología (002)

Dates(s): 1882 – 1906

Extent: 274 pieces

Level of description: Section

Medium of original material: Glass plate negatives, glass lantern slides, celluloid nitrate film and photographic prints.

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator: Museo de La Plata

Description: in this section we explain the history of the resolution of 1937 and the sections then created.

Series description

Reference number: EAP207/AFO/002/001

Title: "Retratos Indígenas"

Date(s): 1882 – 1906.

Extent: 219 items.

Level of description: Documental Series (AFO/002/001-Retratos Indígenas)

Medium of copies: The material was copied on microfilm and digitized (scanner). The Preservation and Access Copies is on both formats.

Medium of original material: 217 glass plate negatives, 1 celluloid film negative, 1 photographic print

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator(s): Museo de La Plata

Description: The series "Retratos Indígenas" is composed of different photographs of indigenous peoples from Argentina, Chile and Paraguay, which were produced between 1882 and 1906. A big part of this series comprises anthropometric photographs that were taken following precise rules. By the end of nineteenth century anthropologists interested in

Table 3. Item description for AFO Collection. Heading and first 5 items.

Fond: Francisco Ayerza - Escenas del campo argentino (AYE)

Documental Type: Albumen Print (17 x 23 cm.)

Date(s): c. 1890

EAP Reference	Microfilm Disc	Image	Original Location	# Original Doc.	Description	Observations
EAP207-AYE-001-0001	Roll 2-054	dCH907270219H23	EAP207-AYE-001-0001	AYE - 1	1	Country Scene. A group of three gauchos in front of a hut. One of them is drinking from a bottle, another one is playing the guitar and a third one is making mate.
EAP207-AYE-001-0002	Roll 2-055	dCH907270219H23	EAP207-AYE-001-0002	AYE - 1	2	Country Scene. Two gauchos on horseback help an oxcart fording a creek. Another gaucho on horseback contemplates the action.
EAP207-AYE-001-0003	Roll 2-056	dCH907270219H23	EAP207-AYE-001-0003	AYE - 1	3	Country Scene. A group of four gauchos, two of them on horseback and the others on foot. The horses are positioned in opposite directions and each one of the horsemen holds an end of the same lasso.
EAP207-AYE-001-0004	Roll 2-057	dCH907270219H23	EAP207-AYE-001-0004	AYE - 1	4	Portrait of a gaucho leaning on his horse.
EAP207-AYE-001-0005	Roll 2-058	dCH907270219H23	EAP207-AYE-001-0005	AYE - 1	5	Country Scene. A group of five gauchos. Three of them are playing cards meanwhile the other two are watching. One of the standing gauchos is drinking mate.

the study of “human races” recommended all subjects being photographed naked, according to established anthropometric poses, making full-length or torso portraits. This series also comprises several images that do not fit in this “anthropometric” classification, and could be considered in close relation both with the “artistic” and “ethnographic” portraits.

The provenance of these photographs is diverse. The majority of them were obtained as part of Museo de La Plata scientific research activities, such as those taken by order of Francisco Moreno (Buenos Aires, Argentina) in 1885, and those produced in the expeditions to Catamarca (Northwest Argentina) in 1893; to Patagonia by the end of 1895; to San Sebastián (Tierra del Fuego, Argentina) in 1896; to

Paraguay in 1896-1897; and to Jujuy (Northwest Argentina) in 1906.

A second group of photographs comes from other expeditions such as those of Crequi-Monfort to Tierra del Fuego (Chile and Argentina) in 1882–1883, Nicanor Larraín to Puerto Deseado (Patagonia, Argentina) in 1883; Charles de La Hitte to Villarrica (Paraguay) in 1894; and Carlos Spegazzini to Salta (Northwest Argentina) in 1905.

A last group comprises photographic reproductions (with an unknown date of production) made by the Museum Photographic Service from original documents belonging in many cases to the other two groups of photographs noted above. In a few cases the provenance of these reproductions is unknown.

ARQ

Collection description

Title: Museo La Plata – Departamento Arqueología – Colección fotográfica – Sección Antropología

Dates(s): 1885 – 1906

Extent: 231 documents

Level of description: Section (002 – Antropología)

Medium of original material: 221 glass plate negatives, 6 glass-lantern slides, 4 photographic prints

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Departamento de Arqueología.

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator(s): Museo de La Plata, Departamento de Arqueología.

Description: This section, together with other non-anthropological sections, is part of the photographic collection of the Archaeology Department. There, it bears the number 002. The items that compose it were arranged as it was established by the 1937 Resolution and come from different contexts, such as field expeditions taken by Museo de La Plata employees or by independent travelers, photographic studios and private collections.

AYE

Collection description

Title: Francisco Ayerza – Escenas del campo argentino (AYE)

Dates(s): c. 1890

Level of description: Fond

Extent: 12 photographs

Medium of original material: Albumen prints of 17 X 23 cm, mounted on individual pasteboards of 39 x 33 cm.

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata – Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico.

Contributor: Francisco Ayerza (1860–1901)

Creator(s): Francisco Ayerza (1860–1901)

Description: This fond was created by Mr. Francisco Ayerza (1860–1901) – one of the founders of the Sociedad Fotográfica Argentina de Aficionados (SFAA) that functioned between 1889 and 1926 aiming to record the life and costumes of the “gaucho.” With these photographs Ayerza thought to edit an illustrated version of “Martin Fierro,” a very well known book written by José Hernández (1834–1886). The photographs were taken both in Estancia “El Cisne” property of Mr. Ayerza and in Estancia “San Juan”

property of Mr. Leonardo Peryra Iraola, a good friend of Ayerza, and also founder of the SFAA. Although this project was not finished, the photographs circulated by means of expositions, albums and other publications. The first exposition of these images, under the auspices of the SFAA and named “Escenas del campo argentino,” was held in 1891.

BON

Collection description

Title: Collection anthropologique du Prince Roland Bonaparte (Prince Roland Bonaparte’s Anthropological Collection)

Dates(s) : ca. 1883 – 1889.

Extent: 165 pasteboards with mounted albumen prints.

Level of description: Collection.

Medium of original material: albumen prints

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata. Biblioteca “Florentino Ameghino”.

Contributor: Museo de La Plata – Biblioteca “Florentino Ameghino”

Creator(s): Prince Roland Bonaparte, Alfred Ayotte, Friedrich Carl Hisgen.

Description: The collection consists of 165 pasteboards with albumen prints mounted individually or forming groups of two and three, stored in four portfolios and a folder with captions and references in additional sheets of paper. It was created by Prince Roland Bonaparte (1858–1924), the grandson of Lucien, the second brother of Napoleon Bonaparte. The collection documents different ethnic groups such as “Hindous,” “Kalmouks,” “Atchinois,” “Dahoméens,” “Hottentots,” “Bushmen,” “Néo Calédoniens,” “Australiens” and “Peaux Rouges.” There are sitting full-face and profile portraits; full-face and profile torso portraits; frontal, profile and back full-length portraits; group photographs and views of typical dwellings. Most of it was taken at the 1883 Colonial Exposition in Amsterdam, at the Paris World’s Fair of 1889, and temporary exhibitions held in Paris, Berlin and London during 1883 and 1884 (Jehel 1994–1995, Maxwell 2000). Following anthropological instructions of Paul Pierre Broca (1824–1880), Bonaparte’s main aim was to record anthropological “types” in order to be printed and distributed in portfolios among researchers and institutions around the world (Jehel 1994–1995, Timby 1996, Edwards 1992, 2001, 2007).

BOO**Collection description**

Title: “Museo de La Plata, Colección Samuel Boote” (“Museo de La Plata: Samuel Boote’s Collection”)

Dates(s): ca. 1885–1888

Extent: 12 photographs.

Level of description: Collection

Medium of original material: albumen prints

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator(s): Francisco Pascasio Moreno (1852–1919); Samuel Boote (1844–1921).

Description: The collection refers mainly to Araucanian and Tehuelche groups of Patagonia, comprising full-face and profile torso portraits. The photographs were taken in 1885 by Samuel Boote in the Barracks of the 8th Regiment in Tigre (Buenos Aires) by order of Francisco Moreno, director of the Museo de La Plata. There indigenous people belonging to Inacayal and Foyel tribes were imprisoned after the so-called “Conquest of the Desert.” In 1886, approximately fifteen members of these tribes were moved to the Museo de La Plata, where they lived some years. Probably there some of the pictures were taken between that year and 1888.

Samuel Boote was a photographer born in Argentina, of Scots parents. In 1875 he established with James Niven a photo studio in the city of Buenos Aires, “The Photographic Warehouse.” With his brother Arthur, Boote was the most important publisher of photo albums with scenes of urban and rural Argentina in nineteenth-century, as *Vistas de Buenos Aires*, *El Ferrocarril al Pacífico* and *Los ferrocarriles de la provincia de Buenos Aires*.

CDV**Collection description**

Title: “Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico, Colección *Cartes de visite*”

Dates(s): ca. 1860 – 1880

Extent: 42 *cartes de visite*.

Level of description: Collection

Medium of original material: *cartes de visite*. Size: 6 x 10 cm.

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator(s): Unknown, probably Guido Bennati (1827–1898)

Description: These *cartes de visite* represent mainly Andean indigenous peoples (34 documents out of a total number of 42), comprising full length and torso studio photographic portraits. The remaining cards represent different persons of European origin from Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. These cards – small albumen photographic prints mounted on cards 2-1/2 by 4 inches – were wildly popular and made for decades around the world. The compact size and easier production methods lowered costs and meant that nearly any middle-class person could afford to have a set of the small portraits made. The standard 2-1/2" x 4" format was patented by the French photographer André Adolphe Disderi in 1854.

There is no certainty about the exact date the original photographs forming this collection were taken, although several cards were produced in the studio of the Bolivian photographer Natalio Bernal, who was established on La Paz by the 1860s (Buck 1996), and in one of the *cartes de visite* (EAP207/CDV/001/0014) a signature reads: “Julio 9/77” (July 9/77). That is the reason why this collection was dated between 1860 and 1880.

Bearing in mind that the creator of this collection remains unknown and in order not to give misleading information it has been decided to name the collection *Cartes de visite* (CDV); document type is the only common element of the pieces in the collection. However, the strongest hypothesis we can state about the authorship of this collection affirms the probability that its creator was the Italian charlatan Guido Bennati (cf. Podgorny 2009)

In 1885 and 1903 the Museo de La Plata bought part of Guido Bennati’s collections (Farro 2009), although there are no historical or present records that prove that these *Cartes de visite* were part of this transaction.

CJU**Collection description**

Title: “Museo de La Plata: Colección Christiano Junior” (Museo de La Plata: Christiano Junior’s Collection)

Dates(s): ca. 1876 – 1877

Extent: 8 photographs.

Level of description: Collection

Medium of original material: albumen prints

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator(s): Francisco Pascasio Moreno (1852–1919), José Christiano de Freitas Henriques Junior (1832–1902)

Description: These photographs refer probably to the first anthropological and archaeological collections of Francisco P. Moreno (1852–1919), which were the result of several expeditions he undertook to Patagonia and Northwest Argentina between 1873 and 1876. In 1876 these collections, alongside the aforementioned photographs of archaeological and anthropological objects were displayed for the first time in the *Segunda Exposición Científica de Buenos Aires*, organized by the *Sociedad Científica Argentina* at the Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires city. Later this collection of photographs was part of the *Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires* founded in 1877 by Moreno. That institution was closed in 1884, and all the collections were transferred to the *Museo de La Plata*.

The photographs were taken by Christiano Junior and then came the most familiar name of the collection. José Christiano de Freitas Henriques Junior (1832–1902) was a Portuguese photographer who in 1855 moved to Brazil where he established photographic studios in Maceió and Rio de Janeiro. Years later he settled in Argentina, establishing two photography studios in the city of Buenos Aires. In 1876 and 1877 he published two portfolios known as *Vistas y Costumbres de la República Argentina*. In 1878 he sold his studios to Alejandro S. Witcomb (1835–1905).

EUP

Collection description

Title: "Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires: Colección Exposición Universal de París 1878" ("Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires: Universal Exposition Collection, Paris 1878")

Dates(s): 1878

Extent: 21 photographs.

Level of description: Collection

Medium of original material: 3 albumen prints, 16 silver prints, 2 printed copies

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico

Contributor: Francisco Pascasio Moreno (1852–1919)

Creator(s): Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires (1877–1884)

Description: The collection was part of the *Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires* founded in 1877 by Francisco Pascasio Moreno (1852–1919). That institution was closed in 1884 and all the collections were transferred to the *Museo de La Plata*. In 1878, Moreno ordered staff to photograph a selection of indigenous skulls collections contained in the *Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires* in order to make an album to be formally exhibited in Paris between May and October of that year in the Argentinean pavilion of the Universal Exposition. The album contained around fifty photographs illustrating different types of indigenous inhabitants' skulls. Moreno sent the album to Paris probably reserving copies for the institution. Once the Exposition finished, Moreno, as director of the *Museo Antropológico y Arqueológico de Buenos Aires*, ordered the donation of the album to the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*. In the case of the skulls photographs, a document was found attached to the collection which suggests that some silver print copies were made around 1901 from the original photographs taken in 1878.

GOD

Collection Description

Title: Colección Gob. Pedro Godoy – Vistas de la Tierra del Fuego

Dates(s): circa 1895.

Extent: 45 albumen photographs

Level of description: Collection

Medium of original material: Hardcover album containing albumen photographs of different sizes mounted on cardboard.

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Archivo Histórico y Fotográfico

Contributor(s): Museo La Plata

Creator(s): Gobernador Pedro Godoy. Godoy was Governor of Territorio Nacional de Tierra del Fuego (Argentina) between 1893 and 1899.

Description: This collection is composed by one album that contains 45 photographs taken circa 1895, and collected by Pedro Godoy, Governor of Territo-

rio Nacional de Tierra del Fuego at that time. These photographs illustrate the landscape, buildings, indigenous peoples and industrial work of Tierra del Fuego by the end of nineteenth century. Considering that Godoy created this album during his governance period it is possible to think that he had propagandistic purposes in order to attract new inhabitants to Tierra del Fuego.

There is no internal or external classification system of the photographs that compose the album and/or the series within it. On some of the cardboards where the photographs are mounted numerical inscriptions can be seen, but these numbers are non-correlative and have no coherence between them; a correlative number was given to the photographs in order to arrange this collection following EAP Projects Guidelines.

Series Description

Reference number: EAP207/GOD/001

Title: Indígenas de la Tierra del Fuego

Date(s): circa 1895

Extent: 6 albumen photographs

Level of description: Documental series (GOD/001 – Indígenas)

Medium of original material: Albumen photographs mounted on cardboards

Contributor: Museo de La Plata

Creator(s): Gobernador Pedro Godoy. Godoy was Governor of Territorio Nacional de Tierra del Fuego (Argentina) between 1893 and 1899.

Description: This series is composed of six albumen photographs of indigenous peoples from Tierra del Fuego. These photographs are part of an album created by Pedro Godoy, Governor of Territorio Nacional de Tierra del Fuego and donated to Museo de La Plata in 1895.

KOG

Collection description

Title: Theodor Koch-Grünberg “*Indianertypen aus dem Amazonasgebiet. Nach eigenen Aufnahmen während seiner Reisen in Brasilien*”

Date(s): ca. 1903 – 1911.

Extent: 141 pasteboards, with four photographs printed each.

Level of description: Collection

Medium of original material: 141 pasteboards, 32 x 48 cm, divided into six albums.

Location of original material: Museo de La Plata, Biblioteca “Florentino Ameghino”

Contributor: Museo de La Plata.

Creator(s): Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1872–1924)

Description: The collection consists of photographs that German ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1872–1924) took during his second trip to Brazil, between 1903 and 1905. Koch-Grünberg was trained in Classical Philology, German, History and Geography at the Universities of Tübingen and Tiessen. Between 1898 and 1900 he travelled to Brazil for the first time, as a member of an expedition led by Hermann Meyer (1871–1932), whose objective was to find the headwaters of the Xingu River, a tributary of the Amazon River. In 1903, with the support from *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* and following suggestions by Bastian, Koch-Grünberg began a trip to the northwest of Brazil, with the aim of collecting ethnographic objects, build vocabularies, observe the customs and take pictures of indigenous families Tukano, Aruak and Maku (Gusinde, 1925; Lehmann, 1925; Kraus, 2003, 2004). Between 1906 and 1911 six albums that make the work *Indianertypen aus dem Amazonasgebiet. Nach seiner eigenen Aufnahmen während Reisen in Brasilien* (Koch-Grünberg, 1906–1911) were published. Each album is accompanied by an index of photographs, with descriptions containing the particulars of each individual who was photographed. It also includes the language family each individual belongs to, the individual's name, place of residence, the approximate age and height, and the parental relationships between them. Sometimes this also includes brief notes on character and psychological traits, and skin colour according to the chromatic scale developed by Ranke for South American indigenous groups (Ranke, 1907). Each plate contains four photographs, mostly portraits of face and profile and, to a lesser extent, full-length portraits and group photographs. The albums were designed so that each plate can be detached and placed next to another belonging to another album, in order to facilitate comparison of physical traits between groups. The travel narrative, including ethnographic and linguistic data observations, was published in 1909–1910, in two volumes, entitled *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern. Brasilien Reisen in Nord West, 1903–1905*, which appeared in a popular abridged version in 1921, under the title *Zwei Jahre bei den Nordwest-Brasilien Indianern*.

Endnotes

- ¹ Maria Margaret Lopes and I. Podgorny, "The Shaping of Latin American Museums of Natural History," *Osiris* 2, 15 (2001): 108–118.
- ² I Podgorny and María M. Lopes, *El desierto en una vitrina. Museos e historia natural en la Argentina, 1810–1890* (México: Limusa, 2008).
- ³ Cf. Podgorny and Lopes 2008, cit.
- ⁴ Máximo Farro, *La formación del Museo de La Plata. Coleccionistas, comerciantes, estudiosos y naturalistas viajeros a fines del siglo XIX*, (Rosario: Prohistoria: 2009); I. Podgorny, "Francisco Pascasio Moreno," in Noretta Koertge (ed.), *New Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (Detroit, Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 180–3.
- ⁵ Endangered Archives Programme, <http://www.bl.uk/about/policies/endangeredarch/homepage.html>.
- ⁶ "Resolución creando el archivo fotográfico general del instituto del Museo," *Revista del Museo de La Plata*, Sección Oficial, 1937.
- ⁷ Tatiana Kelly, Alejandro Martínez, and Martha Garrido, "Las colecciones fotográficas del Acervo Histórico de la Facultad de Ciencias Naturales y Museo de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata," *Entrepassados*, 31 (2007).
- ⁸ It is worth noting that the Museum became a natural science school of the new Universidad Nacional de La Plata, established in 1906. Cf. Susana V. García, *Enseñanza Científica y Cultura Académica. La Universidad de La Plata y las Ciencias Naturales (1900–1930)*, (Rosario: Prohistoria Ediciones, 2010).
- ⁹ It must be considered that photographic materials could have different origins: acquisitions, expeditions, field work, gifts, etc.
- ¹⁰ CEHIPE (Centro de Estudios Históricos e Investigación Parque de España – Center for Historical Studies and Research – is one of the leading institutions in Argentina for microfilming historical collections. It is a non profit organization devoted to the preservation of historic documents and the study of Ibero-American past, It is funded by AECID, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development; cf. <http://www.cehipe.org.ar/nuevositio> and <http://www.aecid.es/web/es/aecid/>.
- ¹¹ ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description, [http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD\(G\).pdf](http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD(G).pdf).
- ¹² Cornell University Library, "Moving Theory into Practice: Digital Imaging Tutorial," <http://www.library.cornell.edu/preservation/tutorial/contents.html>.
- ¹³ Stephen Chapman and Anne Kenney, "Digital Conversion of Research Library Materials. A Case for Full Informational Capture," *D-Lib Magazine* 2, no. 10 (October 1996), <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/october96/cornell/10chapman.html> (accessed 15 July, 2010).
- ¹⁴ Franziska Frey and James Reilly, "Digital Imaging for photographic collections. Foundations for technical standards," http://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/shtml_sub/digi-book.pdf (accessed 2 June, 2010)
- ¹⁵ I. Podgorny, *El sendero del tiempo y de las causas accidentales. Los espacios de la prehistoria en la Argentina, 1850–1910* (Rosario: Prohistoria, 2009).