

Picturing High Asia:  
German Expedition Photography in  
the Hindukush and Karakoram

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is based on the examination of more than 18,000 photographs taken by participants of German expeditions to the Hindukush and Karakoram in the years between 1954 and 1963. I posit that a thorough analysis of these photographs facilitates a deeper understanding of the crucial role played by visual materials in the production of knowledge about geographical space. Furthermore, I argue that the 20<sup>th</sup>-century expeditions to the Hindukush-Karakoram can be characterised as ‘visualisation projects’. By using photography, German expedition travellers significantly shaped the contemporary perception and geographical imagination of the region as a high mountain space.

Photo collections of three major German expeditions are examined as case studies: the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, and the 1962/63 Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. I have reviewed and evaluated these photographs within the context of contemporary concepts and perspectives in geography and anthropology. Thus, two often overlooked issues have been addressed: firstly, the history of scientific exploration during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and secondly, the major role played by expedition photography in creating and disseminating knowledge about high mountain spaces.

This work contributes to the scientific and historical reappraisal of analogue photographic practices in high mountain research. It also assesses the historical and present value of expedition photographs in the contexts of research, archives, and museums.



## Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit ist der Analyse von über 18.000 Fotografien gewidmet, die zwischen 1954 und 1963 von deutschen Expeditionsreisenden in den Gebirgszügen des Hindukusch und des Karakorum aufgenommen wurden. Die zahlreichen Hindukusch- und Karakorum-Expeditionen der 1950er und 1960er Jahre, bei denen deutsche und österreichische Forscher eine führende Rolle spielten, trugen mit ihren Fotografien entscheidend zur zeitgenössischen geographischen Imagination der Region als Hochgebirgsraum bei.

Als Fallstudien dienen die Fotosammlungen dreier großer deutscher Expeditionen, namentlich der Deutsch-Österreichischen Himalaya-Karakorum-Expedition von 1954, der Deutschen Karakorum-Expedition von 1959 und der Stuttgarter Badakhshan-Expedition von 1962/63. Da vor allem Geographen und Ethnologen an diesen Expeditionen beteiligt waren, werden die historischen Bilder vor dem Hintergrund aktueller Konzepte und Perspektiven dieser beiden Disziplinen untersucht und neu bewertet. Dabei werden zwei miteinander verbundene Themenkomplexe in den Blick genommen: zum einen die Geschichte der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung Hochasiens in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts, zum anderen die Rolle der Expeditionsfotografie bei der Produktion und Verbreitung geographischer Vorstellungen von den asiatischen Hochgebirgen.

Die Arbeit leistet einen Beitrag zur wissenschaftshistorischen Aufarbeitung analoger fotografischer Praktiken in der Hochgebirgsforschung und bewertet dabei historische Expeditionsfotografien hinsichtlich ihres heutigen wissenschaftlichen Stellenwertes in Forschung, Archiven und Museen.





# 1 Viewing and reviewing expedition photographs from the Hindukush and Karakoram

My first encounter with expedition photography was a technical one. In 2017, working as an intern for the Linden Museum in Stuttgart (*Linden-Museum Stuttgart, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde*), I digitised a collection of photographs that had been rediscovered a few years earlier. This collection comprised over 1,100 framed colour slides taken during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.

The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition was a research journey through the Afghan Hindukush commissioned by the Linden Museum. From July 1962 to October 1963, its three German members, Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy, conducted ethnological research and collected artefacts of ethnographic relevance. Additionally, they captured over 15,000 photographs, many of which have survived. These photographs, now housed in the Linden Museum, represent unique historical records. Even today, they are of high interest for anthropologists and geographers. Additionally, they provide insight into the historic travel and working conditions of the expedition as it pursued its mission in Badakhshan six decades ago.

Among these expedition photographs, there are panoramic views that showcase the mountain landscapes and snow-covered peaks of the Hindukush. These images are complemented by detailed shots of the region's flora and fauna. Other photographs display agricultural practices which illustrate the nature of cultivation and the irrigation systems in use. The infrastructure, including the construction of bridges, roads, and houses, was meticulously documented. Additional photographs



Figure 1.1 ▲

Horses being loaded in the morning at the expedition camp in Parwara, captured by Friedrich Kußmaul on 11 October 1962 during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1962): *E II D 1037 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

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give insights into the everyday life during the expedition. They show activities like loading horse caravans (see Figure 1.1), setting up and taking down camp sites, or engaging in ethnological fieldwork.

While digitising and sifting through the collection of slides over several weeks in the summer of 2017, I started to re-imagine this historical journey. I realised how photographs enable those who look at them to mentally construct an image of a region they have never visited in person – a place and time before their own lifetime and experiences. This prompted me to reflect on the role of photography in scientific explorations and its impact on the creation of ‘geographical imaginaries’.

At the same time, my attention was caught by the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition itself. In my perception, expeditions seemed like relics from a bygone era: colonial undertakings that explored the ‘white spots on the map’ on behalf of European governments. Expeditionary anthropology and science appeared incongruous with the political and scientific shifts I had associated with the post-Second World War era. I was not alone with this view. Many authors, historians, geographers, and anthropologists have termed the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the end of the ‘Age of Exploration’ (see e.g., Deacon 1971; Rice 2002; Bell and Hasinoff 2015). A closer glance at the post-Second World War history of exploration in High Asia, however, contradicts this assumption.

In the 1950s and 1960s, numerous European expeditions explored the high mountain regions of the Hindukush, the Himalayas, and the Karakoram. These expeditions were commissioned by European institutions – mountaineering associations, museums, and universities – with the goal of advancing knowledge about the regions located at the border between Central and South Asia. German researchers and mountaineers played a leading role in these undertakings. They identified themselves with a distinct German tradition of High Asia research, which traced its origins back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, the post-war expeditions to High Asia are largely forgotten. Similarly, the scientific contributions of expedition participants do not

hold a prominent place in contemporary academic discourse. This is primarily due to the fact that, since the mid-1970s, many scientific disciplines, including anthropology and human geography, have distanced themselves from former expeditionary research methods.

Over recent decades, the meaning of the term ‘expedition’ has become ambivalent. While in professional mountaineering, ‘expedition’ signifies a logistical approach to travel and climbing, in popular culture, ‘expedition’ represents a broader narrative of adventure and exploration of the unknown. Frequently, travel companies (mis)use the term ‘expedition’ to promote their (more or less) fancy offers. Conversely, in the realm of science, the term ‘expedition’ nowadays often carries negative connotations. As a research method, the expedition has largely fallen out of favour. Especially in social sciences and (human) geography, it is associated with the “Age of Exploration” and is rejected due to “its deep roots in imperial conquest, extraction and settler colonialism” (Leshem and Pinkerton 2019: 497).

A critique of the concepts of exploration and expedition and their historical role is justified and should be taken seriously. At the same time, it is important not to lose sight of the fundamental role that expeditions have played in the history of science in general, and in the history of individual disciplines in particular. The disciplines of anthropology, ethnology, and geography are essentially based on data collected during expeditions. It is no exaggeration to state that expeditions have played paramount roles in shaping *what* is known about the world today and *how* it is understood. For centuries, expedition reports, along with a diverse range of expedition pictures such as maps, panoramas, sketches, paintings, films, and photographs, have informed popular and scholarly notions about the world. Expeditions were instrumental in procuring images of regions far away from the centres of European and North American policy making. By way of visual records, the so-called ‘remote’ regions of the world also became imaginable and accessible to scientific research. Expeditions, whether conducted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century or the second half of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, served as powerful “visualization projects” (Bleichmar 2012: 7). For centuries, pictures originating from expeditions have served as vital tools in producing, representing, and communicating spatial knowledge.

But recognising the historical significance of expedition pictures also raises questions about their relevance today. What role do they play in academic literature, archives, and museums in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? And what meaning do they have for the places where they were initially crafted or taken? These questions have guided my research project. Its results are presented in this doctoral thesis. It is based on the examination and analysis of over 18,000 photographs, including colour slides, negatives, and prints. These photographs were taken between 1954 and 1963 by participants of three German expeditions into the mountain ranges of the Hindukush and Karakoram.

My argument is that the scrutiny of these photographs is essential in order to understand how expeditionary anthropology and geography relied on visual materials to develop knowledge about high mountain environments. My thesis intends to show that the Hindukush and Karakoram expeditions of the post-Second World War era functioned as wide-ranging visualisation projects, exerting a profound influence on the contemporary geographical perception and imagination of these regions as high mountain spaces.

I will review and reassess the expedition photographs within the context of concepts and perspectives brought forth by anthropology and geography in recent decades. In this process, I will address two interconnected issues that have received only limited attention so far. On the one hand, I will examine the history of scientific exploration during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, I will analyse the significance of expedition photography in producing and disseminating knowledge about high mountain spaces.

## 1.1 An introduction to expedition photography

Expedition photographs exhibit unique characteristics that differentiate them from other types of European travel photographs, such as those taken by tourists, pilgrims, or missionaries. Despite its particularities, expedition photography is rarely acknowledged as a distinct genre in academic literature. The two terms ‘expedition’ and ‘photography’ have only rarely been analysed together. Notable exceptions include the works of Felix Driver and Lowri Jones (2009) as well as James Ryan (1998, 2013), who have analysed the use of photography in the context of British expeditions. Beatrice Kümin (2007), for her part, has traced the evolution from ethnographic drawing to photography in the context of exploration in Brazil. In my thesis, I will examine the intertwined histories of expeditions and photography with a special focus on German undertakings.

In recent years, authors from various disciplines, including historians of art and science, anthropologists, and geographers, have sought to re-evaluate the European project of exploration through a postcolonial lens. Within this context, many have engaged with the question, ‘What is an expedition?’. The answers to this question, however, have been diverse. ‘Expedition’ has turned out to be a multifaceted and somewhat elusive concept (see e.g., Torma 2011a: 15; Konishi, Nugent, and Shellam 2015: 1; Thomas 2015: 1–24). This conceptual vagueness can be attributed to the fact that countless undertakings over the past centuries, including sea voyages in the early modern period, desert crossings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the climbing of the world’s highest peaks after the Second World War, have all been labelled as ‘expeditions’. Is it possible to identify common characteristics that are applicable to ventures as diverse as James Cook’s second voyage in the 1770s and the British Mount Everest expedition of 1953?

Historian Peter Mierau provides a definition of ‘expedition’ that I find particularly informative:

What all expeditions have in common is that they are intended to increase knowledge about an area that is difficult to access. They may have scientific, military, or political goals. Participants in expeditions are often largely self-reliant or must make do with limited resources available locally. Consequently, participants in expeditions often viewed themselves as pioneers of civilisation in underdeveloped regions. Since they travelled in foreign environments, expedition members had to carry both provisions and essential goods, which made expeditions huge and complex logistical undertakings. (Mierau 2006: 18)

Peter Mierau’s definition mentions the ideological aspects of expeditionary travel, but also addresses the physical challenges involved. The fact that expeditions were ‘logistically complex’ made them labour-intensive undertakings. They heavily depended on local workforce. An illustrative example is the German Karakoram expedition of 1959. It comprised nine German participants who brought with them four tonnes of luggage. To facilitate the transport through the rugged terrain of the northwestern Karakoram, more than 120 local residents were hired as load-carriers and porters (see Schneider und Bardodej 1960: 120).

European explorers, whether they were seafarers, scientists, political agents, or mountaineers, did not embark on their journeys alone; instead, they travelled in groups. Expedition teams consisted of a diverse range of individuals, including scientists, mountaineers, porters, guides, interpreters, cooks, draftsmen, soldiers, and liaison officers.<sup>1</sup> Expeditions were hierarchically organised projects with a high degree of division of labour. Therefore, historian of science Graham Burnett (2002: 6) characterises expeditions as “hybrid” projects, “hybrid in the composition of the exploring party itself, as well as hybrid in purpose.”

The objectives of expeditions were varied and have changed over the centuries. Despite these changes, a constant thread has been that they generated images. Nearly all expedition teams included artists,

draughtsmen, or cartographers. This is why Daniela Bleichmar (2012: 7) characterises expeditions as “visualization projects”. Drawing from the example of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish natural history expeditions in South and Central America, the art historian expounds:

When I describe expeditions as visualization projects, I am not resorting to a figure of speech but to the very concrete ways in which they overwhelmingly privileged visual ways of knowing over other methods of inquiry, and visual statements over other research results. (Bleichmar 2012: 7)

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, hand-made images stood out as some of the most notable outcomes of expeditions (Kuba 2018: 115). However, already by the 1830s, a novel method of portraying the world had seized the attention of explorers. The need to produce and reproduce images with heightened precision and speed gave rise to a spectrum of techniques now collectively known as ‘photography’.

A rarely mentioned figure in the history of photography is Hercules Romuald Florence.<sup>2</sup> The painter from Nice immigrated to Brazil in 1824, where he joined a four-year Russian expedition in the capacity of a cartographer. After the expedition, in 1828, Florence settled in Brazil and began experimenting with photographic techniques. Remarkably, in February 1833, six years before Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre introduced his ‘daguerreotype’ to the Parisian public, Florence recorded in his personal notebook that he had taken a “photographic” (Florence as quoted in Kümin 2007: 36).

The narrative of Hercules Romuald Florence, one of the pioneers of photography, should not be regarded as a side note. Rather, his biography highlights the pivotal role played by expedition artists and cartographers in the history of photography. Technological advancements did not exclusively occur in European cities and photography was far from being a Euro-urban gimmick. Instead, photography presented a solution to the challenge faced by every expedition: the need to produce and replicate highly standardised images efficiently and swiftly across various locations



worldwide. Consequently, in the decades following the 1830s, numerous individuals participating in expeditions made substantial contributions to the development and enhancement of photographic techniques.

During its early stages in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, expedition photography remained a challenging endeavour. Taking a photograph necessitated laborious preparations and an enhanced understanding of chemistry and physics. The photographic equipment used on expeditions comprised various components: a camera, a tripod, photographic plates, a range of chemicals, and a portable darkroom tent. The substantial weight of this equipment made its transportation a labour-intensive and time-consuming task that entailed additional costs. Harsh environmental conditions, including tropical humidity and snowstorms, posed a potential threat to the fragile photographic materials. However, these challenges did not diminish the appeal of photography for early expedition photographers.

This is exemplified by explorers like the German anthropologist Gustav Theodor Fritsch. In 1863, at the age of 25, Gustav Fritsch embarked on an expedition to southern Africa. In late September 1864, while travelling from Harrismith to Durban, the expedition team made a stop near the banks of the Umgeni River. There, Fritsch captured a photograph of the breathtaking view of the river cascading into a deep gorge (Dietrich 2008: 76). After taking the picture, Fritsch retreated to his darkroom tent to develop the photographic plate. Years later, he reported on the events of that day as follows:

In the unique African sun [...], I had pitched my tent nearby the river and was working, dripping with sweat but silently enjoying myself, [...] when the tent above my head suddenly came alive, and before I knew what was happening, I was sitting on the ground, like Jeremiah amidst the ruins of Jerusalem; I sat there on the overturned tent amidst the chaos of broken bottles, glasses, and plates. The burning steppe nearby had created a silent whirlwind that whirled the tent and all its contents above my head. Such unpleasant surprises [...] inspire a true traveller and provide him with increased strength; anyone who is intimidated by this does not belong in Africa. (Fritsch 1910: 50)

Gustav Fritsch's personal account is an expression of the ideological, or more precisely colonial, dimension of expedition photography: The hardships and perils of travelling beyond the infrastructure of European 'civilisation' were seen as akin to the difficulties of photographing far from urban photo studios and darkrooms. However, in the 'burning steppe of Africa', a 'true traveller' willingly embraced these challenges for a greater purpose – making 'uncivilised' spaces visible through photography.

Towards the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, photography, much like long-distance travel, became more easily practicable. As early as the 1860s, the first travel cameras made their debut in expeditions. They were more compact and lighter compared to the studio cameras used before. In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century exposure times became shorter, recording materials lighter, and were easier to handle. The decisive improvement was marked by the introduction of flexible celluloid film in 1887, which gradually replaced the less user-friendly glass plates. Around 1900, handheld cameras gained popularity among travellers, allowing for more versatile photography without the need for tripods. This, in turn, enlarged the range of subjects that could be captured. In the ensuing decades, technological advancements also enabled amateurs to take photographs. That development led to the proliferation of snapshots and tourist photography. Both professionals and amateurs alike began to document scenes of 'everyday life', which has ever since featured prominently in the work of travelling anthropologists, geographers, and tourists (Lederbogen 2007: 75).

The described technical advancements have left their mark on the history of expedition photography in High Asia too. As early as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the camera became a standard tool of European expeditions to the Himalayas, the Hindukush, the Karakoram, and the Pamirs. Following the Second World War, it was customary for expedition members to carry multiple cameras. The decreasing costs of camera equipment resulted in a substantial increase in the number of photographs taken during expeditions. Thus, photography supplanted hand drawing as the primary method of image production.

In 1857, after their expedition to India and Central Asia, the brothers Hermann and Robert Schlagintweit returned to Europe with approximately 400 photographs and over 1,000 hand-drawn images, watercolours, drawings and sketches. A century later, the participants of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition returned from their journey with about three dozen hand-drawn images and more than 15,000 photographs.<sup>3</sup>

The number of photographs taken by German expedition participants in High Asia is surprisingly large. However, only limited scholarly attention has been given to the expedition photographs captured during the 1950s and 1960s. In the past decade, only two authors have explicitly addressed German expedition photography of the post-war period. One is Annette Krämer. In her 2013 article, the museum curator calls the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition “the most significant research trip in the history of the Linden Museum” (Krämer 2013: 101) and provides insight into the extensive photographic material produced during the expedition. Geographer Hermann Kreutzmann has compiled a wide variety of expedition photographs from different decades and by various photographers in his book *Hunza Matters: Bordering and Ordering Between Ancient and New Silk Roads*. This comprehensive work on the history of the Hunza Valley in northern Pakistan also includes a series of German expedition photographs from the 1950s. Both Annette Krämer (2013: 116) and Hermann Kreutzmann (2020: 27) emphasise the research potential of these pictures. Accordingly, the objective of this work is to contribute to this hitherto little-researched field.

## **1.2 On the selection of research material**

Researchers interested in mountaineering expeditions in the Himalayas are able to refer to *The Himalaya by the Numbers*, edited by Richard Salisbury,

Elizabeth Hawley, and Billi Bierling (2021). This book offers a statistical analysis of mountaineering activities in the Nepalese Himalayas spanning the years from 1950 to 2019. Yet, there is no comparable compilation of expedition records for the Hindukush-Karakoram. Consequently, to gather information for my research, I had to rely on a variety of sources, including journals, books, unpublished archival documents, as well as correspondence with mountaineers and scholars.<sup>4</sup> By assembling these mosaic pieces, I acquired an initial overview of the German expeditions that explored the Hindukush and Karakoram ranges during the two decades following the Second World War.

Between 1953 and 1970, German expeditions were conducted in the Hindukush and Karakoram almost every year. Major expeditions were complemented by a series of smaller reconnaissance trips known as *Kundfabrten*. Upon closer examination, a clear pattern emerges: major expeditions journeyed to the Karakoram, while smaller ones predominantly focused on the Hindukush. This can be explained by financial considerations. The Karakoram, with its towering 8,000-meter peaks, attracted renowned Austrian and German mountaineers like Hermann Buhl, Anderl Heckmair, and Mathias Rebitsch. Expeditions that aimed at climbing the highest mountains in the world were logistically complex and very expensive. In contrast, the Hindukush served as the primary destination for mountaineers who could not afford the costly Karakoram expeditions. Iris Trübswetter, one of the first female mountaineers in the Afghan-Hindukush, referred to the Hindukush-*Kundfabrten* as the “high mountain expeditions of the common man” (Iris Trübswetter, personal correspondence, 14/11/2020).

Some expeditions, such as the Traunstein Hindukush expedition of 1961, were exclusively geared toward mountaineering. Others, like the 1955/56 German Hindukush expedition and the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, placed primary emphasis on scientific or ethnological objectives. However, most German endeavours in the Hindukush-Karakoram had a dual focus, simultaneously pursuing both scientific and

mountaineering goals. Prominent examples of these scientific-mountaineering expeditions include the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the 1959 German Karakoram expedition. Their dual approach was also influenced by financial considerations, as reported by Iris Trübswetter:

All our reconnaissance trips and expeditions were sponsored by the German Alpine Club. In order to secure funding, it was necessary to include scientific objectives in the application. Whether we as mountaineers liked it or not, we had to include scientists in our teams. (Iris Trübswetter, personal correspondence, 14/11/2020)

German expeditions to High Asia pursued a variety of objectives, with photography playing a crucial role in all these efforts. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, both scientists and mountaineers generated extensive photographic materials, negatives, slides and glass plates. The number of photographs taken during an expedition could vary greatly. Between 1953 and 1970, major expeditions to High Asia, which comprised three to fifteen participants, typically returned with more than 10,000 photographs to Germany, while a typical *Kundfahrt* managed to amass well over 1,000 pictures. These estimates are based on my personal counting and calculations. Using these approximations as a guideline, it can safely be said that well over a hundred thousand photographs were taken during expeditions to the Hindukush and Karakoram in the 1950s and 1960s.

Offering more precise numbers proves challenging, not least because documentation is often incomplete. While the larger context – the history of German expeditions in High Asia – is well-documented, historical information on the photographs themselves, their utilisation and storage, often remains vague. This lack of knowledge is also due to the fact that numerous expedition photographs are, or were, under private ownership, and those housed in private residences, basements, and attics have largely remained inaccessible. As private collections have rarely undergone official cataloguing, one cannot know how many of these photographs may have been lost or discarded.

However, numerous expedition photographs have found their way into institutional holdings. Through bartering and sales photographs from High Asia expeditions have become part of collections in German museums, archives, and universities. These institutions include, for example, the archive of the *Deutscher Alpenverein* in Munich, the *Linden-Museum* in Stuttgart, the *Weltkulturen Museum* in Frankfurt am Main, the *Museum am Rothenbaum* in Hamburg, and the *Deutsche Fotothek* in Dresden. There, acquired photographs were usually catalogued and organised into formal collections, rendering them readily accessible for scholars today.

The expedition photographs which were taken in the Hindukush-Karakoram, and which are currently archived in German institutions, were mostly captured by German and Austrian expedition photographers. During the 1950s and 1960s, residents in the expedition areas had only limited opportunities to take photographs themselves. As noted by Hermann Kreutzmann (2020: 24–25), foreign travellers were the ones who “exclusively controlled and possessed the modern technology of camera and film.” The European authorship of these images significantly shaped the representation of the photographed regions. Expedition photographs primarily reflect the perspectives of “outsiders” (ibid.: 24).

Still, collections of expedition photographs from the Hindukush-Karakoram showcase a notable diversity in both their origins and histories. Taking this diversity into account, I have compared expedition photographs that vary in terms of authorship, shooting context, and photographic materials. I have examined expedition photographs with ethnological, mountaineering, and geographical focuses, analysing their various applications in private, commercial, and scientific contexts. Additionally, I have examined how expedition photographs were used in a museum setting. Considering all these aspects, I have selected photo collections from three major German expeditions as case studies: the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, and the 1962/63 Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.

I regard the photographs from the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition as particularly valuable for examining the geographical and scientific applications of expedition photography. A considerable number of photographs captured during the 1954 expedition had been included in books and scientific papers, rendering them readily accessible for my research. Additionally, I had the opportunity to examine 350 slides from the collection of geologist Hans-Jochen Schneider. These slides were made available to me through the kindness of Hermann Kreutzmann at the Free University of Berlin and the private collector Gerhart Klamert, who passed away in 2022. Furthermore, my analysis included 221 photographs taken by the leader of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, Wolfgang Pillewizer, which are organised into two photo albums. These albums were generously made available to me in digital format in 2021 by Thomas Hofmann, the head of the Library, Archive, and Publishing Unit at the Geological Survey of Austria (since 2023, *GeoSphere Austria*).

The 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition included both scientists and mountaineers, as did the 1959 German Karakoram expedition. One notable participant in both expeditions was Gerhart Klamert. Throughout his journeys, the mountaineer employed at least three different types of cameras, amassing an extensive photographic collection comprising nearly 3,000 images from the northwestern Karakoram. What characterises Gerhart Klamert's collection is not only its impressive size but also a wide range of photographic themes. Thus, the collection is well-suited for the examination of the mountaineering aspects of expedition photography. In 2018, Gerhart Klamert shared his photo collection with geographer Hermann Kreutzmann for publication purposes. Through Hermann Kreutzmann's introduction, I have gained access to the collection, and Gerhart Klamert generously granted permission to use digitised copies of his expedition photographs for my project.

The Linden Museum in Stuttgart currently houses over 13,000 photographs from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. These photographs consist of negatives, diapositives, contact prints, and paper prints, all categorised into several collections. I have obtained permission from the museum to access these photographs with the purpose of examining the ethnological aspects of expedition photography. During my research on the photographic heritage of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, my primary focus has centred on a series of approximately 1,100 colour slides known as the 'E II D collection'. This collection was curated in the late 1960s, after the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, by its leader and museum curator, Friedrich Kußmaul. The E II D collection features photographs by Friedrich Kußmaul, Peter Snoy, and Hermann Schlenker, who participated in this expedition. Eventually, I have received generous permission from Hermann Schlenker to examine the approximately 1,300 photos from his private collection and use them for this study.

In total, my research relies on the analysis of 18,000 photographs, which have been thoroughly examined and compared with other materials from diverse sources, including archival documents, museum collections, and publications. The large variety of photographic materials used in this study offers a comprehensive perspective on expedition photography, enabling a more nuanced understanding of the different methods by which expedition photographs were created, disseminated, and employed.

### **1.3 A methodological approach to examining the materiality, context, and content of expedition photographs**

Right at the beginning of my project, a significant challenge emerged due to the fact that many data required for analysing the photographs turned out to be missing. Specifically, the private collections of Gerhart Klamert, Hans-Jochen Schneider, and Wolfgang Pillewizer had never been



catalogued or indexed, resulting in a lack of reliable metadata. Even within archival and museum collections, a considerable amount of information had gone lost. This included critical details, such as when and where precisely the photographs were taken. Another difficulty arose due to storage conditions which had affected a significant number of photographs over the past decades. Dust, moisture, and mould had accumulated and damaged the pictures. Therefore, my initial focus was to index and digitise the historical material, thereby enhancing its accessibility for research purposes.

Digitisation offers convenient access to historical images, but it cannot fully replace the original material. Analogue photographs provide historical information that digital copies often lack. Crucial details might be missed or lost during the digitisation process. For example, handwritten inscriptions on the frame of a slide or on the back of a print may go unnoticed if only the image area of a photograph is digitally captured. This is why scholars in the field of photo research, such as Joan Schwartz (1995), Christopher Pinney (1997), and Joanna Sassoon (2004), have consistently advocated against viewing photographs as mere two-dimensional images. Instead, a photograph should be viewed as

[...] a multilayered laminated object in which meaning is derived from a symbiotic relationship between materiality, content and context” (Sassoon 2004: 199).

Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, referring to earlier studies by anthropologist and curator Nuno Porto, emphasise the importance of acknowledging photographic materiality:

Materiality translates the abstract and representational ‘photography’ into ‘photographs’ as objects that exist in time and space. The possibility of thinking about photographs in this way in part rests on the elemental fact that they are things: ‘they are made, used, kept, and stored for specific reasons which do not necessarily coincide. [They are things, in the sense that] they can be transported, relocated or dispersed; or damaged, torn and cropped; and because viewing implies one or several physical interactions’ (Porto 2001: 38). (Edwards and Hart 2004: 2–3)

An object-oriented approach marked the beginning of my occupation with expedition photography. My research involved examining photographs from all angles, using a magnifying glass, and comparing them with other photographic objects. Examining the material aspects of the original photographs has enabled me to gain insights into the historical use and understanding of expedition photographs which would have been overlooked otherwise. As noted by Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart,

[...] material characteristics have a profound impact on the way images are 'read', as different material forms both signal and determine different expectations and use patterns. (Edwards and Hart 2004: 3)

For example, the choice of slide film suggests that the expedition photographer intended to present the images to an audience in public talks or lectures. Conversely, negative film was well-suited for reproduction purposes, such as the publication of photographs in books, magazines, and exhibitions. In the 1950s and 1960s, colour film gained popularity among both amateur and commercial photographers, while black and white film was deemed a suitable medium for ethnological researchers and geodesists (see e.g., PIL 04, 28; Schlenker 2015: 18).

After having become familiar with the material aspects of the photographic objects, my next step was to examine the historical contexts in which the photographs were captured. Expeditions were organised within institutional frameworks. This contradicts the popular notion of expeditions as 'unpredictable adventures'. Indeed, they were characterised by a high degree of bureaucracy. Every aspect of an expedition, from preparations and fieldwork to the assessment of outcomes, was documented. This paperwork included packing and shipping lists, applications, reports, insurance records, newspaper articles, professional correspondence, and scientific diaries. In addition to written records, there are film and sound recordings. I have examined these unpublished sources in various archives and museums across southern Germany. Many of them had not been paid attention to since they were

produced over 60 years ago. They provided me with insights into the organisational, logistical, and financial aspects of the expeditions and enabled me to understand the scientific, economic, and political importance of expedition photography.

Official documents, however, usually lack information concerning individual or personal experiences which also play a role in expedition photography. To learn about these, it is essential to seek the perspectives of experts in the field and contemporary witnesses. Therefore, I entertained written correspondence and personal conversations with three contemporary witnesses: Georg Buddruss, Hermann Schlenker, and Iris Trübswetter, all of whom had participated in German expeditions in the 1950s or 1960s. Furthermore, relatives, friends, and colleagues of former expedition participants generously shared their insights with me.

In July 2021, I travelled to the districts of Hunza and Nagar in northern Pakistan, two of the destinations most frequented by the German expeditions in the 1950s and 1960s. My experiences and the information I gathered there have further contributed my research and meaningfully complemented my archive-and-object-centred approach to expedition photography. I am especially indebted to Hermann Kreutzmann, who generously shared his networks and contacts with me. Without his help I would not have been able to conduct research in the Hunza Valley.

Based on the information available to me, there are no surviving first-hand accounts from the 1950s and 1960s in the Hunza Valley. Nevertheless, I had the privilege of conversing with a dozen former expedition labourers from Hunza, all of whom are now gentlemen over the age of 70. They shared their memories of working as porters, cooks, or guides for German expeditions during the 1970s. Additionally, I sought the perspectives of younger generations of men. With their accounts and recollections handed down from their late fathers, grandfathers, and uncles, they also offered valuable insights. They also provided me access to an array of artefacts, including documents, certificates, photographs, postcards, and letters that had been preserved by their ancestors. Thus, I

could gather important information that was absent from any German archive or publication.

I am indebted to everyone who took time to support my project. In this thesis, I rely particularly on information provided by Ibadat Shah and Aziz Ali of Karimabad, Mohamad Rafi of Altit, as well as Ayub Khan of Gulmit. The discussions held in Altit and Karimabad were facilitated, translated, and enriched through the efforts of Aslam Kotoshi and Attaullah Khan. Their contribution proved essential, especially given their professional expertise in the field of tourism and expedition in the Karakoram and Western Himalayas. Through these interactions, I not only gained insights into historical expeditions but also gained a better understanding of contemporary developments in the region.

The result of this multi-year research process is a comprehensive data set that, as of now, remains unique. It has allowed me to gain hitherto unknown insights into historical expedition photography. To fully appreciate the epistemic value of this data set, however, one needs to develop an applicable theory of expedition photography

#### **1.4 Imagining High Asia: Towards a theory of expedition photography**

According to art historian Joan Schwartz and geographer James Ryan, with the invention of photography, “the geographical imagination acquired a powerful ally” (Schwartz and Ryan 2003: 1). This statement presents a thought-provoking perspective on the interplay between photography and spatial theory. The authors highlight the profound link between photography and ‘geographical imagination’. The concept of geographical imagination enables a critical perspective on how space has been organised politically, delineated scientifically, and adopted culturally. Contrary to an essentialist perspective on space, the concepts of

geographical imagination and imagined geographies are based on the premise that space, as it is perceived, encountered, and discussed, is not predetermined but rather shaped through human actions (Cosgrove 2008: 8). Hence, the geographical imagination and imagined geographies are consistently entangled in the power dynamics of socio-political and scientific developments (Harvey 1990: 418; Gregory 1994: xi).

Concerning the connection between photography, exploration, and the creation of imagined geographies, other contributions by James Ryan and Joan Schwartz stand out too (see e.g., Schwartz 1996; Ryan 1998 and 2013). Taking a historical and contextual approach in their book *Picturing Place*, they illuminate the relationship between geographical enquiry and photographic practices and show how photographs have been used “in profoundly influential ways to shape modern geographical imaginaries” (Schwartz and Ryan 2003: 6). They conclude that photography can function as a set of practices “by which geographical information is gathered, geographical facts are ordered and imaginative geographies are constructed” (ibid.).

In his monograph titled *Photography and Exploration*, James Ryan places emphasis on the political dimension of photography. He specifically highlights how exploratory photographs from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries played a role in both establishing and perpetuating colonial power structures and global inequalities. With the aid of photographs, as stated by Ryan (2013: 9), “European and American explorers often constructed an ‘other’ onto which Western fantasies of superiority and justifications of political domination could be projected.”

The imagined geographies of the ‘Orient’ and the ‘West’ have been subjects of extensive debate and study for almost 50 years (see e.g., Said 1978; Bonnett 2004). Likewise, concepts such as ‘Africa’ and ‘the tropics’ have been subjected to critical scrutiny (see e.g., Driver and Martins 2005; McAleer 2010). Despite the distinctiveness of the Orient and the West, as well as Africa and the tropics in terms of their geographic locations, these terms share a crucial commonality: they were decisively shaped and disseminated through the written accounts and visual depictions of European

conquerors, explorers, and participants in expeditions (Ryan 2013: 8).

Examining the historical perspective on mountains and mountain regions, the book *High Places. Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice, and Science* edited by Denis Cosgrove and Veronica della Dora (2009) is of fundamental importance, as well as the insights provided by Swiss geographers Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz in their book, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*. Debarbieux and Rudaz argue that “the mountain, far from being a given of nature [...], deserves to be studied as a notion in itself, as the product of a social and political construction” (Debarbieux and Rudaz 2015: 2). In the progress of this thesis, I will further elaborate on how the analysis of historical expedition photographs can yield valuable insights into this multifaceted process of the ‘social and political construction’ of high mountain regions.

Ideas and imaginations associated with geographical space are of course not only expressed, reproduced, and conveyed through visual representations, but also through language. This is especially evident in the way spaces are categorised and named. The term ‘Karakoram’ is relatively recent when compared to the term ‘Hindukush’ (in its various spellings). In fact, in 1880, British explorer John Biddulph referred to significant parts of what is now known as the Karakoram and Pamir regions as “Hindoo Koosh”, and none of his contemporaries objected. While some British explorers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century were already using the term ‘Karakoram mountains’ (see e.g., Moorcroft and Trebeck 1841: 258–259), it was not until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that the Schlagintweit brothers identified and defined the “Karakorúm” (von Schlagintweit, 1865: 363) as a distinct mountain range. It took several more decades, until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for the term ‘Karakoram’ to gain widespread recognition among European scientists and mountaineers (see e.g., Mason 1938: 127).

In the fields of geography and geoscience, the mountain ranges of the Hindukush and Karakoram are frequently examined within a broader spatial context and collectively referred to. For example, phrases like the

“Greater Himalayan Region” (Hewitt 2014: 2) and the “Tibetan Plateau and Adjoining Regions” (Yao Tandong 2007) encompass both the Hindukush and the Karakoram mountain ranges. Other authors have employed more metaphorical expressions, such as the “roof of the world” (Gordon 1876) or the “third pole” (Dyhrenfurth 1960; Qui 2008). The latter is a somewhat figurative expression that underscores the concept that the “Himalaya-Karakoram-Hindu Kush” (Hewitt 2014: 41) represents the world’s largest glacier area outside of the Arctic and Antarctica.

In the context of the European exploration of the Himalaya, Hindukush, Karakoram, and Pamir regions, another term of historical significance is ‘High Asia’. Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, this term, known as *Hochasien* in German and *Haute Asie* in French, has been used to describe “the greatest and highest mass elevation on earth” (Haffner 1997: 314). According to this definition, High Asia encompasses an extensive complex of mountain ranges and plateaus, which include the Himalayas to the south, the Karakoram and Hindukush to the west, and the Pamir and the Alai mountain range to the north. Its eastern boundaries extend deeply into East Asia (Haffner 1997: 304; Schmidt 2013: 42).

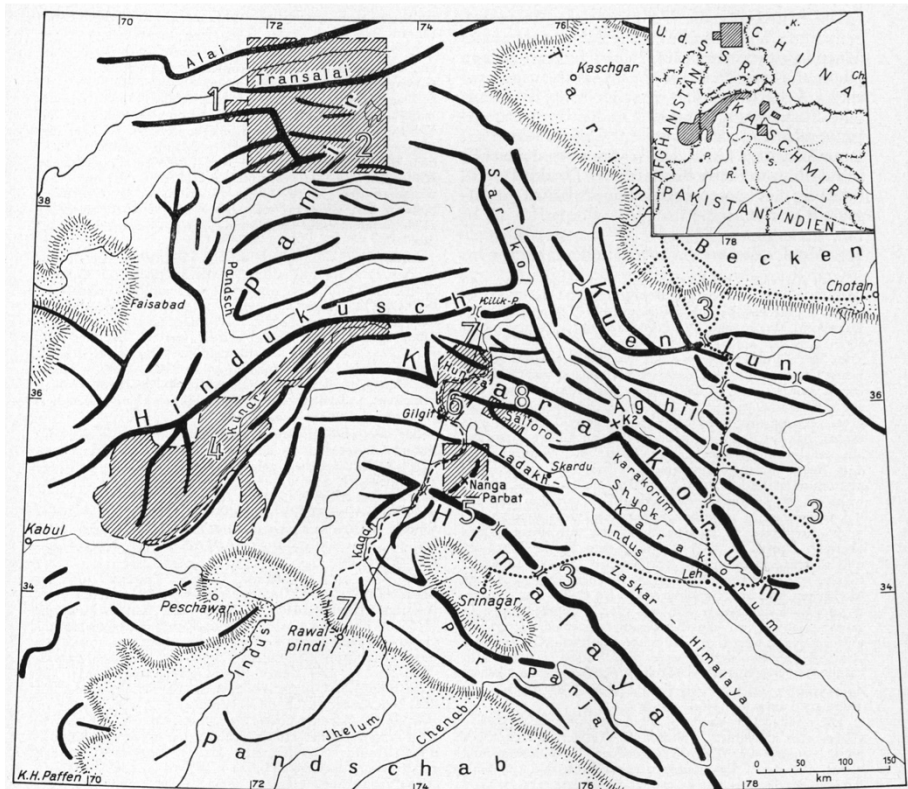
The scholarly concept of High Asia is based on a physiographic notion of ‘height’ or ‘altitude’. European explorers played a pivotal role in popularising this term. After exploring the oceans, river courses, and deserts of the extra-European world, 19<sup>th</sup>-century expedition travellers turned their attention to what historian Jon Mathieu (2011: 9) has described as the Earth’s “third dimension”. In German, *Hochasien* was coined by the scholar Carl Ritter in the early 1830s. Initially, Ritter used the term to describe certain parts of the Himalayas (see Ritter 1832: 37–39). In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, during their explorations of South and Central Asia, the Schlagintweit brothers and their expedition team crossed the Karakoram Mountains. This experience, along with Hermann and Robert Schlagintweit’s journey over the Kunlun Mountains in 1855, inspired the two explorers to further develop the concept of High Asia.

Figure 1.2 ►

This sketch map, featured in the “Preliminary report on the scientific work of the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition”, delineates the geographical region which is referred to as *Hochasien* (High Asia) since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Within the sketch map, the author, Karlheinz Paffen, has marked the areas explored by German expedition teams in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The participants of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition regarded their undertaking as a continuation of these earlier expeditions.

Source: Karlheinz Paffen (1956):

*Abb. 1: Deutsche Forschungsgebiete zwischen Pamir und Himalaya.* Reproduced from Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 3.



*Abb. 1: Deutsche Forschungsgebiete zwischen Pamir und Himalaya*

1 Pamir-Expedition des D. u. Ö. Alpenvereins 1913; 2 Deutsch-Russische Pamir-Exped. 1928; 3 *Trinklersche* Zentralasien-Exped. 1927/28; 4 Deutsche Hindukusch-Exped. 1935; 5 Deutsche Himalaya-Expeditionen z. Nanga Parbat 1934 u. 1937; 6 Deutsch-Osterreichische Himalaya-Karakorum-Exped. 1954; 7 Reiseroute der DÖHKE 1954 u. Lage des von *K.H. Paffen* aufgenommenen Vegetationsprofils; 8 Deutsche Chogo Lungma-Expeditionen 1954 u. 1955 und Arbeitsgebiet von *K. Oestreich* (1902).

In 1870, Hermann von Schlagintweit presented an expanded version of Carl Ritter’s definition to the *Königlich Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences):

High Asia, the world’s most formidable mountainous region, abuts the low-lying tropical and subtropical areas of India. It stretches from Assam to Kabul in length and spans from Bengal, Hindustan, and Punjab, crossing Tibet to Mongolia and eastern Turkestan in breadth. (von Schlagintweit 1870: 314)

The Schlagintweit brothers’ definition of High Asia had a lasting impact on European, particularly German, expeditionary scholarship (von Brescius 2019: 118). In their personal notes and publications, the participants of German expeditions in the 1950s and 1960s also made



references to the journeys of the Schlagintweit brothers (see e.g., *Diary Klamert II*: 35; Kick 1960). The leader of the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, Wolfgang Pillewizer, considered them pioneers in the field of German scientific exploration in the Karakoram:

As early as 1856, the Schlagintweit brothers had begun their geographical and geological explorations in a region of High Asia that would later become a primary destination for German research expeditions. (Pillewizer 1961: 10)

As a geographical concept, High Asia has retained its significance throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to this day (see, e.g., von Wissmann 1961; Kick 1985; Kuhle 1986; Stadelbauer 1997; Brogiato et al. 2005; Mathieu 2011). Its relevance persisted in the German context even as substantial portions of High Asia became inaccessible after the Second World War when the Soviet and Chinese borders were closed for researchers from the Federal Republic of Germany established in 1949.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, West German research efforts focused on the western and central parts of High Asia, including the Afghan and Pakistani parts of the Hindukush, the Western Himalayas, and the Karakoram.

Despite its historical and scientific relevance, High Asia remains an elusive spatial concept – a generalisation that provides a condensed overview of an area but overlooks political, historical, linguistic, and religious differences. Consequently, it lacks room for nuanced considerations and, moreover, disregards emic perspectives. Nevertheless, I will employ the term ‘High Asia’ whenever I want to evoke the connotations associated with it. When I use it, my intention is to emphasise the geographical imagination of High Asia as a physiographical entity and to underscore its historical origins and significance within the realm of German expeditionary science. The concept of High Asia is crucial for understanding why it is both reasonable and necessary to analyse apparently separate endeavours, like the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, and the 1962/63 Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, in close

comparison. By comparing the photographic outcomes of these expeditions, I aim to elucidate how German expedition photography in High Asia served as a set of practices for collecting spatial information, organising scientific data, and constructing imaginative geographies (Schwartz and Ryan 2003: 6).

### 1.5 Outline of chapters

To provide a comprehensive discussion of my research findings, this introduction is succeeded by five additional chapters. The second chapter, titled “Historical perspectives on High Asia”, examines the artistic, cartographic, and photographic developments that provided the basis for expedition photography of the 1950s and 1960s. Within my historical review, I present selected visual examples that illustrate various modes of representation for High Asia since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The aim is to provide readers with an initial understanding of the diversity of expedition images and the messages conveyed by them. Furthermore, I elucidate the relationship between geographical imaginations and the emergence of distinct image types.

Expanding on these explanations, I proceed to the main part of this work. In chapters 3, 4, and 5, I present three distinct viewpoints within German expedition photography in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, i.e., the geographical, the mountaineering, and the ethnological perspectives on the Hindukush-Karakoram.

In Chapter 3, titled “Capturing the high mountain landscape”, I closely examine a significant spatial concept of 20<sup>th</sup>-century German geography: the notion of landscape (German: *Landschaft*) and its visual representation in expedition photography. This analysis focuses on survey photographs taken during the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition in the northwestern Karakoram by geographer Wolfgang Pillewizer and

geodesist Karl Heckler. Through a comparative analysis of their photographs, I illustrate how, in 1954, these surveyors used their cameras to portray the northwestern Karakoram as a subject of German geography and high mountain research.

In Chapter 4, titled “Expedition mountaineering and photography during the ‘golden age of Himalayan climbing’”, I revisit German expedition activities in the northwestern Karakoram. However, this time, I approach the subject from the perspective of expedition mountaineering. The 1950s are often referred to as the ‘Golden Age of Mountaineering’ in the Himalaya and Karakoram (see e.g., Isserman and Weaver 2008: 295). In various regions of High Asia, including the Hunza Valley, a professional expedition sector was developing in order to meet the demands and expectations of a continuously growing number of foreign mountaineers. 3,000 photographs taken by expedition mountaineer Gerhart Klamert during the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the 1959 German Karakoram expedition serve as a testimony to these developments.

Gerhart Klamert’s photographs also offer insights into a significant shift in the perception of the northwestern Karakoram, a shift that began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the photographs and films of European and North American explorers, the region underwent a transformation from being perceived as the ‘dangerous and untamed frontier of the British Empire’ to becoming a sought-after destination for Western travellers seeking adventure and scenic beauty. In the analysis of Gerhart Klamert’s photographic oeuvre, my aim is to trace the societal, media, and economic factors that spurred this transformation.

In Chapter 5, titled “Collecting, archiving, and exhibiting the Hindukush”, I focus on the photographs taken during the 1962/63 Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. This expedition was conducted on behalf of the Linden Museum, one of the most prominent German ethnological museums at that time. Through the analysis of photographs taken by the three German expedition members, I will analyse expedition

photography as an ethnological practice, which comprises the activities of collecting, archiving, and exhibiting. In this context, I will discuss another prevalent geographical imagination within German research: the idea of mountain regions as “living museums, preserving much that has long disappeared in more accessible areas” (Kußmaul 1972: 8; see also, Buddruss 1993: 39).

Each of the three case studies presented in chapters 3, 4, and 5 examines a specific aspect of German expedition photography. In Chapter 6, I bring together these diverse perspectives and draw conclusions.

In its entirety, my work aims to provide insights into the role of expedition photography in the history of science. In other words, the objective is not to write a mere history of expedition photographs but to shed light on how photography has informed the history of expeditions. Within this framework, my intention is to challenge the practice of viewing photographs as ‘windows to the past’ or as unbiased evidence of historical events.

## **1.6 A brief note on writing and reading this thesis**

Several terms employed in this work originate from languages other than English. This applies in particular to titles of honour, professional designations, personal names, and place names derived from Arabic, Burushaski, German, Persian, Shina, Urdu, and Wakhi. Consequently, a standardised transcription is necessary. When transcribing honorific titles, professional designations, and personal names from Arabic and Persian, I have adhered to the spellings employed by Annemarie Schimmel (1990). For place names, on the other hand, I have adopted a standard widely used in English-language maps and publications (see e.g., Skyhawk 2008; Kreutzmann 2015a and 2020; Hauser 2016). To maintain consistency, I have refrained from using diacritical marks throughout the text.

Throughout my work I quote from German sources. In cases where no English translations of these sources were available, I have made the translations myself. Moreover, I have relied on primary sources that have not yet undergone institutional archiving procedures. This mainly applies to the photographs and text documents found within the personal estates of Karl Heckler, Gerhart Klamert, Wolfgang Pillewizer, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy. I have documented the provenance of these sources in the bibliography to the best of my knowledge. Nonetheless, it is possible that these sources may have been relocated in the meantime.

To support my research findings, I have included 106 pictures in this work. Most of them were taken during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the German Karakoram expedition, and the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. A considerable number of these photographs have not been previously published. Generous permission to reproduce and display these images has been granted by Annette Krämer of the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, Thomas Hofmann of the Austrian Geological Survey in Vienna, as well as the private collectors and photographers Gerhard Klamert and Hermann Schlenker. Additionally, this work presents images for the purpose of quotation. These visuals have undergone critical examination and are presented to substantiate my findings. Since these images have been made publicly accessible with the explicit consent of the copyright holders, their incorporation as quotations is legally justified, even when subject to copyright protection (§ 51 UrhG). Modifications have been limited to adjusting the image size. Copyright holders are identified in the image caption.

## Endnotes of pages 1–29

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the history of exploration, most of the men and women who served as load-carriers and porters for European expeditions were poorly compensated day laborers, and many received no payment at all. The history of expeditions and exploration is closely intertwined with the global history of slavery, forced labour, and bonded labour.

<sup>2</sup> See Beatrice Kümin's work *Expedition Brasilien* (Kümin 2007: 26–37) for a more detailed account of the life, expedition travels, and work of Hercules Romuald Florence.

<sup>3</sup> The figures for the Schlagintweit expeditions are based on data from Andrew Jarvis (2015: 161) and Stephanie Kleidt (2015a: 147). The figures for the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition are derived from Annette Krämer (2013: 116) and my own counting.

<sup>4</sup> The number of large expeditions can be traced through the yearbooks of the German Alpine Club. Furthermore, large and medium-sized undertakings frequently published their expedition reports in the form of separate booklets. Information regarding smaller expeditions and reconnaissance trips can be located in local newspapers.

<sup>5</sup> While I refer to 'German expeditions', my sources are exclusively drawn from West German endeavors. The history of East German expeditions to the Pamirs is equally intriguing, and a comparison of the photographs from both countries would reveal both similarities and differences in the two German perspectives between 1949 and 1990. However, it is worth noting that knowledge about expeditions to High Asia has indeed transcended the German-German border. This is illustrated by the life of Wolfgang Pillewizer. Born in 1911 in Steyr, Austria, Wolfgang Pillewizer participated in various expeditions of the German Reich. During the Second World War, he served as a cartographer and surveyor for the National Socialist government in various special units. In 1954, he led the (West) German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Subsequently, in 1958, Wolfgang Pillewizer assumed the position of Chair of Cartography at the Technical University of Dresden in the German Democratic Republic. In this role, he led two polar expeditions to Spitzbergen. His book, titled *Zwischen Wüste und Gletschereis*, about the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, was published in 1961 by an East German publishing house and was widely accessible in the German Democratic Republic.

## 2 Historical perspectives on High Asia

Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century expeditions have explored High Asia and produced an abundance of visual documents, such as watercolours, maps, films, and photographs. The first expedition teams were commissioned by the British and Russian empires. Subsequently, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers, geodesists, and mountaineers from the German Reich also became increasingly involved in the exploration, surveying, and visualisation of various regions within High Asia.

In the early 1950s, as the first expeditions from the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany set out for the Hindukush and Karakoram, they had already many visual materials on High Asia at their disposal. German researchers benefited from the cartographic achievements of their British, Russian, and German predecessors, and had access to information in illustrated books, journals, and photo collections. Many German citizens had viewed the widely popular expedition films from the 1930s. When the expedition travellers created their own images, maps and photographs, they drew inspiration from these earlier representations and established a visual continuity, bridging the period before and after the 1940s.

In the following, I will present an overview of how expedition participants have portrayed High Asia since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Using selected images from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as examples, I will elucidate various traditions of representation that preceded the expedition photographs taken by later West German researchers and mountaineers in the Hindukush-Karakoram. I will consider a range of political viewpoints and visual perspectives that influenced German expedition

photography after the Second World War. This will lead to an understanding of these images within their historical context.

## **2.1 The ‘imperial gaze’: Early exploratory image generation between the Indus and the Oxus**

Modern exploration of the Hindukush and Karakoram began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period when the exploration of the Alps and Andes was already quite advanced. It was intricately tied to the geopolitical context often described as the ‘Great Game’. The term ‘Great Game’ encapsulates a sequence of conflicts involving the British and Russian empires, each striving for territorial dominance and influence in the regions of Central and South Asia. In the framework of this geopolitical rivalry, exploration gradually transformed into a

[...] contest of knowledge gathering in support of the imperial authorities [...] in which geographical societies, cartographers and surveyors, diplomats and officers, and intelligence branches participated and cooperated. (Kreutzmann 2017: 21)

Explorers in the service of the British Empire embarked on journeys into the Hindukush and Karakoram mountains, which they approached from both eastern and western directions. Concurrently, explorers commissioned by the Russian Empire made their way to the regions from the north. These expeditions were dispatched with the objective of surveying and mapping the terrain, as well as identifying trade and military routes. Additionally, they collected information that, by contemporary standards, would be categorised as geographical and anthropological data. Consequently, the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century explorers in the Hindukush and Karakoram, like Mountstuart Elphinstone, Patrick Alexander Vans Agnew, and Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen, played dual roles as imperial envoys and individuals who contributed to scientific knowledge.



Expeditions conducted in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century differed from those undertaken in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in several aspects. These earlier expeditions often took several years and travelled distances that spanned thousands of kilometres. A good example are the expeditions undertaken by Adolph, Hermann, and Robert Schlagintweit, three brothers from Bavaria. In 1854, the Schlagintweit brothers arrived in India. Authorised and commissioned by the East India Company and financially supported by the monarchs of Prussia and Bavaria, the brothers began their voyage in Bombay, proceeded through South India, and made their way to Calcutta. Subsequently, they continued their journey northward, passing through Sikkim and Kashmir before advancing into Ladakh and approaching the Tibetan border. Their exploration further led them to the Karakoram and Kunlun ranges. By 1856, the brothers had already covered a distance of “15,000 English miles” (approximately 24,000 kilometres), as Hermann Schlagintweit documented in a letter to his mentor, Alexander von Humboldt (von Brescius 2019: 112).

Travelling as a member of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century expedition in High Asia entailed risks and other difficulties. In order to protect themselves, explorers frequently travelled in disguise, for example as merchants or monks (see Figure 2.1). Otherwise, foreign travellers were at risk of being identified as agents or spies of one of the imperial powers. Adolph Schlagintweit fell victim to these risks. In 1857, he had separated from his brothers and embarked on an expedition to Turkestan. In August of the same year, Adolph Schlagintweit, along with his fellow expedition travellers, was captured and subsequently executed in Kashgar (von Brescius 2019: 1).<sup>1</sup>

Several decades before the Schlagintweit brothers' expeditions, from 1819 to 1825, William Moorcroft, an English veterinarian with the East India Company, had led an expedition from Punjab to Bokhara. At some point along this journey, the Moorcroft expedition included more than 300 individuals, encompassing soldiers, porters, cooks, guides, and interpreters (Meyer and Brysac 1999: 31).

Among Moorcroft's most trusted advisors were Ghulam Hyder Khan, an Afghan, and Mir Izzat-Ullah, a Persian. Ghulam Hyder Khan had previously accompanied Moorcroft on an expedition to the Tibetan border. Mir Izzat-Ullah had already explored the route to Bokhara on behalf of Moorcroft in 1812 (Alder 1980: 181–183). Another member of this expedition was George Trebeck, a young Englishman recruited by Moorcroft to serve as a draughtsman and geographer. These four individuals successfully reached Bokhara. However, during the return journey, William Moorcroft died under dubious circumstances in Afghanistan in 1825. George Trebeck, on the other hand, succumbed to a fever just a few months later (Meyer and Brysac 1999: 50).

Both Moorcroft and Trebeck left behind detailed records of their journey, which were preserved by their fellow travellers and later entrusted to the orientalist Horace Hayman Wilson. Wilson edited and published these records in London in 1841. The resulting book, titled *Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara*, was further enriched by a map created by the London cartographer John Arrowsmith.

Figure 2.1 ▼

This watercolour painting, created by the Anglo-Indian explorer Hyder Young Hearsey, dates back to the 1812 expedition led by William Moorcroft. On the reverse side of the original painting, measuring 354 x 515mm, the following inscription provides information about the depicted place and individuals: "Kyllass Mt. Road to Mansarowar Lake. Moorcroft and Capt. H. and Chinese Horsemen".

Before the invention of photography, watercolour paintings were one of the most common forms of visual documentation during expeditions. According to historian of science Lachlan Fleetwood, this painting is in many respects representative of the imagery associated with British expeditions to High Asia in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding the pictorial representation of the landscape, Fleetwood (2022: 109) points out that the "image both draws on and reinforces the 'exotic' and the sublime tropes that typify visual representations of the Himalayas in this period".

Source: Hyder Young Hearsey (1812): *Moorcroft and Hearsey on the road to Lake Mansarowar (Tibet)* [watercolour]. British Library, London: WD 350. Copyright: British Library Board. Reproduced from Fleetwood 2019: 497.



Arrowsmith, neither a traveller nor an explorer, crafted the map using the data, drawings, and outlines provided by Trebeck.

It was a customary practice to craft expedition maps only afterwards and at a considerable distance from the expedition area. Similarly, other forms of expedition imagery, such as landscape paintings, were often generated after the expeditions had concluded. The constraints imposed by travel often limited the creation of highly detailed and standardised illustrations (Kleidt 2015a: 151). The introduction of photography did not alter this practice immediately. During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, photographs were still characterised by their limited durability and the difficulties of reproduction. Moreover, the photographic technology of that era did not capture colour sufficiently. Consequently, photographs taken during High Asia expeditions were transported to urban centres in both Asia and Europe. In these locales, professional artists created watercolour paintings after the photographs, while cartographers used them in the production of maps. These hand-crafted images, in turn, were preserved, archived, or reproduced for subsequent publication. This underscores the intimate connection between expedition photography and expedition painting. Early photography did not seek to supplant painting but rather served as a useful complement to it.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was an increasing demand for expedition images from High Asia by English-speaking audiences across the British Empire. Illustrated publications such as *The Graphic*, *The Illustrated London News*, and *The Sphere* regularly featured expedition pictures produced by esteemed artists. Within the realms of science and military, however, maps stood out as the foremost means for representing High Asia. The significance of maps lies in their capacity to compile and disseminate spatial information. Maps offer a distinctive perspective on space, typically presenting an overview “that subsumes and supersedes the individual *view*” (Edney 1997: 64, emphasis in original). Expeditionary surveying and mapping emerged as potent methods for not only visualising but also organising spaces:

Just as natural historians placed each new plant observation within an artificial space of botanical taxonomy, so geographers placed each observation of the land into the larger spatial framework. (Edney 1997: 64)

Mapping played a pivotal role in ascribing new meanings to spaces. For instance, the British surveying projects frequently ignored the existing names of places. Instead, they gave those places new names, often in tribute to British explorers and expedition leaders. Two prominent examples of this practice are the ‘Mount Everest’ and the ‘Godwin-Austen Glacier’. 19<sup>th</sup>-century British maps of High Asia, therefore, display a pattern that various postcolonial and feminist theorists have called the ‘imperial gaze’. This imperial gaze represents a restricted perspective which “reflects the assumption that the white western subject is central” (Kaplan 1997: 78).

Through maps spatial data could be easily transported, disseminated, communicated, and archived. In London, for example, maps had already been part of library collections when the Royal Geographical Society made the decision to establish its Map Room in 1854 (Crone and Day 1960: 12).<sup>2</sup> In this manner, the British Empire, which comprised vast portions of the globe, could be looked at within a single room.

Maps had the power to render spaces as distant from London as the Hindukush-Karakoram immediately visible, knowable, and ideally, governable. They were pivotal tools in “the imperial project of governing at a distance” (Bleichmar 2012: 9). Consequently, the greatest challenge faced by both scientists and colonial officers was the existence of unmapped areas, often referred to as ‘blank’ or ‘white spots’ on the map (see Figure 2.2). These areas signified not only a lack of knowledge but of power and control. Blank spots on the map were perceived as a provocation, giving rise to a strong impetus to fill them. However, in the conflict-ridden context of the Great Game, the imperial endeavour of ‘filling in the blanks’ became increasingly arduous for British explorers.



▲ Figure 2.2

A section of the *Map of Chitrál, Hunza, and parts of Wakhán and Káfiristán*, surveyed by Colonel R. G. Woodthorpe, R. E., assisted by Sub-Surveyor Bápu Jádu. The map was commissioned by the Survey of India and completed in November 1888 at the Trigonometrical Branch Office in Dehradun. The mapping was based on data collected by the surveyors of the Gilgit Mission (1885–1886), an expedition commissioned by the Secretary of State of India. The members of the Gilgit Mission, in turn, had built upon the findings of earlier expeditions conducted in the decades leading up to the 1880s. Therefore, the map represents the “aggregated knowledge” (Kreutzmann 2020: 71) about the region during that period. Striking, however, is the presence of numerous blank areas on the map marked as “unsurveyed”. These blanks reflect that in the late 1880s, the northwestern parts of the Karakoram were not yet under British colonial control. The *Map of Chitrál, Hunza, and parts of Wakhán and Káfiristán* was created using photozincography, a method for copying photographic negatives onto zinc for use in map-making and image reproduction. Source: G. W. E. Atkinson, Munshi Abdul Karim, and T. H. Rendell (1888): *Map of Chitrál, Hunza, and parts of Wakhán and Káfiristán* [map, cropped]. Copyright: CC0. Reproduced from Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: supplement.



Figure 2.3 ▲

Mohamad Amin, a merchant from Yarkand, was another ‘native explorer’. As Hermann Kreutzmann (2017: 87) points out, “he was the leader of the Schlagintweit brothers’ expedition in Ladakh and the Kun Lun Shan mountains”. European photographers used different approaches to portray non-European expedition participants. This photograph is notable for its depiction of Mohamad Amin, inspired by European bourgeois portrait photography. It serves as a testimony to the openly acknowledged respect and esteem for him. The alterations to the portrait are particularly interesting: the back of the chair and the column in the background appear to have been added by hand. In addition, Mohamad Amin’s pupils have been blackened. According to Moritz von Brescius (2019: 177), these changes “were artistic interventions, aiming to show the individual portrayed as a civilised individual, not as a ‘racial type’.”

Source: Unidentified photographer (n.d): *Mohammed Amin, ein Muselman aus Calcutta* [paper print]. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München: Schlagintweitiana Collection, SLGA/IV.2.94. Copyright: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Reproduced from von Brescius 2019: 177.

After the First Anglo-Afghan War in 1842, for instance, British surveyors deemed it too hazardous to venture deeper into Afghan territory (Bayly 2016: 295–304; Chwaściński 1966: 202). To continue their surveys, the colonial government enlisted individuals of so-called ‘native’ origin, provided them with training for intelligence tasks, and engaged them in their service. Several of them went on to achieve remarkable careers as explorers. Mani Singh, Nain Singh, Abdul Subhan, and Abdul Rahim are just a few of the highly skilled surveyors who contributed to the exploration and mapping of the Hindukush, Karakoram, Pamirs, and Western Himalayas.

In colonial literature, they are often called ‘native explorers’ (see e.g., Holdich 1901: 41; Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: iii). While these men certainly were explorers, the term ‘native’ carries a misleading connotation that stems from the British colonial understanding of ‘race’. In fact, these non-British surveyors were usually just as foreign or non-native to the regions they explored and traversed as the British.<sup>3</sup>

The career of the ‘native’ surveyor Abdul Subhan, also called ‘the Munshi’, illustrates the production, dissemination, and use of expedition imagery during the era of the Great Game. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kashmiri accountant was enlisted by the Survey of India, where he made substantial contributions to various British missions of exploration. Sir Thomas Hungerford Holdich, the Superintendent of Frontier Surveys in British India at the time, described Abdul Subhan as “a very able draftsman” who had “developed considerable capacity as an explorer” (Holdich 1901: 167). By the 1870s, Abdul Subhan had become the foremost authority for surveys conducted in the Oxus region, situated between the Pamirs and Badakhshan (*ibid.*: 165). However, following a dispute over his remuneration, Abdul Subhan left British service and entered the service of the Emir of Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman Khan, on whom, according to Thomas Hungerford Holdich, he must have wielded considerable influence:

He [Abdul Subhan] held his place for a time and made his influence felt. I have very little doubt that one result of that influence was the freedom with which native surveyors were permitted to traverse the untrodden parts of Afghanistan in the early days of the Boundary Commission; and another is the remarkable acumen which the Amir [Abdur Rahman] has always displayed about maps. He not only knows the meaning of a map when he sees one, and can decipher its topography, but he has shown a shrewd appreciation of the part which a map may be made to play in the political arena of boundary agreements. (Holdich 1901: 168–169)

The case of Abdul Subhan, as a map producer and distributor of pictorial knowledge, exemplifies the extent to which exploratory expertise circulated during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His career provides valuable insights on multiple aspects. Firstly, it underscores the geopolitical significance assigned to visual materials, particularly maps, by various stakeholders in 19<sup>th</sup>-century High Asia. Secondly, it offers a glimpse into the methods of disseminating pictorial knowledge. Thirdly, Abdul Subhan's example highlights the substantial participation of non-Europeans in the production of imperial imagery, revealing that these images were not exclusively intended for European audiences. During the colonial era, political decision-makers across Central and South Asia acquired the capacity to interpret, produce, and utilise European-style visual materials as a political, social, and economic tool.

## **2.2 The 'topographical view' and the politics of scientific imagery**

Geographer Kenneth Hewitt divides the history of European exploration in the Karakoram and its adjacent mountain regions into two distinct phases. He writes that,

Early explorers, before and including the Schlagintweits and Godwin-Austen, had paid attention to all aspects of natural



history and to the activities, settlements and land uses of the mountain peoples they met. They had what today would be called a multi-disciplinary and ecological mind set. (Hewitt 2008: 63)

Subsequently, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Hewitt observes a significant shift in perspective. This transformation coincided with the establishment of India as a British crown colony in 1858, leading to a notable change in approach:

Karakoram exploration and discovery would become militarised and enveloped in the language and imagery of the 'last frontiers'. [...] the narrowly topographical view became more palatable to the colonial administration. It helped promote images that ignored the people of the Karakoram; expunged its cultural and historical space, and replaced it with 'empty lands' and a 'mountain fortress'. (ibid.)

Kenneth Hewitt's observations are significant in the context of this study, as they present one of the few contemporary scholarly reflections on the historical representation of the Karakoram region. However, a distinct demarcation between early and later representations of the Karakoram proves challenging. A comparative analysis of expedition reports and visual records from the 19<sup>th</sup> century fails to substantiate the claim that there was a significant shift in how the Karakoram Mountains were portrayed after the year 1858. Instead, it suggests that both mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century naturalists and late-19<sup>th</sup>-century British colonial expeditions ignored the indigenous perspectives and meanings associated with the region.

In order to challenge Kenneth Hewitt's assumption, I am going to examine his argument more closely. The assumed distinction between the imagery captured by naturalists like the Schlagintweit brothers and that obtained by British colonial surveyors is informed by a dominant yet illusory idea of the history of exploration. It presupposes the existence of an expeditionary science that either precedes imperialist and colonial contexts or operates independently of it. Whatever the case, it overlooks the timeless continuities between scientific exploration and modern age European colonialism.

Instead of Kenneth Hewitt's thesis of a clear shift in perspective demarcated by the establishment of the Crown rule, I want to suggest a more nuanced perspective. On the one hand, the images by the earlier explorers were no less shaped by a 'narrowly topographical perspective' than those by the later ones. On the other hand, the reports furnished by the later colonial emissaries can be regarded as 'multi-disciplinary' as those by the earlier naturalists. Furthermore, both naturalists and surveyors heavily relied on imperial and colonial policies. In the subsequent sections, I will elaborate on my argument by presenting selected images as examples.

As noted by Kenneth Hewitt, the most renowned Karakoram expeditions of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were led by the Schlagintweit brothers and by Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen. Both the Schlagintweit brothers and Godwin-Austen directed their expeditions toward the eastern and northeastern regions of the Karakoram ranges. An earlier explorer in the northwestern Karakoram was Patrick Alexander Vans Agnew, a British civil servant with the East India Company. In 1847, Vans Agnew's expedition reached Gilgit and proceeded northward. It was the first European expedition to travel as far as Chalt in the Hunza Valley. Only 29 years later, in 1876, another expedition, this time led by John Biddulph, fared comparatively far into the northwestern Karakoram.

By the 1870s, John Biddulph had established himself as an experienced explorer, having participated in numerous expeditions to High Asia. Despite his extensive travels, he produced only a limited number of paintings. Nevertheless, his influence on European perceptions of the Hindukush and Karakoram was substantial. Based on his observations and other data he had collected, in 1880 he published his book *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*. It encompasses various aspects that can be considered both scientific and 'multi-disciplinary'. It provides extensive information on the geography, ethnography, politics, climate, economy, and languages of western High Asia and is also accompanied by a map. Notably, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh* remained a standard reference for participants in European

expeditions well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Biddulph's book provides evidence that challenges Kenneth Hewitt's claim that the colonial administration sought to "promote images that ignored the people of the Karakoram" (Hewitt 2008: 63). Instead, it illustrates that British colonial explorers held a deep interest in the culture and history of the 'tribes of the Hindoo Koosh'. The encyclopaedic nature of John Biddulph's work can be found in many colonial reports and gazetteers from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several of these documents feature images that are equally remarkable and diverse as the written information they contain.

In the context of expedition photography, a particularly significant expedition report is that of the Gilgit Mission. In 1885, the Indian Foreign Secretary entrusted it with a confidential task, which included the identification of a route from Kashmir through Gilgit to Chitral and the collection of information about 'Kafiristan' (Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: iii). William Lockhart, an intelligence agent, was singled out to lead the mission. He organised a team that included 17 soldiers and five "native surveyors" (*ibid.*). Lockhart was joined by three Britons, among them George Michael James Giles, who served as both the expedition's physician and photographer. In 1886, Surgeon Giles was the first explorer who took photographs of the Hunza Valley in the northwestern Karakoram. Two years later, Bronislav Grombchevsky followed in Giles' footsteps and took photographs in the Hunza Valley on behalf of the Russian Empire.

The photographic collections of Giles and Grombchevsky have endured to the present day, preserving a wealth of unique visual records.<sup>4</sup> Many of these images offer a topographical perspective of the documented regions, encompassing uninhabited plateaus as well as critical military infrastructure such as passes, bridges, potential invasion routes, and mountain fortresses (Figure 2.4 and 2.5). However, these expedition photographers of the 1880s did not 'ignore' the human element within the Karakoram. On the contrary, the human dimension held importance also

Figure 2.4 ►

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, bridges were photographic subjects of great strategic military importance. This picture was taken during the Gilgit Mission in September 1885. It shows the “Bridge at Chitrál”.

Source: George Michael James Giles (1885): *Bridge at Chitrál* [photograph]. Copyright: CC0. Reproduced from Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: following page 66.



Figure 2.5 ►

This is one of the first photographs taken in Hunza. Taken on 26 April 1886 by Surgeon Giles during the Gilgit Mission, it shows Altit Fort, which, along with another fort in Baltit (now Karimabad), served as the residence of the rulers of Hunza for centuries.

Source: George Michael James Giles (1886): *Altit Fort* [photograph]. Copyright: CC0. Reproduced from Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: following page 394.





◀ Figure 2.6

Collections of expedition photographs typically contain many group portraits. As Denis Skopin (2022: 57) has observed, group photography “establishes and consecrates a very special relationship between those who are depicted in it”. Therefore, the examination of group photographs taken during expeditions proves insightful. It reveals how expedition travellers comprehended the social environment in which they travelled. This group portrait is of an ethnographic type, intended to showcase the “Boys of [the village of] Réchun” in Chitral.

Source: George Michael James Giles (1885): *Group of Boys at Réshun* [photograph]. Copyright: CC0. Reproduced from Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: following page 266.



◀ Figure 2.7

Another group photograph taken during the Gilgit Mission. It portrays Azhar Khan, son of the ruler of Nagar, Jafir Khan, surrounded by his retinue.

Source: George Michael James Giles (1886): *Uzar, Khan of Nagar, and attendants* [photograph]. Copyright: CC0. Reproduced from Lockhart and Woodthorpe 1889: following page 286.

in later colonial photographic exploration. This is vividly demonstrated through the ‘strictly confidential’ report of the Gilgit Mission, which comprises 123 images, encompassing 105 black and white photographs, 15 drawings, and 3 maps. Among these visuals, a substantial portion consists of portraits of local rulers and photographs that today would be categorised as anthropological (Figures 2.6 and 2.7). Additionally, hand-drawn ethnographic depictions have also been incorporated into the report.

Colonial envoys during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century held a keen interest in the Karakoram, viewing it as a significant “cultural and historical space” (Hewitt 2008: 63). This interest was not contradictory to their colonial perspective; in fact, it was central to it. For the British government in India, acquiring comprehensive knowledge about the inhabitants of the Hindukush and the Karakoram regions held paramount importance. These populations were viewed through a dual lens, seen both as potential adversaries of the Empire and as future colonial subjects. This dual perspective led participants in colonial expeditions to amass “a fund of information about the history, the religion, and the customs of the people”, as the British expedition traveller and spy, Francis Younghusband (1896: 5), put it.

Much like colonial emissaries, naturalists in High Asia during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century collected scientific data about the populations in the regions they explored. At the same time, however, they also produced a substantial number of images deliberately overlooking the people of the Karakoram. To comprehend the world ‘as it is’, naturalists during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries attempted to deconstruct it into its constituent elements. They categorised the environment they examined into distinct domains, distinguishing what is now referred to as ‘nature’ from ‘culture’. This process led to the development of two distinct perspectives: one exclusively focused on the examination of the human realm, and the other dedicated solely to the seemingly non-human environment.

Landscape painting, specifically, offered naturalists a medium through

which they could focus exclusively on the natural elements of a region. The works of topographer and geologist Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen exemplify this approach. His watercolours of various glaciers in the Karakoram, explored in 1861, serve as typical survey images. In a manner consistent with contemporary expectations, they portray the glaciers as what Kenneth Hewitt (2008: 63) has called “empty lands”.<sup>5</sup>

With his landscape paintings, Adolph Schlagintweit went beyond merely depicting ‘empty lands’ as he encountered them. Instead, he intentionally constructed these landscapes in his pictures. In 2015, geographer Marcus Nüsser revealed Adolph Schlagintweit’s artistic portrayal of ‘untamed wilderness’ in his analysis of the watercolour painting titled *Mountains of Astór or Hazóra. Part I. Diámer Group*. Crafted in 1856, this watercolour captured the panoramic view the expedition traveller supposedly witnessed from the pass between the Gurikot and Rupal valleys (Figure 2.8). The painting showcases a vast plateau with towering, snow-covered peaks emerging in the distance. The perspective is from a high elevation, affording an expansive panorama of the mountainous terrain. At the heart of the composition, three markhors, wild goats, are depicted, further enhancing the romantic style of the painting (Nüsser 2015: 331).

Although the original painting is lost (Kleidt 2015b: GR-Nr. 378), a preserved lithograph based on Adolph Schlagintweit’s watercolour has continued to captivate German scholars throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Nüsser 2015: 331). In 1938, four years after surveying the Nanga Parbat region during the 1934 German Himalaya expedition, Richard Finsterwalder (1938: 152–154) discussed the image, emphasising its topographical precision and glaciological value. In the 1980s, Egon Dorrer (1989) analysed the pictorial geometry of the landscape view. Adolph Schlagintweit’s painting was further scrutinised by geodesist Wilhelm Kick (1996: 20) in the 1990s. All these authors have examined the painting under the assumption that its purpose was to accurately portray the precise topography of the location. However, Marcus Nüsser points out that the height of the ridgeline in the left middle ground of the picture does not

Figure 2.8 ►

*Mountains of Astór or Hazóra.*

Part I. *Diámer Group*: Colour

lithograph based on a watercolour created by Adolph Schlagintweit in September 1856.

Source: Unidentified author (n.d.): *Mountains of Astór or Hazóra. Part I. Diámer Group*

[lithograph]. Copyright:

Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München. Reproduced from Nüsser 2015: 330.



correspond to the actual terrain (Nüsser 2015: 331). As per Marcus Nüsser’s analysis, Adolph Schlagintweit deliberately concealed the view of the settlement area located at the bottom of the valley (ibid.: 332).

Through the example of the painting *Mountains of Astór or Hazóra*, it becomes evident that the “narrowly topographical view [...] that ignored the people of the Karakoram” (Hewitt 2008: 63) not only received approval from the British colonial government but was also adopted by continental European naturalists. Marcus Nüsser concludes his analysis of Adolph Schlagintweit’s artwork by emphasising that,

The motif of the uninhabited and untamed wilderness appears to persist in exerting an influence on the self-perception of physical-geographic research in high mountain environments, even to this day. (Nüsser 2015: 332)

The evident similarities observed in the images produced by naturalists and colonial agents in 19<sup>th</sup>-century High Asia can be attributed to at least two factors. Firstly, they stem from well-established modes of representation that exerted a comparable influence on the artistic output of both naturalists and explorers. Pan-European artistic trends and schools left a similar imprint on the works of these two groups (Kümin 2007: 8–9). Secondly, the process of image production during these expeditions was profoundly influenced by the prevailing political context. It is crucial to emphasise that no expedition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century served



exclusively scientific purposes. Explorers in High Asia, even those portrayed as naturalists, conducted their voyages under the auspices of imperial or later colonial institutions. The journeys of the Schlagintweit brothers, who were commissioned by the East India Company, compellingly illustrate the link between the histories of scientific exploration and the emergence of British colonialism in High Asia.

Scientific exploration in the Hindukush and the Karakoram mountain ranges during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries did not occur in isolation from the structures established by British imperialism and colonialism. Rather, it operated within the parameters established by these structures and confirmed them. The narrative that depicts scientific explorers as impartial naturalists who diligently collected emic perspectives of the territories they traversed is just one of the many European myths associated with exploration.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, my research also embarks on a critical analysis of expedition photographs which are commonly classified as purely scientific and takes into account the political context in which they were captured.

### **2.3 Pictures of 'wild people' and 'most loyal subjects': The exploratory gaze before and after the 1890s**

Like Kenneth Hewitt, I posit that a notable transformation took place in the European perception of High Asia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, I argue that this change in perspective did not transpire in 1858, as Hewitt suggests, but rather during the 1890s. At around that time substantial political and administrative transformations took place in various regions of the Hindukush and Karakoram. These political developments reshaped the European understanding of High Asia fundamentally and led to a transformation in the works of European draughtsmen and photographers. To substantiate my argument, I will conduct a

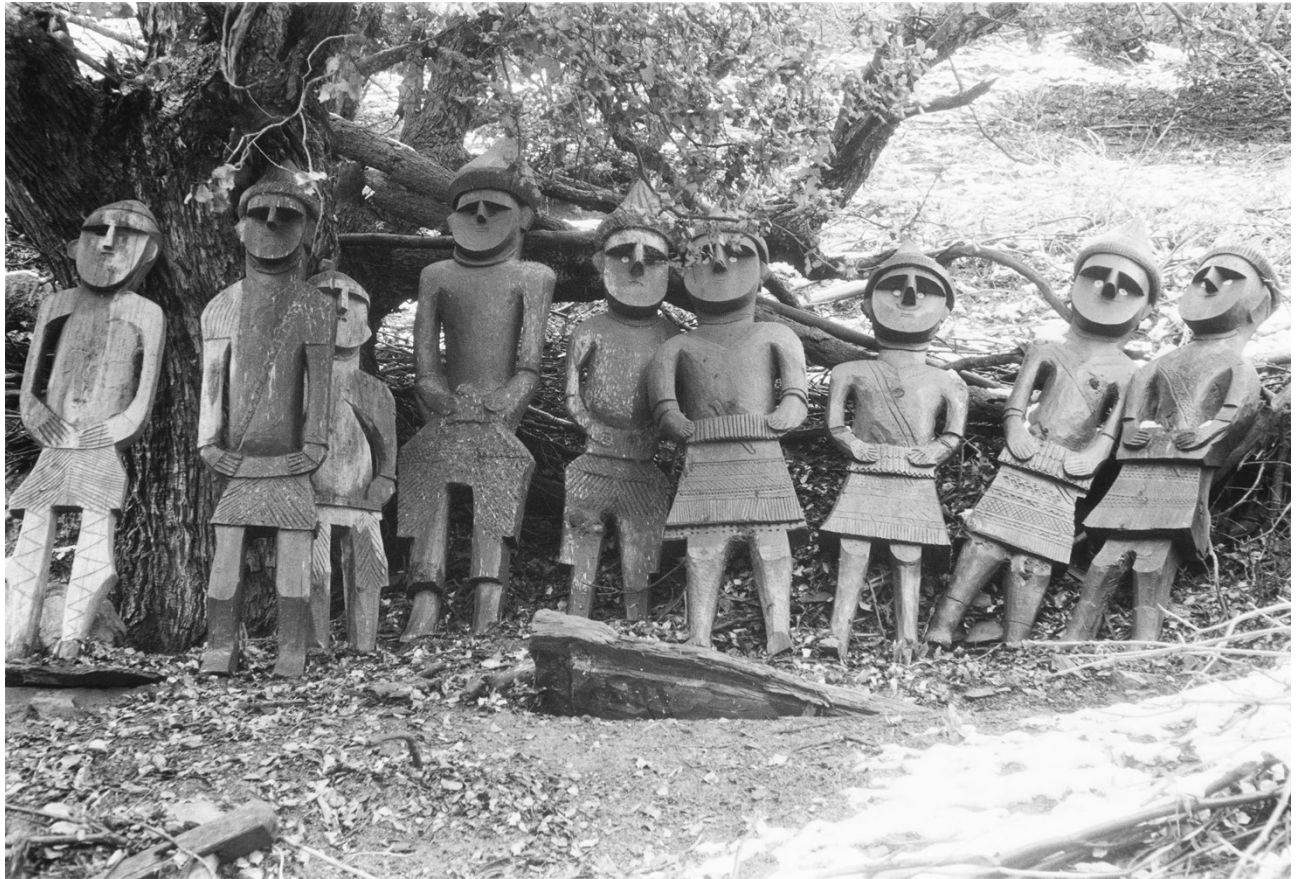
comparative analysis of visual depictions before and after the 1890s.

In 1889, the Englishman George Scott Robertson embarked on an expedition that took him to a region which the British at that time referred to as 'Kafiristan'. Before Robertson's undertaking, only a few select explorers, including those associated with the Gilgit Mission, had journeyed into this specific area of the southern Hindukush. This fact heightened Robertson's interest in the region. "Kafiristan", as scholar Edward Marx elaborates, was

[...] a place that held almost the same kind of fascination for Victorians as the Upper Nile. If its name, 'Kafiristan', has any significance, it is to suggest that this is entirely virgin territory, as untouched by the old Islamic civilisation [...] as by the British; for 'kafir' in Arabic means 'unbeliever'. (Marx 1999: 44)

George Scott Robertson made two separate journeys to Kafiristan. His initial visit occurred in October 1889, and a year later, he returned to the southern Hindukush, where he took up residence in the village of Kamdesh from October 1890 to September 1891. Robertson documented his year-long stay in Kamdesh in a 658-page book titled *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*. In the preface, he characterised it as "the record of [...] nearly a year spent amongst a wild and interesting people" (Robertson 1896: viii).

In addition to Robertson's detailed depictions of the living conditions among the 'Kafirs' in Kamdesh, the book also features approximately 80 illustrations created by the artist Arthur David McCormick. These illustrations are based on photographs taken by Robertson during his stay in 1890/91. *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush* features a diverse array of motifs, including depictions of the village's architecture, the rituals and celebrations of its residents, as well as portraits of individuals who played pivotal roles in Robertson's research, such as his hosts, interpreters, and informants. The extensive collection of visual materials within the book has contributed to its enduring recognition as an "important" work that is "impressive in its ethnographical detail" (Klimburg 2008: 391; Anderson 2005: 49).



▲ Figure 2.9

The Kalasha – who, like other communities in the southern Hindukush, were labelled ‘Kafirs’ – have fascinated several generations of European explorers. As a tribute to their deceased, members of the Kalasha community carved figures into cedar trunks. European explorers repeatedly photographed these ancestor figures, establishing them over the decades as a symbol of ‘Kafir culture’ among European anthropologists and collectors. The widespread circulation of these photographs and the anthropological cult surrounding the wooden statues resulted in the Kalasha people being deprived of their sacred possessions. In some cases, ancestor figures were stolen from Kalasha cemeteries, while in others, members of the Kalasha community themselves sold statues to European collectors. The first explorers to photograph the Kalasha ancestor figures were George Michael James Giles and George Scott Robertson. This photograph was taken in the Rumbur Valley in 1956 by Adolf Friedrich, the leader of the German Hindukush expedition.

Source: Adolf Friedrich (1956): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Photo collection of Adolf Friedrich (Deutsche Hindukusch-Expedition 1955/56).  
Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

Indeed, Robertson has given an extensive and detailed portrayal of the living conditions of the people in the southern Hindukush. However, in my view, it is important not to see the book as simply ethnographical. Instead, it should be regarded as a collection of politically significant reflections by someone who identified first and foremost as a soldier, explorer, and official of the British Empire. Had Kafiristan not become inaccessible to the British shortly after Robertson's second expedition, the information he brought back would have been of even higher value for the British government. As it happened, though, *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush* was not published until 1896. By that time, 'Kafiristan' had been incorporated into the Afghan kingdom and renamed as 'Nuristan'.

In 1893, the diplomat Sir Henry Mortimer Durand negotiated an agreement on behalf of the British government with the Afghan king Abdur Rahman Khan. This agreement defined the north-western boundaries of British influence and led to the establishment of a 2,450-kilometer border, which is still known today as the Durand Line. As part of the agreement, the British pledged to refrain from intervening in the affairs of the Afghan king. This commitment allowed Abdur Rahman Khan to extend his influence into the regions of the southern Hindukush. Consequently, the Afghan ruler initiated a series of military campaigns, including one in 1895 that targeted 'Kafiristan':

The Amir succeeded in short time where the British had failed, and the transformation of the region was marked by a change in name: from 'Kafiristan' (land of infidels) to 'Nuristan' (land of the enlightened), the name by which the region is known today. The elimination of the region and its inhabitants as objects of British colonial desire marked the end of the region's highlighted status within the field of colonial discourse and the beginning of its slide into archival obscurity. (Marx 1999: 60)

By the mid-1890s, the British found themselves compelled to relinquish any vested interest in the southern Hindukush. Nevertheless, they tried to strengthen and extend control on what they perceived as 'their' side of the Durand Line, with a particular focus on the northwestern

region of the Karakoram. When George Scott Robertson returned from Kafiristan to Gilgit in October 1891, he met with his longtime friend and expedition companion, Colonel Algernon Durand. During this time, Algernon Durand, the brother of Henry Mortimer Durand, was immersed in extensive military preparations. Under his leadership, British-Kashmiri forces were tasked with the mission to ‘open up’ and ‘pacify’ the principalities of Hunza and Nagar. This effectively meant that the principalities were to be incorporated by force into the *Pax Britannica* (Kreutzmann 2020: 43, 115).

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the northwestern Karakoram represented the outermost boundaries of the British colonial government’s sphere of influence. Within this region lay the Hunza Valley, which was divided by the Hunza River into two distinct principalities: Hunza on the orographic right and Nagar on the left side of the valley. To the northeast of the Hunza Valley, situated beyond the Khunjerab Pass, lay the Chinese Empire. Concerned about the political influence of both China and Russia, the British aimed to establish complete control over Hunza and Nagar, positioning them as a defensive buffer zone. This strategic objective was motivated by the British government’s intention to safeguard its territorial interests and limit interactions, especially among the ruling elites of the Hunza Valley, with their counterparts in Russia and China.

While the British colonial government aimed to protect the Hunza Valley from influences coming from the north and east, they sought to improve its accessibility from the south. To realise this objective, they devised plans to construct a traversable road connecting Gilgit to Hunza. However, *tham* Safdar Ali Khan emerged as a significant impediment to this road construction project. The ruler of Hunza did not see his territory as a peripheral area or a buffer zone of the British Empire. Instead, he saw his principality at the very centre of the three great powers, strategically well placed amidst the British, Chinese, and Russian empires (Younghusband 1896: 285). Despite British disapproval, Safdar Ali Khan maintained diplomatic and economic relations with both China and

Kashmir. Furthermore, he provoked British indignation when reports emerged that Bronislav Grombchevsky, a Russian explorer and suspected spy, had appeared in the Hunza Valley.

Safdar Ali Khan's persistent efforts to expand the boundaries of his domain westward into regions already claimed by the ruler of Nagar and the Maharaja of Kashmir increased the level of threat he posed to the British. According to 19<sup>th</sup>-century British sources, these territorial ambitions were not the only transgressions committed by Safdar Ali Khan and the people of Hunza. The Hunzukuts were depicted as a menace to the overall security of the Empire, characterised as ruthless robbers and brigands who frequently conducted raids on caravans (see e.g., Biddulph 1880: 23; Younghusband 1896: 227).<sup>7</sup>

Several British expeditions, including the aforementioned Gilgit Mission led by William Lockhart, were dispatched to the Hunza Valley with the objective of initiating negotiations with the ruler of Hunza. In 1889, Francis Younghusband, a British Army officer, explorer, and intelligence agent, embarked on his first expedition to the Hunza Valley in order to assert British authority over Safdar Ali Khan. However, the *tham* adamantly rejected Francis Younghusband's demands. Subsequently, Younghusband would recount the incident in the following manner:

On the following morning [in November 1889, MH], during a long visit Safder Ali paid me in my tent, [...] I reminded him that the raids were committed by his subjects upon the subjects of the British Government, and if he wished to retain the friendship of the British Government, as he professed to do, he should restrain his subjects from carrying on such practices. Safder Ali replied, in the most unabashed manner, that he considered he had a perfect right to make raids; that the profits he obtained from them formed his principal revenue, and that if the Government of India wished them stopped, they must make up by a subsidy for the loss of revenue. There was no diplomatic mincing of matters with Safder Ali, and this outspokenness did not come from any innate strength of character, but simply because he was entirely ignorant of his real position in the universe. (Younghusband 1896: 285)

The events which followed would intensify the situation. During the 1880s, the rulers of Hunza and Nagar found themselves in rivalry on numerous matters. However, when it came to the planned development of the road from Gilgit to their valley, both Safdar Ali Khan of Hunza and Azhar Khan of Nagar presented a united front of opposition to the road's construction. Conversely, the British authorities in Gilgit were determined to open up the valley at any cost, which meant that the two rulers had to be reined in. As a result, a decision was made in Gilgit that coercive measures were required to compel Hunza and Nagar to collaborate on the road project.

Initially, the proposal to initiate a 'Hunza-Nagar Campaign' and invade the principalities faced criticism, even from within the British ranks (Durand 1899: 252–253). The advocates of military intervention were forced to persuade their government and substantiate their case. Ultimately, the adverse portrayal of Hunza and its ruler, Safdar Ali Khan, in the reports submitted by William Lockhart and Francis Younghusband served to justify a military campaign. These reports had depicted Hunza in an exceedingly unfavourable manner:

The people of Hunza were constructed as caravan raiders who wreaked havoc on 'trade' in the remote frontier region. The backwardness of Hunza, however, was not of a regular kind. Rather, these people were not just inferior but also beyond reason; they were the radical other. (Shafqat Hussain 2015: 17)

By the end of November 1891, Algernon Durand initiated the campaign and entered Nagar. Colonel Durand was accompanied by none other than George Scott Robertson and no fewer than 1,000 soldiers. Durand would later clarify the size of his troops, stating, "A larger force could not have been fed in the country, a smaller could not have undertaken the job" (Durand 1899: 255). In his memoirs, *Making of a Frontier*, Durand asserted that he had tried his best to avert the attack:

By the end of November [1891] my troops were concentrated at Chalt, and I moved there myself. I had for some time been in constant communication with the chiefs [of Hunza and Nagar],

and had exhausted every means of persuasion by letter, and by the mouth of trusted envoys, in the hopes of arriving at a peaceful solution, but in vain. Finally, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, I sent in my ultimatum to the chiefs who were with their forces, Safdar Ali Khan of Hunza at Mayun, and Uzr Khan at Nilt, about eight miles from my camp. I gave them three days to think it over, but on the second my envoy returned on foot, having been robbed of his horse, and threatened with murder, and informed me that the chiefs had decided to fight. [...] There was nothing more to be done, and on the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1891 we crossed the Hunza river above Chalt [...]. The tribesmen had rushed on their fate, the die was cast, and all that remained was to strike quick and to strike hard. (Durand 1899: 252)

From Chalt, the British-Kashmiri troops advanced and captured the fort of Nilt, albeit at a significant cost in terms of casualties. Algernon Durand himself sustained injuries and had to be evacuated to Gilgit, while his troops continued their advance under the leadership of George Scott Robertson. The Hunza-Nagar Campaign concluded on 20 December, merely a month after commencing in Chalt, with the surrender of both principalities (Kreutzmann 2020: 92). Safdar Ali Khan had fled to China. To consolidate their recently established authority, the British appointed his half-brother, Mohamad Nazim Khan, as the new ruler of Hunza. The British had laid the foundation for their indirect governance over Hunza and Nagar for the subsequent five decades.

Mohamad Nazim Khan held the record as the longest-reigning *tham* or *mir* of Hunza, presiding over the semi-autonomous principality from 1892 until his death in 1938.<sup>8</sup> *Mir* Mohamad Nazim Khan's rule was characterised by autocracy, aligning closely with British interests. This alignment made him popular – at least in London. Periodically, reports and photographs depicting Mohamad Nazim Khan as a noble and equitable ruler made their way to Europe. In the English press, the 'Hunza success story' was invoked whenever the British sought reassurance regarding their influence in the northern periphery of their empire.



This narrative surfaced once more in 1934 when riots erupted in Xinjiang, referred to as ‘Chinese Turkistan’, not far from the Hunza Valley. In this context, *The Sphere*, an illustrated magazine that offered its readers glimpses into the Empire, released a report titled “Hunza: The little state on the borders of turbulent Turkestan”. The article depicted *mir* Mohamad Nazim Khan as a “staunch friend of Britain” (Trevelyan 1934: 62). A circular black-and-white photograph at the centre of the article showcased the ruler atop his white horse, surrounded by his retinue in Hunza’s capital, Baltit. The accompanying text below the image provided the following interpretation:

Since 1892, Hunza has been under the joint suzerainty of the Indian Government and the Maharajah of Kashmir. Its ruler, Mir Sahib Sir Mohd Nazim Kahn, K.C.I.E. [Knight Commander of the Indian Empire], is a most loyal subject of the King-Emperor. The people, a happy blending of Aryan and Turanian ancestry, are open and frank of countenance, with complexions and colouring often resembling those of the Highlanders of Scotland. They are of splendid physique and are probably unsurpassed anywhere as mountaineers. Before the British occupation, their raids on the Central Asian trade route from Leh to Kashgar were notorious, but they are now peaceful and law-abiding. (Trevelyan 1934: 62)

The contrast between the British portrayal of Mohamad Nazim Khan and his predecessor, Safdar Ali Khan, could not have been more striking. This disparity stemmed from a profound shift in perception that transpired nearly overnight at the conclusion of the year 1891. In the eyes of the British, the Hunzukuts had undergone a transformation, evolving from being characterised as ‘irrational savages’ and ‘caravan raiders’ to being acknowledged as the ‘most loyal subjects’ of the British Empire.

Mohamad Nazim Khan earned favour with the British colonial government due to his willingness to open up the Hunza Valley. In fact, he adopted their plans. In 1925, he commissioned the construction of a guest house, which he named ‘Tash Mahal’. Furthermore, Mohamad Nazim Khan oversaw the expansion of communication infrastructure in

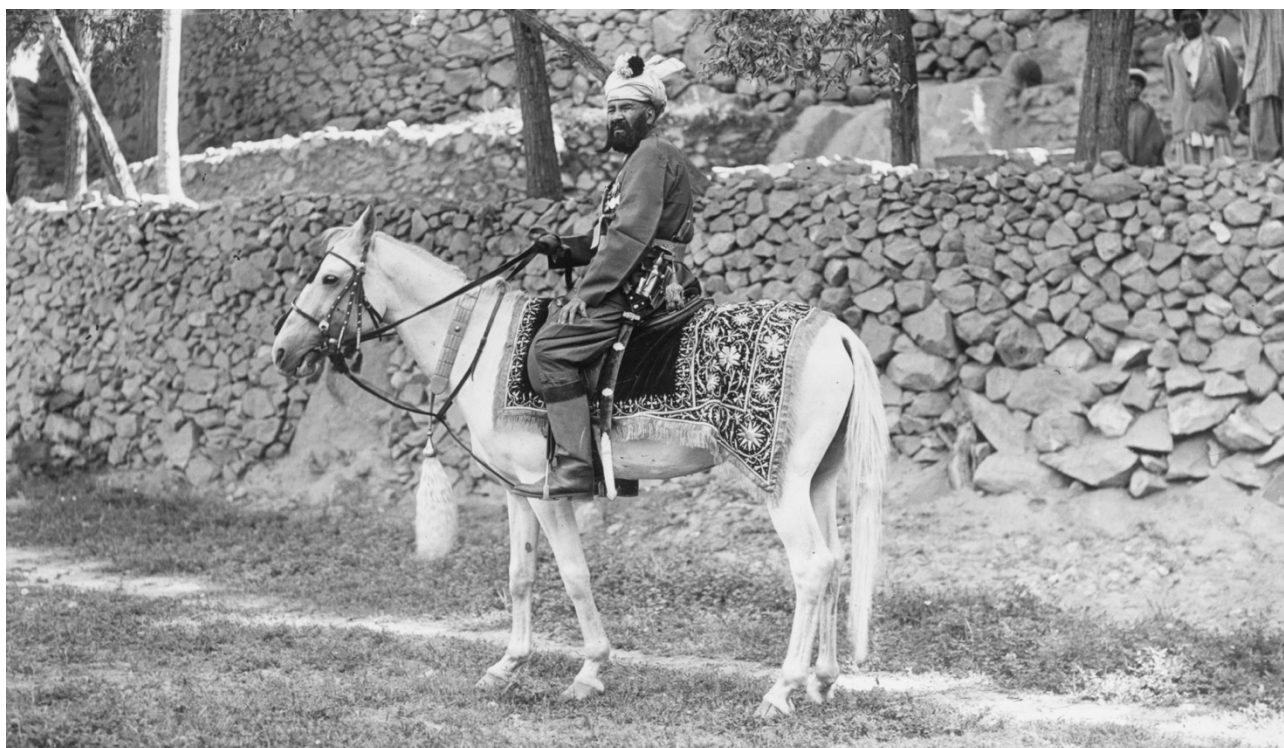


Figure 2.10 ▲

A mid-1930s portrait by David Lorimer captures *mir* Mohamad Nazim Khan dressed in military attire and mounted on his white horse. Photographs taken by British citizens like David Lorimer and R. F. Trevelyan provided Mohamad Nazim Khan with the opportunity to present himself as the ruler of Hunza to audiences across the British Empire.

Source: David Lockhart Robertson Lorimer (n.d.): [photograph]. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London: Lorimer Collection, PP MS 66. Copyright: SOAS. Reproduced from Kreutzmann 2020: 18.

the region, allowing him to swiftly extend his authority over the entire principality.

In 1913, the 'light field service telephone line' between Gilgit and Aliabad was replaced by a permanent one; five years later, on 10 December 1918, the telegraph office in Misgar was opened and commenced its operation. From then on, the *tham* of Hunza controlled Gojal [the upper Hunza Valley, MH] by modern means and established one centrally located telephone in the house of a trustworthy person in every village. (Kreutzmann 2015a: 409, emphasis in original)

When examining the history of Karakoram expeditions and the imagery they produced, the profound impact of the forceful integration of the northwestern Karakoram region into the *Pax Britannica* becomes evident across various dimensions. Most notably, this development precipitated a transformation in expedition travel. The establishment of stable diplomatic relations with the rulers of Hunza and Nagar afforded foreign travellers the unprecedented opportunity for extended stays in the valley. They could even expect protection and, to some extent, support from the rulers of Hunza and Nagar (Figure 2.11). The development of infrastructure, which included the construction of roads, guesthouses, and the installation of telephones, made travel in the Hunza Valley more convenient.

With the inclusion of the Hunza Valley in the *Pax Britannica*, the goals of expeditions changed. In the Karakoram region, expedition participants were no longer assigned the role of exploring borders, river courses, or trade routes, as those missions were considered to be fulfilled. Instead, expeditions could be devoted to other goals. Numerous photographic collections from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have been preserved, offering evidence of this transformation. Among these collections are those belonging to the Irish physician and naturalist Richard William George Hingston, the archaeologist Marc Aurel Stein, as well as Emily Overend Lorimer and her husband, David Lockhart Robertson Lorimer. The pictures shot by these travellers provided fresh perspectives and exerted a lasting influence on the European imagination of the northwestern Karakoram throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Figure 2.11 ►

A group photograph by Richard William George Hingston taken on 23 May 1913 during the Indo-Russian Triangulation expedition.

In the centre of the picture are *mir* Mohamad Nazim Khan and Kenneth Mason, the leader of the expedition. They are surrounded by the *mir's* entourage and other members of the Indo-Russian Triangulation expedition.

What is interesting about this picture is the composition of the group: the ruler of Hunza being photographed along with the members of the expedition.

Photographs featuring foreign expedition travellers alongside the rulers of the Hunza Valley were not captured until after 1891. However, shortly thereafter, they completely supplanted earlier ways of portraying the *mir* and their retinue (cf., Figure 2.7).

Source: William George Hingston (1913): *23 May, the Mir in a characteristic attitude* [photograph]. Trinity College Library, Dublin: Papers of Major Richard William George Hingston, IE TCD MS 10484/7/38.

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## 2.4 In search of Aryans and origins: German explorers in High Asia

On 8 August 1935, 44 years after George Scott Robertson's departure from 'Kafiristan', a group of six German researchers, along with 20 Afghan soldiers, eight 'servants', and 30 porters, arrived at the village of Kamdesh (Scheibe 1937: 13, 41). This expedition, known as the German Hindukush expedition, was led by agronomist Arnold Scheibe. His team consisted of agronomists Werner Roemer and Klaus von Rosenstiel, anthropologist Albert Herrlich, botanist Gerhard Kerstan, and scholar of Iranian studies Wolfgang Lentz. Financially supported by the German Research Foundation, the primary aim of the expedition in eastern Afghanistan was to research and collect "proto-wheat" (German *Urweizen*; Herrlich 1936: 623).

The botanical objective of the German Hindukush expedition was consistent with the prevailing scientific trends of the time. Beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, various European countries, as well as Russia and the United States of America, witnessed a notable increase in agricultural and botanical research. This surge was tied to the challenge of sustaining rapidly increasing populations in industrialised societies. Ensuring an adequate food supply became a matter of political importance, particularly in the period following the First World War (Elina et al. 2005: 163). Due to its central role, agricultural and botanical research received substantial public funding, some of which was also allocated for expeditions (ibid.: 162).

In 1924, a decade before the German Hindukush expedition, the Institute of Applied Botany in Leningrad organised an expedition to Afghanistan with the purpose of researching and collecting cultivated plants (Agricultural Afghanistan 1929: 74). Among the members of this expedition, was Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov, a Russian geneticist and plant geographer. He gathered evidence which indicated that

Afghanistan and adjacent countries, especially the North-Western Provinces of India, is one of the most important

primary world agricultural centres, where the varieties of numerous plants have originated. (ibid.: 75)

Vavilov's research findings suggested that eastern Afghanistan represents the 'centre of origin' from which club wheats and soft wheats had spread to Europe (ibid.).

This generated considerable attention in the German Reich (Elina et al. 2005: 164). Beyond the scientific fascination with genetics and plant breeding, this interest was amplified by an additional factor: Vavilov's recognition that some well-known and cultivated plant species in the German Reich had their origins in High Asia aligned with a popular narrative suggesting that the 'German people' could trace their origins to the same region.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, German expeditionary science had a strong focus on 'origins'. Researchers embarked on explorations both within and beyond Europe in order to discover not only the origins of plant life but also the foundations of civilisation, culture, and language. Notable expeditions dispatched to High Asia in pursuit of these origins include the 1911/12 expedition led by geographer Arved von Schultz, the 1928 German-Soviet Alai-Pamir expedition, the 1935 German Hindukush expedition, and the 1938/39 German Tibet expedition. Therefore, the idea of 'origins' (German *Ursprünge*) is paramount to the understanding of German High Asia expeditions in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The following explanation will highlight two closely related aspects of this idea: the politically charged concept of the 'Aryan race' (German *arische Rasse*) on the one hand, and the notion of 'remnants' (German *Reste*) on the other.

In Europe, the scholarly exploration of human origins began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as part of the process of scientification. Scholars began crafting historical narratives that, while deeply rooted in the Genesis creation story, were enriched with new and seemingly more 'rational', or scientific, considerations (Arvidsson 2006: 13–17). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the exploration of human origins gained momentum when philologists,

facilitated by British imperialism in India, gained access to ancient Asian scriptures such as the Avesta and the Vedas.

The prevalent belief at the time was that the Earth was only a few thousand years old. As a result, these writings, which dated back thousands of years, held a deep fascination. They were assumed to have been composed shortly after the creation of the world. Comparative studies of the oldest known languages, including Greek, Latin, Persian, and Sanskrit, were regarded as a scholarly way “to return to a privileged moment in time when God, man, and natural forces still lived in mutual transparency” (Arvidsson 2006: 5).

The translation of ancient Asian scriptures, initiated, among others, by William Jones, a linguist and British judge at the Supreme Court in Bengal, and the French orientalist Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, enabled European scholars to integrate these ancient texts into their deliberations. This, in turn, increased the interest of philosophers in India, including the high mountain regions which surround it. Thus, in his *Lectures on Physical Geography*, Immanuel Kant advocated for a comprehensive study of these regions:

A more precise understanding of Tibet in Asia would be of paramount importance, providing us with the key to unlocking the entirety of history. Tibet, being the highest region [German *Land*], was undoubtedly inhabited before any other, possibly serving as the site of creation and the birthplace of science. The Indian culture, as is known, almost certainly originated from Tibet, just as many of our arts, agricultural practices, numbers and the game of chess appear to have roots in Indostan. A place that acts as the cradle [German *Urplatz*] of arts, sciences, and, dare I say, humanity, undeniably warrants a more thorough investigation. (Kant 1839: 509)

The scholarly exploration of origins had never been an exclusively German endeavour. However, it was within the context of a burgeoning sense of German nationalism that German-speaking scholars, politicians, and later a significant portion of the general population in the German

Reich developed a profound “obsession with origins” (Marchand 2004: 331). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this ‘obsession’ gradually permeated every facet of politics and society within the German Reich. It also manifested in terms of a scientific fascination with High Asia and in the propagation of a “scientific myth” (Arvidsson 2006: 5) regarding an alleged ancient race of superhumans known as the ‘Aryans’.

Similarly to the idea of origins, the notion of the Aryans has a complex, intertextual history. The philological work of William Jones played a significant role in this history. In the 1780s, William Jones came to the conclusion that there are notable similarities between Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin. He described them as

[...] so strong, indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three without believing them, to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists. (Jones 1824: 28)

Jones’s discovery, which linked ancient Asian and European languages, drew considerable attention, and was promptly pursued and further developed. In this process, numerous philologists began to adopt the idea that the similarities among these languages could be attributed to a shared origin in a common ‘proto-language’. Contemporary languages spoken in Asia and Europe that displayed resemblances to ancient Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek were subsequently categorised as ‘Indo-European’, ‘Indo-Germanic’, or ‘Aryan’ languages (see e.g., Schlegel 1819; Bopp 1841; Pictet 1859–1863; Müller 1861b).

The concept of the Aryan, its long history of use and abuse, and especially its emergence in European scholarly discourse are difficult to grasp. In his book *Aryan Idols. Indo-European Mythology as Ideology and Science*, the Swedish historian Stefan Arvidsson explains its first appearance as follows:

The modern history of the word [Aryan] begins in the eighteenth century, when the French pioneer of Orientalism Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron [...], made a connection among the name that Herodotus and Diodoros used



for the Medes (Gk. *αἰῶι*), a self-designation in Avestan (*airyanəm vaejah-*), and the country name Iran. Anquetil-Duperron was working on a translation of the Avesta to French, and when it came out in 1771 (and in German translation from French, in 1776–83), it was probably the first time that ‘Aryan’ (Fr. *Aryens*, Ger. *Arier*) was used in these languages. In English the name probably surfaced for the first time in 1794 in Jones’s translation of the Indian legal text *Mānava Dharmaśāstra*, the *Laws of Manu*. In this text, the word *arya* means roughly ‘noble’ and is a marker of high caste. (Arvidsson 2006: 20; emphasis in original)

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term ‘Aryan’ gained traction as more and more scholars engaged in discussions and studies related to it. Of considerable influence was the interpretation given to it by the orientalist Max Müller. Müller advocated for the interchangeability of the term “Aryan family of speech” with “Indo-Germanic” or “Indo-European language family” (Müller 1861b). Furthermore, he claimed that Indo-European or Aryan languages not only shared a common proto-language but indeed originated from the same geographical region. He referred to this region as the “original home of the whole Aryan race” (Müller 1861a: 211), which he believed had been located “somewhere in Asia” (Müller 1888: 93). Müller considered the possibility that the first Aryans, later designated as ‘proto-Aryans’, had, in ancient times, departed from their homeland and migrated in two directions: northwest towards Europe and southeast towards Iran and India. Hence, he suggested that the descendants of the ‘Aryan race’ had evolved into two complementary groups: one in Europe and one in Asia (Müller 1861a: 191–192). Thus, Max Müller approached the concept of Aryans from a spatial perspective.

While an early geographical interpretation of the term ‘Indo-Germanic’ had been introduced to scholarly debate by Carl Ritter (1832: 351–352, 431–437), it was primarily Max Müller who popularised a geographical understanding of the ‘Aryans’ (Mitra 2018: 2). Subsequently, scholars explored the concept of Aryans not only through philological analysis of ancient texts but also in physical space. Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century,

therefore, the search for the origins of the ‘Aryan race’ also aroused the curiosity of explorers and expedition travellers (see e.g., Biddulph 1880: 73, 128, 159; Younghusband 1896: 179).

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of the Aryan extended its influence beyond the realms of philology and geography and permeated popular discourse. A significant catalyst for its spread beyond scholarly circles was its association with racial ideologies (see e.g., de Gobineau 1853–1855; Chamberlain 1899). In its racial interpretation, the term Aryan no longer alluded to ancient peoples who had once shared a common language. Instead, it represented the idea of a distinct people related by blood – *the* Aryan race. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, across Europe, the term Aryan had become synonymous with claims of superiority (Poliakov 1974: 312; Arvidsson 2006: 60). Numerous individuals, particularly anthropologists, philosophers, politicians, and politically driven writers, asserted Aryan ancestry to underscore the perceived superiority of their respective social class or nation.

In German-speaking regions, the concept of the Aryan sparked intense debate. Against the backdrop of growing pan-German nationalism, the scientific exploration of human origins became more specialised, with an emphasis on German ancestry (Torma 2011a: 68). In this environment, the Aryan concept attracted the attention of various German speaking scholars. Their inquiries encompassed philological aspects, including the study of the ‘Aryan proto-language’. Geographical studies were undertaken to locate the ‘Aryan homeland’. Anthropological considerations focussed on the physical traits that were believed to have been inherited by Germans from the Aryans. In consequence, methodological questions arose too: Which scientific methods were feasible for investigating the distant past and researching the ‘Aryan ancestors’ of *the* Germans?

Answers to these methodological questions came from both archaeology and geology. The quest to understand the Earth’s origins had led to the establishment of geology as a scientific discipline. During the

18<sup>th</sup> century, scholars recognised that mountains presented an ideal setting for studying the Earth's evolution (von Brevern 2012: 47–48). Geologically trained experts examined outcrops, exposed rock structures and layers of rock, allowing them to trace the Earth's evolution over extensive periods of time. Like geologists, archaeologists also embraced the concept of thinking in 'layers of time' (Torma 2011a: 67).

Archaeologists unearth the remnants of ancient societies through excavations, meticulously removing the accumulated layers of earth. The fundamental principles and methodologies of geology and archaeology have informed various other disciplines. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, anthropologists, ethnologists, and geographers examined contemporary societies, cultures, and religions with the aspiration of uncovering insights into early human history. They approached non-European societies much like archaeologists investigating prehistoric artefacts, examining religious texts and myths with a method reminiscent of the study of rocky outcrops.

In this context, a specific terminology developed in the German language during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which put emphasis on the concepts of 'residua' or 'remnants' (German *Reste*). German-speaking anthropologists, ethnologists, geographers, and linguists, engaged in thorough discussions surrounding concepts such as 'residual languages' (German *Restsprachen*) and 'residual peoples' (German *Restvölker*). Like the archaeological notion of an excavation site, 'residual peoples' were understood as "shards and remnants of ancient societies who, owing to the isolation of their settlement areas, retained numerous ancient customs, often creating the impression of primordial cultures [German *Urkulturen*]" (Hirschberg 1938: 262).

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first German expeditions to High Asia were launched with the objective of searching for remnants of the ancient Aryan civilisation. These early undertakings encompassed the 1913 Pamir expedition, which was organised by the German and Austrian Alpine Club and led by Wilhelm (Willi) Gustav Rickmer Rickmers, as well as expeditions overseen by Arved von Schultz. Born in Kurland (now part

of Latvia), the German-Baltic geographer Arved von Schultz held Russian citizenship, a circumstance that likely eased his journeys into the Russian territories within the Pamir region (Hauser 2007: 167). In the years 1905, 1909, and 1911/12, Arved von Schultz directed three expeditions to the eastern regions of this mountainous area. The last of these expeditions, financially supported by the Museum of Ethnology in Gießen (*Museum für Völkerkunde zu Giessen*) yielded a wealth of comprehensive anthropological and geographical findings. In his publication *Die Pamirtadschik* (The Pamirtajik), Arved von Schultz emphasised the significance of the Pamir region for German research:

The Pamir region holds exceptional ethnographic value due to its Aryan population in the West, the Pamir Tajiks, whose primitive cultural elements can offer us insights into the ancient Aryans. (von Schultz 1914: V)

German explorers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the high mountain regions of Asia as ideal for gaining insights into their distant past. They justified this view with the unique geography of High Asia, characterised by a steep terrain, difficult-to-reach settlement areas, and a harsh mountain climate. Scholars believed that these remote regions had preserved remnants which in more accessible areas had mixed and subsequently disappeared. Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Max Müller had characterised the Indian mountains as a realm where people had retreated to live “in a world of their own, without a past, and without a future before them” (Müller 1867: 66). This imagination of High Asia as a “depository” (Roemer und Troll 1937: 3; see also, von Schultz 1914: 11–12) found broad acceptance among European scholars and persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Diverging from the British approach, German scholarly engagement in High Asia was not primarily motivated by territorial claims. Nevertheless, it had a discernible colonial dimension. This colonial dimension is rooted in the ideological appropriation of the region. In the high mountains of Asia, German explorers embarked on a quest to uncover their own origins. They aimed to trace the origins of their wheat, their language, their blood,

and, later, their genes. By claiming a linguistic, cultural, and genetic kinship and perceiving their 'Asian relatives' as mere remnants of their own history, the people of High Asia were denied an autonomous identity within the narratives of German research.

In 1933, the National Socialist German Workers' Party seized power in the German Reich. The new government immediately supported the fantasy of Aryan lineage within the 'German people' and adopted it as an official doctrine. As a result, various professional groups, including physicians, scientists, and civil servants, were mandated to produce what was referred to as an 'Aryan certificate' (German *Ariernachweis*). National Socialist propaganda actively promoted the concept of Aryans as a legendary people and asserted that they are superior to all other ancient civilisations, particularly the 'Semites' (another term that had been integrated into the German national discourse through philology).

Since the credibility of the National Socialist state hinged significantly on depicting 'Germans' as the descendants of the Aryan *Übermensch*, several institutions were established with the purpose of providing scientific validation for this claim. One such institution was the *Abnenerbe* association, founded in 1935, with Heinrich Himmler among its founders. Despite undergoing various name changes and reorganisations, this association funded research in the fields of racial anthropology (German *Rassenkunde*) and natural sciences for more than a decade. The primary objective of this research was to substantiate the mythical and esoteric foundations of National Socialist ideology scientifically.

One of the major projects funded by the *Abnenerbe* association was the German Tibet expedition of 1938/39, led by the zoologist Ernst Schäfer. Among the expedition's diverse objectives was to investigate if the Tibetan population had an Aryan ancestry. To achieve this, anthropologist Bruno Beger conducted anthropometric measurements on numerous individuals and crafted plaster casts of their faces (Greve 1995: 173). The anthropologist Albert Herrlich had previously pursued a similar objective during the 1935 German Hindukush expedition. In his quest for the

“proto-Aryan” (German *Urarier*; Herrlich 1937: 168), Herrlich employed craniometry in Nuristan. The anthropologist not only measured the dimensions of men’s heads but also captured photographic images of their faces.

In Nuristan, Albert Herrlich produced hundreds of anthropometric photographs, a substantial portion of which found their way into the official report of the German Hindukush expedition, titled *Deutsche im Hindukusch*. The report’s section, “Beitrag zur Rassen- und Stammeskunde der Hindukusch-Kafiren” (Contribution to the racial and tribal studies of the Hindukush Kafirs), authored by Albert Herrlich (1937: 168–246), primarily centres on the analysis of 105 of these anthropometric photographs. The printed portraits feature men, presented in either profile or frontal views. In the captions, the individuals photographed are categorised into various ‘types’. In addition to these portraits, Herrlich also analyses a series of close-up photographs that highlight various facial features, such as the nose, ears, and eyes. These close-ups, according to the author, provide additional evidence for the categorisation of distinct ‘racial types’ (see Figure 2.12). Albert Herrlich’s analysis of his photographs led him to a (somewhat vague) conclusion, suggesting

[...] that the Kafirs of the Hindukush exhibit a racial blend characterised by three essential elements.

1. Element A is ascribed to an indigenous population, likely resembling the racial groups living in the Central Himalayas.
2. Element B exhibits characteristic features of Western, Asian, and Oriental racial groups [...].
3. Element C is presumably a racial component that has endured in this mountainous region since the era of early Indo-Aryans. (Herrlich 1937: 219)

The anthropometric and anthropological photographs captured by Albert Herrlich during the 1935 German Hindukush expedition do not portray individuals. Instead, they methodically break down the portrayed men into discernible ‘racial components’. This photographic approach was meant to enable the scrutiny of these ‘racial components’ and their

assumed racial origins. The disconcerting nature of this method becomes evident when one realises, as indicated by Herrlich (1937: 179), that in numerous instances, the photographs were taken without the consent of the individuals being photographed.

The racialized gaze on the people of High Asia, as expressed in the photographs of Albert Herrlich, remained a significant element of German expeditionary research for a period spanning at least four more decades (see e.g., Kußmaul 1972: 8). Until well into the 1960s, German expedition members in High Asia generated extensive compilations of anthropometric and anthropological portrait photographs during their missions, sometimes accumulating hundreds or even thousands of these images (see e.g., Schlenker 2015, 87–88). Consequently, racial-anthropological imagery holds a central place in the history of German expedition photography in High Asia.

Today, social and cultural anthropologists do not ascribe any scientific value to the racial anthropological photography produced during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Nordström 1993: 209; Pinney 2011: 9). These images are dismissed due to their derogatory and racist portrayal of individuals and the inhumane conditions under which many of these photographs were taken. Furthermore, there is an ongoing debate about whether these images should be displayed. Indeed, the act of displaying anthropometric images requires careful consideration. On the one hand, it may re-expose the photographed individuals to a racialized gaze, potentially perpetuating a racist perspective. On the other hand, the still and tranquil nature of the portraits might obscure the underlying violence of racial-anthropological photography, potentially normalising it.

I have chosen to include selected racial-anthropological photographs in this work because I aim to examine and discuss them within the context of the history of expeditions. Through the anthropometric and anthropological portraits created by Albert Herrlich and his academic successors, crucial aspects of the decade-long engagement of German-speaking scholars with High Asia are conveyed. These photographs not

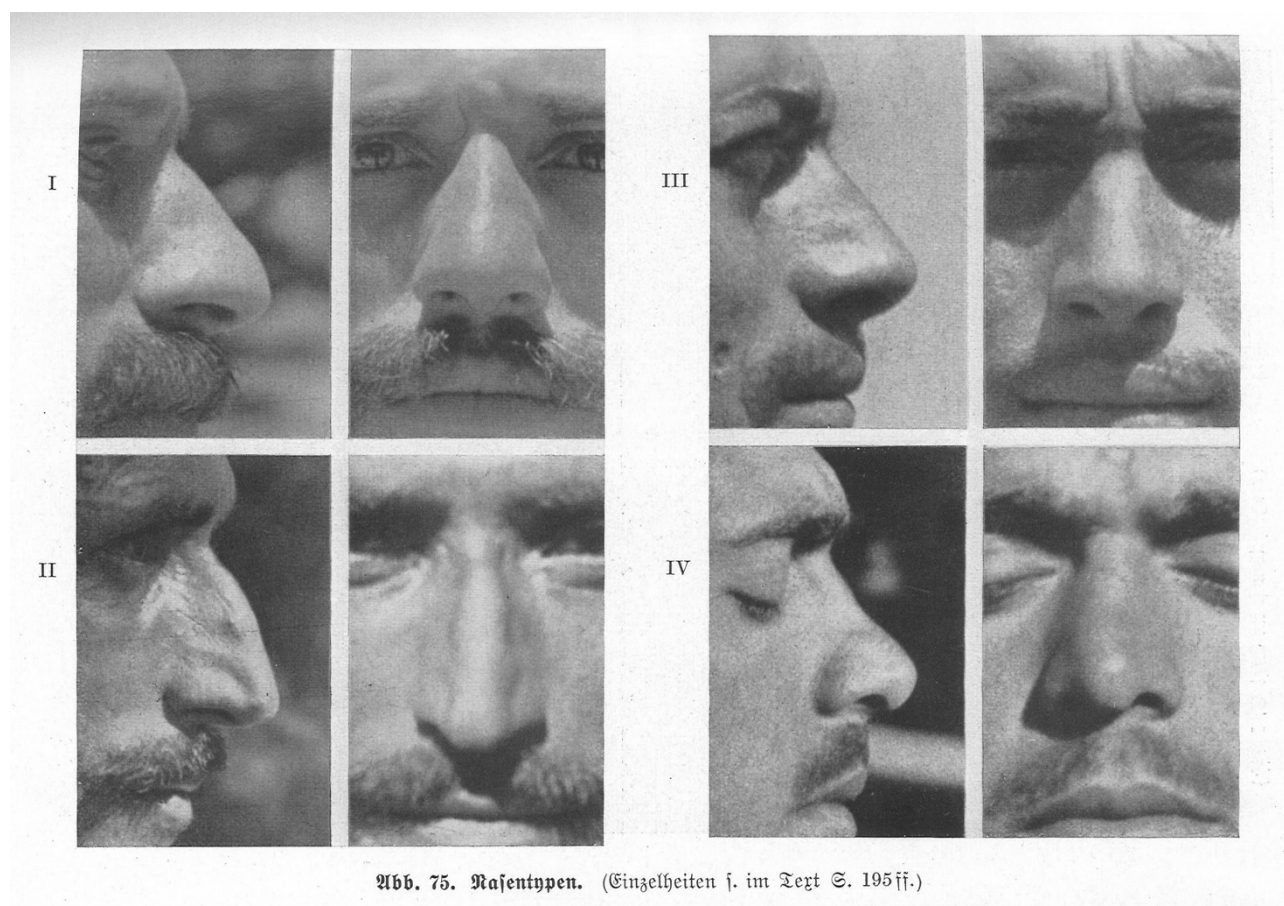


Abb. 75. Nasentypen. (Einzelheiten s. im Text S. 195ff.)

Figure 2.12 ▲

In the German Reich, physical anthropology presented itself as an exact science centred on the concept of race. Physicians and anthropologists sought to divide humanity into different races based on physical characteristics and to organise these human races hierarchically. In this process, the nasal structure was considered of anthropological importance. Long, straight noses were propagated to demonstrate racial superiority, while short, wide noses were devalued and likened to those of primates (see e.g., Friedemann 1908: 6). Expedition photography played a key role in legitimising racial anthropology during both German colonialism and the National Socialist era. The importance of photography for racial science was also emphasised by Albert Herrlich in his "Beitrag zur Rassen- und Stammeskunde der Hindukusch-Kafiren": "Nose length, nose breadth, and the nasal index give only a vague indication of the actual shape and proportions of a nose. More important than these numerical values are the morphological characteristics. Therefore, the frequency of occurrence of [...] nasal types [in Nuristan] was determined by the analysis of [...] photographs" (Herrlich 1937: 195).

Source: Albert Herrlich (1937): *Abb. 75. Kafirentypen*. Reproduced from Herrlich 1937: following page 192.



(only) depict the individuals displayed but, more significantly, they encapsulate the German quest for ‘origins’, ‘Aryans’, and ‘remnants’.

The necessity to examine these photographs today is grounded in the historical fact that the racialized gaze, developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and during the National Socialist era, received scientific validation. It was precisely this scientific legitimacy that allowed it to endure for an extended period. The enduring presence of the racialized gaze within German scholarship, academic institutions, and expeditionary research is one of the reasons why *Deutsche im Hindukusch*, as well as other works by Albert Herrlich, were valued sources of knowledge for German scientists and ethnologists during their expeditions to High Asia in the 1950s and 1960s (see e.g., Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 32; Snoy 1965: 147–148; Kußmaul 1972: 100; Jettmar 1961: 96).

## 2.5 Mountaineering expeditions in service of ‘Volk und Vaterland’

German expeditions to High Asia involved not only scholarly pursuits of scientists but also efforts in mountaineering. Starting in the 1910s, alpinists travelled to the Hindukush, Himalayas, Karakoram, and Pamir regions, driven by the ambition to scale the world’s highest peaks. The common goal of exploring High Asia fostered cooperation between German scientists and mountaineers, eventually leading to collaborative expeditionary efforts.

Among the High Asia expeditions of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the German-Soviet Alai-Pamir expedition of 1928 stands out as a notably ambitious undertaking. This endeavour brought together eleven German and thirty Russian participants. Among the scientists involved was linguist Wolfgang Lentz, who later joined the 1935 German Hindukush expedition, and geodesist Richard Finsterwalder. During the expedition, Lentz focused his research on what he then referred to as “Indo-European

residual peoples” (Lentz 1931: 5), while Finsterwalder conducted terrain surveys utilising a metric camera. Simultaneously, their fellow German expedition members, Karl Wien, Eugen Allwein, and Erwin Schneider, undertook ascents of several peaks in the Pamir region. Their most significant achievement was the ascent of Pik Kaufmann (later renamed Pik Lenin in October 1928, and subsequently Pik Abuali ibni Sino in 2006). Reaching the summit of Pik Kaufmann, which stood at an elevation exceeding 7,100 meters, marked a new altitude record at that time (Ritter 2011: 182).

As an international project, the German-Soviet Alai-Pamir expedition was jointly led by two individuals. On the Soviet side, the expedition was directed by the geologist Dmitrii Ivanovich Zcherbakov, while the German team was under the leadership of Willi Rickmer Rickmers. Born in Bremerhaven into a family of traders and shipowners, Willi Rickmer Rickmers gained recognition not only for his somewhat eccentric personality but, more importantly, for his exceptional organisational skills. In the 1910s, he implemented several rationalisation measures aimed at optimising German expedition procedures. Through his entrepreneurial acumen, Rickmers significantly enhanced the management and logistics of expeditions, ultimately creating an entirely new form of expedition: the scientific-mountaineering expedition (Torma 2011a: 194–196). This type of expedition continued to dominate German undertakings in High Asia until the late 1960s.

Willi Rickmer Rickmers himself considered “mass travel operations” to be his particular “area of expertise” (Rickmers 1930: 234). He argued that by uniting mountaineers and scientists in their travels, it was possible to consolidate expedition costs and streamline logistical efforts (ibid.: 235). Already during the planning of the German and Austrian Alpine Clubs’ inaugural High Asia expedition in 1913, Rickmers, serving as the expedition’s logistical leader, introduced innovative standards aimed at optimising the efficiency of expedition travel. In his 1930 publication, *Alai! Alai! Arbeiten und Erlebnisse der Deutsch-Russischen Alai-Pamir-Expedition*

(Alai! Alai! Work and experiences of the German-Russian Alai-Pamir expedition), Rickmers spent an entire chapter elaborating on his theory of rationalising expedition procedures (see Rickmers 1930: 225–257). In essence, he claimed that an expedition should function in a manner akin to a business enterprise:

Many findings from explorations, both ancient and modern, have become worthless, of low quality, or at least challenging to analyse due to the absence of precise location data. On Earth, numerous things require a fresh start. Instead of merely patching things up, it is preferable to embark on a complete overhaul, much like dismantling and completely rebuilding an outdated business. Explorers should not anticipate unemployment anytime soon. However, the most efficient division of labour between experts will eventually replace adventurous exploration. [...] In the end, expeditionary mapmaking is no different from weaving cloth. The more modern and expensive the equipment, the better and cheaper the square meter of fabric. For two and a half million [Reichsmark, MH], I can provide a map of the entire Tajikistan (Alai-Pamir) region at a 1:50,000 scale. That amounts to 20 Marks per square kilometre, making it the most cost-effective map sheet ever produced. (Rickmers 1930: 232)

In the 1910s and 1920s, within the context of German High Asia expeditions, scientific and mountaineering objectives were considered equally significant. However, a noticeable shift in perspective occurred during the 1930s. During this decade, mountaineering objectives began to assume a more prominent position. The model of scientific-mountaineering expeditions was not abandoned, and scientists continued to participate in expeditions. Nevertheless, their contributions received less public recognition, and it was precisely the emphasis on propaganda aspects and public acclaim that played a pivotal role in shaping the expedition policy of the German Reich during the 1930s.

Mountaineering in High Asia presented the German Reich with an opportunity to assert itself on the international stage, a policy that gained prominence in the aftermath of the First World War. During the interwar

period, the rivalry among European nations and the United States of America shifted to new arenas, and High Asia emerged as one of these locales. In this context, mountaineering expeditions underwent a significant transformation, evolving into a fiercely competitive endeavour centred on reaching the world's tallest summits (Isserman and Weaver 2008: 171, 443). While American expedition members set their sights on ascending K2 (8,611m) and British climbers persisted in their attempts to reach the summit of Mount Everest (8,849m), German alpinists increasingly directed their efforts toward Nanga Parbat (8,126m). Between 1932 and 1939, a total of five German expeditions made attempts to scale this peak, located in the present-day Gilgit-Baltistan region of the Western Himalayas.

After the National Socialist German Workers' Party came to power in 1933, the already politicised narrative surrounding German mountaineering activities in High Asia became even more pronounced. Leveraging nationalist sentiments, the fascist propaganda machinery forged a distinct German perception of Nanga Parbat that transcended the narrative of mountaineering as a competitive sport. In his introductory remarks to his study on *Nanga Parbat and its path into the German imagination*, literary scholar Harald Höbusch encapsulates this phenomenon as follows:

Nanga Parbat – over a period of roughly two decades between 1932 and 1953 – became [...] the quintessential German ‘mountain of the mind’ onto whose slopes German mountaineers, mountaineering officials, politicians, writers, and filmmakers would project some of the most pressing social, political, and cultural concerns of their time. (Höbusch 2016: 1)

The National Socialist appropriation of the German imagination of Nanga Parbat began in 1934, following the unfortunate conclusion of the German Nanga Parbat expedition led by Willy Merkl. This expedition had resulted in the tragic loss of ten lives, comprising six high-altitude porters and four German mountaineers. In the aftermath of this calamity, the media under the control of the National Socialist government began to designate

Nanga Parbat as the ‘German Mountain of Destiny’ (German: *Schicksalsberg der Deutschen* or *Deutscher Schicksalsberg*) (Nüsser und Clemens 2003: 52).

One of the surviving members of the 1934 expedition was the alpinist Fritz Bechtold. As one of the expedition’s cameramen, he played an important role in the media coverage of the expedition. Following the expedition, in 1935, he authored a report titled *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat: Der Angriff 1934* (Germans on Nanga Parbat: The 1934 attack). His book gained remarkable popularity. The initial 1935 edition comprised 50,000 printed copies, followed by an additional 20,000 copies in 1936. Amid the Second World War, the twelfth edition of the book was published with an additional 50,000 copies (Höbusch 2016: 89–90).

The National Socialist propaganda relied on literature, radio broadcasts, and films depicting mountaineering expeditions to cultivate enthusiasm among the population for the growing militarisation of the German Reich (ibid.: 30–31). During the 1930s, the language used to describe German expeditions in High Asia became progressively militarised. Mountains were no longer ascended; they were ‘besieged’, ‘tackled’, and ‘conquered’; expedition participants were referred to as ‘comrades’, ‘fighters’, and ‘heroes’ (see e.g., Bechtold 1935; Bauer 1937). The film, produced during the 1934 Nanga Parbat expedition was promoted as a “magnificent film [that] portrays the tragic destiny of German heroes, their unwavering iron will, their camaraderie, and their loyalty even unto death” (DAV 17: 2; see Figure 2.13).

Tropes of militarism and heroism were also incorporated into the visual language. The German mountaineers of the 1930s introduced a novel photographic perspective on High Asia. Many of the expedition photographs selected for publication were taken from low angles, presenting viewers with portrayals of mountain faces that appeared almost insurmountable (see Figure 2.14).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, representations of High Asia typically took the form of panoramic images, encouraging viewers to contemplate the landscape in its entirety. These images conveyed a sense of mastery over



the terrain (see Figure 2.8). In contrast, the photographs captured by German expedition mountaineers in the 1930s featured a notably restricted perspective. These images of individual mountain faces required the viewer to direct their gaze upward. The ‘worm’s-eye view’ evoked feelings of awe and admiration but also a sense of being overwhelmed. These pictures aimed to convey a distinct image of German mountaineering expeditions in High Asia. The pursuit of mountaineering came to symbolise the courage and self-sacrifice of German men who ventured far from their homeland in the service of “Volk und Vaterland” (Reichssportführer Hans von Tschammer und Osten, as quoted in *Rückkehr der Deutschen Himalaja-Kundfahrt 1936*: 22). Losing one’s life while endeavouring to ascend one of the world’s highest peaks was considered by the propaganda as a profound act of sacrifice for a higher purpose. In essence, narratives of heroism and martyrdom surrounding high mountain exploration in High Asia were intended to ideologically prepare young men for their future military service (Torma 2011b: 453–455; Höbusch 2016: 103). This interpretation is historically substantiated, among other sources, by Fritz Bechtold’s expedition report, *Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934*, which concludes with the following remark:

It must be beautiful to return home with this mighty mountain as a trophy, but it is even greater to give one’s life for such a goal in order to serve as a guiding light for the young hearts of future fighters. (Bechtold 1935: 64)

German mountaineering expeditions in High Asia and their photographic documentation held significant strategic value for the National Socialist government. The propagandistic purpose behind these activities elucidates why, during the 1930s, mountaineering efforts were not only heightened but also firmly institutionalised. The German and Austrian Alpine Club (*Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein*) had been actively engaged in both the scientific and the mountaineering exploration of High Asia since the 1910s. In addition, in 1936, the German Himalaya Foundation (*Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung*) was founded in Munich by

mountaineers Fritz Bechtold and Paul Bauer, in collaboration with *Reichssportführer* Hans von Tschammer und Osten. The primary objective of the German Himalaya Foundation was to secure funding for further exploration of the Himalayas. Its core mission, however, soon revolved around the promotion and support for the ascent of Nanga Parbat.

The Alpine Club and the Himalaya Foundation were two essential institutions that supported German mountaineers in conducting expeditions to High Asia for several decades. The German Alpine Club continues to be active and is committed to this mission to this day. However, the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 brought a preliminary end to German mountaineering expeditions. It was only in the early 1950s that German mountaineers began to consider the possibility of resuming expeditions to the Himalaya and Karakoram mountains. By this time, the geopolitical landscape in High Asia had undergone substantial transformations. In 1947, British India had gained independence from the British Empire, leading to the partition of the country and the establishment of India and Pakistan as separate states. Substantial portions of the Karakoram, Hindukush, and Himalayan regions had become autonomous regions and principalities, with their foreign policy overseen by Pakistan.

Following the defeat in the Second World War, the German Reich also experienced a division. In 1949, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany were founded. The distinct economic, ideological, and diplomatic orientations of these two German states also influenced their respective expeditions to High Asia. Residents of the German Democratic Republic were only permitted to travel to the Soviet portion of the Pamir region. Conversely, citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany were constrained to travel within the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The 1940s did bring about significant changes in the global political landscape and consequently, travel conditions. However, West German expeditions to High Asia exhibited noteworthy similarities to those of the



German Reich. This continuity can be attributed, in no small part, to the individuals who took part in West German expeditions. They considered themselves part of a longstanding all-German tradition of exploration and were committed to preserving it. During the 1950s and 1960s, West German ethnologists continued to journey to the Hindukush in pursuit of 'Iranian residual peoples and languages', while West German geodesists, geographers, and geologists ventured into the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram to map previously uncharted areas. Concurrently, West German mountaineers maintained their ambition to ascend the world's tallest peaks.

Like any historiography, the history of German expeditions in High Asia must be narrated as a blend of both ruptures and continuities. In the 1950s and 1960s, participants in German expeditions embraced established ways of depicting High Asia while simultaneously introducing new perspectives through their cameras.

## Endnotes of pages 31–81

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed historical analysis of the events surrounding the execution of Adolph Schlagintweit in Kashgar, see Kreutzmann 2015b.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, not only maps but also drawings were added to the collection of the Royal Geographical Society's Map Room. Photographs were systematically included from 1884 onwards (Crone and Day 1960: 16). This indicates that the different types of images were thought of together and were given a complementary epistemological value.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed reflections on the history of the so-called 'native explorers', see Driver 2013: 427, Driver and Jones 2009, Kreutzmann 2017: 83–142, as well as von Brescius 2019: 13.

<sup>4</sup> The photo collection of Bronislav Grombchevsky is in the possession of the Scientific Archives of the Russian Geographical Society; the photographs of the Gilgit mission taken by George Michael Giles are kept by the Royal Geographical Society in London.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g., *The end of the Punmah Glacier, Baltistan*, watercolour created by Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen in 1861 during the Baltoro expedition, held in the RGS-IBG Collections, Picture Library of the Royal Geographical Society, call number X0592/002.

<sup>6</sup> In the German context, the resurgence of Alexander von Humboldt as a 'climate and human rights activist' is striking. This characterisation was particularly ascribed to him by the press in 2019, marking Humboldt's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday (see e.g., Ismar 2019: 3; Weber 2019: 1, 37–39). For a thorough and critical analysis of Alexander von Humboldt's impact on research related to European colonies, refer to Pratt 2008.

<sup>7</sup> The depiction of the Hunzukuts as feared caravan raiders remains a prevalent image even in contemporary times. As Shafqat Hussain (2015: 53–57) highlights, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century individuals from Hunza did, indeed, engage in raids on the camps and occasionally on the caravans of Kyrgyz pastoralists. Their objective was to forcibly collect taxes for the utilisation of disputed grazing lands. Shafqat Hussain (ibid.: 16) suggests that the British, in their reports, consistently employed the term 'caravan raid' to evoke the notion of trade caravans travelling between India and Central Asia, thereby insinuating that the Hunzukuts posed a general threat to international trade.

<sup>8</sup> The Persian term *mir* and the Burushaski term *tham* both served as titles denoting the rulers of Nagar and Hunza.

### **3 Capturing the high mountain landscape: Photographs from the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition**

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of *Landschaft*, hereafter referred to as 'landscape', played a central role in the work of German-speaking geographers. This emphasis on the landscape concept is also evident in historical expedition images. Paintings, photographs, survey images, and panoramas produced by expedition travellers have enabled German geographers to view various places around the world *as* landscapes.

This chapter analyses the landscape images produced by the scientists and surveyors who participated in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition of 1954. The analysis encompasses photographs, photogrammetric images, and maps and explains the impact of the geographical concept of landscape on the pictorial representation of the expedition area in the northwestern Karakoram.

I will initiate my discussion by introducing the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Subsequently, I will elaborate on essential aspects of its fieldwork, as well as the institutional and programmatic factors that influenced and promoted German expedition photography in the aftermath of the Second World War. Then, I will elucidate some of the intrinsic assumptions, which underly the creation and interpretation of landscape imagery. Finally, I will examine the composition of some of the landscape photographs produced by the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition in more detail.

### 3.1 Gaining a 'comprehensive overview': The mission of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition

The German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition ranks among the major expeditions that travelled the Karakoram in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between May and July 1954, a team of eleven Germans, led by two Austrians, traversed an area of 3,000 square kilometres in the northwestern Karakoram. The expedition was a scientific-mountaineering venture, comprising two distinct groups: the first group included five scientists, while the second group consisted of eight mountaineers.

The expedition's hybrid nature can be attributed to its organisational and financial structures. It was financed by several different sponsors. The Alpine Clubs of Austria and Germany, along with the German Himalaya Foundation, contributed to the costs of the expedition. Further backing was provided by the German Research Foundation. Additionally, there was a noteworthy sponsorship by private sector companies (Rebitsch 1955: 103).

In accordance with its bipartite structure, the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition had two leaders. Mathias Rebitsch assumed leadership of the mountaineering group, while the team of scientists was under the guidance of Austrian geographer and geomorphologist Wolfgang Pillewizer. His team consisted of four German citizens: geodesist Karl Heckler, geographer Karlheinz Paffen, geologist Hans-Jochen Schneider, and geophysicist Karl Wienert. All members in Wolfgang Pillewizer's team, except for Hans-Jochen Schneider, the youngest among them, had been on research expeditions before. Wolfgang Pillewizer had participated in multiple expeditions during the Second World War. In the early 1940s, he was affiliated with a German special unit, the *Forschungsstaffel zur besonderen Verwendung des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*, which was responsible for assessing military terrains. Pillewizer's assignments encompassed geodetic and cartographic

missions in the Libyan Sahara, the Balkans, Norway, Finland, and the Soviet Union (Häusler 2007: 177).

The geographer Karlheinz Paffen had also been involved in intelligence operations of the *Forschungsstaffel zur besonderen Verwendung*. In 1944, he collaborated with Wolfgang Pillewizer on an expedition into the Finnish part of Lapland (Häusler 2019: 20). Karlheinz Paffen was a student of the renowned geographer Carl Troll. Following his mentor's research interests, Karlheinz Paffen studied the vegetation and settlement patterns of the Hunza Valley during the 1954 expedition.

Another, albeit temporary, member of Wolfgang Pillewizer's team was Karl Wienert. Between 1938 and 1939, the geophysicist had taken part in the German Tibet expedition under the leadership of Ernst Schäfer. After 1947 Wienert took up residence in Pakistan and was involved in the establishment of a geomagnetic observatory in Quetta. During the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, he mainly collaborated with geologist Hans-Jochen Schneider (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 4).

The fifth member of the scientific team was Karl Heckler. In the late 1930s, Heckler had made a name for himself as an expedition geodesist and mountaineer in the Peruvian Andes. Just over 10 years later, in the early 1950s, he was appointed to the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition to conduct geodetic and topographic surveys.

On 15 May 1954, shortly after the German-Austrian expedition team had arrived in Pakistan via the port of Karachi, Wolfgang Pillewizer made an entry in his diary: "Our expedition will be joined by a plane-tablet, a Pakistani surveyor named Sahib Shah" (Diary Pillewizer: 22). As anticipated, Sahib Shah joined the expedition a few days later in Murree. Coming from the town of Kohat in the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Sahib Shah held the position of a topographer within the Survey of Pakistan. The Pakistani authorities designated him as a liaison officer for the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, thereby placing him as the sixth member within the scientific team.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 3.1 ▲

The members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team aboard the 'Victoria' at the port of Karachi. This photograph was taken on 12 May 1954 during the official reception accorded to the team upon their arrival in Pakistan. The picture shows (from left to right) mountaineer Anderl Heckmair, geographer Karlheinz Paffen, filmmaker Eugen Schuhmacher, geodesist Karl Heckler, expedition leader Mathias Rebitsch, mountaineer Dolf Meyer (squatting), mountaineer Gerhart Klamert, mountaineer Hans Zeitter, geologist Hans-Jochen Schneider, expedition leader Wolfgang Pillewizer, mountaineer Martin Schließler, and the expedition team's doctor Paul Bennett. Geophysicist Karl Wienert and liaison officers Sahib Shah, Daud Beg, and Shah Khan were to join the expedition later. At the time this photo was taken, the members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition still had a long journey ahead to reach their final destination. Starting from Karachi, they endured a 36-hour train journey to Rawalpindi, followed by a flight to Gilgit. From Gilgit, they continued their journey by jeep and, finally, on foot to the Hunza Valley, reaching it at the end of May 1954. The entire journey from Munich to the Hunza Valley took them a month.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Die recht gut genährte Expedition wird bei Ankunft in Karachi mit Blumen bekränzt* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 6). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

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The liaison officer was supposed to bridge the gap between the foreign expedition team and the Pakistani authorities. And indeed, Sahib Shah played an important role in the expedition. During the preparatory phase of their research, the participants of the German-Austrian expedition relied on the limited number of map sheets available for the northwestern Karakoram region. These maps had been created by the Survey of India in the 1940s (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 5). After the conclusion of British rule, ownership of these map sheets was transferred to the Survey of Pakistan. Access to these maps came with specific conditions, as noted by Wolfgang Pillewizer: “The maps we requested are classified as ‘confidential’. They will only be entrusted to Sahib Shah” (Diary Pillewizer: 22).

Officially, the designated expedition area was not an integral part of Pakistan but fell within the domains of the semi-autonomous principalities of Hunza and Nagar.<sup>2</sup> This particular region, referred to by the participants as “Batura Muztagh,” “Hunza-Karakorum,” “Hunza-Land,” or “NW Karakorum” (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956), encompassed the westernmost mountain range of the Karakoram and extended southwards to include the Rakaposhi Range. The choice of this area had been influenced by several factors. The northwestern Karakoram was considered an “ideal research area” (Schneider und Bardodej 1960: 118) due to its distinct physiographic characteristics. On the one hand, there was, according to Hans-Jochen Schneider, the region’s significance as “one of the most glaciated mountain ranges on our planet” (ibid.: 119). On the other hand, the northwestern Karakoram had attracted the attention of the German scientists because of its location “between the subtropical Himalayas to the south and the arid plateaus of Central Asia [...] in the northwest and north” (ibid.: 118–119). The primary reason for choosing the Hunza Valley as the expedition area, however, was the dearth of available cartographic information, which the expedition set out to mend.

The members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition had access to British map sheets produced in the 1940s.

However, the scientists deemed the quarter-inch maps at a scale of 1 : 253,440 inadequate. This led expedition leader Wolfgang Pillewizer to see the northwestern Karakoram as “largely untouched and unexplored” (Pillewizer 1961: 14). In their expedition report, Karlheinz Paffen, Wolfgang Pillewizer, and Hans-Jochen Schneider (1956: 6) described the area as a “large white spot with ‘Hunza’ at its centre”. Therefore, the overall objective was to gather spatial data for a “modern map series” (Schneider und Bardodej 1960: 118). A series of map sheets with a minimum scale of 1 : 100,000 should eventually provide a “comprehensive overview of the [...] research area” (Pillewizer 1961: 187).

All scientists employed photographic methods for their research. Hans-Jochen Schneider captured geological and glaciological aspects of the northwestern Karakoram on both negative and slide film. Karlheinz Paffen directed his focus towards studying settlement patterns and vegetation cover in the Hunza Valley. Geodesist Karl Heckler documented the region’s topography using a Rolleiflex stereo camera. In collaboration with Wolfgang Pillewizer, Karl Heckler also utilised a photo-theodolite, a geodetic instrument with an integrated metric camera. This resulted in the production of over 400 photogrammetric images. After the expedition, particular emphasis was placed on the survey photographs. They were the basis for the intended topographical mapping and thus played a crucial role for the ‘overview of the research area’. Furthermore, these images served as landscape photographs.

### **3.1.1 Expedition and landscape photography in 1954**

The genre of landscape photography relates to the idea – and term – of ‘overview’ (German *Übersichtlichkeit* and *Überblick*). The connection pertains, above all, to perspective and image composition. Landscape photographs do not emphasise details but offer an overview of the surroundings. In his book *Pure Geography*, first published in German in



1929, the Finnish scholar and photographer Johannes Gabriel Granö contrasted the perspectives of “proximity” and “distant view”, equating the latter with the term “landscape” (Granö 1997: 19). According to Granö, ‘proximity’ can be experienced with all senses, while a ‘landscape’ is perceived solely through the eye. The landscape is thus a purely visual subject of study (ibid.).

But landscape photography is also conceptually linked to the idea of an overview. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, German-speaking scholars have employed the terms *Übersichtlichkeit* and *Überblick* to refer to the general recognisability of correlations (Eser 2014: 91). *Überblick* (overview) relates to comprehensive knowledge and cognition.

As landscape photography and the concept of ‘overview’ are intertwined, geographical landscape photographs can be defined as images that enhance the comprehension of larger spatial correlations. Landscape photographs enable geographers to adopt a distant viewpoint regarding the subject of their study, which is the landscape. In this sense, the landscape represents a viewpoint that can be visualised by photography.

Such theoretical considerations of landscape photography are substantiated by an analysis of the photogrammetric images taken by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer, which are the centre of the following discussions.

Gottfried Konecny and Gerhard Lehman define terrestrial photogrammetry as

[...] a procedure for measuring objects according to their position and shape. In this process, an object is not directly measured, but indirectly by measuring its image. Photogrammetry is therefore a remote sensing technique. (Konecny und Lehman 1984: 11)

Photogrammetry is based on the science of making measurements from photographs. It is a method that leverages the mathematical-geometric analysability of photographs to accurately capture and quantify topographical features.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the 400 photogrammetric images

captured during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition display unique features and distinguish themselves from other photographs of the expedition. This distinctiveness is, in part, due to the recording method.

For the photogrammetric recordings, Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer were each provided with a model of the TAF photo-theodolite<sup>4</sup> manufactured by Zeiss (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 5). Photo-theodolites are equipped with a metric camera, which provides additional spatial information. Unlike standard photographic cameras, metric cameras are designed to ensure precise 'interior' and 'exterior orientation'. The TAF photo-theodolites were also fitted with a frame with fiducial marks. These marks served to establish the image coordinate system, enabling the precise identification of the photograph's principal point.

The TAF photo-theodolite had a lasting influence on both the material and the appearance of the images it produced. The photographic material consisted of glass plates, known as *Topoplatten*, produced by the Perutz company in a 13 x 18-cm format. During the 1950s, in terrestrial photogrammetry, glass was the preferred choice over film due to its reduced recording errors (Lehmann 1959: 22). When a photographic plate was exposed, the fiducial marks were simultaneously captured. In the resulting photographs, these marks appeared as recognisable features at the picture edges (see Figure 3.2). These fiducial marks were later used to evaluate the photograph with the help of a stereo-autograph (Pillewizer 1986: 108–109).

Between the 1950s to the 1990s, the photogrammetric images captured by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer were used for cartographic purposes at the Institute for Photogrammetry, Topography, and General Cartography of the *Technische Hochschule München* (now Technical University of Munich). However, the first map was not completed until 1967. In the meantime, reproductions of the photogrammetric images served other purposes.



▲ Figure 3.2

Photogrammetric survey image: The fiducial marks can be seen on the four sides of the picture. The image was taken at Batura Glacier by Wolfgang Pillewizer in early July 1954 with the photo-theodolite facing east.  
Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Blick den Baturagletscher hinab* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 22). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

Some copies were used for further scientific investigations of the expedition area (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 6); others were published for the sake of illustration in scientific or popular scientific publications (see Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956; Schneider 1959; Pillewizer 1961; Pillewizer 1986). Finally, the survey images were displayed in private contexts. For instance, Wolfgang Pillewizer included copies of photogrammetric images in one of his photo albums (see PIL 03).

The first map encompassing the entire area surveyed by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer was not completed until 40 years after the expedition. The map *Hunza-Karakorum 1:100,000* was published in 1995 by the German Alpine Club. In his “Accompanying text for the ‘Hunza-Karakorum 1:100,000’ map”, cartographer Rüdiger Finsterwalder, emphasises the lasting relevance of the photogrammetric images produced during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition:

These photo plates have a documentary value beyond their original purpose and allow changes in the region's [...] landscapes to be recognised and, if necessary, even for measurements to be carried out. (Finsterwalder 1996: 170)

The whereabouts of the photographic plates after 1995 are unclear. According to the archives of the Technical University of Munich, the survey images are no longer housed at the university. Therefore, the original photogrammetric image collection was not available for my research. To fill this gap, I conducted my investigation with the help of reproductions as they appear in publications and in Wolfgang Pillewizer's photo album.

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### **3.2 Expanding the Alpine gaze: German survey photography and expedition cartography in High Asia**

One of the primary scientific objectives of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition was to collect data for a large-scale map. The surveyors had access to maps of the Karakoram region that had been created by British surveying expeditions. However, the Austrian-German team members did not regard these quarter-inch maps as a template for their own project. While surveying the 3,000-square-kilometre expedition area, they rather aligned their approach with the methodologies and cartographic models established by German expeditions during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Much like the 1954 expedition, earlier 20<sup>th</sup>-century German expeditions in High Asia operated under the auspices of the Alpine Club. It wielded significant influence on the survey photography of Austrian and German high mountain expeditions. The association not only played a pivotal role in the development of photographic techniques but also left its mark on the content and composition of expedition photographs, including the survey images taken in 1954.

#### **3.2.1 Surveying in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: A comparison of British and German approaches**

The geodetic exploration of the Karakoram commenced in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a British colonial project. The first major surveys were carried out as part of the Kashmir Principal Triangulation (1855–1860) and the Pamir Boundary Commission (1895). Moreover, British mountaineering expeditions, notably the one led by William Martin Conway in 1892, contributed to surveying and cartographic efforts in the western Karakoram (Schneider und Baumert 1968: 449). However, in comparison to the cartographic outcomes achieved in the more eastern regions of the

Himalayas, the mapping of the western Karakoram remained imprecise and incomplete. On the Empire's northern frontier, British surveyors and cartographers directed their attention towards delineating borders, mapping river courses, and charting mountain passes – elements strategically more significant. The northwestern Karakoram, which included the principalities of Hunza and Nagar, was viewed as a transit region, and the British colonial administration displayed minimal interest in commissioning large-scale mapping of the area (Kreutzmann 2020: 24).

The participants of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition regarded the maps produced by the British in the 1940s as outdated and “highly generalised” (Schneider und Baumert 1968: 449). Consequently, Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer intended to acquire geodetic and topographic data for creating a distinctly “modern map series” (Schneider und Bardodej 1960: 118). They envisioned the production of map sheets that would fulfil both mountaineering and scientific requirements (ibid.). The initial plan was to create a map of the northwestern Karakoram with a scale of 1:100,000. The ultimate objective was to increase the scale to 1:50,000, as only a map sheet of that scale would accurately depict the “landscape [...] in a realistic manner” (Pöhlmann 1974: 3). The expedition maps of the northwestern Karakoram were intended to resemble the map *Nanga Parbat-Gruppe 1:50.000* published in 1937 (Pillewizer 1986: 98; Figure 3.3). The photogrammetric survey for this specific map had been conducted during the 1934 German Himalaya expedition by Richard Finsterwalder and Walter Raechl.

The German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition was the first non-British expedition to survey the Hunza Valley. Starting their work in late May 1954, Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer initially had to rely entirely on the data provided by the British quarter-inch maps (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 5). Against this background, it could be argued that they, in 1954, continued the legacy of British colonial surveying initiatives. However, the members of the German-Austrian expedition did not see themselves as successors to the British. Instead,



◀ Figure 3.3

Section of the map *Nanga Parbat group 1:50,000*, published in 1937 by the German and Austrian Alpine Club. According to cartographer Erik Arnberger (1970: 188), this map marked a “turning point in the history of expedition cartography of the Alpine Club”. Arnberger attributes historical significance to this map for two reasons.

Firstly, it is based upon groundbreaking photogrammetric work in the Himalayas: In 1934, surveyors Richard Finsterwalder and Walter Raechl had recorded 115 position lines in the 3,000 square-kilometre expedition area and had exposed around 350 photographic plates. Secondly, cartographer Fritz Ebster used this map to experiment with his *Haarstrich-Felszeichnungsmethode* (method of hairline rock drawing), a technique that enabled the preservation of contour lines in rock formations.

Source: Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein (Hg.) (1937): *Deutsche Himalaya-Expedition 1934. Nanga Parbat-Gruppe, 1:50.000 (detail)*. Reproduced from Arnberger 1970: 193.

they saw their expedition as part of a “tradition” established by German surveyors in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Schneider und Baumert 1968: 446; Figure 1.2).

In High Asia, German and British surveyors pursued different goals. This becomes evident when comparing expedition images from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Not only do German and British maps of the Himalaya-Karakoram differ in scale, but they also exhibit variations in graphic design. Differences are also observable in the photographs, with variations in both content and the techniques used to capture them.

The differences in the photographs taken by German and British

expedition travellers can be attributed, in no small part, to their respective political and ideological agendas. Before 1947, surveying expeditions in the Himalaya-Karakoram region commissioned by the Survey of India, served to further British political interests. Both photography and mapping were of strategic importance for the maintenance and expansion of power in the Empire (Hewitt 2008: 63).

German organisations and institutions, on the other hand, had other motives when they sent expeditions to High Asia. They pursued the political interests of the German Reich: they wanted to establish international relations, enhance their scientific reputation, and demonstrate national superiority through mountaineering achievements. Consequently, German geodesists and cartographers did not aim to create maps or other images of military strategic importance. Instead, they produced images with scientific and mountaineering significance, including landscape images, chorographic maps, and large-scale topographic maps. In other words, German scientists continued to do in High Asia what they had practised before in central Europe. In their expedition photography, German scientists and surveyors drew on what they had learned in the eastern Alps – lessons heavily informed by the interests of the Alpine Clubs of Austria and Germany.

### **3.2.2 Expedition photography in the Alpine Clubs**

The Austrian Alpine Club was founded in 1862, followed by the establishment of the German Alpine Club in 1869. According to their statutes, both associations had set for themselves the task of “expanding and disseminating knowledge about the Alps and facilitating travel there” (Trautwein 1870: I). This implied that, right from the outset, the Alpine Clubs prioritised both scientific research and the development of tourism in the Alps as goals of equal importance.



To fulfil their educational mission the Alpine Clubs engaged in the publication of journals and bulletins. These periodicals served to consistently inform both club members and the broader public about recent discoveries. This was achieved not only through text but also through an array of visual content, encompassing landscape paintings, panoramas, maps, and photographs.

Organising photo exhibitions was among the major activities undertaken by the Alpine clubs. On 19 November 1862, which marked the founding day of the Austrian Alpine Club, the club already hosted its first photo exhibition. In the meeting room known as the ‘Green Hall’ at the Vienna Academy of Sciences, photographs of mountains by the renowned Frères Bisson were exhibited (Holzer 2006: 17). The French photographers, Louis-Auguste and Auguste-Rosalie Bisson, who jointly operated a successful photo studio in Paris, had taken these photographs on their numerous Alpine expeditions.

It had been a sensational event when, in 1861, the collodion plates, exposed by Auguste-Rosalie, the younger of the Bisson brothers, atop Mont Blanc, were exhibited. Twenty-five porters had been needed to transport Auguste-Rosalie’s photographic equipment, weighing several hundred kilograms, through ice and avalanches to the summit of Mont Blanc (Tillmann und Kesberger 1997: 16–17; Ryan 2013: 93). The media response to these mountain photographs was immense, and Auguste-Rosalie Bisson’s venture inspired a whole series of photographic expeditions to the Alps.

These undertakings included the Grossglockner expedition of 1863. The photographer recruited for the Grossglockner expedition was Gustav Jägermayer, a member of the Austrian Alpine Club. Just a few weeks after the expedition, in November 1863, Jägermayer’s photographs were exhibited and discussed at the autumn meeting of the Austrian Alpine Club. The acting chairman of the club, Friedrich von Hellwand emphasised the Alpine Club’s contributions to Jägermayer’s success and “concluded by pointing out the importance of the undertaking for geography and various branches of natural science” (von Sommaruga 1865: 359).

The early history of the Alpine Clubs shows that the associations not only promoted scientific and mountaineering skills but also mountain photography. In the process, the ambitions of the clubs quickly expanded beyond the Alps. In 1873, the Austrian and German Alpine Clubs merged, becoming a unified entity and broadening the Club's scope for action. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Alpine Club's financial resources were exclusively designated for Alpine expeditions. However, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Club made the decision to additionally fund expeditions to non-European mountain regions. The first extra-Alpine expedition (German *Auslandsbergfahrt*) organised by the German and Austrian Alpine Club was the Pamir expedition of 1913, led by Willi Rickmer Rickmers. Fourteen years after the first expedition to High Asia, in 1927, the Alpine Club changed its statutes. The goal shifted from solely acquiring and disseminating knowledge about the Alps to encompassing 'mountains from around the world' (German *Weltberge*; Arnberger 1970: 185).

With the expansion of the Alpine Club's sphere of activity, the expeditionary methods initially developed in the Eastern Alps were extended to mountain regions in other parts of the world. In these regions as well, mountaineering pursuits were combined with scientific exploration. However, the adaptation of methodologies encompassed not only the logistical and organisational facets of the expeditions themselves but also extended to how the expedition areas were described and depicted.

This was particularly evident in the domains of photography and cartography. Photographic techniques that were initially developed, refined, and honed in the Eastern Alps found new applications in the high mountains of Asia. Particularly notable was the use of terrestrial photogrammetry, a technique that had been employed since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for surveying glaciers in the Alps. This technique was effectively applied by Wilhelm Deimler in the Pamirs in 1913 (Arnberger 1970: 186). The images generated by Deimler allowed for the presentation of photogrammetric views of High Asia in Europe for the first time.

In the present day, marked by unprecedented access to images from around the world, it is essential to remember the fascination that these survey images held in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One can compare photogrammetry to a converter that presented the once unknown and unseen Pamirs in a tangible, measurable, and navigable shape. Photogrammetric images revealed previously unseen and imperceptible locations, albeit in a manner that was already known.

The same was the case with cartographic techniques. Alpine modes of cartographic representation, particularly Austrian, German, and Swiss ones, were used in maps which illustrated regions in High Asia. This included not only features like specific scales and colouring but also influenced the content of the maps.

By using various forms of imagery – photographs, survey images, and maps – it ultimately became possible to directly compare other mountain ranges in the world with those in the Alps. Using methods developed in the Alps to depict markedly different mountain regions can be called the ‘global expansion of the Alpine gaze’. This gaze formed the Eurocentric basis of early and mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century German high mountain research.

### **3.2.3 Austrian-German expedition photogrammetry**

The production of “first-class mountaineering maps that could also serve as valuable resources for high mountain research” (Arnberger 1970: 28), has played a central role in the endeavours of the German and Austrian Alpine Club. Given that the success of both mountaineers and scientists depended on large-scale maps, the Alpine Club’s cartography inevitably focused on map scale. Frequently, members of the Alpine Club found the available survey data and maps to be insufficient. To meet their elevated requirements for cartographic material, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they commenced their own surveying efforts. Surveying and mapping became



Figure 3.4 ▲

In 1954, Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler were equipped with two TAF photo-theodolites. The expedition leader took a photograph of his survey equipment and pasted it into his photo album. The caption reads: “My instrument, the photo-theodolite”.

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Mein Instrument, der Phototheodolit* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 31). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

essential tasks for participants in expeditions commissioned by the German and Austrian Alpine Club, both within and outside of Europe. (ibid.: 185).

Thus, the German and Austrian Alpine Club also embraced the emergence and development of photogrammetry. Starting from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the club actively participated in topographical surveys through the application of terrestrial photogrammetry. The importance that the club attributed to photogrammetric techniques can be understood within the context of its ambitious cartographic pursuits: members of the Alpine Club aimed to create maps that portrayed landscape features, all while adhering to a standardised technological methodology.<sup>5</sup>

However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the foremost challenge of photogrammetry revolved around the considerable weight of the equipment, which exceeded 70 kilograms per survey team (Arnberger 1970: 23).<sup>6</sup> Cartographer Ingrid Kretschmer (2003: 14) therefore identifies the genuine beginning of photogrammetric surveying in high mountain regions to have occurred only in the 1920s. According to Ingrid Kretschmer, the history of German-Austrian photogrammetry in the Alps began with the invention of a lightweight field photo-theodolite. This field photo-theodolite was developed in 1924 by the Carl Zeiss company in collaboration with the mathematician and geodesist Sebastian Finsterwalder. Known as the “Terrestrische Ausrüstung Finsterwalder” or the “TAF photo-theodolite”, it remained in use on Alpine Club expeditions for many decades (Figure 3.4).

Sebastian Finsterwalder played a key role in advancing photogrammetric techniques in the Alps. By the time he became a professor of descriptive geometry at the *Technische Hochschule München* in 1911, he had already achieved pioneer status in both earth and aerial photogrammetry (Arnberger 1970: 234). In 1913, Finsterwalder began holding his *Gletscherkurs* (glacier course). At the *Berliner Hütte* (Berlin hut) in the Zillertal Alps, he taught geographers and geodesists about high-

altitude photogrammetry (Kretschmer 2003: 14). Among Sebastian Finsterwalder's students were Hans Bobek, Herbert Louis, and Carl Troll – individuals who would later emerge as mentors for the generation of expedition surveyors in the 1950s.

One of Sebastian Finsterwalder's students at the *Berliner Hütte* was his son, Richard Finsterwalder. In 1928, Richard Finsterwalder participated in the German-Soviet Alai-Pamir expedition. Six years later, he collaborated with the geographer Walter Raechl and conducted the photogrammetric survey of the Nanga Parbat region during the 1934 German Himalaya expedition. After the Second World War, Richard Finsterwalder became professor of photogrammetry, topography and general cartography at the Technical University of Munich. In the early 1950s, he provided guidance to Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler for the upcoming surveying work of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. He remained actively involved in analysing the survey results until his death in 1963.

By the early 1950s, aerial photogrammetry was already well established in the Alps. Its application for surveying High Asia thus intrigued the members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. In the mid-1930s, the British had already demonstrated the technical feasibility of reconnaissance flights in the northwestern Karakoram (Kreutzmann 2020: 26, 118, 126). Nonetheless, participants in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition had to discard the idea of aerial surveying for two reasons – unaffordability and a political constraint, as outlined by Wolfgang Pillewizer:

Getting a flight permit in this politically sensitive border area between China, the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, was highly unlikely. Moreover, our expedition area was in the [...] part of Kashmir that is still disputed between India and Pakistan. Therefore, Karl [Heckler] and I had no choice but to undertake the challenging task of a terrestrial-photogrammetric survey of these high mountains. (Pillewizer 1986: 98)

The German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition did not identify as a political mission. However, it was inevitably influenced by the

political circumstances in the expedition area. The ban on aerial photography in the northwestern Karakoram shows that technical feasibility was subordinated to political considerations. Therefore, the following section considers both the technical aspects of survey photography and its interconnections with political, economic, and social dynamics.

### **3.3 Survey photography as an expeditionary practice**

In the 1950s, aerial photogrammetry had emerged as the primary method for terrain mapping. Nonetheless, terrestrial photogrammetry continued to prove its worth in specific contexts, including topographic surveys in high mountain regions and during expeditions (Lehmann 1959: 55). In such instances, terrestrial photogrammetry benefitted from its status as a well-established and standardised technique. Nevertheless, employing the photo-theodolite in high mountain terrain posed distinctive challenges. One of these challenges arose from the technique's dependence on location, necessitating an unobstructed view to prevent foreground objects from obscuring the background. Additionally, the accuracy of terrestrial photogrammetric images noticeably decreased as the depth of the recorded space increased (Finsterwalder 1939: 15–20; Lehmann 1959: 8).

When survey teams used terrestrial photogrammetry, they also faced challenges that were non-technical in nature. Achieving precise surveys in high mountain regions demanded advanced mountaineering skills. Furthermore, adverse weather conditions, budget constraints, political power dynamics, and team interactions influenced photogrammetric processes. Ultimately, the interplay of these factors determined when and where survey photographs could be taken. A closer examination of the survey work conducted during the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition clearly illustrates this.

To demonstrate both the potential and limitations of terrestrial photogrammetry as a surveying method, I have analysed the writings and photographs of the expedition surveyors Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer. By reconstructing the surveyors' daily activities, I aim to raise awareness beyond a purely technological interpretation of survey photographs.

### **3.3.1 Expedition surveying as a collective challenge**

Terrestrial surveying, especially in high mountain regions, has always required a collaborative effort. It therefore fell in the scope of expeditions. The German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition brought together individuals from different backgrounds and professions. Wolfgang Pillewizer and his German team members contributed the necessary technical equipment and expertise. The local labourers, primarily those engaged in porter services, had intimate knowledge of the routes and terrain. Local rulers and regional authorities were also involved in the surveying process. They oversaw the labour regulation and issued travel permits. Furthermore, the expedition was accompanied by liaison officers who facilitated communication between the different parties and served as interpreters.

The differing spheres of responsibility gave rise to intricate power dynamics within the expedition team. The survey work led to complex economic, political, and social circumstances that required ongoing negotiation. Ultimately, the various parties participating in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition were dependent on each other.

The historical records of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition provide information about the employment conditions of the men serving as load-carriers porters. In the Hunza Valley, there was a substantial workforce responsible for transporting goods to the base

camps. Their employment was short-term, often lasting only a single day. This group of labourers can be referred to as ‘load-carriers’. Only a handful of expedition photographs depict men from the group of load-carriers, most of them being barefoot and lacking adequate equipment for the strenuous tasks. Only limited interaction occurred between the load-carriers and the European expedition members. This was primarily due to the short-term nature of their employment and the language barrier, which hindered immediate conversation. Consequently, the men serving as load-carriers received minimal attention in the diaries and official reports of the Austrian and German expedition members.

The situation differed for the men offering porter services at higher altitudes. This group of selected labourers extended their porter duties beyond the base camps, catering to the needs of both scientists and mountaineers. In contrast to the load-carriers, who had limited engagement, these men were employed on a long-term basis and under distinct contractual arrangements. This particular group of labourers is commonly referred to as ‘porters’ or, when their role involved accompanying mountaineers, as ‘high-altitude porters’.

The interaction between porters, high-altitude porters, and their German-Austrian employers contrasted with that of load-carriers. Porters and high-altitude porters maintained considerably longer tenures within the expedition team. Consequently, Wolfgang Pillewizer described them as “permanent porters” (Diary Pillewizer: 62). The German-Austrian expedition team provided specific benefits to the (high-altitude) porters, including meals, warm clothing, and insurance coverage.<sup>7</sup> These entitlements were incorporated into their contracts, a privilege not extended to the load-carriers.

Upon their arrival in the expedition area at the end of May 1954, the five scientists – Karl Heckler, Karlheinz Paffen, Wolfgang Pillewizer, Hans-Jochen Schneider, and Karl Wienert – proceeded in different directions within the expedition area. Collaborating with the porters, the scientists organised themselves into distinct teams. Each team comprised one or two German scientists and a minimum of two porters. The porters



took on responsibilities such as equipment transportation, camp management, and assistance in scientific and geodetic tasks. During the survey work, Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler individually led their teams and worked closely with local men from Hunza and Nagar. Karl Heckler found value in working alongside a young Wakhi farmer named Shason, hailing from the village of Gulmit in Upper Hunza. Wolfgang Pillewizer's personal assistants were Shah Barat and Mirza Nehal, both from Central Hunza (Figure 3.10).

Occasionally, liaison officer Sahib Shah led his own survey team. More often, however, he worked within Karl Heckler's team. Wolfgang Pillewizer's personal diary entries reveal his scepticism regarding Sahib Shah's role in the expedition. In the eyes of the Austrian expedition leader, Sahib Shah, as a trained plane-tableer, made little contribution to the expedition's photogrammetric survey. Furthermore, Pillewizer regarded the liaison officer less as a fellow member and more as a "watchdog" (Pillewizer 1986: 99). In contrast, Karl Heckler held a deep appreciation for Sahib Shah:

Sahib Shah is a remarkable individual. He takes on all the arduous tasks, handles negotiations with lambardars, chowkidars, coolies, and porters.<sup>8</sup> [...] Despite his full awareness of his indispensability, he remains humble and never [...] acts presumptuously. [...] Whether it is setting up camp, mealtimes, or any other situation, he consistently prioritises my needs over his own. (Diary Heckler: 72–74)

Sahib Shah was not provided with any technical equipment, leaving the photogrammetric work solely in the hands of Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler. The expedition leader described his photo-theodolite as "lightweight measuring equipment" (Pillewizer 1986: 101). However, the combined weight of the survey equipment, including the photo-theodolite, tripod and photographic plates, exceeded 15 kilograms. In addition to this, the survey teams had to transport high altitude camping gear and provisions. Following the expedition, Wolfgang Pillewizer acknowledged that without the "skilled porters from the Hunza Valley", the scientists would not have been able to "manage the daily ascents of over 2,000 metres at high altitude" (*ibid.*).



Figure 3.5 ▲

Load-carriers in the camp near Toltar in Nagar on the morning of 16 June 1954 (see Diary Klamert I: 13).

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.



▲ Figure 3.6

A group of porters is receiving their wages. The expedition provided the porters with equipment, including warm clothing and sturdy footwear. However, the shoes brought from Germany were often ill-fitting. They caused discomfort, blisters, and sometimes serious infections. As a result, some porters had to continue their work barefoot (see Diary Pillewizer: 64, 104).

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Im Expeditionslager von Toltar* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 22).

Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



Figure 3.7 ▲

Five porters of the survey teams in the camp near the Batura glacier (from left to right): Fakir, Shah Barat, Akbar, Mirzah-Nehal, and Ali Gohar. Wolfgang Pillewizer noted, “Fakir is wearing my cardigan, knitted by my wife”. Behind the porters (from left to right): Hans-Jochen Schneider, Sahib Shah, and Wolfgang Pillewizer.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Die Träger der wissenschaftlichen Gruppe im Hauptlager* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 6). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



◀ Figure 3.8  
“Mirzah drilling a hole in the ice”,  
a picture from the photo album  
of Wolfgang Pillewizer.

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer  
(1954): *Mirzah bohrt ein Loch ins  
Eis* [paper print]. Geologische  
Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere  
Austria): Photo album of  
Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03:  
18). Reproduced by kind  
permission of Thomas Hofmann.

Figure 3.9 ►

Mohamad Wali from Baltit assisting Wolfgang Pillewizer in the photogrammetric survey. This image is a reproduction of a poster advertising Eugen Schuhmacher's documentary movie *Im Schatten des Karakorum* (In the Shadow of the Karakoram), shot during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. The colourised poster was based on a black and white photograph, possibly taken by expedition cameraman Eugen Schuhmacher. According to his descendants and his former neighbour Attaullah Khan, Mohamad Wali was never informed that he appeared on a film poster in Germany. Source: Unidentified artist (n.d.): *Im Schatten des Karakorum* [film poster]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Estate of Wolfgang Pillewizer (PIL 05). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.





▲ Figure 3.10  
Wolfgang Pillewizer with Shah Barat and Mirza Nehal during survey work on Pasu Glacier. The photograph was taken by Gerhart Klamert on 21 July 1954 (see Diary Klamert I: 19).  
Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

To establish the position lines required for photogrammetric recordings, it was crucial to determine a set of ground-control points with precise coordinates. The responsibility of locating these ground-control points fell to the geodesist, Karl Heckler. The task involved both rediscovering ground-control points the coordinates of which were already known from British surveys and determining the necessary number of new points. In late May 1954, the survey teams commenced topographic surveying in the western part of the expedition area, not far from the village of Chalt, located at the confluence of the Bar and Kukuvar valleys. Wolfgang Pillewizer later described the area as follows:

In terms of its landforms, the western Kukuvar valley is closely associated with the Hindukush Mountains and resembles the Western Alps with its deep firn-filled depressions. On the contrary, the eastern Baltar Valley is already a part of the Karakoram Mountains; its slopes rise incredibly steeply [...] to the towering peaks of the main ridge, soaring to an altitude of nearly 7800 meters. (Pillewizer 1986: 103)

Terrestrial photogrammetry was practical in the ‘Western Alps’-like Kukuvar Valley, where Karl Heckler started his work. However, the technique was hardly feasible in the Baltar Valley, where Wolfgang Pillewizer arrived in early June. Amidst the steep mountain slopes, the survey team led by Wolfgang Pillewizer struggled to find suitable locations for measurements and recordings. Furthermore, the narrow valley obstructed the view of the ground control points. In other valleys, surveying became a mountaineering challenge, especially in the Mouchuhar and Shishpar valleys, surrounded by mountains reaching heights of 7,000 meters. Even ascending to higher elevations did not provide Wolfgang Pillewizer with a satisfactory vantage point (Pillewizer 1986: 104). Working in some of the world’s highest mountains, the experienced expedition surveyors encountered “problems [they] had not faced before” (ibid.: 99).

Looking back on 1954, Wolfgang Pillewizer admitted in 1986 that surveying had essentially “failed” in the southern part of the expedition



area. He described the expedition survey as a challenge “at the limits of terrestrial photogrammetry” (ibid.: 98).

The demanding terrain was but one of the challenges encountered by the surveyors. Their work was frequently disrupted, compelling them to adapt their schedules due to adverse weather conditions. Rainfall hampered their photogrammetric recordings, and the weather frequently took sudden turns. Fog and clouds would descend so low into the valleys that survey photography became impractical. As a result, the survey teams were forced to retreat to their camps without accomplishing their objectives, eagerly anticipating improved weather conditions (see e.g., Diary Heckler: 172–173).

In addition, technical challenges emerged. For a period, Karl Heckler was forced to work with a malfunctioning altimeter (Diary Heckler: 88). In May 1954, the expedition team received a letter from Richard Finsterwalder, the expedition’s primary advisor in Munich. He expressed his apologies for realising only after the team’s departure that the cases containing the photographic plates were not lightproof. Consequently, Richard Finsterwalder sent new black covers to the Hunza Valley via



◀ Figure 3.11

Detail of a survey photograph documenting the terrain of the eastern Baltar Valley. The handwritten caption in Wolfgang Pillewizer’s photo album reads: “It is almost impossible to find suitable locations for surveying on these rock faces [...]”

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Es ist kaum möglich, an solchen Felswänden [...] Standpunkte für die Kartenaufnahme zu finden* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 30). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

airmail. However, as Karl Heckler noted in his diary, the new covers introduced yet another compromise:

Now the photographic plates are in lightproof cases, but you can hardly get them into the camera. It is a waiting game every time, and the accuracy of the work suffers greatly. (Diary Heckler: 108–109)

Despite terrestrial surveying being a highly standardised procedure, it was still susceptible to human error. Both Karl Heckler and Sahib Shah made several measurements from inaccurately recorded observation points (Diary Heckler: 169–170; Pillewizer 1961: 189). Karl Heckler vividly described the challenges of a typical working day in his diary:

Woke up at 4 a.m. At 6 a.m., we began the ascent over the steep and rugged slopes. The last four hundred meters were particularly challenging for the porters. Once they stepped onto the snow, they started to stumble, even though they had been walking relatively confidently on rocky terrain. We reached the summit at 9 a.m., located the British survey marker and immediately started working, beginning with the photogrammetric position line. Finding suitable points far apart from each other proved quite difficult due to the demanding terrain. Altitude sickness left me feeling quite fatigued.

Figure 3.12 ►

Karl Heckler triangulating on a summit above the camp at Lupdur. In the foreground are his assistants, Shason from Gulmit, and Ali Gohar from Baltit. In the background, just above the theodolite, one can see the ridge where, according to Wolfgang Pillewizer (1961: following page 144), the highest photogrammetric position lines of this area were measured. Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Karl Heckler beim Triangulieren* [photograph]. Reproduced from Pillewizer 1961: following page 144.



I experienced a headache and a rapid pulse. [...]. We completed 3 position lines (18 photographs) by 2 p.m., which capture a significant portion of the southern main range of the Karakoram and the Hunza Valley. Altitude sickness played an unpleasant trick on me; I confused '6' and '9' and ended up exposing the photographic plate 9 or 6 twice. However, I managed to rectify the situation. The process of triangulation met with only partial success, as I struggled to locate any of the established ground control points. At this point, I must navigate as though I were in entirely unexplored territory. Completed my work by 4 o'clock. Sahib Shah went ahead. The altitude sickness has affected him so much that he could not do any work. (Diary Heckler: 69–70)

### **3.3.2 Political and economic dimensions of scientific expeditions**

While Karl Heckler and Sahib Shah suffered from altitude sickness, Wolfgang Pillewizer was plagued by bureaucratic troubles. In the middle of his work, the expedition leader received news that the travel permit for the Misgar Valley, which was meant to demarcate the northeastern boundary of the expedition area, had been revoked (Diary Pillewizer 1954: 81). To avert subsequent travel restrictions and adhere to travel regulations, Wolfgang Pillewizer frequently had to halt his survey work and engage in negotiations with the rulers of Hunza and Nagar (see Diary Pillewizer 1954: 57, 63, 65, 88, 111–112). This consumed a substantial amount of time and drained Pillewizer's patience.

In addition to bureaucratic challenges, Wolfgang Pillewizer also encountered logistical obstacles. In June 1954, the residents of the Hunza Valley were suffering from the "annual spring famine" (Diary Pillewizer: 63). Previous harvest supplies had been depleted, and the new crop was not yet ready for harvesting. The expedition team also exhausted their flour reserves, leaving them unable to provide sustenance for their porters (*ibid.*). Insufficient rations were one of several predicaments that contributed to

a series of conflicts between the surveyors and their porters. During the two months that Wolfgang Pillewizer, Karl Heckler, and Sahib Shah operated in the northwestern Karakoram, the labourers responsible for porter services abstained from work for a total of six days.<sup>9</sup> These work stoppages resulted in survey delays and raised specific concerns for Wolfgang Pillewizer, who as the leader of the expedition was responsible for ensuring the progress of the survey.

In High Asia, load-carriers, porters, and high-altitude porters refusing to work posed a significant challenge for European expedition travellers. Most expedition reports feature accounts of so-called porter strikes, spanning from racist-colonial rants to self-deprecating satire. However, instances of work stoppages were rarely captured in photographs. Probably intense conflicts were not deemed suitable occasions for a photoshoot.

Based on the limited body of historical research on this topic, it becomes evident that porter work stoppages primarily served as a direct form of resistance against the prevailing working conditions during expeditions. As geographers David Butz and Kenneth MacDonald point out:

Formalized porter strikes [...] openly defy the authority of the dominant group. They are public transcripts of resistance, which coalesce around identifiable leaders and specific demands, primarily aimed at improving wages and working conditions. (Butz and MacDonald 1998: 340)

In the context of the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the porter Ali Gohar from Hunza could be characterised as such an 'identifiable leader' (Diary Pillewizer: 111; Figure 3.7). While the German archival records do not say whether Ali Gohar held an official position as the *sardar* or leader of the Hunza porters, these records do indicate that he took charge of overseeing this group of porters.<sup>10</sup> He played a crucial role in recruiting and dismissing porters and acted as their representative during conflicts with the expedition leader, Wolfgang Pillewizer.



◀ Figure 3.13

Paul Bernett, the expedition team's doctor, among a group of load-carriers who went on strike near the village of Bar in Nagar.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Doktor-Sahib hält eine Ansprache an die Träger [...]* [paper print].

Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 21). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

It is noteworthy that the causes of conflicts between the local labourers and the foreign expedition members cannot be solely attributed to their employment relationship. Often, these conflicts were rooted in broader social and economic factors that extended well beyond the control of the European expedition members. Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler have documented these external causes of conflict. In the early days of the expedition, Wolfgang Pillewizer made the following observations:

On 30 May 1954, [Karl] Heckler and [Karl] Wienert were scheduled to depart for the Toltar Glacier, but the porters went on strike. In addition to the porters from Chalt, there were also porters from Hunza and Nagar who had come to work. However, the men from Chalt did not want outsiders working in their area. (Diary Pillewizer: 44)

Wolfgang Pillewizer's account of the situation, in which labourers from different parts of the Hunza Valley refused to cooperate, can be attributed to their unique employment arrangements. The leaders of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, namely Wolfgang Pillewizer and Mathias Rebitsch, did not personally select the porters for their

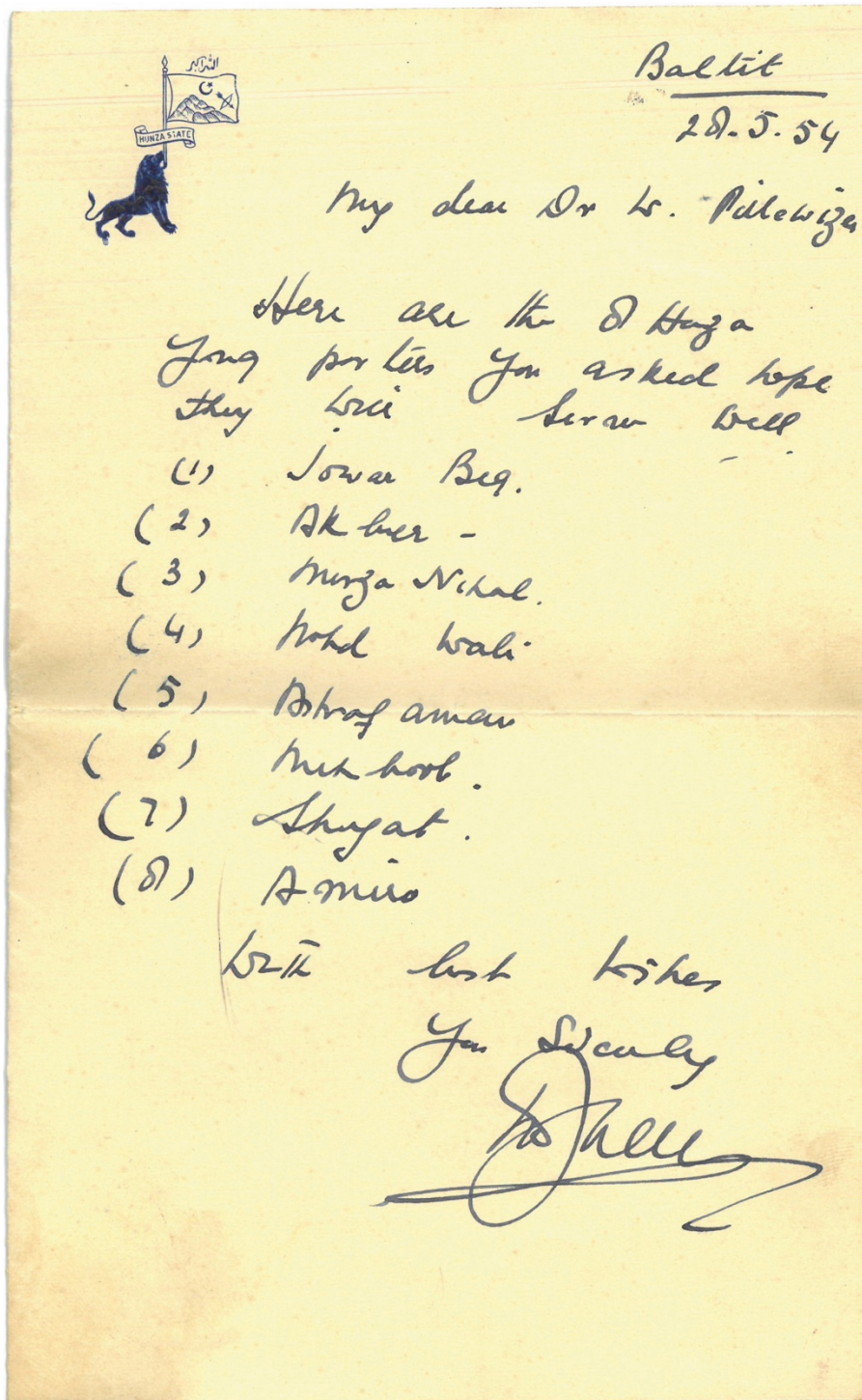
mission. The individuals who worked as porters during the 1954 expedition were designated for this role by a representative of their respective village.

Until the mid-1970s, the labour of porters in the Hunza Valley was entangled in a network of loyalty, accountability, and authority. The selection of porters and high-altitude porters was coordinated locally. Village representatives, particularly the *lambardars*, would identify individuals who were then given approval to work for foreign expeditions, allowing them to earn a monetary income. These village representatives, in turn, had acquired authorisation from their *mir* to nominate individuals from their community as labourers (Ibadat Shah, personal conversation, 8/7/2021; Mohamad Rafi, personal conversation, 15/7/2021).<sup>11</sup>

The central responsibility for coordinating and overseeing all matters related to foreign expeditions and local labour in the Hunza Valley rested with the *mir* of Hunza and the *mir* of Nagar. These two rulers served as the primary points of contact for foreign expedition leaders. The *mir* issued necessary travel permits to the expedition travellers and ensured the availability of an adequate workforce for their undertakings.

In the 1950s, labouring for foreign expeditions in the Hunza Valley represented one of the few chances to earn a wage. Consequently, village representatives endeavoured to secure the favour of the respective *mir* and capture this unique opportunity for themselves and the members of their village community. This dynamic set the stage for a competitive environment that underlay the conflict experienced by the German-Austrian expedition at the end of May 1954.

The village of Chalt officially belonged to the Nagar territory, and, as per regulations, the porters from Chalt fell under the authority of the *mir* of Nagar. However, the men from Chalt were unwilling to share their potential wages with labourers from the eastern regions of Nagar, and they also resisted collaborating with men from the principality of Hunza. Consequently, they refused to work and initiated a 'strike'.



◀ Figure 3.14

A letter, dated 28 May 1954, written by *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan of Hunza to Wolfgang Pillewizer, informing the expedition leader of the selection of porters from Hunza. While surveying, the expedition teams regularly communicated with the rulers of Hunza and Nagar. Messengers carried letters between the valleys and the expedition camps.

Source: Letter from *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan to Wolfgang Pillewizer dated 28/05/1954. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Estate of Wolfgang Pillewizer (PIL 01). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



Figure 3.15 ▲

Load-carriers resting by an irrigation channel. Payment for load-carriers, porters, and high-altitude porters varied based on route difficulty and load weight. In the 1950s, high-altitude porters in the service of German expeditions earned three to eight rupees per day (see KLA 01: 2–3). Even at high altitudes, loads could weigh up to 20 kilograms (see Diary Pillewizer: 127).

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): [...] *die Träger rasten* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 14). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



It was not until 31 May 1954, that they returned to work. Karl Heckler documented the unfolding events in his diary:

The inhabitants of Chalt expressed their objection to allowing individuals from either Hunza or [the eastern parts of, MH] Nagar to engage in work within their territory. The intervention of the Mir of Nagar became necessary. Two of the agitators faced repercussions, being tasked with presenting one sheep each to the Mir [of Nagar] as a penalty. Following this, a mutiny took root among the people from Hunza. [...] The negotiations extended into the following day. The presence of Sahib Shah was invaluable. Our reliance on him was immeasurable. On Monday morning (May 31), Wienert and I embarked with a group of 8 porters from Chalt, while Pillewizer and Shah began their journey at 11 a.m., accompanied by 8 men from Hunza and 4 porters from Nagar. Shah employed a clever ruse, simulating a telephone conversation with the Mir [of Hunza]. He conveyed to the Hunza men that their Mir had warned them against returning home, and finally, we could proceed. (Diary Heckler: 78–79)

The organisation of porter work in the Hunza Valley, managed and overseen by the rulers of Hunza and Nagar, was not a system created solely for foreign expeditions. The labour performed by load-carriers, porters, and high-altitude porters in the 1950s was an extension of pre-existing labour schemes. In the Hindukush and Karakoram regions, carrying loads was a compulsory task until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Hunza and Nagar, this labour scheme was known as *rajaaki* (in Burushaski). In the neighbouring regions governed by the Dogra since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this system was referred to as *kar-i-begar* (in Persian). Both terms, *rajaaki* and *kar-i-begar*, refer to compulsory labour schemes in which significant portions of the population were obliged to work without receiving wages or with only inadequate compensation, because they served the interests of a ruler or the state.<sup>12</sup>

Forced and compulsory labour schemes, such as *rajaaki* and *kar-i-begar*, captured the attention of British colonial travellers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the British both derived benefits from this form of

enforced labour while simultaneously expressing stern criticism (MacDonald 1998: 292–298; Kreutzmann 2020: 100; see e.g., IOL 01: 53). In contrast, participants in continental European expeditions paid less attention to the working conditions of their porters and the political circumstances under which their missions operated. In the diaries and official reports of participants in German expeditions, the organisation of porter work is rarely mentioned. It seems that political and economic structures within the expedition areas only drew the German scientists' attention when they hindered the progress of their expedition. Local politics were only addressed in cases where they resulted in interpersonal conflicts, delays, travel restrictions, staff turnover, or additional expenses.

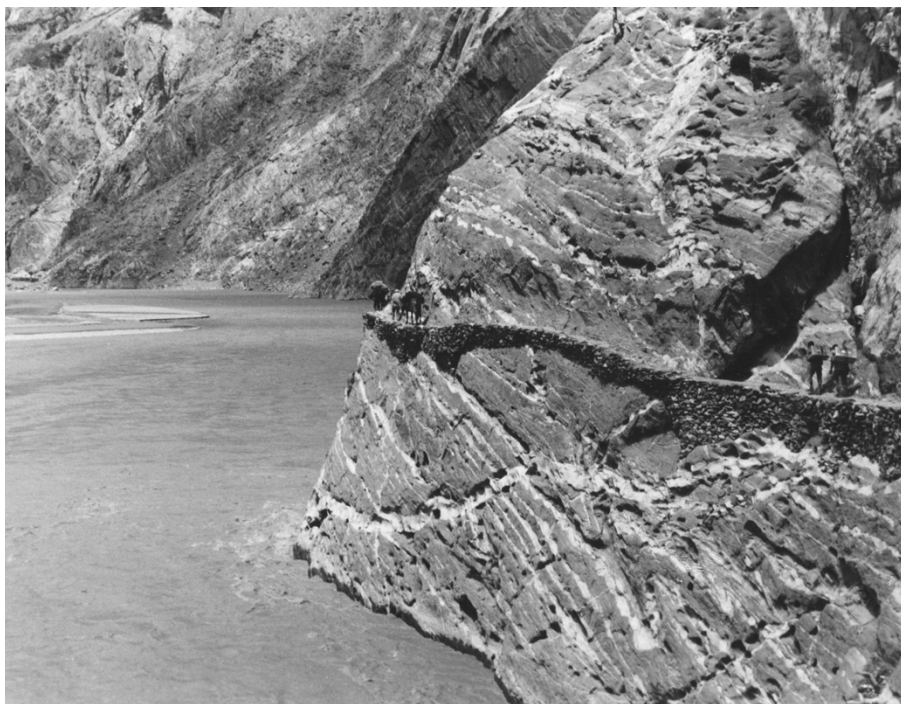
However, by adopting the perspective of a critical history of science it becomes possible to look beyond the visual content of the images and contemplate the socio-political context in which these survey photographs were produced. This change in perspective provides the opportunity for reinterpreting survey photography. On closer examination, seemingly neutral or objective survey images, which often depict uninhabited landscapes, can be recognised as the product of a complex collaborative work process, which was influenced by individuals with highly different interests.

### **3.3.3 Preliminary results of the 1954 expedition**

Despite facing numerous obstacles, the survey teams led by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer managed to produce over 400 photogrammetric images. By the end of July 1954, the survey teams of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition completed their fieldwork on the Batura Glacier and began their return journey to Central Hunza. During this trip, they made a stop at the village of Pasu and established their camp for the night. It was on the 24 July when Karl Heckler made the final entry in his diary:

It has been a constant series of farewells over the past 8 days since we hiked back from the Batura Pass. I took one last look at an exceptionally beautiful mountain, the flowers [...], the small lake, the old campsite, and the shepherds. The slopes near the Batura are adorned with rose blooms as if they are dressed up for a festival. Now, time is rushing by – I can feel it. We are once again falling into the European habit of creating schedules and appointments. For me, the most important work in the Karakoram has been completed, and whatever lies ahead, even if it takes another 14 days, will not be much trouble. (Diary Heckler: 197)

Two days later, on 26 July 1954, between the villages of Gulmit and Sarat, Karl Heckler had a mortal accident. While on a narrow path, Heckler stayed behind the group to take a photograph but slipped and fell, descending about 20 meters into the Hunza River (Pillewizer 1986: 115). He could not be rescued. His body was only found after the other members of the German-Austrian expedition had departed and his remains were temporarily interred in Gilgit.



▼ Figure 3.16

This photograph taken by Wolfgang Pillewizer captures the narrow path (Wakhi *perien*, also called *rafiq*) carved into the rock along the Hunza River. It was on this path that Karl Heckler slipped and fell into the river. In the 1950s, the only road accessible by car terminated at Chalt, and the *perien* served as the sole connections throughout the entire Hunza Valley. Today, these paths have been supplanted by the Karakoram Highway, which was completed in 1978.

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Die Unglücksstelle in der Hunzaschlucht* [paper print, cropped]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 11). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

The death of his colleague deeply affected Wolfgang Pillewizer. But it also raised concerns for the expedition leader regarding the expedition's objectives. Later, Pillewizer reflected on the situation, stating:

The survey of the northwestern Karakoram seemed to have been largely successful – after all, we had taken more than 400 survey photographs [...]. However, at that time, I was uncertain whether it would be possible to evaluate these images without Karl, and furthermore, whether we could calculate the triangulation without his expertise. (Pillewizer 1986: 116)

After the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team had returned to Munich in late September 1954, it became clear that Wolfgang Pillewizer's concerns were justified. Initially, it seemed that Karl Heckler had completed his work to the point where the missing data could be derived from his field notes (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 5). This task was consigned to geodesist Hans Baumert at the *Technische Hochschule München*. However, Baumert's evaluation of the photogrammetric images revealed that the recordings made by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer were inadequate to develop the intended map series. Significant data gaps were identified, particularly in the documentation of the valleys of Baltar and Mouchuhar, as well as on the glaciers of Pasu and Batura (Finsterwalder 1996: 170). The need to fill in these missing pieces of information ultimately led to the decision to organise a second expedition. Five years after the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, in May 1959, the German Karakoram expedition embarked on a journey to the Hunza Valley.

The 1959 mission had fewer participants than its 1954 predecessor. Initially, there was an expectation for Wolfgang Pillewizer to lead this expedition too, but professional commitments made his involvement impossible. As a result, geologist Hans-Jochen Schneider, who had already accompanied the 1954 expedition, took on the leadership of the scientific team. Collaborating with Hans Baumert, his main goal was to complete the photogrammetric survey of the designated expedition area. The 1959

German Karakoram expedition originally aimed to trace the path of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. However, the Pakistani authorities denied this expedition the permission to access the region north of the Batura main ridge. As a result, the verification and supplementation of the data gathered in 1954 within the areas of the Batura and Pasu Glacier were not completed. The situation prompted a shift in focus. The 1959 expedition's scope expanded to encompass the southern and western regions of the northwestern Karakoram, with a specific emphasis on the Minapin Glacier area in Nagar (Schneider and Baumert 1968: 446; Finsterwalder 1996: 170).

The overall outcome of the 1954 and 1959 expeditions requires nuanced consideration. On the one hand, these expeditions produced a wealth of data. Thus, they made significant contributions to German high mountain research in High Asia. These contributions have stood the test of time and continue to be acknowledged, adopted, and further developed even more than half a century later (see e.g., Finsterwalder 1996: 170; Kreutzmann 2020: 19). Moreover, the results generated by these expeditions played a pivotal role in shaping the professional paths of numerous participants, such as Hans-Jochen Schneider. Drawing from the 1954 data, Schneider completed his post-doctoral qualification in 1957 (see Schneider 1959). In 1963, he assumed a position at the Free University of Berlin, where he established the Chair of Applied Geology.

On the other hand, the expeditions did not achieve their intended goals. In 1954, an ambitious plan was announced to conduct a photogrammetric survey covering 3,000 square kilometres. Despite two expeditions, this ambitious objective remained uncompleted: The envisioned 'modern map series' was never realised.

### **3.4 Expedition photography and its application in landscape research**

In September 1954, the participants of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition completed their mission and returned to southern Germany, bringing back thousands of photographs. Over the following decades, these images served various purposes – they were developed, reproduced, and printed, finding prominent places in both scientific and popular publications. Moreover, the expedition photographs became illustrative material in university lectures and public events.

The 400 photogrammetric images, captured by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer, held particular significance. Beyond their role in map production, these survey images played a crucial part in the ongoing exploration of the expedition area. Subjected to interpretation from geographical, geological, glaciological, and topographical perspectives, these survey photographs went beyond being mere carriers of geodata. They transformed into landscape images that facilitated both scientific contemplation and communication.

The following sections will delve into the diverse applications of the survey photographs, with a primary focus on their significance as landscape images within the context of German geography. The German expedition members along with their Austrian leader, are acknowledged among scholars who made substantial contributions to German landscape research post-1945. The theoretical development of the concept was particularly advanced by vegetation geographer Karlheinz Paffen (see e.g., Paffen 1948, 1951, 1953). In alignment with many of his contemporaries, Paffen (1948: 167) regarded the landscape as the “true and central object of geographical research”. The scientific and surveying endeavours of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition need to be contextualised within the framework of German landscape studies and research.

### 3.4.1 Landscape images in German geography

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, geography established itself in German-speaking countries as an independent academic discipline. This new science revolved around describing and understanding the Earth's surface and, accordingly, required appropriate classifications and categories to delineate it (Schultz 1980: 41–47). Therefore, the categories of *Land* (region or country) and *Landschaft* (landscape) played central roles in German geography. Subsequently, these concepts gave rise to the geographical sub-disciplines of *Länderkunde* (regional studies) and *Landschaftskunde* (landscape studies).

In the history of German geography, the concepts of *Land* and *Landschaft* maintain a complex interrelationship. Both terms were of pivotal significance for the discipline, but they also competed with each other. Initially, the concept of *Land* attracted greater attention and was applied more often. However, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of *Landschaft* gained traction. In 1925, Otto Maull, then a professor in Frankfurt am Main, asserted that the academic discipline of geography was the “study of the landscape” (Maull 1925: 36). The following year, *Schulgeograph* Oswald Muris designated the landscape as geography’s “specific object [of research, MH]” (German *ureigenes Objekt*; Muris 1926: 235). This viewpoint garnered broad consensus (see e.g., Mikula 1932: 69). While geography had to share the subject of *Land* with other disciplines, the landscape remained the exclusive preserve of geographers. The idea of landscape thus established the autonomy of geography as a distinct scientific discipline (Schultz 1980: 125–128).

Despite the central importance of landscape in German geography for many decades a uniform definition remained elusive. Some geographers, like Hans Bobek and Josef Schmithüsen, approached the concept nomothetically:

Regional studies [German *Länderkunde*] view and appreciate the geographical object ideographically, i.e., as unique in time and

space. The geographical object understood as a unique and individual entity is what we call a ‘region’ [German Land]. [...] Landscape research [German *Landschaftsforschung*], on the other hand, is a normative approach that classifies the parts of the Earth’s surface into categories or types based on comparisons. Landscape research deliberately ignores the uniqueness of the object of study in order to work out its regularities [...]. In scientific geography, we call such a spatial unit a ‘landscape’ [German *Landschaft*]. (Bobek und Schmithüsen 1949: 113)

Other geographers deemed the clear distinction between *Land* and *Landschaft* as “not sustainable” (Troll 1950: 164). Johannes Granö (1935: 296) argued that “neither geographical individuals nor geographical types are absolute, permanently fixed totalities”. In stark contrast to the definition proposed by Bobek and Schmithüsen in 1949, Carl Troll attributed an individual character to the geographical landscape in 1950:

A geographical landscape (landscape individual or natural landscape) is conceptualised as a segment of the Earth’s surface that, defined by its visual appearance and the interplay of its elements [...], forms a spatial unit with a distinct character [...]. (Troll 1950: 165)

Carl Troll, conversely, perceived *Länder* (countries) as “political and national [German *völkische*] territories” (ibid.).

This diversity of definitions is characteristic of the conceptual ambiguity of the term *Landschaft* in German geography. Therefore, the definition proffered by the geographer Gerhard Hard can be regarded as an act of geographical diplomacy: “The [...] ‘geographical landscape’ is a landscape that is seen in an indeterminate way as a [...] ‘landscape’” (Hard 1970: 234).

Gerhard Hard’s definition might appear tautological; nevertheless, it aptly captures the core of the concept. The argument I want to make is that there was a widespread notion of the landscape as something ‘seen’. *Landschaft* was defined by its visual perceptibility. Therefore, its visual representation became an important means of its scientific exploration. Landscape images evolved into the primary subjects of investigation. The



relevance of landscape imagery for German-speaking scholars, however, goes beyond the history of geography as a modern scientific discipline.

As documented by geographers such as Carl Troll (1950: 164), Gerhard Hard (1970: 113), and more recently, Olaf Kühne (2019: 24–25), the German term *Landschaft* has been in use since the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, it referred to spatial, social, and political phenomena. The decisive factor for the later integration of the term into geography was the use of linear perspective in painting during the Renaissance (Kühne 2019: 25). With linear perspective it became possible to perceive an arrangement of objects as a landscape (Berr 2019: 42). In the painted image, the landscape evolved into an entity of its own.

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a landscape could only be seen and represented in paintings. However, influenced by Romanticism, scholars and naturalists started to recognise specific portions of physical space *as* landscapes (Kühne 2019: 25). The romantic gaze perceived “reality through the eyes of a painter, and nature through the eyes of a landscape painter” (Hard 1977: 14). The landscape paintings of the Renaissance were idealised representations, and the romantic perspective on the landscape was still more normative than realistic. Both Renaissance and Romantic painters crafted landscapes to portray what should (or should not) exist.

The appropriation of this genre by various expedition travellers and naturalists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought about a change. Landscape paintings became increasingly realistic. They were no longer created to portray an idealised perspective but rather to faithfully reproduce existing phenomena. The most famous examples of this new approach can be traced back to the explorer Alexander von Humboldt. In the second volume of his work *Cosmos*, Humboldt dedicated an entire chapter to the visual representation of physical space. At the outset of his reflections, he underscored the qualities of landscape painting:

As fresh and vivid descriptions of natural scenes and objects are suited to enhance a love for the study of nature, so also is landscape painting. Both shew to us the external world in all its

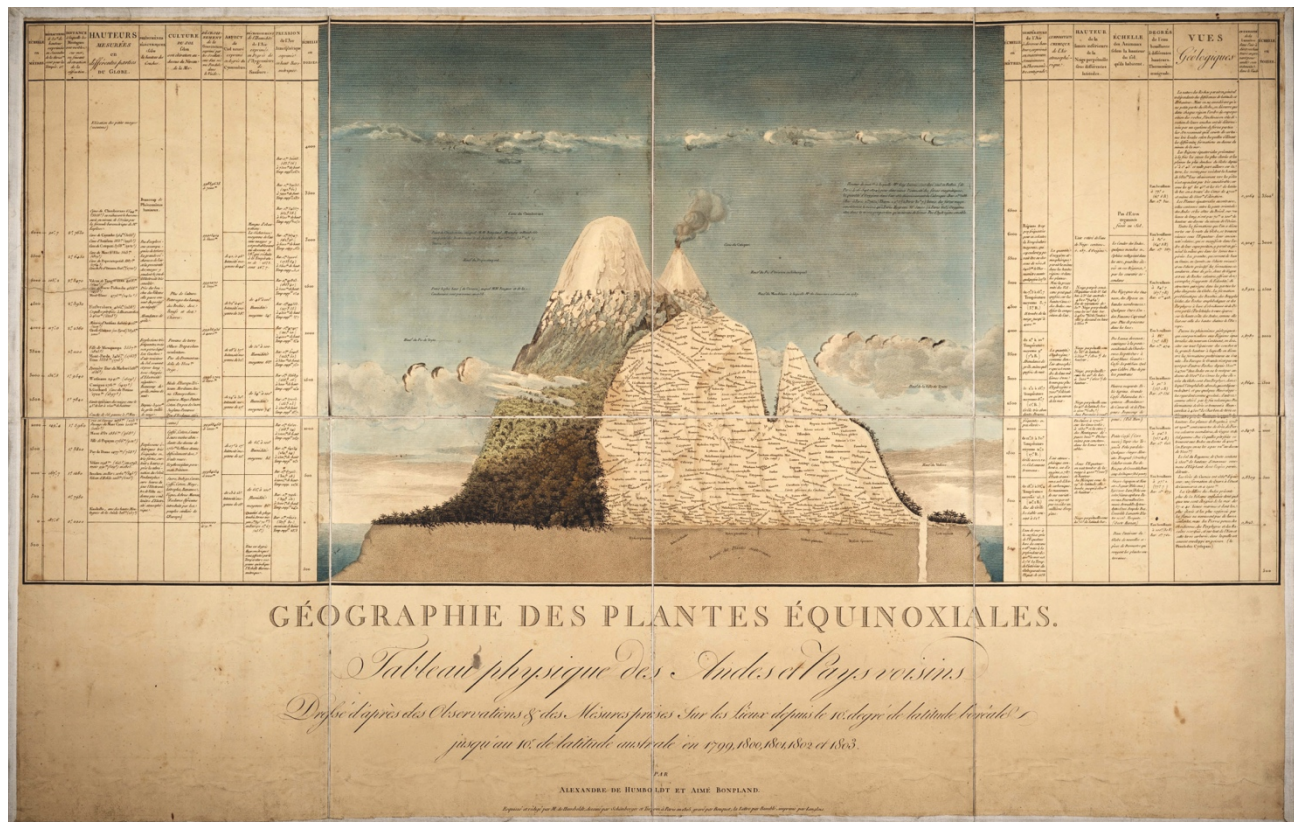
rich variety of forms, and both are capable [...] of linking together the outward and the inward world. It is the tendency to form such links which marks the last and highest aim of representative art. (von Humboldt 1848: 74)

In the works of Alexander von Humboldt and his contemporaries, such as Adelbert von Chamisso, *Landschaft* was no longer defined by the perspective of the painter or the romantic literati, but also by that of the naturalist. The later scientific understanding of the landscape started to emerge. In the naturalists' interpretation of landscape, however, the epistemic relationship between the image and the physical space was reversed: In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the landscape was a painted representation. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this artistic perspective on the landscape evolved into an understanding of physical space. Consequently, landscape was regarded as a feature of nature. Naturalists began to perceive the landscape as a scientific object, as an entity that *really* constituted physical space. Therefore, in the paintings of naturalists, the landscape was no longer a subject of artistic expression; rather, it was considered a faithful representation of a reality 'drawn after nature'.

Among the geographers of the German Reich, the concept of landscape was already a well-established scientific category. In 1903, Richard Seyfert articulated:

The term landscape has gained deeper meaning as it shifted from the language of painters and tourists to the realm of science. [...] The concept of landscape has evolved into a geographical one. In science, landscape is understood as a specific part of the Earth's surface characterised by internal unity – an identifiable geographical individual [...]. (Seyfert 1903: 7–8).

The concept of landscape had evolved into a framework which enabled geographers to divide the Earth's surface into different units. Therefore, it was necessary to explore and document landscapes all over the world. Beyond Europe, this was achieved through expeditions which produced both textual and visual materials.



▲ Figure 3.17

One of Alexander von Humboldt's most famous works is the *Tableau physique des Andes et pays voisins*. In 2019, it was recognised as one of the "most influential diagrams in the history of environmental science" (Moreta et al. 2019: 12889). However, the *Tableau physique* is more than just a diagram. Tobias Kraft (2016: 318) highlights it as a blend of a map, diagram, and landscape painting. Through the combined use of text, numbers, and painted elements, Humboldt pursued an "educational purpose" that, "in today's terms, aimed at developing 'visual literacy'" (ibid.: 314). Using landscape painting as a medium, he created an aesthetically pleasing experience to kindle interest in findings that could only be abstractly conveyed through text and figures (ibid.: 317).

Source: Alexander von Humboldt (1807): *Tableau physique des Andes et pays voisins*. Peter H. Raven Library, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis. Copyright: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Reproduced from Biodiversity Heritage Library, <http://botanicus.org/page/1061689>.

Friedrich Ratzel, a zoologist and geographer, endeavoured to write landscape descriptions that were both scientifically accurate and literarily sophisticated (see Ratzel 1904). Building on Ratzel's contributions, his student Richard Seyfert compared the description of a landscape to a photographic image:

The mere sensory perception of a landscape corresponds to the description of a landscape. [...] The description is akin to the photographic representation of a landscape. (Seyfert 1903: 1)

The landscape paintings by Alexander von Humboldt, along with his “graphical representation of the physiognomy of plants” (von Humboldt 1848: 74), continued to inform the ideas and works of German geographers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Numerous geographers in the German Reich embraced Humboldt's holistic worldview. Humboldt's proposition that landscape imagery can illustrate the connection between “the outward and the inward world” (ibid.) found widespread acceptance. This contributed to an essentialist interpretation of landscape. It was assumed that a landscape possesses a particular ‘essence’ (German *Wesen*; see e.g., Seyfert 1903: 7; Hettner 1927: 376; Paffen 1953: 19) reflected in its overall appearance. Thus, it was considered observable.

In the essentialist understanding of landscape and its later developments such as landscape ecology, description and interpretation are deeply interconnected. The hidden forces which constitute a landscape – its essence – can be grasped and understood if its external manifestations are described scientifically. The observation of the landscape by the geographer, whether in real life or through imagery, is the best method in order to gain scientific insights. Consequently, the photographic image, conceptualised as a form of “description” (Seyfert 1903: 1), assumed paramount importance within the realm of German geography.

In the German Reich, this essentialist concept of landscape became more and more politicised. As a consequence, it was interpreted as a geopolitical directive which manifested itself in the fascist *Lebensraum* and

*Blut-und-Boden* ideology during the reign of Adolf Hitler. The geopolitical implications became apparent in the „Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 20/VI/42 über die Gestaltung der Landschaft in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten“ (General order [...] on the design of the landscape in the incorporated eastern territories) signed by Heinrich Himmler on 21 December 1942:

The landscape in the incorporated Eastern territories has been neglected [...] due to the cultural inadequacy of foreign nations [...]. If this new *Lebensraum* is to become a *Heimat* for settlers, the systematic and nature-oriented redesign of the landscape is a crucial prerequisite. Therefore, it is not sufficient to settle our people in these areas and eliminate foreign nations. The regions must, instead, acquire an imprint corresponding to our national essence [...]. The countenance of the landscape should epitomise the most beautiful and dignified expression of the *Volks- und Raumgemeinschaft*. (Heinrich Himmler as quoted in Mäding 1943: 51; emphasis added)

After 1945, German geographers actively sought to distance themselves from the National Socialist interpretation of *Landschaft* (see e.g., Troll 1947). However, they did not completely discard the concept (Schultz 1980: 228). The holistic approach was maintained but dissociated from the politicised understanding of the 1930s and early 1940s. The trajectory envisioned for geographical landscape research was its transformation into an empirical science characterised by standardised and controllable methods (Michel 2013: 28).

The ‘rehabilitation’ of the geographical concept of *Landschaft* after 1945 is primarily attributed to Carl Troll. Troll, who obtained his doctorate in botany in 1921, quickly garnered widespread recognition as a geographer. In 1930, he assumed the role of associate professor of *Kolonial- und Überseegeographie* in Berlin. Eight years later, he accepted a professorship at the department of geography at the University of Bonn, eventually becoming its director and holding this position until his retirement in 1966. From this influential position he rebuilt German geography after the Second World War.

Already in the late 1930s Carl Troll had developed a geographical concept (see e.g., Troll 1939) that after 1945 gained widespread application and recognition as ‘landscape ecology’ (Lauer 1976: 3). Landscape ecology was founded on the idea that the Earth comprises distinct, self-contained systems, often denoted as ‘ecosystems’ (Troll 1950: 173). These autonomous systems operate through internal processes which manifest themselves externally. This implies that the functionality of a landscape is related to its visual outlook (Neef 1956: 90). Therefore, the landscape image carried an epistemological significance comparable to the one which was at work in the concepts of *Landschaft* before 1945.

Carl Troll made enduring and substantial contributions to German geography. These contributions encompassed not only landscape ecology but also extended to aerial image research and the conceptualisation of ‘comparative high mountain research’ (German *vergleichende Hochgebirgsforschung*). It was, in fact, because of his numerous expeditions that Carl Troll became convinced that the comparative approach should form the basis of geographical landscape research (Lauer 1976: 2).

Some of these expeditions and research ventures deserve to be highlighted. In 1925, Troll attended one of Sebastian Finsterwalder’s *Geltescherkurse* in the Zillertal Alps, where he gained expertise in terrestrial photogrammetry (ibid.: 1). He applied this knowledge in Bolivia just two years later. In 1928, he participated in an expedition to the Andes organised by the German and Austrian Alpine Club. In 1937, Troll led the scientific group of the German Nanga Parbat expedition. Prior to this, between 1933 and 1934, he took part in an expedition to East and South Africa. During the Second World War, Troll, alongside Karlheinz Paffen and Wolfgang Pillewizer, served in the *Forschungsstaffel zur besonderen Verwendung des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*.

In the 1950s, Carl Troll’s ideas about geography were significantly informed by expeditionary science. He repeatedly emphasised that geographical research methods must be globally applicable and comparative. His perspective on the Earth’s surface was not only holistic

but also universal. The tasks he attributed to geographical landscape research were manifold. In today's terminology they would be called 'interdisciplinary'.

According to Troll (1950: 166–167), the first task of geographical landscape research is to document the diverse landscapes of the Earth and to comprehend their forms, structures, boundaries, and characteristics. Troll subsumed this task under the term *Landschaftsmorphologie* (Troll 1950: 166). The second task involves conducting a landscape-ecological analysis that explores the complex interactions of different elements within a landscape. Following the identification of distinct landscapes based on external features and internal functions, the third task is to categorise individual landscapes into landscape types based on their characteristic features. Troll summarised these tasks using the term *Landschaftstypologie* or *Landschaftssystematik* (ibid.). The fourth task, referred to as *Landschaftschronologie* (ibid.: 167), pertains to the examination of the historical developments and transformations of landscapes over time.

The scientific mission of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition can only be fully understood within the context of this positivistic and comparative understanding of landscapes which dominated German geography in the 1950s. The task of capturing the diverse aspects of the landscape was assigned to the geomorphologist Wolfgang Pillewizer and the plant geographer Karlheinz Paffen – and their cameras. Hans-Jochen Schneider and Karl Wienert also dedicated their research to the examination of landscape chronology. The geodesist Karl Heckler contributed to mapping through triangulation and topographic surveys. The maps were supposed to make the results of the expedition members' research "effectively and comprehensively" visible (Pillewizer 1961: 187).

### 3.4.2 Geographical landscape as a photographic perspective

After the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition had returned to Germany, the photogrammetric images captured by Karl Heckler and Wolfgang Pillewizer were given to the *Technische Hochschule* in Munich where they were supposed to be used for mapping (Pillewizer, Paffen und Schneider 1956: 6). However, the significance of the 400 survey images went beyond their application in cartography. They also contributed to other ways of exploring the northwestern Karakoram. Wolfgang Pillewizer had the images reproduced and ensured that a set of duplicates was distributed to each of his former expedition colleagues. The reproduction and distribution of these images transformed the unique photogrammetric material into a comprehensive database accessible to all scientists who were involved in the expedition. Wolfgang Pillewizer had high expectations concerning this database and described its potential as follows:

The photogrammetric images turned out to be incredibly valuable, not just for mapping but also for advancing the scientific exploration of the study area. Within these images, a glaciologist can observe the current state of the glaciers, a geologist can analyse the stratification and composition of the rock formations, and a vegetation geographer can precisely identify the sparse forests and vegetation zones. Consequently, each researcher who took part in the expedition received a set of duplicate survey images. As the researchers scrutinise the photographs, it is akin to revisiting the expedition area, enhancing their field notes. However, this time, they do so comfortably from their desks. (Pillewizer 1961: 190–191; see also Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 6)

The idea that photographic technology could bridge the spatial gap between a scientist's desk and the remote research area goes back to the beginnings of expedition photography. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, advocates of this idea prophesied that photography would ultimately render costly expeditions unnecessary. Among these were, above all, anthropologists



(see e.g., Fritsch 1875: 605; Tylor 1876). Concurrently, the claim that photography could supersede firsthand scientific experience encountered resistance. German geographers and explorers in particular expressed scepticism. These critics emphasised that active fieldwork was the “most important prerequisite” (Meyer 1900: 8) for any comprehensive geographical investigation. It was argued that only in the field could an explorer realise the ‘essence’ or ‘character’ of physical space, engaging all senses in the process. The sounds, odours, and tactile sensations experienced by the geographer were deemed essential factors of scientific evaluation (see e.g., Hettner 1895). The visual impression of a physical space, as captured and conveyed by photography, was only one of the many indispensable aspects of geographical field research.

These objections against the reliance on photography only, which have persisted since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are also comprehensible in the context of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. The fieldwork conducted in the northwestern Karakoram proved to be anything but ‘comfortable’ (Pillewizer 1961: 191). In the field, an array of factors such as rough terrain, high altitude, inclement weather conditions, time constraints, language barriers, illness, politics, and various conflicts significantly influenced the work of the scientists. These factors, intrinsic to the field experience, become invisible in survey photographs. Scientists confined to their desks are therefore unable to experience a given region fully.

Comparing the field work with desk-based research, it becomes evident that the survey images were not meant to enable the scientists to ‘revisit the expedition area’ (Pillewizer 1961: 191) from behind their desks. The photogrammetric images were crafted over weeks of strenuous work with the aim of eliminating any ‘disturbance variables’ encountered in the field. Within the survey images, the perspective of the expedition area was purged of distracting sensory impressions, presenting a rather abstract view of *the* high mountain landscape.

Back at home at the desk, it was not the physical space itself but its visual representation that became explorable, and the actual objects of investigation were the survey images themselves. The analysis of these photographs was the study of the high mountain landscape under 'laboratory conditions'. It was only within the photographs, within the visual construction, that the northwestern Karakoram could be seen as an abstract subject of geography and landscape research. The existence of this subject of geographic research depended on the production of photographs. They generated knowledge about spatial phenomena.

The distinctive feature of landscape and survey photographs, namely transforming physical space into an abstract subject of geographical and landscape research, becomes clearer when compared with other forms of expedition photography. The photo albums compiled by Wolfgang Pillewizer lend itself well for such a comparison. For personal purposes, Wolfgang Pillewizer compiled two photo albums with 221 photographs taken during the German-Austria Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. The albums are predominantly organised chronologically. As a result, the first album begins with photographs capturing the expedition members' departure from Munich, progressing to scenes in the ports of Naples and Karachi, and to the festive reception upon their arrival in the expedition area. The second album concludes with photographs of the visit to the pyramids in Cairo, undertaken by Wolfgang Pillewizer on his return journey to Germany. However, most of the album pages showcase photographs taken within the expedition area. In addition to reproductions of photogrammetric survey images and photographic landscape representations, the selection includes photographs that capture everyday life in the expedition camps, portray scientific activities, and document cultural events in Hunza and Nagar.

The photogrammetric images stand out clearly in terms of composition and content when compared to the other photographs featured in these albums. For example, the latter were taken in the valley or in close proximity to the expedition camps. They offer a perspective at eye level



▲ Figure 3.18

Photogrammetric survey image of Lupdur Glacier. One of the few photogrammetric images that reveal the presence of the surveyor and his assistant. Upon close inspection, one can identify a porter and the theodolite at the bottom of the picture.

Source: Karl Heckler (1954): *Der Gletscher von Lupdur* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 24). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

that captures the immediate surroundings of the photographer. They vividly portray bustling village streets and activities within the camps. They focus on human activity.

In contrast, the survey images adopt a distant perspective. Taken from elevated positions, these images feature expansive framing, guiding the viewer's gaze over the valleys or glaciers and toward distant peaks. As a result, the survey photographs provide a sweeping view of the uninhabited high mountain landscape. Even when they capture the valleys, these images are taken from a high angle, rendering the human sphere distant and occupying, at most, the lower edge of the frame (see e.g., Figure 3.20). These survey photographs convey the impression that the photographer stood significantly above the inhabited and economically exploited regions of the Earth. In these remote locations, the scientists, equipped with their photogrammetric technique, seemed to be scientifically documenting terrain that was otherwise deserted and inaccessible.

Owing to this impression, survey photographs can be interpreted as allegories of a broader exploratory narrative. They depict an uninhabited or 'blank' space, symbolising the territory yet to be conquered by exploration. However, the terrain identified as the research area by the scientists of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition was not as pristine and unclaimed as it appeared in their survey images. This reality was experienced firsthand by Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler during their survey.

Indeed, the German scientists usually did not discover new pathways during their explorations but often traced the routes taken by local shepherds on their way to the pastures. While trying to find optimal shooting locations along the glaciers, several times, Wolfgang Pillewizer was taken aback by the "unexpectedly large number [...] of high-altitude pastures" (Pillewizer 1961: 71).

The routes of the two groups – the participants in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the local shepherds – intersected regularly, and the shepherds were adept at leveraging the presence of outsiders:

It is noteworthy that even every small patch of grass serves as an alpine pasture where sheep, goats, and a few cows graze. I [Wolfgang Pillewizer], lend the shepherds my rope, and they use it to guide a cow into an otherwise inaccessible spot where there is more pasture available. (Diary Pillewizer: 68)

Encounters with the local population of High Asia have been extensively documented in popular expedition and travel literature (see e.g., Schäfer 1938; Pillewizer 1961). The interaction with the so-called ‘mountain peoples’ (German *Bergvölker*) constituted an element of archaic charm associated with travelling in a foreign land, a narrative that authors felt compelled to convey to their readers back home. In contrast, scientific reports rarely included descriptions of these encounters. Scientific texts and photographs, especially survey images, intentionally refrained from depicting residents as an alien, archaic, or exotic ‘other’. This conscious



◀ Figure 3.19

Wolfgang Pillewizer working at Batura Glacier, photographed by Gerhart Klamert in early August 1954.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): *Der Phototheodolit wird am Baturagletscher aufgestellt* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 7). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



Figure 3.20 ▲  
 Panorama composed of two  
 photogrammetric images,  
 published in the expedition  
 report of 1956. The images of  
 the basin of Chalt were taken by  
 Wolfgang Pillewizer in early  
 August 1954 with the photo-  
 theodolite facing east.  
 Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer  
 (1954): *Das Becken von Chalt*.  
 Reproduced from Paffen,  
 Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 19.

omission wielded a significant influence on the conceptualisation and visualisation and of the represented space. The omission of the encounter with the ‘other’ is tantamount to a suspension of perceiving the space as that of the ‘other’. Consequently, the space constructed by Wolfgang Pillewizer in his photo albums, using photogrammetric images, is not conceptualised as that of the shepherds from the Hunza Valley or another local community, but rather as his *own* research area. The photogrammetric images portray the northwestern Karakoram as an environment of geography, geoscience, and landscape research.

The perspective of physical geography and landscape research persisted and dominated the depiction of high mountains for several years following the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Until the late 1980s, German researchers paid minimal attention to the intricate socio-cultural and political dynamics in high mountain regions. The inhabitants of the northwestern Karakoram, along with their land utilisation practices and the complexities of water and grazing rights in those areas, played a marginal role in European exploration and research projects (Mathieu 2011: 9; Kreutzmann 2020: 11). Consequently, in survey images, the human sphere, if represented at all, was relegated to the lower edges of the visuals, nearly beyond the purview of German high mountain research.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.4.3 Blind spots in geographical landscape photography

Through the appropriation of the landscape concept, German geography had opened up a vast field of research. Here, the term ‘vast’ is to be taken literally: an area conceived as a geographical landscape could span several thousand square kilometres. Studying such expansive landscapes proved challenging. Moreover, methods of terrestrial photography or photogrammetry fell short in capturing the object of investigation in a comprehensive way. The field of view in terrestrial recording methods was comparable to, and at times even smaller than, that of the human eye. Individual landscape and survey photographs remained mere details of a larger whole. Consequently, images providing the desired “comprehensive overview” (Pillewizer, 1961: 187) of a landscape were usually compositions based on numerous individual photographs.

Illustrative of such compositions is the map sheet *Minapin (Rakaposhi Range) NW-Karakorum 1:50,000*, which was published in 1967 by Hans-Jochen Schneider (Figure 3.21). This map sheet is among the early cartographic publications that convey the results of the photogrammetric surveys conducted during the Karakoram expeditions of 1954 and 1959. In their accompanying text, editor Hans-Jochen Schneider and co-author Hans Baumert acknowledge that the “area covered by the map sheet, approximately 400 km<sup>2</sup>, represents only a relatively small section of the northwestern Karakoram”. However, they assert that it “nonetheless encompasses all *essential* landscape elements of the *entire* high mountains” (Schneider und Baumert, 1968: 448; emphasis added).

In addition to maps, panoramas were widely employed as a form of representation in landscape research. Photographic panoramas were constructed from at least two, often three, photographs. These photographic compositions expanded the field of view and, consequently, the researcher’s scope of understanding of the landscape (see Figure 3.20).

Many geographical landscape representations are created by assembling several individual pictures into a coherent whole. Consequently, the

MINAPIN (RAKAPOSHI RANGE)

332 (2) NW-KARAKORUM



Übersichtsskizze NW-KARAKORUM key map

Lage und Gebiet von Teilblatt Situation and area of sheet



Trigonometrische Ausgangspunkte  
 Triangulation starting points  
 nach der according to  
 Intersected points nach der Neu-Transpiration 1954/1959 korrigiert  
 intersected points corrected according to new triangulations 1954/1959

Triangulationen  
 Triangulations  
 Photogrammetrische Aufnahmen  
 Photogrammetrical survey

Berechnung und Auswertung der Felddaten  
 Calculations and elaboration of the field work

Das Gebiet südlich der Rakaposhi-Dünen ergänzt nach  
 Area south of the ridge Rakaposhi-Dünes completed according to  
 Kartographische Arbeiten  
 Cartographic work

Die Wälder/Forest/Map

**Erläuterungen**  
 Alle Höhenangaben in Meter (m)  
 Höhenlinienabstand: 50 m  
 Vertikale Höhenlinien: 200 m  
 Falten, Schutt: schwarz  
 Gletscher, Quarzschnee, Gestein: grau

Stellwasserzungen (Stellungen)  
 Wacholder-Beetstöcke und andere kleine Büsche-vegetation  
 Heilige Raschtrich-Pflanz-Beetstöcke

Irrigation canals (Kanalnetze)  
 Junger scrub and trees, and low-lying birch-willow vegetation  
 Heifer contours (Pine) forest

**References**  
 All altitudes in meters (m)  
 Contour intervals: 50 m  
 Stressed contours: 200 m  
 Rock, scree: black  
 Glaciers, perennial snow, and rivers etc.: blue

Herausgeber: W.-J. Schneider  
 Editor  
 Fotolichtbilder u. kartographische Auswertung wurden gefertigt von: Surveying work and cartographic elaboration have been sponsored by:  
 Deutscher Alpenverein und Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft  
 Die Karte zeigt den Gletscherstand im 1954  
 The map depicts field conditions of glaciation  
 Maßstab 1:50.000 1 cm = 500 m Scale 1:50.000  
 1000 m 500 0 500 1000  
 1967



significance of survey photography lay in its capacity to generate a multitude of standardised, i.e., complementary images, ready for subsequent assembly (Ryan 2013: 39). Only in exceptional cases, a single survey image has become the sole focus of geographical interest. During the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, Wolfgang Pillewizer achieved the capture of a photograph that would later become such an exception. This photogrammetric image portrays the north slope of Rakaposhi, acknowledged as “one of the highest mountain slopes on earth” (Pillewizer 1961: 80). The composition of the image aligns with the magnitude of its subject: the photograph captures the expanse from the foot of the mountain at the water level of the Hunza River (approximately 1,860 m) to the summit of Rakaposhi (7,788 m). Wolfgang Pillewizer successfully captured this unusually wide perspective onto a single photographic plate by creating a considerable distance to the mountain and after having ascended to a vantage point at 4,544 metres.

On 19 June 1954, Wolfgang Pillewizer ascended to the ‘Hachindar’ survey marker, established by the Survey of India 40 years earlier in 1913. Three porters accompanied him, one of whom was “a local from the village of Hindi familiar with the route” (Diary Pillewizer: 60). In his diary, Wolfgang Pillewizer subsequently chronicled the day’s activities:

Anticipating bad weather in the afternoon, I hurriedly ascend to the ridge at 4,300 metres by 7 am. For the first time, I sense a slight heart problem, probably a result of the exertions from the previous day. Taking a Cardiazol tablet with dextrose swiftly alleviates the symptoms, including severe palpitations. Now, the challenge is locating the Trig. P. [triangulation pillar or trigonometrical point, MH] Hachindar of the Survey of India at 14,900 feet (4,550 metres). The description is somewhat vague, but the first peak I reach turns out to be the correct one. At the summit, I discover a circle and a point carved in stone. However, the indicated altitude does not seem to be correct as my altimeter registers a lower altitude. I instruct the porters to build a cairn, and then I embark on photogrammetric work, continuing until 2 pm. At first, the view of the peaks is clear, but as time passes, clouds gather, and by the time I finish, the first

*Opposite*

Figure 3.21

Map sheet *Minapin (Rakaposhi Range) NW-Karakorum* 1:50,000, based on the photogrammetric surveys conducted by Hans Baumert, Karl Heckler, Wolfgang Pillewizer and Hans-Jochen Schneider during the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the 1959 German Karakoram expedition.

Source: Hans-Jochen Schneider (Hg.) (1967): *Minapin (Rakaposhi Range) NW-Karakorum 1:50.000* [map sheet]. Copyright: Deutsche Karakorum Expedition 1959.

Reproduced from the collection of Hermann Kreutzmann/ Institut für Geographische Wissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin.

thunderstorm has arrived. Feeling tired yet reasonably satisfied, [...] I have the equipment packed up and descend to Muchichul [Muchutsil, MH]. (Diary Pillewizer: 62)

From his vantage point at the Hachindar survey marker, Wolfgang Pillewizer enjoyed a view that he would remember as “overwhelming” (Pillewizer 1986: 108). However, the survey photograph taken of the Rakaposhi north slope on 19 June 1954, barely conveys this emotional impression. It is its scientific aesthetics, produced by an extremely wide field of view, frontal perspective, the absence of colour, and the reduction of the view to 13 x 8 cm (further reduced in most publications), that significantly diminished Wolfgang Pillewizer’s subjective impression.

Instead of evoking sentiments, the photogrammetric image appears almost schematic. Despite being a photograph, it resembles early painted geographical representations of mountains, such as Alexander von Humboldt’s renowned *Tableau physique des Andes et pays voisins* (Figure 3.17). This impression primarily emanates from the clear delineation of the distinct altitudinal zones within the mountainous landscape in the photograph. Indeed, the individual altitudinal zones of the mountain landscape stand out as the most striking feature of the picture.

The lower quarter of the picture depicts the desert steppe zone of the valley. It is characterised by sparse vegetation on the one hand and human settlements amidst irrigated oases on the other. Above this, the next altitude zone is portrayed, featuring sparse juniper stocks. In the upper third of the picture, the contours of the nival zone can be recognised, from where the glacier snouts extend down into the lower zones. In the upper quarter of the photograph, one sees the summit of Rakaposhi, partially obscured by cumulus clouds. The sharpness and clarity of the image, perceptible even in various paper reproductions of the photograph, attests to the use of a glass plate as the recording medium. This ‘glass-plate aesthetics’ further accentuates the perceptible contrast between the different altitudinal zones depicted.



▲ Figure 3.22

Detail of the photogrammetric image of Rakaposhi north face, captured by Wolfgang Pillewizer on 19 June 1954. The survey photograph covers an area in the northwestern Karakoram that closely corresponds to that depicted on the *Minapin (Rakaposhi Range) 1:50,000* map sheet of 1967 (Figure 3.21). For landscape researchers in the 1950s and 1960s, the photograph served as a representative portrayal of a high mountain landscape.

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Die Rakaposhi-Nordflanke von Hachindar mit dem Phototheodoliten aufgenommen*. Reproduced from Pillewizer 1961: following page 80.

In this particular survey photograph, Rakaposhi is not portrayed as an individual geographical, morphological, or orographic phenomenon. Instead, the attention is directed to the ‘general character’ or ‘essence’ of the mountain by way of image composition and content; Rakaposhi is photographically visualised as a distinct *type* of landscape. Although the photograph represents only a small section of the northwestern Karakoram it nonetheless, quite like the map sheet *Minapin 1:50,000*, displays ‘essential landscape elements of the high mountains’ (Baumert and Schneider, 1968: 448). The image caters to the holistic gaze on the landscape and the “wondrous forces” (von Humboldt 1848: 29) or “elements” and “functional interrelationships” (Troll 1950: 163–164) that it is composed of.

By conceptualising the survey photograph as a representation of a distinct landscape type, it became an object of abstract scientific analysis and interpretation, facilitating its use and presentation in various contexts. Initially featured in the “Preliminary report on the scientific work of the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition” (Pillewizer, Paffen und Schneider 1956: 27), this survey photograph gained further attention a decade later when Hans-Jochen Schneider and Hans Baumert (1968: 448) incorporated it into their text accompanying the expedition map *Minapin 1:50,000*. In this context, the authors encouraged a distinctly geodetic interpretation by presenting the uncropped image and displaying its fiducial marks.

Between the 1950s and 1980s, Wolfgang Pillewizer repeatedly employed the survey image of Rakaposhi’s north slope. For example, in his popular science book on the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, *Zwischen Wüste und Gletschereis* (Between desert and glacial ice), the survey photograph is featured among 57 illustrations in the book (Pillewizer 1961: following page 80). Distinguished by its composition and content, the survey photograph stands in contrast to the numerous colour photographs depicting everyday life in the expedition camps, scenes of villages, and portraits of people in the Hunza Valley. Nevertheless, it

assumes paramount significance in Wolfgang Pillewizer's book. None of the other photographs within the book encapsulates the theme 'between desert and glacial ice' as distinctly as the photogrammetric recording of the Rakaposhi north slope.

Geographical landscape images depict physical space from a specific perspective, capturing a distinct section of the Earth's surface. Ideal landscape images should encompass all elements that characterise the landscape. As demonstrated by the example of the survey image of the north slope of Rakaposhi, achieving this goal required a specific distance between the camera and the photographed section of the Earth. This approach, favoured by (vegetation) geographers and landscape ecologists, faced criticism, particularly from botanists. The latter preferred a closer perspective to enable detailed examination and representation of individual plants. Additionally, plant sociologists occasionally found the geographical photographic approach to be insufficiently detailed and overly generalised (Kwa 2018: 180, 196). And as far as the human sphere is concerned, one could also accuse landscape research of adopting an overly generalising perspective.

In the theoretical framework of German landscape research, some attention was indeed granted to anthropogenic influences. Carl Troll, for instance, in 1950 underscored the necessity to integrate the human sphere into landscape research:

The functional approach [of landscape ecology] arises from the consideration that all geofactors, encompassing both the inanimate and animate aspects of nature, as well as, if present, the functions of human economy and culture, are interrelated. Based on the degree of human influence, one generally distinguishes between natural landscapes and cultural landscapes, taking into account that a cultural landscape includes not only the natural components but also the establishments of economic culture, settlement, and transportation. Additionally, it incorporates the manifestations and influences of the intellectual disposition of its inhabitants, including their traditions, language, nationality, societal structure, art, and religion. (Troll 1950: 164)

During the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, Karlheinz Paffen was tasked with documenting and examining the cultural landscape of the Hunza Valley. However, in the “Preliminary report”, he admitted that the information he had gathered on “complex ownership structures, inheritance and water rights, and the social structure” was “incomplete and frequently inaccurate due to time constraints and linguistic difficulties” (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 30).

Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the challenges faced by Karlheinz Paffen in investigating the ‘cultural landscape’ within the northwestern Karakoram were not solely attributed to time constraints and language barriers. A fundamental issue arose from the way the members of the German-Austrian expedition had predefined the scope of their research. In the 1950s, landscape researchers divided physical space into distinct, self-contained units known as landscapes. However, spheres of anthropogenic influence often extend beyond the confines of a landscape’s scale. Social, political, and economic dynamics operate within contexts that transcend the boundaries of a single landscape. The researcher, whose perspective was confined to a specific segment of the Earth’s surface, encountered difficulties in comprehending the intricate and far-reaching dimensions of social, political, economic phenomena. These very difficulties were also addressed by Karlheinz Paffen in the “Preliminary report”:

The rural cultural landscape of the Hunza Valley reveals impressive development, meticulous organisation, and harmonious design. Surprisingly, many elements that appear modern have ancient origins. Therefore, the stark contrast in the exceptionally primitive living conditions of the Hunza population, whose material culture embodies unimaginable simplicity and unpretentiousness, is truly unintelligible. (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 32)

However, the exclusion of broader historical and socio-political aspects from the consideration of German landscape research was not the result of negligence but rather a purposeful decision. Numerous advocates of

essentialist and positivist landscape research resisted the notion of the “human [as] the primary subject and central actor on the stage of geographical science” (Rückert 1951: 92). Karlheinz Paffen, in particular, regarded a human-centred research approach as an existential threat to the field of geography:

The primary reason for physical anthropogeography lagging behind seems to stem from a broader shift in geography [...]. This shift is characterised by a somewhat incomprehensible dominance of perspectives from the humanities and social sciences, occasionally coupled with a significant lack of robust scientific, particularly biological, underpinnings. This trend poses a considerable risk to the entire field of geography. (Paffen 1959: 372)

From Karlheinz Paffen’s point of view, those concerns were justified. The increasing influence of ‘perspectives from the humanities and social sciences’ within German geography was poised to undermine the pre-eminence of landscape studies. In 1969, fifteen years after the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, students of geography gathered at the *Deutsche Geographentag* (German Geographers’ Congress) in Kiel. There, they protested against highly respected geographers and called for the abolition of regional and landscape studies. According to these students, regional and landscape studies were an “unscientific and oversimplified process of accumulating facts about countries and landscapes” (Hillers 1968/69: 285). They argued that the science of geography should no longer rest on the ‘baseless’ concepts of *Land* and *Landschaft*:

In lieu of these traditional approaches, the students insisted on a shift towards geographical inquiries that address real-world problems with societal relevance. They called for investigations covering urbanisation and its associated challenges [...], the utilisation and potential overexploitation of natural resources [...], social tensions and conflicts from a global perspective, and the impact of social change on spatial considerations. (Hillers 1968/69: 285)

The Geographers' Congress in Kiel is widely regarded as a pivotal moment in the trajectory of German geography. Geographer Ilse Helbrecht (2014: 319) characterises the events of 1969 as a "revolution". Yet she concedes that the student protest did not bring about an immediate paradigm shift. Rather, it laid the groundwork for the emergence of an "extremely [...] fragmented situation within the discipline" (ibid.: 320).

Starting from 1969, the idea of assimilating all geographical perspectives under the concept of the landscape as envisioned in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has faded. Instead, geography has undergone further diversification or, as Ilse Helbrecht puts it, 'fragmentation'. The field is now characterised by a diverse spectrum of perspectives. This is evident not only in theoretical frameworks but also in visual representations. One end of this spectrum is characterised by visually emphasising that humans are the "primary subjects and central actors on the stage of geographical science" (Rückert 1951: 92). The opposite end is marked by a geographical perspective which takes more distance than ever before: it looks at the Earth from outer space.

### **3.5 In the shadow of the Alps: Reflections on the image composition of expedition photographs**

The different techniques of German high mountain photography were developed in the Eastern Alps. In 1954, these methods, initially designed for depicting European high mountains, were used by the participants in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition to document the unique spatial conditions in the northwestern Karakoram. The expedition photographers sought to collect valuable scientific information about the Karakoram region. However, their photographs were also used to generate knowledge about high mountain landscapes in general. This



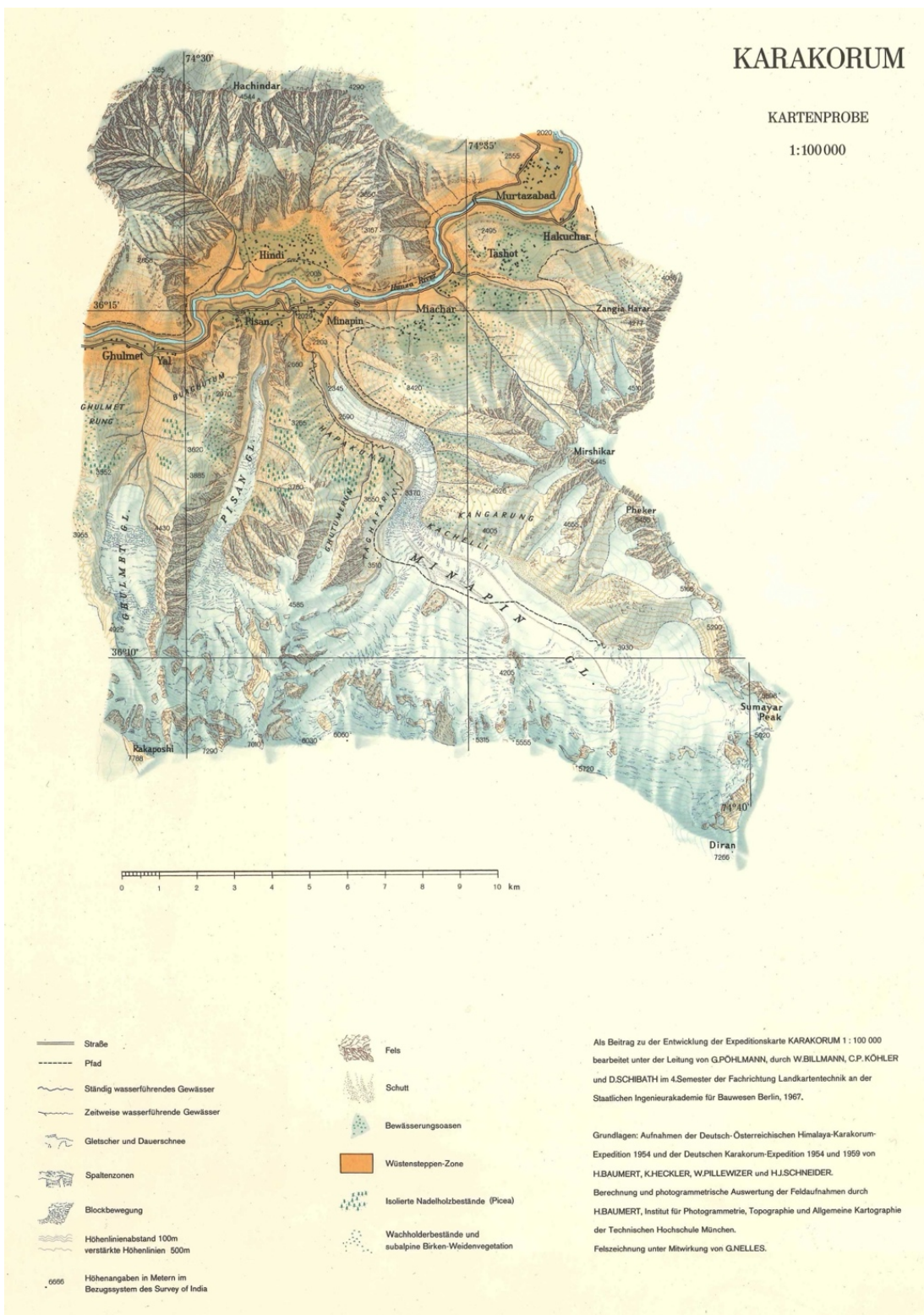
raises the question of how general scientific knowledge can be derived from photographs of specific, and possibly unique, environments. This question serves as a starting point for the final sections of this chapter. In answering it, I want to address a more fundamental issue: What characterises scientific expedition photography?

In the following, I will illuminate the role of image composition in creating and communicating spatial information gathered during expeditions. In this context, I will introduce the concept of ‘photographic redundancy’ as a crucial feature of expedition photography.

### **3.5.1 Making the unseen visible: The visual language of expeditionary science**

The ‘modern map series’ of the northwestern Karakoram, envisaged by Hans-Jochen Schneider (1960: 118) was never completed. Nevertheless, a few map sheets and map samples were generated following the expeditions of 1954 and 1959. These maps were created to convey the main landscape features of the expedition area (Pöhlmann 1974: 111–112). They are of interest from both a cartographic and historical perspective. On the one hand, they are the first large-scale maps of the northwestern Karakoram region (Kreutzmann 2020: 19). At the same time, they are among the last instances of cartographic work based solely on the results of expeditionary surveys and the use of terrestrial photogrammetry (Schneider und Baumert 1968: 446).

In 1967, Hans-Jochen Schneider had published the expedition map *Minapin (Rakaposhi Range) NW-Karakorum 1:50,000*. The following year, Schneider and Hans Baumert authored the accompanying text for the map. Both the map sheet and its accompanying text credit cartographer Otto Walter from Frankfurt am Main as its sole creator. However, upon examining another cartographic work, i.e. the map sample *Karakorum 1:100,000* from the same year (see Pöhlmann 1974: following page 116), it becomes evident that four students from the State Academy of Civil



Engineering in Berlin (*Staatlichen Ingenieurakademie für Bauwesen Berlin*) made significant contributions to the design of the expedition map *Minapin* (*Rakaposhi Range*) *NW-Karakorum 1:50,000*.

One of these four students was Gerhard Pöhlmann. In the 1970s, he continued working with the *Minapin* map sheet while pursuing his doctoral studies at the Free University of Berlin. In his 1974 thesis on the *Cartographic representation of landscape physiognomy*, Gerhard Pöhlmann analysed the design and composition of the expedition map sheets *Minapin 1:50,000* and the map sample *Karakorum 1:100,000*. He initiates his deliberations with general considerations:

Expedition cartography involves specific recording techniques and unique cartographic challenges. Its purpose is to discover and convey the unknown. In well-developed areas with thorough surveys conducted a century ago, minimal cartographic adjustments and improvements are needed. [...] However, expedition maps are produced under the previously unknown conditions of the [...] surveyed areas. In this context, only individual solutions can yield optimal results. (Pöhlmann 1974: 101)

The ‘cartographic challenge’ that Gerhard Pöhlmann describes is, strictly speaking, an epistemological challenge: making previously unknown subjects comprehensible and knowable. All expedition images, including maps and photographs, are crafted with the explicit purpose of addressing this challenge. They aim to make the unseen visible and convey knowledge about the unknown. Therefore, Gerhard Pöhlmann’s reflections on expedition cartography can also enhance the understanding of expedition photography and deserve further consideration.

At first glance, it seems possible to convey knowledge about an unfamiliar area by creating an image as faithful or ‘true to nature’ as possible. However, paintings ‘drawn after nature’ or photographs do not necessarily provide the beholder with an understanding of what is depicted. Even if it were possible to create a lifelike image of a place, that alone would not ensure the successful conveyance of its unique

*Opposite*

Figure 3.23

The map sample *Karakorum 1:100,000* was created with regard to the planned expedition map of the same scale.

Source: G. Pöhlmann, W.

Billmann, C.P. Köhler und D.

Schibath (1967): *Karakorum, Kartenprobe 1:100.000* [map

sample]. Published in Pöhlmann 1974: following page 116.

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Wissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin.

characteristics to someone unfamiliar with it. Viewers cannot easily recognise previously unknown visual information in a picture without the support of supplementary information with which they are already familiar. The unknown, therefore, requires an already known frame of reference within which it can be understood. In the context of expedition cartography, Gerhard Pöhlmann states:

The lack of a clear conceptualisation of the depicted objects cannot be compensated for solely by naturalistic representation. [...] It is only through a representation that uses redundancy that one can grasp the cartographic depiction of an unfamiliar landscape physiognomy. (Pöhlmann 1974: 110)

When conveying information about previously uncharted territories, expedition cartographers incorporated a significant degree of redundancy into their maps. In other words, they added map elements that did not introduce new or unique data but instead emphasised or reinforced existing cartographic information.

Expedition maps were intended for various target audiences. They were meant to serve scientific research. Additionally, they aimed to introduce the expedition area to a broader audience beyond scientific circles (Pöhlmann 1974: 108). Therefore, designing the *Minapin 1:50,000* expedition map posed a twofold challenge. On the one hand, it was necessary to create a cartographic representation of the terrain that conveyed its unique landscape features, being useful for landscape researchers. On the other hand, the map sheet had to bear resemblance to existing cartographic representations of the Alps so that map users, especially alpinists and mountaineers, acquainted only with alpine cartographic representations of high mountain landscapes, could recognise the northwestern Karakoram *as* a high mountain landscape. The twofold challenge in creating the *Minapin 1:50,000* map sheet was addressed by using redundant information, specifically by employing a familiar colour scheme; but to do so in a novel way.

In the 1960s, when the map sheet *Minapin 1:50,000* was produced,

using colours to indicate elevation was a well-established practice in cartography. The origins of this technique can be traced back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Austrian and Swiss cartographers first employed it in mapping the Alps (Jenny and Hurni 2006: 198). A specific colour scheme for depicting altitude and variations in elevation gradually became established and was replicated in numerous cartographic representations of the Alps. This scheme employed green or blue-green to indicate lowlands, yellow and yellow-brown for medium altitudes, and brown to represent high altitudes and mountains. The intensity of the brown could be deepened to reddish-brown for altitudes exceeding 4,000 metres (ibid.). The colour scheme gained popularity under the premise that it authentically reflected the landscape of the Alps, with “green representing fertile flatlands and brown indicating highlands with less vegetation” (Imhof 1959: 66).<sup>14</sup>

The seemingly natural and realistic colour scheme became well-known among German map users, especially since the 1940s, owing to its widespread use in school atlases and wall maps.<sup>15</sup> In the 1970s, Gerhard Pöhlmann (1974: 113) noted that German map readers would habitually associate the green colour on the map with the “humid lowlands of the Alps”. It was precisely this habit of interpreting maps of mountain regions that presented both a dilemma and an opportunity for the cartographers responsible for crafting the expedition map sheet, *Minapin 1:50,000*.

In theory, the colour scheme designed for mapping the Alps could have been well applicable for crafting detailed maps of the northwestern Karakoram. In practice, however, adjustments had to be made to ensure that the chosen colours correctly reflected the unique landscape features of the northwestern Karakoram. Although landscape researchers classified both the Alps and the Karakoram as mountains, the regions exhibit decisive differences. These differences concern the overall altitude as well as the climate. In this context, Gerhard Pöhlmann points out:

The Minapin map sheet must not create the impression of a humid, green lowland. In the hot valley zone, up to 5 to 35% of

the soil is dry. The colour of the Karakoram landscape is dominated by rock. (Pöhlmann 1974: 113)

To prevent any confusion among Austrian and German map users, especially in mistakenly associating the green colour on the map with humid and fertile lowlands, a strategic modification was implemented when creating the *Minapin* map sheet. In this modification, red – typically used to indicate high altitudes in Alpine cartography – was employed to represent the valley zone in the northwestern Karakoram.<sup>16</sup> To indicate increasing altitude, the colour scheme transitioned from red to green, then to grey-blue and white, with the latter representing glacial ice. These adaptations of the alpine colour scheme enabled expedition cartographers to leverage the habits of map readers and effectively communicate previously unknown information about the landscape of the northwestern Karakoram.

The use of redundant information is not unique to cartography. This specific form of image creation and composition is inherent in many expedition images, including photographs. In the ensuing discussion, I will transpose the cartographic concept of redundancy to expedition photography.

### **3.5.2 The northwestern Karakoram as a scientific locale**

Only on rare occasions were expedition photographs viewed and distributed in the places where they were taken. Typically, European expedition members journeyed thousands of kilometres to the ‘remote’ expedition areas, taking back the exposed films upon departure. As a result, the contexts of image production and image usage diverged.

The photographs taken by the members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition in the semi-autonomous principalities of Hunza and Nagar were shot at high altitudes, in challenging terrain, amid unpredictable weather conditions, and through collaborative efforts of a

sizable team. In contrast, these photographs were later viewed in urban settings in Austria and Germany – in lecture halls, laboratories, and offices. The primary audience comprised German-speaking individuals, including students, researchers, cartographers, and an interested public. While many of these viewers were familiar with scientific and photographic representations of mountains, only a few had experienced the environment of the northwestern Karakoram themselves. To aid viewers unfamiliar with the area in interpreting the images, the photographers had incorporated additional or ‘redundant’ image information already when they took the photographs.

With the term ‘photographic redundancy’, I refer to pictorial elements within photographic images that, while not essential for comprehension, enhance the ease and clarity of image interpretation. Redundant photographic information is intended to guide the viewer toward a particular interpretation of an image. It serves as a tool to elucidate the unknown. However, redundant information caters exclusively to a specific audience, as it is tailored to the viewing habits and needs of the intended recipients.

The photographs taken by the scientific members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition were composed to reveal the essential features and elements of the Karakoram landscape. A distinctive characteristic of the physiognomy of the northwestern Karakoram was the wide variation in altitude. On the expedition maps, this was represented by contour lines and highlighted through colouration. In the photogrammetric images, a metric camera was used to generate additional spatial information. This supplementary data made the images computable. However, expedition photographs taken without a metric camera lacked this characteristic. Therefore, without redundant photographic information, they would not have been able to convey details about the dimensions and proportions of the photographed landscape.

According to Gerhard Pöhlmann, when looking at landscape images,

[...] we subconsciously form an idea of the spatial dimensions displayed. This idea is only accurate when grounded in experiences from [...] similar spaces. However, if the depicted landscape does not correspond to any of our experiences, then our perception of its dimensions is inevitably incorrect. (Pöhlmann 1974: 108–109)

This indicates that individuals who rely on viewing experiences gained in the Alps when scrutinising a landscape photograph from the Karakoram might misinterpret the dimensions of the Karakoram landscape, and potentially underestimate its actual proportions. Consequently, the distinctive feature of great altitude variation is likely to be overlooked in an ordinary expedition photograph. To prevent such misinterpretations, the expedition photographers in 1954 incorporated redundant image elements.

Any objects with properties or sizes assumed to be familiar to the future beholder were considered suitable as redundant pictorial elements. This included items such as expedition luggage, matchboxes, tents, and tools, but also people. The expedition photographers intentionally positioned members of their team, primarily porters and high-altitude porters, in the photographs (see Figures 3.24 and 3.25). This allowed the previously unseen proportions of the Karakoram to appear against the familiar element of a human figure's height. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European mountain photographers have used the human figure as 'staffage', a reference point, or scale within their photographs (Holzer 2006: 16). Therefore, the expedition photographers of 1954 could be confident that viewers of their images would also interpret the photographed porters as a pictorial element providing scale.

Redundant photographic elements could also cater to a more specific audience. Geologist Hans-Jochen Schneider regularly incorporated his geologist's hammer into the composition of his photographs taken during the 1954 expedition (see Figure 3.26). The use of a hammer as a pictorial element is a common practice in geological photography. It serves as a clear scale for the photographed object. Additionally, the geologist's





▲ Figure 3.24

Photograph taken by Wolfgang Pillewizer on the Batura Glacier.  
The proportions of the landscape become discernable when  
compared to the height of the human figure.

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Ein Eistal im  
Baturagletscher* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt  
(GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL  
03: 19). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



Figure 3.25 ▲

Large firn crevasses on Batura, photographed in July 1954.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Gähnende Firnkluft* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 30).

Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

hammer serves as a distinctive marker, indicating the relevance of the photograph to geology. By incorporating the geologist's hammer, the picture's subject becomes comparable to other geological images. It invites and facilitates scientific evaluation.

Recognising additional pictorial elements *as* redundant photographic information is essential for the successful interpretation of expedition photographs. Firstly, recognising photographic redundancy is crucial for understanding the photographer's intended message in a historically accurate manner. A landscape image included in a scientific photo collection featuring a porter in the foreground is unlikely to be a portrait of that individual. Hence it would not align with the original intent of photographer Wolfgang Pillewizer to interpret one of his landscape photographs, showcasing local men in the foreground, as an anthropological study.

Secondly, the concept of photographic redundancy can answer the question of how expedition photographs have represented the Karakoram as a locale for scientific research. Expedition photographs were typically viewed in locations different from where they were taken. As a result, redundant information targeted individuals unfamiliar with the depicted space. This, in turn, emphasises that redundant information is not specific to the place depicted; instead, it represents external pictorial elements. Redundant photographic elements, such as a matchbox or a geologist's hammer, are objects that were not originally part of the location depicted in the photograph. These items were intentionally introduced into the scene to enhance the external or nonlocal viewer's understanding of the space depicted.

When Hans-Jochen Schneider captured a photograph featuring his geologist's hammer, he was specifically addressing fellow geologists, a distinct group of viewers familiar with the tool's dimensions, typically a handle length of 30 to 40 cm, and its purpose in the image, serving as a scale during field photography. Through redundant information, photographs go beyond documenting space; they offer additional insights



Figure 3.26 ▲

Hans-Jochen Schneider included this photograph taken during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition in his publication on “Tectonics and Magmatism in the NW Karakoram”. The photograph has been altered, with an additional scale manually added to precisely indicate the size of the gneisses.

Source: Hans-Jochen Schneider (1954): *Anatektische Übergänge von ‘voralpindischen alten Gneisen’ in Granodiorit [...]*. Reproduced from Schneider 1959: 444, Abb. 10.

on how to conceptualise the represented space. By integrating external geological details to the scene, the photographed location becomes distinctly geological. Thus, Hans-Jochen Schneider, through his photographs, crafted a spatial imagination that only existed within his photographic staging: the northwestern Karakoram as a geological environment. By photographically staging space as a scientific locale, expedition scientists constructed an environment of their own – a locale of scientific research.

Redundancy in expedition photography served an additional purpose: it functioned as a method of standardising spatial representations. Redundant photographic elements were not exclusive to the photographs taken during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Expedition photographers exploring regions as diverse as the Andes, the Alps, and the Himalayas incorporated similar redundant pictorial elements into their images. For example, geologists globally utilised their hammer, while researchers focusing on landscape representation commonly incorporated a human figure for scale. The uniformity in photographic composition gave rise to a universal visual language, facilitating the comparison and analysis of photographs captured in high mountain environments worldwide.

However, this standard in photographic composition had been established in the Alps. For many decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, European researchers, particularly from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as British explorers, regarded the Alps as the benchmark for evaluating other high mountain regions. In the context of German high mountain research, Carl Troll emphasised this aspect in his 1955 definition of ‘high mountains’:

High mountains are mountains that, within their respective climatic belt, rise to such elevations that they display the landforms, vegetation, soil, and landscape character associated with the concept of high mountains *originating in the Alps*. (Troll 1955: 153; emphasis added).



▲ Figure 3.27

“The ‘Dolomites’ of Pasu”, survey photograph from the album of Wolfgang Pillewizer. The photogrammetric image was taken in July 1954, either by Karl Heckler or Wolfgang Pillewizer.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Die „Dolomiten“ von Pasu* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer II (PIL 03: 33).

Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.

By leveraging parallels and comparisons with the familiar features of the Alps, the researchers of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition articulated, depicted, and conceptualised the Karakoram. Consequently, they projected an inherently Alpine-centric perspective on High Asia.<sup>17</sup>

This geographical bias was expressed in the participants' scientific language. Terms such as *Alm* (alp), *alpin* (alpine), or *alpidisch* (alpidic) were recurrently used by Karlheinz Paffen, Wolfgang Pillewizer, and Hans-Jochen Schneider to describe the northwestern Karakoram (see e.g., Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 1; Schneider 1959: 431). Similarly, their photographs express an Alpine-centric perspective. In the northwestern Karakoram, the members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition did not develop an idiosyncratic visual language. Instead, they employed techniques of photographic representation developed and refined in the Eastern Alps. This has led to an enduring conceptual hierarchy in their photographic collections: Despite the considerable altitude of the Karakoram, which far exceeds that of European mountains, its conceptual significance remains overshadowed by the scientific prominence of the Alps.

## Endnotes of pages 83–166

<sup>1</sup> After 1954, Sahib Shah continued to accompany German expedition teams as a liaison officer. Immediately following his participation in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, he joined the German Himalaya expedition. During this expedition, Sahib Shah closely collaborated with geodesist Wilhelm Kick (Heichel 2010: 149). His involvement also extended to the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, led by Hans-Jochen Schneider and Gerhart Klamert.

<sup>2</sup> Since 1947, Nagar and Hunza were princely states of Pakistan. It was only in 1972 and 1974 respectively that they were fully incorporated into the Pakistani administration.

<sup>3</sup> For detailed information on the technical and conceptual status of terrestrial photogrammetry in the 1950s, see Lehmann 1959.

<sup>4</sup> The acronym TAF stands for *Terrestrische Ausrüstung Finsterwalder*.

<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed historical account of the development and use of photogrammetric technology in high mountain expeditions, see Finsterwalder 1939: 67 and Kretschmer 2003.

<sup>6</sup> In this context, Anton Holzer highlights the historical significance of the “nameless porters” (Holzer 2006: 16) who made the photographic exploration of the Alps possible.

<sup>7</sup> The ‘porter insurance’ was arranged with the respective *mir* (see DAV 01, invoice item 62). German-language sources do not specify whether the injured party or the *mir* would receive payment in the event of an insurance claim.

<sup>8</sup> In this context, *lambardar* (or *numbardar*) can be understood as a ‘village representative’ or ‘superior’. The designation *chowkidar* can be interpreted as a ‘guard’ or ‘watchman’ (Kreutzmann 2020: 512, 514).

<sup>9</sup> In his diary, Wolfgang Pillewizer documented ‘porter strikes’ on 29–30 May 1954, 11 June 1954, and 28 July 1954 (Diary Pillewizer: 44, 54, 110). Additionally, Karl Heckler reported on the porters refusing to work on 26 May 1954 and 7 July 1954.

<sup>10</sup> In the Himalayas and Karakoram, a *sardar* (from Persian *sar* = head) is the leader of a group of (high-altitude) porters. A *sardar* coordinates and supervises the portering work. He also mediates between the porters under his command and the climbers.

<sup>11</sup> The work of load-carriers, porters, and high-altitude porters in the Hunza Valley during the 1950s and 1960s has not yet been considered by research. The following remarks on the recruitment and regulation of porter work are therefore intended as a first historical examination of the subject and are based, primarily, on the evaluation of the following records: DAV 02; KLA 01; PIL 01. I gained further insights into the historical circumstances of the (high-altitude) porters’ work through personal conversations in Hunza in July 2021. Information on this subject was provided by Ibadat Shah from Karimabad on 8 July 2021, Mohamad Rafi from Altit on 15 July 2021,

Aziz Ali from Karimabad on 16 July 2021, and Ayub Khan from Gulmit on 19 July 2021. The conversations in Altit and Karimabad were accompanied and translated by Aslam Kotoshi and Attaullah Khan. Since the abolition of the *miri* rule in 1974, the organisational structure of porter services has changed and is now in private hands.

<sup>12</sup> For more detailed information on the terms *kar-i-begar* and *rajaaki*, as well as accounts of their historical development, refer to Berger 1998: 362; MacDonald 1998: 292–298; Spies 2019: 119; Kreutzmann 2020: 100, 453.

<sup>13</sup> Historical landscape photographs, even if not originally taken from an anthropogeographical perspective, can be valuable sources for the study of cultural landscapes. For contemporary research, they are particularly useful for detecting transformations in vegetation cover, glaciers, settlements and agricultural areas. Using the methods of repeat photography and multi-temporal analysis, Marcus Nüsser has shown how historical landscape photographs provide insights into environmental and landscape changes in the Hindukush and Northwest Himalaya (see, for example, Nüsser 2000 and Nüsser and Dickoré 2002). His analysis deepens the understanding of cultural landscape transformations driven by human activities and land uses (Nüsser 2001: 241).

<sup>14</sup> The concept of how a map should be coloured to achieve a realistic viewing experience has changed throughout the history of cartography. As a result, map colouring has been and continues to be a central issue in geographical and cartographic discussions. To compare two distinct representations of mountains, both claiming to realistically reproduce colours, refer to Carl Ritter's "Deutschland als Bas-Relief" of 1803 (Schausten 2012: Abb. 20) and "Deutschland – Südlicher Teil 1 : 500.000" of 2002 (Diercke Weltatlas 2002: 22–23).

<sup>15</sup> The use of this colour scheme remains common today. For a contemporary example from a German school atlas, see Diercke Weltatlas (2002): "Einführung in das Kartenlesen – physische Karte", 12–13 and "Mitteleuropa", 16–17.

<sup>16</sup> Prior to the 1960s, red tones had already been used to represent the arid and semi-arid valley zones in the 1938 *Vegetationskarte des Nanga Parbat (Nordwest-Himalaja) 1 : 50.000* by Carl Troll (see Troll 1938).

<sup>17</sup> On the "globalisation of the concept of the Alps" and the "dominant position of the Alps in Western culture", see Mathieu 2011: 41.



## **4 Expedition mountaineering and photography during the ‘golden age of Himalayan climbing’**

The independence of the Indian subcontinent and the formation of Pakistan in 1947 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of mountaineering in High Asia: the 1950s emerged as the “golden age of Himalayan climbing” (Isserman and Weaver 2008: 295). This development was started by European and North American mountaineering expeditions which, after the Second World War, targeted the world’s highest peaks in greater numbers than ever before. Mountaineering in High Asia, which had begun as a colonial project of exploration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and evolved into nationalist pursuits in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had developed by the 1950s into an international “race to scale the eight-thousanders” (ibid.: 443).

The first ascents of Mount Everest, Nanga Parbat, and K2 resonated strongly in the European and North American media. The accounts of mountaineering triumphs in High Asia were full of fresh imagery from the Himalayas and the Karakoram. The visual narratives spread through various media channels, particularly magazines, advertisements, and films, thereby disseminating both established and novel motifs of exploration. In this context, visuals from the northwestern Karakoram, especially from the Hunza Valley, would become a part of popular culture in Europe and North America throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The photographic trends of those decades are also evident in the works of the German mountaineer Gerhart Klamert. Having participated in both the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition of 1954 and the German Karakoram expedition of 1959, Gerhart Klamert has left behind a collection of

approximately 3,000 images. From a historical perspective, his photographs hold great value today. They provide answers to an array of questions concerning the history of expedition photography in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In my examination of Gerhart Klamert's photographic oeuvre, I focus on the societal, media, and economic factors that informed the visual representation and perception of the Karakoram in the 1950s, particularly within West Germany. My investigation aims to highlight the trends that influenced these visual depictions over time. In this context, I will also scrutinise the effects of touristic portrayals and North American perspectives on High Asia on European expeditionary image production. Ultimately, a comprehensive study of the photographs from the 1950s requires an examination of the commercialisation process of expedition photography and mountaineering. This chapter provides insights into the historical evolution of expedition mountaineering in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century while illuminating the dynamic relationship between image production, media influences, and societal changes.

*Opposite*

Figure 4.1

The artist Martin Schließler participated in the 1954 expedition as a mountaineer. Throughout the expedition, he kept a diary, documenting his experiences with reports and drawings. On 12 June 1954, at the Baltar base camp, he penned the following entry: "We have been in Pakistan for a month now, and things are starting to gain momentum. Today, Anderl and I explored the possibilities of reaching the summit. We managed to scout out a suitable spot for our base camp and, by 7 a.m., completed our reconnaissance at just over 5,000 metres before heading back. It would have been great to climb higher, but dark clouds were sweeping across the mountains. In the evening, another avalanche served as a stark reminder of our smallness in the grandeur of these peaks. Now, we are back in the tent. All day long the hail hits the roof [...]"

Source: Martin Schließler (1954): *12. Juni, Basislager*. Reproduced from Schließler 2004.

#### **4.1 The German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the German Karakoram expedition as mountaineering ventures**

The 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the 1959 German Karakoram expedition were undertaken to gather both scientific and mountaineering knowledge about the northwestern Karakoram. Accordingly, scientists and mountaineers travelled together from Munich to northern Pakistan and from there to the expedition area. At the site, however, the scientists and the mountaineers worked mostly separately and met up only occasionally.

The mountaineering team of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition was led by Austrian Mathias Rebitsch and

12. Juni  
Benin Lager.



Genau einen Monat sind  
wir nun im Patinkan. -  
Ein Teil des Fußes wie ich ihn  
noch nie erlebte. - Und ge-  
nan noch einem Monat  
für nun richtig los. - Mit  
Anderl zusammen erkundete  
ich heute die Möglichkeit auf  
den von uns vorhergesehenen Gipfel.  
Wir standen bereits um 7 1/3 Uhr auf,  
und waren bereits kurz später auf  
den Beinen. Nach im Dunkel stol-  
pernd wie einen nun endlich er-  
stehenden Moränen bei hinauf  
nun dann den flachen Berg  
während den Tag anzufehen. Auch  
der alte Fuß ist in seinem Ele-  
ment und findet gut durch. Ein  
zweites Lager wird gefunden und  
bereits um 7 Uhr können wir in  
einer Höhe von etwa über 5000  
nun stehen. Es wäre schön gewesen  
gleich bis zur Spitze zu gehen aber  
dünne Wolken zogen nun die Berge.  
Am Abend hatten wir noch eine ge-  
waltige Lawine erlebt die nun die  
Wichtigkeit unserer Hülle deutlich  
werden ließ. - Nun sind  
wir wieder am Jelt.  
den jungen Tag  
über prallte die  
Hagel auf Dach und  
grau-rot standen  
die Berge über uns  
keine Nacht wollen  
wir wieder hinauf.



Figure 4.2 ►  
Dolf Meyer raising the Pakistani  
flag for the summit photo taken  
by Martin Schließler on 5 August  
1954.

Source: Martin Schließler (1954):  
unnumbered photograph [35mm  
slide]. Private collection of  
Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by  
kind permission of Gerhart  
Klamert.

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comprised Andreas (Anderl) Heckmair, Gerhart Klamert, Dolf Meyer, Martin Schließler, and Hans Zeitter. Additionally, the physician Paul Bernett and the cameraman Eugen Schuhmacher were part of the team. Liaison officers Daud Beg from Lahore and Shah Khan from Gulmit (Upper Hunza) joined the team in Pakistan.

In the early stages of planning, the climbers in the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team had set themselves ambitious goals, including a plan to ascend the eight-thousander Gasherbrum II in the Baltoro Muztagh region (DAV 6: 19). However, as preparations progressed, this endeavour proved untenable when Pakistani authorities denied them permission to climb Gasherbrum II. The reason was that the entry permit for the Baltoro region had already been granted to an Italian K2 expedition team (Rebitsch 1955: 106). Consequently, the German-Austrian climbers adjusted their plan. Their renewed focus centred on Rakaposhi, a previously unclimbed 7,000-metre peak within the territory of the micro-state of Nagar.

Upon arriving in the expedition area in late May 1954, the mountaineering group promptly commenced an assessment of the feasibility of ascending Rakaposhi. However, in a matter of days, they abandoned this plan due to the adverse weather conditions and the imminent risk of avalanches, making reconnaissance exceedingly perilous. With the objective of “conquering” one of the “unnamed seven-thousanders” (Rebitsch 1955: 106) within the Batura Muztagh, the climbers made the decision to leave Nagar and join their scientific expedition colleagues in Hunza. Following the unsuccessful Rakaposhi endeavour, the expedition faced the urgent need for a concrete achievement – a “visible success” (ibid.: 111) – that could satisfy their sponsors and supporters in Munich. Eventually, on 5 August 1954, Dolf Meyer and Martin Schließler accomplished the ascent of a mountain situated near the expedition camp on the Batura Glacier. The estimated altitude of this mountain was above 7,000 metres. Despite the climbers’ inability to precisely determine the elevation of the mountain, the

photograph taken at the summit served as compelling evidence that “after a long odyssey, the team of climbers had successfully reached their ultimate objective” (Rebitsch 1955: 112; Figure 4.2).

Five years later, the successor to the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the German Karakoram expedition, set off. The 1959 expedition team was notably smaller than that of 1954. The core of the German Karakoram expedition comprised three scientists and four mountaineers. Gerhart Klamert, already a member of the 1954 team, took on the role of the mountaineering leader for the 1959 expedition. Among Klamert’s team were mountaineers Rudolf Bardodej, Fritz Lobbichler, and Erwin Stocker. Temporarily joining the team was Willy Bogner, a prominent German entrepreneur, who covered his own travel expenses and had a primary interest in big-game and trophy hunting. Overseeing the expedition were liaison officers S. A. Rauf from the Pakistan Meteorological Department and Sahib Shah, an officer from the Survey of Pakistan who had previously been part of the scientific team during the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition in 1954.

The mountaineering challenges that Klamert’s team faced in 1959 were no less formidable than those in 1954. In June 1959, the expedition’s mountaineering group established their base camp near the Minapin Glacier within the territory of Nagar. During this time, Rudolf Bardodej and the high-altitude porter Kabul came remarkably close – within a few hundred metres – to reaching the summit of the 7,266-metre Diran. However, much like the events of 1954, adverse weather conditions compelled them to abandon their ascent. Following this setback, by the end of June 1959, all high-altitude camps were evacuated due to heavy snowfall. Subsequently, the mountaineers traversed the expedition area, setting up camps sporadically and dedicating several days to the search for five participants of the British Batura-Muztagh expedition who had been involved in a fatal accident. In the autumn of 1959, the German Karakoram expedition team returned to Munich – this time without a summit photo.

When comparing the routes and programmes of the expeditions carried out in 1954 and 1959 with those of the German expeditions from the 1930s, a clear contrast emerges. The German ventures of the 1930s primarily centred around a solitary mountain: Nanga Parbat. They channelled both their mountaineering and scientific endeavours towards this singular objective. In contrast, the mountaineering-scientific expeditions of the 1950s highlighted a more comprehensive spirit of exploration. This was clearly articulated by expedition leader, Mathias Rebitsch:

The mountaineering group [of 1954] did not intend to focus solely on a predetermined mountain and attempt its conquest throughout the entire duration of the expedition. The primary focus of the group was exploration – a general endeavour to understand the potential of mountaineering in these high mountains. (Rebitsch 1955: 104)

The distinctive approach to mountaineering exploration is also evident in the photographs captured by the members of the 1954 and 1959 expeditions. Instead of focusing solely on a single objective, such as Nanga Parbat, which had for two decades been a central theme for German photographers who featured High Asia, the emphasis shifted towards capturing the expedition itself and its journey. Photographs depicting camp life, landscapes, and cultural or folkloric events took precedence over images showcasing heroic mountaineers and a towering mountain.

The documentary film about the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, titled *Im Schatten des Karakorum* (In the shadow of the Karakoram), further attests to this novel approach in portraying Austrian and German expeditions in the Karakoram region. Filmmaker Eugen Schuhmacher consciously avoided showing dramatic mountaineering tragedies or delving into the pattern of a *Kampf um den Himalaya* (Battle for the Himalayas) which characterised the 1930s narratives. Instead, *Im Schatten des Karakorum* presents idyllic scenes of mountain hiking, interpersonal encounters, and the rich flora and fauna of

the mountainous environment. The film distinctly moves away from the narrative of the German mountaineering hero and the genre of mountain films popularised by National Socialist propaganda.

This shift away from the portrayal of the tragic figure of the German mountaineering hero is also apparent in other visuals from the 1954 expedition, like the diary of mountaineer Martin Schließler (2004). The artist dedicated the majority of his drawings to the daily life of the expedition members. Only a small fraction, approximately one-fifth, of his 150 sketches depict scenes related to mountaineering as such.

This trend in German expedition imagery during the 1950s to depict participants as adventurous travellers rather than heroic mountaineers is also discernible in Gerhart Klamert's photographic collection. Having participated in both the 1954 and 1959 expeditions, Klamert produced a remarkable collection of photographs. This chapter is devoted to the analysis of his photographic legacy and its interpretation.



Figure 4.3 ▲

With his expedition photographs Gerhart Klamert also pursued commercial interests. This becomes evident when examining the photographic objects in Klamert's 35mm slide collection. In labelling the slides, the collector abstained from providing specific details about the content of the images. Instead, he chose to imprint his name on the frames of the 35mm slides, thus securing his copyright in anticipation of rental and sale.

Source: own photograph (2018): unnumbered 35mm slide from the private collection of Gerhart Klamert.

#### 4.1.1 Gerhart Klamert's collection of expedition photographs

Until his death in 2022, Gerhart Klamert maintained ownership of his collection of expedition photographs taken in the Karakoram. The decision to keep this collection in private hands, rather than within archives or academic circles, was primarily motivated by its potential commercial value. Over several decades, Gerhart Klamert aimed to generate supplementary income by trading his expedition photographs and the associated reproduction rights. As such, one might assert that the history of the collection reflects the character of its creator: Gerhart Klamert was a passionate collector and a skilled businessman.

Born on 21 July 1924 in Jägerndorf in Silesia (now Krnov, Czech Republic), Gerhart Klamert arrived in Bavaria as a refugee after the Second World War. In 1947, he found employment in Munich at the office of notary Paul Bauer, a prominent public figure who also led the German





Himalaya Foundation (*Deutsche Himalaja-Stiftung*). It was undoubtedly Paul Bauer who supported Gerhart Klamert's participation in the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition.

After completing his law degree in 1955, Klamert assumed roles as a representative for various German companies. Throughout his career, international business trips provided him the chance to blend his vocational pursuits with his personal passion for travel. Throughout numerous expeditions and journeys, Gerhart Klamert amassed an array of exceptional 'souvenirs', which he brought back to his home in Munich. These ranged from handicrafts and antiques to substantial collections of photographs.

For contemporary research, Gerhart Klamert's collection of expedition photographs from the northwestern Karakoram stands as an invaluable historical source. Its significance primarily derives from the abundance of photographic materials it contains – approximately 3,000 photographs. Equally remarkable is the fact that Klamert preserved this photographic material throughout his lifetime, maintaining its original breadth. Unlike other photographic collections, which emerge from a curated selection of images, Klamert appears to have refrained from such interventions. This choice imparts an exceptional wealth of information to his collection.

During both the 1954 and 1959 expeditions, Gerhart Klamert used up to four different cameras to capture images. His technical equipment was largely borrowed, with notable companies like the camera manufacturer Rollei providing support and sponsoring for the expeditions. The diverse

▲ Figure 4.4

A series of photographs showing the rope team of the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, taken by Gerhart Klamert.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1959): *KLA 4/L* [contact print, cropped]. Photo album/ private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

selection of cameras and film materials used by Klamert is evident in the wide array of materials present within his photographic collection.

For my analysis I had access to 515 black-and-white negatives in the 4 x 4 cm format from 1954, 128 colour slides in the 6 x 6 cm format from 1959, and a compilation of 718 colour slides in the 35mm format. This latter collection of framed slides encompassed images from both expeditions. While Gerhart Klamert did not create a written documentation to accompany his collection, he did assemble a photo album. This album contains additional contact prints of 740 slides and 872 negatives in the 35mm format (see Figure 4.4). Through my examination of this album, I was able to determine that the contact prints were arranged chronologically, following the sequence of their creation. Consequently, this album played a crucial role in helping me determine the dates and locations of creation of the remaining photographs.

Given its extensive scope and wide selection of subjects, Gerhart Klamert's photo collection can be regarded as an independent oeuvre. However, its historical significance unfolds within a broader context: the history of expedition mountaineering in High Asia during the 1950s.

## **4.2 German mountaineering after the Second World War and the reshaping of expedition paradigms in the Karakoram**

The German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition was one of the first European expeditions to engage in mountaineering exploration in the northwestern Karakoram after the Second World War. In this endeavour, the expedition received support from three institutions that had already played prominent roles in organising and promoting expeditions before the war: the German Research Foundation, the German Alpine Club, and the German Himalaya Foundation. The latter was established in 1936 as a response to the co-optation of expedition mountaineering by National

Socialist politics. Despite its origins, the foundation continued to exert influence in the post-war period.

At the same time, the target regions for German expedition mountaineers in the Karakoram had witnessed a substantial change in power dynamics. Following 1947, expeditionary activities in the Karakoram and Western Himalayas fell under the control of Pakistani authorities and regional potentates. In the following years, the expedition sector, once under the control of British colonial rule, underwent professionalisation at the regional level. While written sources in German archives about this transformative shift and its impact on expeditions in the Karakoram region are incomplete and insufficient, a rich understanding can be gained from photographs and films of that time. The upcoming sections will analyse visual sources that shed light on the developments within the expedition sector in Hunza and Nagar after 1947.

#### **4.2.1 Benchmark 1953 (part I): German expedition mountaineering after the Second World War**

The year 1953 marks the revival of German expedition mountaineering in High Asia after the Second World War. In May of that same year, the German-Austrian Willy Merkl Memorial expedition team reached the town of Gilgit, the gateway to the peaks of the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram. Leading this expedition was Karl Maria Herrligkoffer, a Munich-based physician who, interestingly, possessed no previous background in expedition mountaineering. What qualified Herrligkoffer to lead the first post-war expedition to Nanga Parbat was, according to his own view, his kinship with Willy Merkl, his half-brother, who had directed two prior expeditions to Nanga Parbat in 1932 and 1934. In 1934, during the attempt to ascend the ninth highest mountain on Earth, Willy Merkl was among the ten victims of a fatal accident. The subsequent expedition

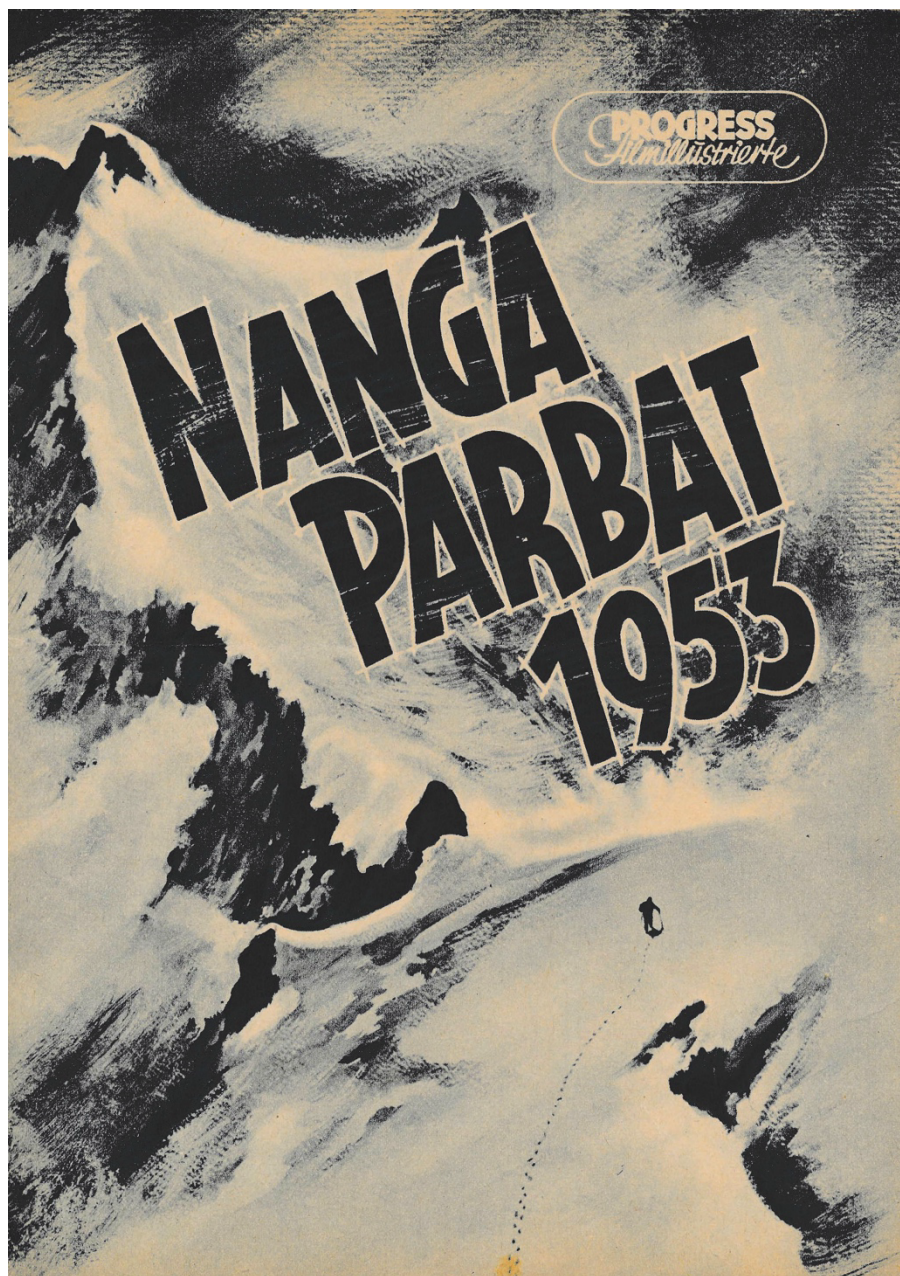
Figure 4.5 ►

Cover page of the programme booklet for the film *Nanga Parbat 1953*, shot during the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition. It bears a striking resemblance to the cover of the programme booklet for the film of the 1934 German Himalaya expedition, *Nanga Parbat: Ein Epos heldischen Kampfes im ewigen Eis* (Figure 2.14). The main difference between the two covers is that the 1953 version introduces a human figure representing Hermann Buhl. In this image, Buhl is depicted on his way to the summit of Nanga Parbat. This programme booklet was published by the *Progress Film-Vertrieb* in the German Democratic Republic. Audiences in East and West Germany showed a similar level of curiosity and enthusiasm for the first ascent of Nanga Parbat and the accompanying expedition film.

Source: Unidentified author (1954): Cover of the programme booklet 'Nanga Parbat 1953'.

Archiv des Deutschen Alpenvereins, München: DAV DOK 2 SG.334.2 (DAV 18).

Copyright: Deutscher Alpenverein. Reproduced from *Progress Filmillustrierte* Nr. 13/54.



report, titled *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat. Der Angriff 1934* (Bechtold 1935), cast Willy Merkl into the role of a heroic figure, central to the mythologization of Nanga Parbat as the ‘German mountain of destiny’.

Even two decades after his half-brother’s death, Karl Herrligkoffer remained enthused “by the idea of completing the work initiated by his esteemed role model” (Herrligkoffer Stiftung n.d.), and he was eager to lead the most skilled mountaineers in Germany and Austria to ascend the summit of Nanga Parbat. Yet, Karl Herrligkoffer’s expedition plans faced strong rejection from the more established actors within the German expedition community, notably the German Himalaya Foundation and the German Alpine Club. The contentious point was the novelty of Herrligkoffer’s proposal:

This entirely novel approach to a Himalayan expedition involved individuals possessing the utmost mountaineering expertise. However, they did not assemble as a team of their own accord; rather, they were selected as if from a catalogue and guided by a man who was essentially a stranger to them. Moreover, Herrligkoffer’s mountaineering achievements were far from remarkable. This situation led to a significant sense of unease [within the Alpine Clubs of Austria and Germany]. (Schmidt-Wellenburg n.d.: 432)

Undaunted by the refusal of established expedition stakeholders, Karl Herrligkoffer sought funding for his ambitious project from alternative sources, ultimately securing generous sponsorship from the private sector. This marked the start of the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition, which not only was the first post-war Nanga Parbat expedition but also stood as the first Austrian-German Himalaya expedition which was predominantly funded by private entities. The commercial use of publications, photographs, and film footage resulted in a significant financial contribution to the expedition budget (Herrligkoffer Foundation n.d.). This had far-reaching implications for both the content and the distribution of the expedition’s imagery.

To capture the attention of potential sponsors and the general public, Karl Herrligkoffer employed every means available to evoke the National

Socialist vision of the ‘German mountain of destiny’. Accordingly, the images captured during the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition were meticulously arranged photographic compositions, serving as a homage to the German mountaineering heritage of the 1930s:

A mere glance at the photographs within Herrligkoffer’s expedition report reveals its close alignment with the ideals of that era. Beyond the striking resemblance of equipment and attire worn by the expedition members to those of 1934, even the visual composition of the images appears to have been influenced by [Fritz] Bechtold’s *Deutsche am Nanga Parbat*. (Backhaus 2016: 170–171, emphasis in original)

In the end, however, the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition was more than a mere re-enactment of Germany’s expedition history from the 1930s. On 3 July 1953, Hermann Buhl, an Austrian climber within the expedition team, became the first person to reach the summit of Nanga Parbat. Upon his return to the camp, completely emaciated and covered with frostbite, Buhl was received and photographed by his expedition companion Fritz Aumann. This iconic portrait of the *Gipfelbezwingler* (summit conqueror) arguably rendered Hermann Buhl the most recognisable figure in Austrian and German expedition history.<sup>1</sup>

The long-desired *Gipfelsieg* (summit victory) on Nanga Parbat abruptly rekindled interest in expedition mountaineering among post-war Austrian and German societies. In this context, the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition played a crucial role in bridging the gap between mountaineering eras before and after the war. On the one hand, it was the last major expedition under German leadership to openly incorporate National Socialist imagery; on the other hand, it established a new benchmark for all subsequent West German mountaineering endeavours in the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram. The Willy Merkl Memorial expedition has set standards, above all, through its organisational and funding structures. Post-1953, German expeditions to High Asia increasingly relied on private-sector sponsorship. Such sponsors equipped

expeditions and, in return, received texts and images for promoting their products. Consequently, the success of an expedition became increasingly contingent on its media presence and public perception, necessitating extensive marketing efforts. Viewed from the sponsors' perspective, mountaineering adventures proved significantly more marketable and appealing than scientific expeditions. The need to ensure marketability presented a unique challenge for scientific expeditions and mountaineering reconnaissance trips that did not venture to renowned peaks such as Annapurna, K2, Mount Everest, and Nanga Parbat.

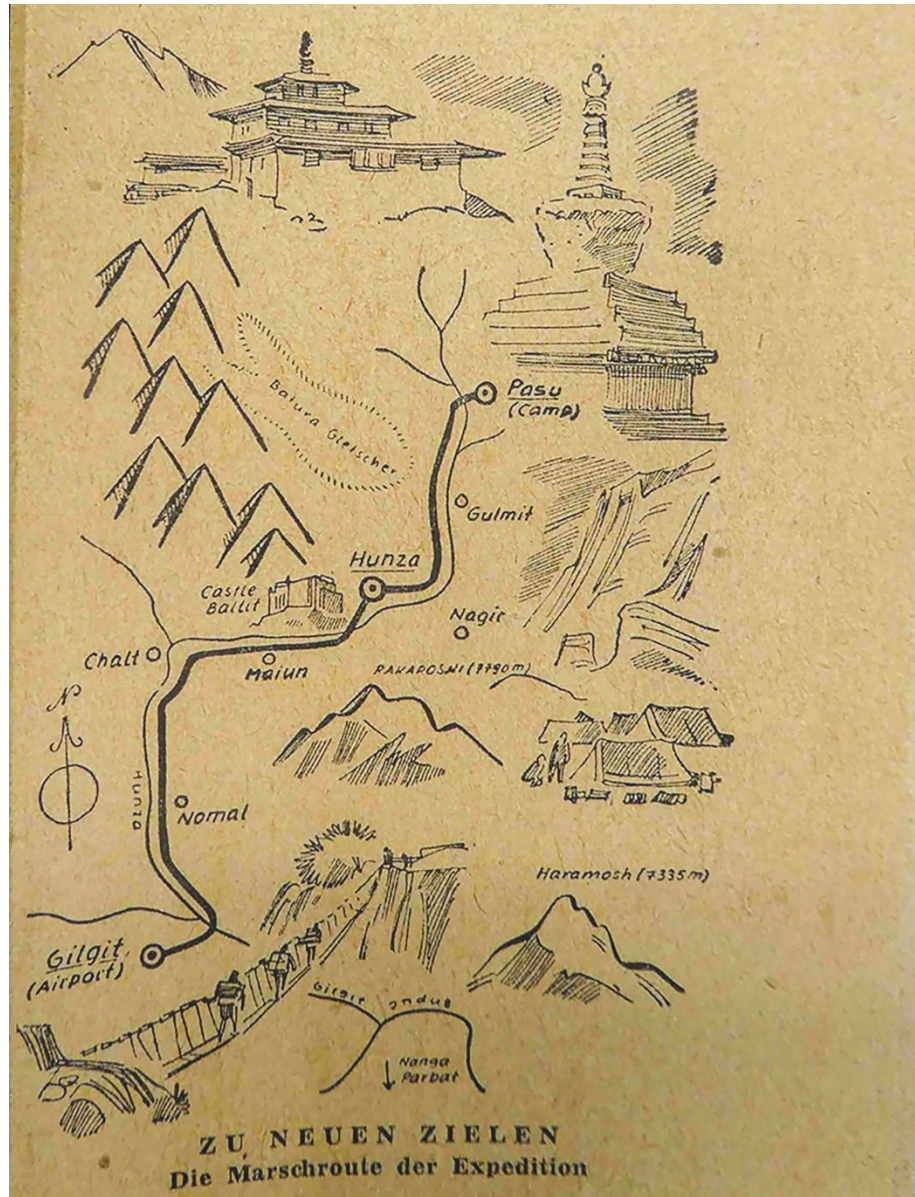
Effectively communicating the objectives of the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition to the general public in an engaging and enthusiastic manner proved to be challenging. The expedition's many objectives left the public perplexed and prompted the regional newspaper *Badische Neueste Nachrichten* to the following statement:

During last year's German Himalaya expedition led by Herrligkoffer, the public knew it was about the 'German mountain of destiny', Nanga Parbat. This is what had made the project so popular. But all that is known about [Mathias] Rebitsch and his men is that they have gone on a reconnaissance trip to the Karakoram, which is hardly sufficient to form a clear picture. (DAV 05)

The Willy Merkl Memorial expedition intertwined personal pursuits with commercial and mountaineering goals. In contrast to the High Asia expeditions organised by the Austrian and German Alpine Clubs, which emphasised scientific research and reconnaissance, Herrligkoffer's objectives did not encompass these aspects. The triumphant first ascent of Nanga Parbat seemed to validate Herrligkoffer's unconventional, commerce-oriented expedition strategy, which he fervently championed despite significant opposition. However, the exuberant media portrayal of the Willy Merkl expedition in the 1950s eventually led to a lasting narrowing of the concept of German high mountain expeditions. Beginning in 1953, the German media and the public began evaluating the

Figure 4.6 ►  
 The reconnaissance trip of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition left ample room for speculation and flourishing imagination. A drawing, purportedly depicting the expedition's route, was featured alongside an article in *Münchener Merkur* on 22 June 1954. However, the most prominent elements in the picture – the pagoda and the stupa – are structures that do not exist in the Hunza Valley. What might have motivated the artist to include them in the drawing? It is conceivable that the artist drew inspiration from one of the expedition films released in the 1930s. These films, particularly *Der Dämon des Himalaya* (The Demon of the Himalayas), produced during Günter Oskar Dyhrenfurth's International Himalaya expedition of 1934, engaged in the exotic blending and purely fictional representation of various Asian cultural elements.

Source: Unidentified artist (1954): *Zu neuen Zielen. Die Marschroute der Expedition*. Reproduced from „Der Rakaposhi scheint unangreifbar zu sein“. Newspaper article in *Münchener Merkur* No. 148, 22 June 1954: 2 (DAV 16).





achievements of expeditions to the Himalayas and the Karakoram in comparison to the successes of the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition. For endeavours such as the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the German Karakoram expedition, it had become a yardstick against which their mountaineering achievements appeared less significant than they actually were.

#### **4.2.2 Professionalisation among high-altitude porters in the northwestern Karakoram**

The Willy Merkl Memorial expedition set new benchmarks in more than one way. Among other achievements, it marked the beginning of an enduring collaboration between European expedition mountaineers and high-altitude porters from the Hunza Valley. High-altitude porters accompanied and guided European climbers in High Asia: they secured the paths, carried equipment, set up camps, and attended to their foreign employers in other ways. Despite the crucial role high-altitude porters played in determining the outcomes of European high mountain expeditions, there exists only limited written documentation of their contributions. Nevertheless, a wealth of preserved pictures provides insight into their activities and their importance for the success of the missions they participated in.

During the 1950s, expedition labourers gained popularity as subjects in both expedition photographs and films. The participants of the 1953 Willy Merkl Memorial expedition had also visually documented their high-altitude porters. These visuals then made their way from the Western Himalaya to Germany, being showcased to the German public through illustrated books, slide presentations, and cinema screenings. One of the significant commercial successes of the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition was the expedition film *Nanga Parbat 1953*, directed and shot by Hans Ertl. The film premiered in Munich on 13 November 1953. Archival records

indicate that it was also screened in Gilgit during the 1950s. After watching the film, Peter Snoy, a participant in the 1955/56 German Hindukush expedition, wrote in a letter to his mother:

Last night, here in Gilgit, we watched a documentary film about the 1953 German Nanga Parbat expedition. [...] I recommend that you watch it whenever you have the chance. One scene showcases a Hunza dance that is truly remarkable. This scene unfolds following the distribution of work attire among the coolies. Within this dance sequence, there are two close-up shots, primarily centred on the dancers' faces. The first close-up shows Hidayat, our servant during our journey to Tangir and Darel, participating in the dance. Furthermore, I wish to draw your attention to an illustrated book stemming from the same expedition. Inside the book, you will come across a picture of Mister Raber Hassan, who was our interpreter [see Herrligkoffer 1953: 34, MH]. (LiMu 06)

The likelihood of expedition participants, such as Peter Snoy, recognising their attendants, guides, and porters in films and photographs from previous expeditions, was not as exceptional as one might assume. Starting from the 1950s, a considerable number of men from the northwestern Karakoram regularly worked for foreign expeditions, sometimes even multiple times a year. Consequently, they were often photographed and filmed by their employers. This phenomenon is traceable through archival documents, photographs, and films. For instance, images of the attendant Hidayat or the interpreter and liaison officer Rahbar Hassan are not confined solely to the records of the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition and the German Hindukush expedition. The photographic evidence of these two men who actively participated in different expeditions has also been documented by expedition travellers such as Karl Jettmar and Barbara Mons (Jettmar 1961: 80; LiMu 07: 4, 6, 7; Mons 1958: following page 32 and 76).

During the 1950s, working as a high-altitude porter, attendant, or cook for foreign expedition teams held economic importance, as it provided one of the limited avenues for income. Isa Khan, a resident of Baltit (now

Karimabad), stood out as one of the first prominent high-altitude porters from the Hunza Valley. His career began with the 1953 Willy Merkl Memorial expedition, and he continued to offer his services as a high-altitude porter to European expeditions, especially those led by Germans, until the 1970s (Figures 4.7 and 4.8).

Since late the 19<sup>th</sup> century, men from the Hunza Valley had been engaged as load-carriers for mountaineering expeditions. Nevertheless, the alterations in political and economic structures after 1947 paved the way for residents of Hunza and Nagar to take on responsibilities as guides, *sardar*, and high-altitude porters as well. This marked a significant transition, and it propelled the professionalisation of the expedition sector within the Hunza Valley. During their early expeditions in the Himalayas and the Karakoram, British colonial explorers lacked confidence in the loyalty of the local men as guides. As a result, they opted to enlist alpine guides from Switzerland. For instance, in 1892, Martin Conway was guided by the Swiss-Italian climber Matthias Zurbriggen during his mountaineering and survey expedition to the northwestern Karakoram (Conway 1894: xiv). Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an initial shift took place in the selection of guides. British explorers departed from their reliance on guides trained in the Alps and instead started enlisting individuals from the Sherpa community from India and Nepal to serve as their mountain guides and *sardar*.<sup>2</sup> Except for the German-American Himalaya expedition of 1932, German expedition teams also adopted the British practice of employing high-altitude porters and mountain guides from the Sherpa community.<sup>3</sup>

Following 1947, the power dynamics and composition within expedition teams changed once again. In independent Pakistan, European expedition teams were obliged to obtain travel permits directly from the newly established Pakistani government, alongside the necessary permissions from regional and local potentates. Furthermore, the Pakistani government began assigning liaison officers for these teams, a role that was formerly carried out by British citizens.

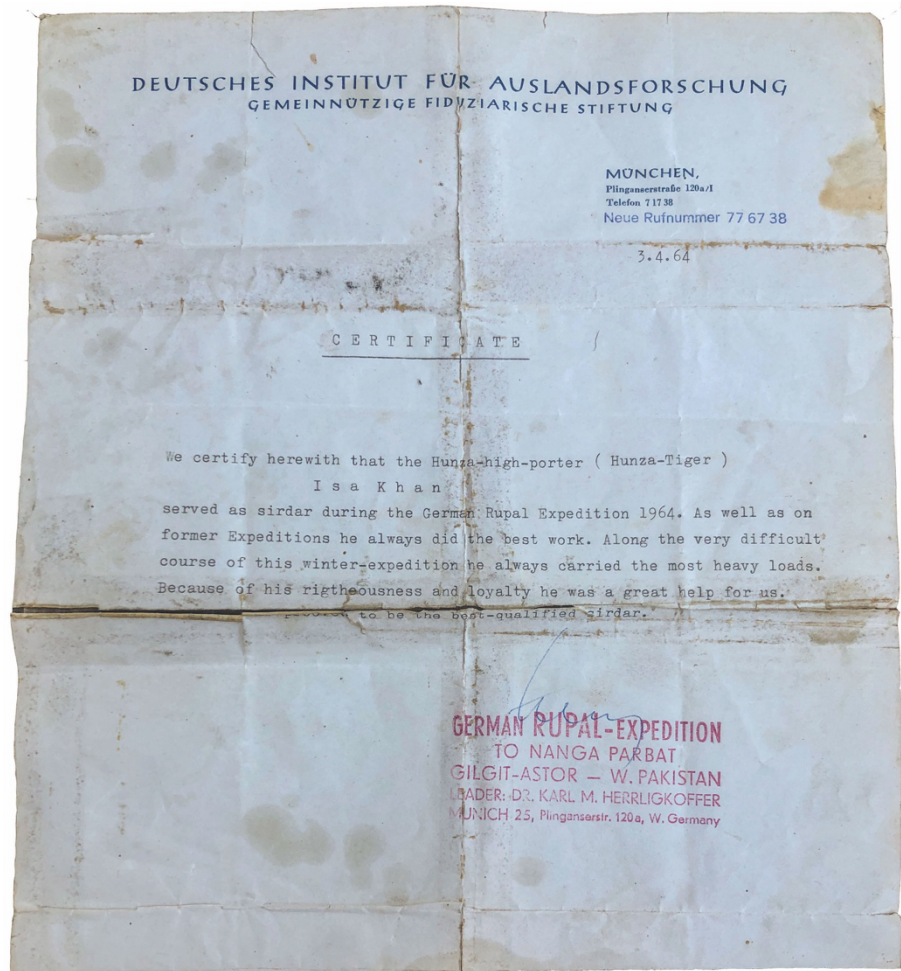


Figure 4.7 ►

At the conclusion of each European expedition, high-altitude porters received certificates that could be presented to future expedition leaders as a reference for their work. This document was given to Isa Khan by Karl Maria Herrligkoffer after the German Rupal expedition in 1964. Following Isa Khan's death in 1986, his family preserved the certificate.

Source: Document in family possession. Reproduced by kind permission of Aziz Ali.



▲ Figure 4.8

This photograph was captured during the 1958 Austrian expedition to Haramosh, led by Heinrich Roiss. The climbers' names were inscribed on the back of the paper print: "Isa Khan [far right, MH], Ebner Rudi, Habibullah, Johar, Aminullah". Isa Khan's contribution to the history of German mountaineering expeditions in the Himalayas and Karakoram can be traced through the photographs of German mountaineers from the 1950s to the 1970s. The 1968 Toni Kinshofer Memorial Expedition even published a series of postcards featuring his portraits. Source: Unidentified photographer (1958). paper print in family possession. Reproduced by kind permission of Attaullah Khan.

Changes were also evident in the process of recruiting expedition staff, guides, interpreters, and high-altitude porters. In 1953, these changes presented a quandary for expedition leader Karl Herrligkoffer. As he prepared the Nanga Parbat expedition, the physician, well-versed in the customs and practices adhered to by German expedition teams during the 1930s, enlisted five Sherpas as high-altitude porters for his team. In the end, these hired experts could not make it to the expedition area, prompting the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition team to proceed without them. It came to light that the Pakistani authorities had refused entry to the Sherpa labourers into the region. Historians Maurice Isserman and Stewart Weaver provide the following explanation for this predicament:

Newly independent Pakistan and India were enemies. And though the Sherpas were not natives of India, the facts that they were non-Muslims and had been hired in Darjeeling made them unwelcome for Pakistani authorities. Herrligkoffer's climbers would have to rely on the support of porters from Pakistan's Hunza Valley, who were inexperienced and reluctant to carry heavy equipment on the mountains. (Isserman and Weaver 2008: 300)

The assertion that Sherpas were prohibited from entering Pakistan on religious grounds is a common theme in both scholarly and popular mountaineering literature. Yet, upon closer examination of the economic and political landscape of the 1950s, it appears that this could have well been just a pretext. A more plausible, or at least complementary, explanation for the entry ban can be deduced from historical imagery.

The documentary film *Kampf um den Himalaja* (Battle for the Himalayas), produced during the German Nanga Parbat expedition of 1937, offers insights into the organisation and hierarchy of expedition labour in the 1930s. The film showcases a team of twelve Sherpas overseeing numerous local load-carriers. Despite their greater numbers, the local workforce follows instructions from the few Sherpa overseers and is directed by them using sticks. This unequal power dynamic, as

depicted in the 1937 film, serves as a catalyst for the lasting animosity experienced by expedition laborers in the Karakoram towards the Sherpas.

Economic considerations further fuelled the conflict. Foreign expeditions brought money and material resources into the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram. However, neither the local labourers nor the local potentates benefited fully from the foreign money, as the most lucrative positions in the expeditions were reserved exclusively for the Sherpas. Therefore, it can be inferred that independently of religious considerations it was primarily the political and economic aspects that drove the decision to restrict Sherpas from obtaining entry and work permits in the Karakoram. Following Independence in 1947, Pakistani authorities possessed the legal authority to enforce such restrictions.

The British withdrawal, along with their Sherpa employees, created a significant void within the expedition sector of the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram ranges. Yet the case of the Herrligkoffer expedition also exemplifies that not all regional actors were able to capitalise on this situation equally. Predominantly men from the dominion under the rule of the *mir* of Hunza took on pivotal roles in the high-altitude porter system. Post-1953, German mountaineering expeditions in the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram region increasingly turned to employing “highly skilled porters from the Hunza community” (Paffen, Pillewizer und Schneider 1956: 4; see also Pillewizer 1986: 101) to fulfil their high-altitude porter and *sardar* positions.

#### **4.2.3 Expedition as a business in Hunza**

According to Wolfgang Pillewizer, the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team was “the first expedition to reach Hunza after the 1947 Partition of India” (Pillewizer 1986: 95). However, only a few days after the expedition had reached the Hunza Valley, other European expeditions were also granted permission to enter.

During the first decades after Partition, the bungalow of the *mir* of Hunza remained the only accommodation for guests in central Hunza. There, the European travellers met in the early summer of 1954. Among the *mir's* guests were the thirteen participants of the German-Austrian team, an “English general and his wife” (Diary Klamert I: 18), two Swiss botanists, “who collect bugs and photograph flowers in the valley” (Diary Heckler: 113), as well as the German doctor Irene von Unruh (von Unruh 1955). In addition to these travellers, the US-American family tutor of the *mir*, Winston Mumby, also stayed in Baltit with his family (Figure 4.9).

In July 1954, in the village of Chalt in Nagar, the members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition encountered an expedition team from the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club. This group of six Britons, united by the goal of ascending Rakaposhi, was accompanied by their liaison officer, Major General Mian Hayauddin (Diary Klamert I: 17; Band 1955: 124). The participants of the German-Austrian expedition were taken aback, as they had not anticipated such a



Figure 4.9 ►

Members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition along with *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan, his son Ghazanfar Ali Khan, and Carol and Winston Mumby at the Baltit campsite in 1954.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): [No] 186 [medium format slide, cropped]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.



‘surge’ of European travellers within the Hunza Valley. The influx of additional mountaineers, coupled with the increasing expenses for porter services, prompted Karl Heckler to arrive at the following conclusion:

I have to be careful with my judgement, yet it appears that we have just witnessed the emergence of modern tourism in the Hunza Valley. (Diary Heckler: 111)

To a significant extent, Karl Heckler’s judgement was accurate. He was both an observer and a client of the emerging modern expedition service sector in the northwestern Karakoram. Nevertheless, he was mistaken in another aspect. In 1954, the expedition and hospitality business in the Hunza Valley was not in its infancy, as Heckler suspected, but rather in full bloom. It had begun more than three decades earlier. As early as 1925, *mir* Mohamad Nazim Khan, appointed by the British in 1891, had a small guest house, a British-style bungalow, built in Baltit:

The growing numbers of visitors – colonial officers and administrators, emissaries of Aga Khan, travellers and traders between Kashmir and Kashgar, pilgrims and spies, hunters and explorers – were accommodated in this comfortable and exposed spot where the *tham* could receive and entertain them, organise and provide requested and required services, and also personally control and monopolise the hospitality business. (Kreutzmann 2020: 39, emphasis in original)

Twenty years later, Nazim Khan’s grandson, Mohamad Jamal Khan, expanded the structures established by his grandfather, and in the process increased his financial standing over regional competitors like the *mir* of Nagar.

For Europeans, expeditions to the Karakoram epitomised the ‘race to scale the eight-thousanders’. However, for the people of these regions, foreign expeditions represented an existential endeavour to earn a living. The high mountain regions of the Karakoram and Western Himalayas were geographically, and above all economically, isolated from the metropolitan areas of Pakistan. Foreign expeditions offered rare and comparatively large sources of income. In Hunza and Nagar, following

1947, the opportunities to earn had become even more essential, as the rulers of Hunza and Nagar no longer received annual subsidies, which they were entitled to receive during British colonial rule (Kreutzmann 2020: 110). Although only on a seasonal basis, foreign expeditions contributed to the economy of the Hunza Valley. They generated paid employment and imported goods. Nearly everything that expedition teams brought into the expedition area – from camping equipment like tents to gas cookers, mountaineering gear, warm clothing, durable footwear, canned food, medicine, and technical tools – was left behind upon their departure (see e.g., Pillewizer 1961: 13; Diary Kußmaul II: 165). The ruling families of Hunza and Nagar, especially those overseeing the expedition business, reaped further benefits from these foreign visitors.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, foreign expeditions strained the economy of the regions they traversed. Local agriculture suffered as it was deprived of its workforce, when peasants were recruited as porters, and local men faced existential health risks while working in high altitudes. Additionally, expedition teams consumed substantial quantities of food, potentially provoking food shortages within the expedition area.

In fact, the risk of expeditions causing food shortages was acknowledged early on. In the Himalayas, the Hindukush, and the Karakoram, various strategies were employed to address this existential threat. In the Hindukush, for instance, in places like Chitral in Pakistan and the Afghan part of Badakhshan, residents declined to allow expedition teams into their villages or to accommodate them in the *mehmaan kbana* (guest house) (see e.g., Diary Friedrich I: 174). In the Hunza Valley, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *mir* of Hunza and the *mir* of Nagar responded by establishing a monopoly over the expedition economy, thus exercising control over economic gains and losses. Furthermore, outsiders were prohibited from purchasing flour locally, and foreigners, such as those arriving in the valley for expeditions and exploration, were required to bring their own food supplies (see Diary Klamert II: 3).

In a place like the Hunza Valley, where a large part of the population suffered from malnutrition and seasonal hunger, taking up high-altitude porter work had a crucial advantage for those who were recruited. It meant having daily access to well nourishing food – and for the families one person less to feed at home. People hired as load-carriers and day labourers by expedition teams were not included in the expedition ration and had to rely on their own domestic supplies for sustenance (Pillewizer Diary: 45). On the other hand, high-altitude porters were contractually entitled to food and equipment. Their provisions – including flour, ghee, dal, tea, and cigarettes – were purchased by their foreign employers from bazaars and army stocks (see e.g., Klamert Diary II: 3). The combination of money, material rewards, and food rations made the position of a high-altitude porter highly sought after, despite the significant risks involved. However, the wage disparity between load-carriers and high-altitude porters regularly provoked social tensions.

On the one hand, an area that hosted a mountaineering expedition typically experienced financial and material gains. On the other, the money brought in by expedition teams did not evenly benefit all residents of the region. The individuals who profited were limited in number. In Hunza and Nagar, it was primarily the *mir*, the *wazir*, and their kin who gained money from these activities. This exclusive group of politically influential actors monopolised the ensuing services for both expeditions and the accompanying hospitality business. They were the primary points of contact for scientific and mountaineering participants in expeditions, overseeing and managing catering, transportation, lodging, and travel routes for them. This resulted in the establishment of an infrastructure on which commercial tourism from the 1970s onwards could rely. Thus, as observed by Karl Heckler back in 1954, expedition mountaineering would eventually play a significant role in shaping ‘modern tourism’ in the northwestern Karakoram.

### **4.3 Pictures of hospitality: Information policy and geopolitics in Hunza and Nagar**

The expeditions of the 1950s differed from individual tourist trips. They were official undertakings that aimed to achieve mountaineering or scientific objectives and were thus integrated into institutional frameworks. Furthermore, they played a political role in deepening international relations. This was one of the reasons why they were meticulously documented in texts, photographs, and audio recordings. Every step taken by an expedition team, from their initial entry to their eventual departure, adhered to established protocols, some of which were codified in written form while others existed as unwritten conventions. The ‘expedition protocol’ constituted a vital, often the sole, context in which participants of European expeditions could engage with their local hosts.

Photographs displaying scenes from the expedition protocol therefore constitute a significant portion – approximately a tenth – of Gerhart Klamert’s photographic collection. Consequently, a thorough examination of these images is essential for comprehending both the nature of expedition travel and the nuances of expedition photography during the 1950s.

#### **4.3.1 Scenes from the expedition protocol**

Two of the most successful German expedition films of the 1950s, namely the film of the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition and the film of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, share few similarities. *Nanga Parbat 1953*, the cinematic portrayal of the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition, was stylistically rooted in the German expedition films of the 1930s. It can be classified within the genre of the German *Bergfilm* (mountain film) and unmistakably follows the tradition of National

Socialist filmmaking. This connection owes much to Hans Ertl, the film's screenwriter, director, and cinematographer, who held a significant role in the National Socialist propaganda machinery. Ertl was not only a favoured cameraman of director Leni Riefenstahl but also held esteem in the eyes of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

The film about the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, titled *Im Schatten des Karakoram*, strikes a different tone. It falls under the category of the German *Kulturfilm* (cultural film or documentary), and its director, Eugen Schuhmacher, was known for producing nature and wildlife documentaries. He had been tasked by the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition to "provide a vivid portrayal of the landscape and the people of the enchanting expedition area" (Rebitsch 1955: 103).

While the two expedition films exhibit notable variations in their content and visual aesthetics, both directors adopted a similar approach in the introduction of the plot. In both films, the narrative unfolds with the arrival of the expedition teams at the Gilgit airfield. There, the expedition teams are welcomed by dignitaries, politicians, and diplomats, including the *mir* of Hunza and the German *Legationsrat*. In the next scene, the expedition participants are seen receiving floral wreaths, presented by the Political Agent of the Gilgit Agency. The entire official reception is welcomed by the Gilgit Scouts' band and their billy goat mascot (Figure 4.10).

Despite having different ideological and aesthetic standards, both directors included this welcome scene in their films because of its political significance. Official events, like the one described above, played a pivotal role in the expedition protocol and were an integral part of diplomatic interaction. Consequently, they were comprehensively documented. Today, these visual documents serve as historical records of the foreign policy and economic aspects of the expedition business in this region. Scenes from the expedition protocol were documented by nearly all Karakoram expedition teams of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were captured in film, photography, and written descriptions.



Figure 4.10 ▲

The members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition were welcomed at the airfield in Gilgit as part of the protocol, with the Gilgit Scouts band playing the German national anthem. Expressing his personal judgment on the performance, expedition leader Wolfgang Pillewizer noted in his diary: "It was quite distorted, in a minor key, and hardly recognisable" (Diary Pillewizer: 34). The photograph was taken by Gerhart Klamert on 22 May 1954.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

George Band, a participant in the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club's expedition to the Karakoram, provides the following written account of the official reception accorded to his team in Nagar in July 1954:

We had only been in Chalt a few minutes when a small crowd accompanied by a six-piece orchestra approached us and led us in procession to greet the Mir of Nagir outside his new bungalow. We were each presented with a garland of tiny roses before some spirited sword dances were performed in our honour. (Band 1955: 80)

The fact that the *mir* of Nagar was in such a hurry and hesitated only for 'a few minutes' to welcome the British newcomers as per protocol might be attributed to an incident that occurred about a month earlier and had involved the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team.

After their official reception at the Gilgit airfield, the members of the German-Austrian team were initially accommodated in the bungalow of the *mir* of Hunza in Gilgit. At the beginning of June 1954, they set off on their journey to the actual expedition area. Like the German Karakoram expedition team five years later, the 13 men in 1954 travelled by jeep from Gilgit to the village of Chalt. From Chalt, they continued on foot and began their work in the mountains not far from the village. Karl Heckler noted in his diary:

Chalt is situated at the confluence of three valleys and serves as the main gateway to the Hunza Valley. Anyone wishing to reach Hunza must traverse approximately 15 miles across the territory of the Mir of Nagar. (Diary Heckler: 112)

However, at the outset of their journey in 1954, the German-Austrian expedition team was evidently unaware that they were travelling and working within Nagar. Expedition leader Wolfgang Pillewizer later justified his ignorance: "In [liaison officer Sahib] Shah's report, it was described as a territory belonging to Hunza" (Diary Pillewizer: 56). When the scientific group of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram



Figure 4.11 ▲

*Mir* Shaukat Ali Khan of Nagar in his bungalow in Chalt. The photograph was taken by Wolfgang Pillewizer in June 1954. The Chalt bungalow was just one of the residences of the *mir*, with his main palace located in Uyum Nagar.

Source: Wolfgang Pillewizer (1954): *Seine Hoheit, der Mir von Nagar [a]* [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 47). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



expedition finally accepted the urgent invitation extended by the *mir* of Nagar on 12 June 1954, it was already two full weeks after they had started working in Nagar territory. According to Wolfgang Pillewizer, the *mir*

[...] complained bitterly that we had only visited the Mir of Hunza and not him, even though we had travelled mainly within his territory. He told us that our offence was comparable to that of a person who had travelled to Germany with a permit issued by France. (Diary Pillewizer: 56)

The complaint raised by *mir* Shaukat Ali Khan of Nagar cannot be dismissed as a mere insistence on formalities. Instead, the head of Nagar tried to defend his territorial and economic claims against his rival, the *mir* of Hunza. For this reason, Shaukat Ali Khan promptly presented Wolfgang Pillewizer and Karl Heckler with some binding conditions for their onward journey:

He [the Mir of Nagar] insisted on providing us with porters and pack animals. He had already done so yesterday for the mountaineers. [...] We will pay him! That's probably why an additional one rupee was suddenly demanded for the kulis, and in difficult terrain [...], we were charged an extra two rupees. Additionally, he is now also arranging my [Karl Heckler's] journey which will take me to Minapin the day after tomorrow, [...] and from there to Hunza. (Diary Heckler: 115–116, emphasis in original)

Within the borders of their respective principalities, the *mir* of Nagar and the *mir* of Hunza managed the expedition business without competition. Beyond their borders, however, they competed for the favour of foreign expedition travellers and the awarding of contracts. In this context, they extended a wide range of hospitality gestures in honour of the foreign expedition teams.

Mohamad Jamal Khan, the last *mir* of Hunza, must be considered one of the most resourceful hosts for expedition teams in the Karakoram. In Central Hunza, particularly in the village of Baltit, foreign expedition teams were treated to an extensive entertainment programme, which included soirées, polo matches, cultural or folkloric performances, and



Figure 4.12 ▲

About seventy years after George Michael James Giles took the first photograph of Altit Fort in 1886 (see Figure 2.5), Gerhart Klamert photographed it on 14 July 1959. Unlike Giles, Klamert was invited to photograph the interior of Altit Fort. His photo collection thus includes additional images showing the various rooms of the fort and an impressive panoramic view from the roof overlooking the valley. By the 1950s, the ruler of Hunza no longer resided in Altit Fort but had moved into a newly built bungalow in Karimabad. In the 2000s, the fort was renovated with the support of the Aga Khan Cultural Services. Today, it serves as a tourist attraction and museum.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1959): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

guided tours of villages. After attending a guided tour of the centuries-old Altit Fort during the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, Gerhart Klamert noted, “Willy [Bogner] photographed like Mister Kodak himself, and even the shutter of my own camera was spinning” (Diary Klamert II: 59; Figure 4.12).

In another part of his diary, Gerhart Klamert emphatically describes his experience of a performance in Baltit given by a *bitan*<sup>5</sup> (‘shaman’) named Ibrahim:

It is eerie and somehow, whether you believe in such things or not, quite stirring. Accompanied by a heavy drumbeat, a branch of a juniper tree is lit, and the bitan is held in the smoke. He immediately falls into a state of trance, clutches the juniper branch with his teeth, and dances away. Meanwhile, a male goat is slaughtered. The bitan grasps its head and sucks blood from its fleshy stump even as he continues to dance and run around. He reaches where the musicians are sitting and beats his head against the drums; his face is now covered in blood, and the goat’s head must be forcibly removed from him. His eyes are fixed on the void, always searching for fairies sitting on trees to reveal their prophecies to him. He imitates the flight of birds, whirls in circles, jumps, and strikes out wildly, then comes to listen to the flutists. He suddenly stops, completely enraptured, and sings verses in the vernacular Shina, something he is unable to do when awake. (Klamert Diary II: 55–56; Figure 4.13)

In the decades following 1959, the performances by *bitan* Ibrahim gained popularity among travellers from various countries in Europe, the United States of America, and Pakistan. Evidence of his performances can be found in photographs, films, and texts published by scientists, mountaineers, and tourists from 1959 to the late 1980s. He was also highly sought after by European and North American anthropologists with whom he shared knowledge about his profession, as well as his insights into the social structure and culture of Hunza (see e.g., Sidky 1994; Csáji 2011; Nicolaus 2015).

*Bitan* Ibrahim was not the sole representative of his profession who regularly conducted programmes for foreign audiences. Other



Figure 4.13 ▲

*Bitan* Ibrahim during a seance, photographed by Gerhart Klamert on 8 July 1959.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1959): unnumbered photograph [medium format slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

performances have been documented by travellers in Nagar (see, e.g., Klamert Diary II: 76), as well as in the Pakistani Hindukush, including Tangir and Chitral (see e.g., Friedrich Diary II: 366e). The extent to which these ‘shamanistic’ performances were authentic rituals or adaptations catering to foreign expectations is not the focus of this discussion. More important is to understand how individuals like *bitan* Ibrahim were able to pursue their own interests by showcasing their special gifts in the presence of foreign visitors. In his book *The Religions of the Hindukush*, the Austrian ethnologist and expedition traveller Karl Jettmar reports the following observation:

The dramatic effect [of a performance] keeps increasing through small, but well-timed (though stereotyped) incidents. For example, the *daiyal* [(*bitan*; ‘shaman’), MH] tries to break through the circle of onlookers and spring at a woman whom he recognises as either impure or being provocative by wearing red clothes, which are considered a challenge to the *peris*. Sometimes, an amulet disturbs him, and it has to be removed. A *daiyal* tried (not without humour) to beat up a European visitor who had ordered a séance but had apparently not paid enough for it. The *daiyal* exculpated his behaviour later with the statement that his *rachi* had urgently requested him to punish so much miserliness. (Jettmar 2018: 304, emphasis in original)<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Foreign affairs in the Hunza Valley

In the 1950s, within the Hunza Valley, cultural performances took precedence in the programmes designed to entertain foreign expedition teams. As these events were integral components of the expedition protocol, attendance was deemed obligatory for the travellers. Nonetheless, during cultural gatherings not delineated in the expedition protocol, such as religious ceremonies, members of the expedition teams found themselves less welcomed. On such occasions, residents of the Hunza Valley were cautious about the presence of foreigners and their cameras.

On 16 July 1959, Gerhart Klamert was unsure whether it was appropriate to watch and photograph the Ashura procession in Nagar:

Tomorrow the Shia people will flagellate themselves and along with them the entire country of Nagar. [...] Hopefully we can take good photographs of it without being stoned to death. (Klamert Diary II: 61)

Gerhart Klamert was present at the procession and subsequently recorded a few observations in his diary. Yet, it appears that he refrained from taking photographs on that day. There is no picture of the Muharram procession from July 1959 in his photo collection.

The members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition were aware of the potential problems and conflicts that could arise from their use of cameras. Prior to their departure in 1954, each expedition participant had received a small notebook containing various pieces of advice, including guidance on photography during the expedition. The typewritten booklet listed various “recommended objects for photography” but also provided a cautionary note:

Exercise caution when photographing military personnel, military facilities and fortifications, church interiors, mosques, religious festivals and processions, high-ranking officials, family gatherings, and funeral processions and burials. (PIL 04: 29)

Furthermore, the author recommended obtaining “special permission” for photographing such scenes to avoid complications or the confiscation of cameras and films. The author also advised taking such “‘forbidden’ shots from concealed locations and using long focal-length lenses!” (ibid.).

In the Hunza Valley, the religious aspect, covering all areas where Islam was practised, was to be shielded from outsiders, especially from their cameras. At other times, foreigners were explicitly invited to attend cultural events with their cameras. This applied to a carefully curated programme, primarily featuring folk dances, shamanistic rituals, and sporting activities such as tug-of-war and polo matches (Figures 4.14–4.16).



▲ Figures 4.14 and 4.15

In August 1954, dances and sword dances were performed at the polo ground in Baltit in honour of the German guests.

Sources: Gerhart Klamert (1954): [No] 334 and [No] 325 [medium format slides]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

◀ Figure 4.16

In July 1954, Gerhart Klamert captured a tug-of-war event at Uyum Nagar. The competition was organised by *mir* Shaukat Ali Khan in honour of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): [No] 278 [medium format slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.





Given the meticulous selection of cultural events that guests were expected to attend, it is not surprising that the images captured by European and North American photographers documenting the cultural life in the Hunza Valley during the 1950s and 1960s bear a striking resemblance to one another: standardised programmes resulted in standardised images.

The restriction of travellers' access to a limited number of cultural performances had political motivations. These programmes, organised as acts of hospitality for foreign visitors, provided a platform for local actors, politicians, and decision-makers in the Hunza Valley to shape the external perception of their region. Through cultural and sporting events, they could convey a specific image of the principalities of Hunza and Nagar and their inhabitants. This illustrates that performances conducted in the name of hospitality were integral to foreign policy and information strategies.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, High Asia had gained a rather unfavourable reputation among European expedition travellers. In their reports European travellers painted a vivid picture of the perils awaiting foreigners in that region. According to these narratives, travellers in High Asia encountered formidable natural forces, including sandstorms, heavy snowfall, swarms of flies and mosquitoes, extreme temperatures, and avalanches. Former expedition travellers recounted harrowing experiences, including the loss of fellow travellers, severe illnesses, betrayal by local guides, thefts and robberies, and even arrests and executions carried out at the behest of local rulers (Baud, Forêt et Gorshenina 2003: 23–24).

Accounts of Hunza were far from being an exception in this regard. British colonial narratives of the 19<sup>th</sup> century portrayed the people of Hunza as primitive barbarians, ruthless caravan raiders, and feared slave traders (see, e.g., Younghusband 1896: 260; Knight 1894: viii, 348; Durand 1899: 177). These stereotypical depictions of the region played a pivotal role in justifying the forced annexation of Hunza and Nagar into *Pax*

*Opposite*

Figure 4.17

The uncommon spectacle of a mask dance was photographed by Gerhart Klamert at the polo ground in Baltit in August 1954. While German travellers in the Pakistani Hindukush – in Chitral, Tangir, or Darel – frequently photographed mask dances, there are no such images from Hunza, apart from this picture preserved in Gerhart Klamert's collection. According to information provided by Aziz Ali Dad and Ghulam Ali in July 2021, the pumpkin and goat-hair mask in Hunza was not employed in a dance ritual but rather as a part of another custom called *jathir* (Burushaski: old man). On 21 December, young men wearing masks embarked on a house-to-house journey, knocking on every door. If the homeowners welcomed them inside, they would dance and entertain the family members, who reciprocated by offering gifts such as dried fruits. The custom of *jathir* is no longer practiced today, and I have been unable to confirm whether the scene photographed by Gerhart Klamert in the summer of 1954 was an adaptation of *jathir* for entertaining the foreign guests or if it was rooted in some other custom.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): unnumbered photograph [paper print]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

*Britannica* in 1891. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, British colonial officers and journalists played a significant role in perpetuating the image of the ‘Hunza raiders’, thereby upholding the colonial perception of the valley (see e.g., Trevelyan 1934: 14; Schomberg 1935: 111; IOL 01: 22 (71), RSAA 01: 19, 23).

After Britain’s withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent, the *mir* of Hunza and the *mir* of Nagar assumed the responsibility for shaping the image of their respective principalities, taking advantage of the post-1947 regionalisation and professionalisation of the expedition sector. Cultural performances emerged as the ideal platform to showcase the regions under their authority to travellers and their cameras. During these performances, local guides accompanied foreign visitors, providing insights into the content and meaning of the presentations. Consequently, these guides played a significant role in influencing the visitors’ interpretations of the performances.

However, there was no attempt to abandon the prevailing colonial narrative of the ‘ruthless Hunza raiders’. Instead, colonial narratives were adopted and adapted. The sword dance performances serve as a prime example of this phenomenon. To this day, sword dances continue to be a central feature of the programmes organised to entertain foreign visitors in Hunza. These swift sequences of movements, performed by men adorned in colourful robes while wielding swords and shields, were described and photographed by numerous travellers in the 1950s and 1960s (see e.g., Figure 4.15). During a sword dance performance, the *mir* of Hunza or a member of his retinue provided the foreign audience with background information about the event. Many guests, with the intention of later publishing their accounts, wrote detailed descriptions of what they had witnessed and heard.

A particularly colourful description of a sword dance was published by the journalists Jean and Franc Shor in *The National Geographic Magazine* in 1953. The couple from the United States of America attended a Hunza sword dance performance in 1952 and received personal instruction in the

programme from *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan:

In the natural amphitheater of Hunza Valley, flashing swords and leather shields hark back to a time when raiding Hunzukuts were feared warriors of the Karakoram Range. Though the people of this mountain kingdom have been at peace for half a century, the old war dances still attract Hunza menfolk. Under blossoming apricot trees centuries old pageantry is recreated by dancers clad in robes of brilliant Chinese silk. Drummers and pipers set an insistent rhythm for the leaping, twirling Hunzukuts. Some old India hands say these dances are the finest to be seen on the Indian subcontinent. According to the *Mir*, the dancers' circular shields have been handed down for more than 300 years. Curved swords are also heirlooms. (Shor and Shor 1953: 502)

The presentation of sword dances to foreign visitors had two effects. With its oriental allure and exhibition of martial primordiality, it aligned perfectly with the preferences and expectations of European and North American guests. Simultaneously, the performance created a temporal distance between the mythical Hunza of the past and the contemporary Hunza of the 1950s. The sword dance was

[...] no longer evidence of Hunza's dangerous and threatening primitivism. Rather, it was seen in nostalgic terms as an artifact from a bygone era, a trait of an interesting and rare society, a threatened and endangered other. (Shafqat Hussain 2015: 63)

The recollection of Hunza's rich and extensive history, incorporated into the cultural programmes, provided *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan with an additional source of income: the sale and exchange of antiques. In 1959, Gerhart Klamert and his expedition colleagues obtained shields, swords, and artfully carved boards from a mosque constructed as part of the Baltit Fort:

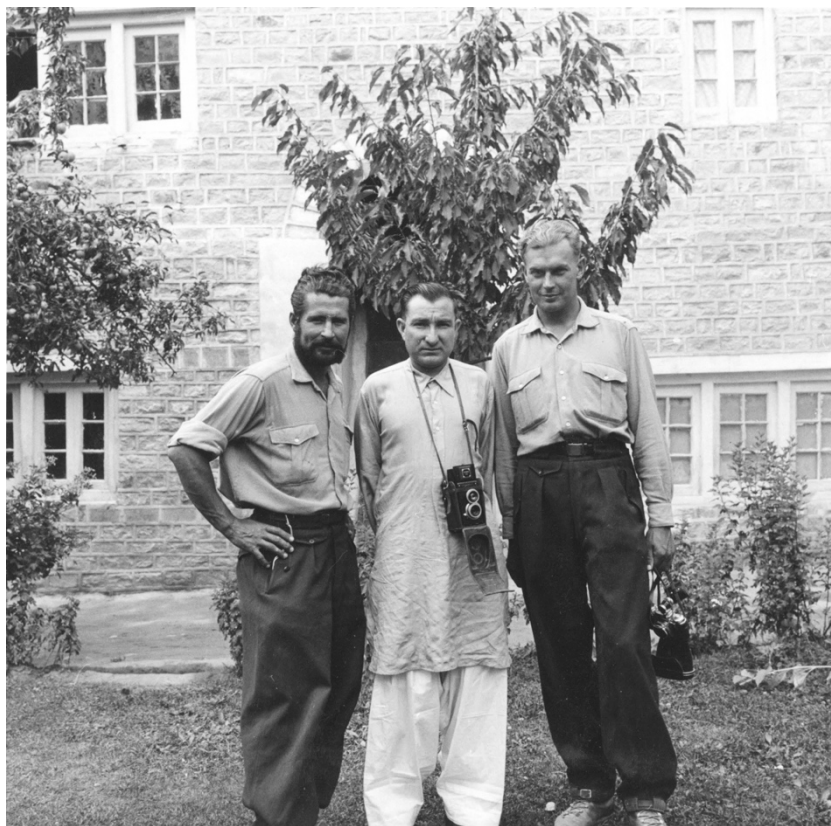
The boards were handed over to us yesterday. I [Gerhart Klamert] had supervised their dismantling. I felt like a desecrator of a temple because the whole structure has deteriorated as a result. The *mir* of Hunza has 'selflessly' provided a doorway arch for museum purposes. However, transporting it would have cost several hundred marks. What a

shame. Then, we traded weapons – I only acquired one sword with a beautiful Arabic inscription. (Diary Klamert II: 54)

Programmes, gifts, and antiques were not a one-sided affair. The expedition protocol stipulated that foreign travellers should reciprocate every gesture of hospitality. Consequently, most accounts from expeditions to the Hindukush-Karakoram of the 1950s and 1960s include lists of ‘gifts’ that these travellers brought along for their hosts (see e.g., StAL 06). The gift lists of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition and the German Karakoram expedition primarily included technical equipment, watches, radios and cameras, as well as hunting rifles, and a few crates of wheat beer (Diary Pillewizer 41; Diary Klamert II: 21, 57). Today, these archived gift lists indicate that the expedition protocol not only pertained to foreign and information policy but also established the framework for economic relations between local rulers and foreign travellers.

Figure 4.18 ►  
 Mir Shaukat Ali Khan is portrayed with Gerhart Klamert (left) and Hans Zeitter (right) in 1954, standing in front of his newly constructed palace at Uyum Nagar. The camera around Shaukat Ali Khan’s neck was a gift from the expedition team.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Seine Hoheit, der Mir von Nagar* [b] [paper print]. Geologische Bundesanstalt (GeoSphere Austria): Photo album of Wolfgang Pillewizer I (PIL 02: 47). Reproduced by kind permission of Thomas Hofmann.



### 4.3.3 Portraits of hospitality: Production and circulation of knowledge about Hunza

With the founding of Pakistan, the ruling elites of Nagar and Hunza found themselves facing increasing economic and political pressures. The British colonial government had guaranteed the rulers of the principalities a certain degree of independence and economic support under specific terms. However, after 1947, the prospect of Hunza and Nagar eventually becoming integrated into the Pakistani state, threatened to erode the authority of the *mir*, the *wazir*, and their respective families. Additionally, during the 1950s, the legitimacy of their autocratic rule was already under scrutiny from within, as growing segments of the population of the micro-states began to question their authority (Shafqat Hussain 2015: 103–104). Against this backdrop, a skilful foreign and information policy was highly important for the ruling elites.

Like no other politician in the Karakoram ranges, *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan of Hunza used the cameras of foreign visitors to project himself as he wanted to be seen: “as the all powerful leader” (ibid.: 104). At polo matches, during cultural performances, and on guided tours of ‘his’ principality, foreigners were shown precisely what they were expected to see in Hunza – and they also photographed exactly what they were meant to portray: A “lush valley, aglow with blossoming apricot” a “benevolent ruler”, and “Hunza smiles” that “reflect contentment and character” (Shor and Shor 1953: 486, 508, 511).

Yet, there was a considerable number of issues in Hunza that foreign travellers were not supposed to see, let alone record. These included economic and political grievances, arbitrary state power, bonded labour, existential poverty, chronic malnutrition, and diseases:

In order both to limit the extent to which visitors could share their ideas with people of Hunza and to present to the world his desired image of Hunza as a remote, ideal rural society – which required that the visitors did not receive contradictory impressions – the *mir* took care to ensure that communication



Figure 4.19 ►

*Mir Mohamad Jamal Khan* in full royal attire with his eldest son, *Ghazanfar Ali Khan*, at the palace garden of Baltit. The picture was taken by Gerhart Klamert on 6 July 1959.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1959): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

between the visitors and his subjects was restricted. [...] Western outsiders were usually assigned to a member of the ruling family or of the house of the *wazir*, who acted as their permanent guide during their stay in the country. (Shafqat Hussain 2015: 105)

In the hierarchical society of the principality of Hunza, the *wazir* and his family members played an equally important role in looking after guests as the *mir* and his kin. The practice of the ruling elites in Hunza which consisted in entrusting men from their own ranks with the expedition and hospitality business can be traced in European records from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards (see e.g., Schomberg 1935: 114). In 1913, the explorer and archaeologist Aurel Stein, while travelling toward the Hunza Valley, took a photograph of one of his guides, Muhabbatullah Beg. Muhabbatullah belonged to the family of the *wazir* of Hunza. Notably, Muhabbatullah's father, M. Raza Beg, was the first author from Hunza to write a historical treatise about the region (Kreutzmann 2020: 18). Continuing the 'family tradition', Muhabbatullah's son, Qudratullah Beg, also engaged in historical studies, following in the footsteps of his grandfather Raza Beg.

Much like his father, Qudratullah Beg occasionally took on the role of guiding foreign travellers. In the 1930s, he assumed the role of the official guide for a British couple, David and Emily Lorimer. He would accompany and advise the Lorimers during their 15-month research stay in the village of Aliabad, spanning from July 1934 to September 1935 (ibid.: 20). Arrangements of this kind usually benefited both sides, the foreign guests and the local political elites.

Men like Muhabbatullah Beg and Qudratullah Beg had received formal education and were proficient in English. They were not just capable of serving as translators between languages but also adept at bridging the divide that existed between the foreign guests and their Hunza hosts. The foreigners benefited significantly from the knowledge, multilingualism, and local authority of their guides. Conversely, for the *mir* and the *wazir* of

Hunza, the engagement of loyal individuals in the hospitality business served to secure their information policy. Through the expertise of individuals like Muhabbatullah Beg and Quadratullah Beg, the production, transmission, and circulation of information remained under tight control. These guides determined what information about Hunza foreigners could gather and bring back to Europe.

Foreign travellers who visited the Hunza Valley would typically take photographs of their guides. Upon returning to Europe and North America, they often presented these portraits as depictions of what they considered to be “typical Hunzukuts” (Kreutzmann 2020: 28; see e.g., Shor and Shor 1953: 489; Banik and Taylor 1960: following 192). Nonetheless, when examining these photographs today, it is essential to recognise that the portrayed individuals were not representatives of the ‘common people’ of Hunza. Instead, they were a select few elite members of society, who were assigned to represent Hunza for Europeans and North Americans.

Foreign travellers did not always stay within the valleys and villages where the *mir*, the *wazir*, and the individuals they had appointed could supervise them. When expedition teams conducted their work in the mountains, far above the villages, the liaison officers played a central role in either disseminating or censoring information related to the Hunza-Karakoram region. This was particularly true for individuals whose loyalty the *mir* of Hunza could depend on.

One such loyal liaison officer was Rahbar Hassan. During the 1950s, he held the position of Head Constable in the Gilgit Police (Jettmar 1961: 80). In this capacity, he routinely accompanied scientific and mountaineering expedition teams, including the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition (1953), the German Hindukush expedition (1955–1956), and the Austrian Karakoram expedition (1958). When interacting with these expedition teams, he identified himself as a ‘Hunzukut’ (see, e.g., Friedrich Diary I: 49) and served as the primary source of information for foreign scholars, addressing all their inquiries about the Hunza Valley.



Among the liaison officers of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team was Captain Shah Khan from Gulmit. He was the son of *mir* Mohamad Nazim Khan and, thus, an uncle to *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan, who ruled Hunza during the 1950s. He was a highly skilled climber and was part of the 1958 British-Pakistani expedition team that achieved the first ascent of Rakaposhi.

During the 1950s and 1960s, all foreign visitors to Hunza were accompanied by individuals who had expertise in hospitality services. These experts typically constituted the only Hunza residents with whom foreign visitors had direct contact. The language barrier between the foreigners and the local population further impeded communication between the two groups, amplifying the travellers' reliance on their liaison officers, guides, and interpreters. Nonetheless, unpublished documents reveal that not all travellers were entirely convinced of the trustworthiness of their guides and hosts. In his 1959 expedition diary, Gerhart Klamert strongly criticised the *mir* of Hunza:

My earlier impression of entering something like the last fairy tale of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not as vivid this time as it was in 1954. [...] The Mir [of Hunza] is fully aware of the wrongfulness of his actions; he lives in quasi-European luxury with all its superficiality and hypocrisy, while the people toil for him and idolise him. (Diary Klamert II: 52)

While colonial officers and British spies in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century openly expressed their strong disapproval of the rulers of Hunza (see e.g., Younghusband 1896: 285; IOL 01: 21(70)–23(72)), such criticisms were seldom made public after 1947. On the contrary, publications from the 1950s and 1960s consistently expressed gratitude, thanking “the Mir and Rani of Hunza, beloved rulers of the world’s healthiest people” (Banik and Taylor 1960: 15) for their “gracious hospitality” (Taylor and Nobbs 1972: 1).

The unanimity among travellers regarding the generosity of their host can also be attributed to the fact that the *mir* of Hunza was personally

informed about the content of the reports they published. He had these publications sent to him via post and continued to stay in touch with his former guests even after their expeditions (see e.g., DAV 06). In fact, controlling information was one of the few means by which Mohamad Jamal Khan actively pursued foreign policy. In all other foreign policy matters, the semi-autonomous principality fell under the responsibility of the Pakistani government. However, in European and North American media, the *mir* could present himself as the ruler of an independent nation.

Compared to Hunza, Nagar played a subordinate role in the reports of foreign travellers, even though the main mountaineering destinations like Rakaposhi and Diran were located within Nagar territory. *Mir* Shaukat Ali Khan of Nagar also received significantly less attention than Mohamad Jamal Khan of Hunza. When Shaukat Ali Khan was mentioned, it was rarely in a flattering context. In July 1954, Wolfgang Pillewizer noted in his diary:

Karl [Heckler] had a very unpleasant experience in Nagar with the porters and the local people, who cannot be compared to the people of Hunza. Similarly, the Mir of Nagar seems like a small villager in comparison to the cosmopolitan Mir of Hunza. (Diary Pillewizer: 77)

While *mir* Shaukat Ali Khan of Nagar may not have been fully aware of his own unfavourable reputation, he certainly recognised the economic and geopolitical disadvantages associated with how his principality was perceived by foreign travellers. To elucidate this point, it is helpful to revisit the incident involving the participants of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, who unintentionally crossed Nagar's borders at the commencement of their journey. What makes this 1954 anecdote more interesting is the fact that they were not the first travellers to disregard Nagar's sovereign rights and violate expedition protocol. *Mir* Shaukat Ali Khan personally reported to Karl Heckler that "Mr. Franc Shor from America had identified Chalt and its residents, along with other places in Nagar, as part of Hunza" (Heckler Diary: 114).

It is true that Nagar is not mentioned even once in the 1953 *National*



◀ Figure 4.20

In the presence of foreign cameras, *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan of Hunza assumed various roles. At times, he presented himself as a fair ruler and gracious host, while on other occasions, he performed the role of a modern statesman. Mohamad Jamal Khan owed this versatility to his proficiency in public relations, as well as the economic opportunities at his disposal. In this photograph taken on 2 September 1954, the *mir* is seen posing with his 'Hunza State No. 1'-car at the Circuit House in Lahore. Hermann Kreutzmann (2020: 433) provides further details, explaining that "the Aga Khan had gifted [this] limousine to *mir* Jamal Khan for his down country stays". In 1838, the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam was officially declared the state religion of Hunza. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the relationship between the Aga Khans and the *mir* of Hunza deepened (Kreutzmann 2020: 449–454). Throughout his reign from 1945 to 1974, Mohamad Jamal Khan, the last *mir* of Hunza, became a beneficiary of this religious bond. Karl Heckler noted in his diary: "The Mir of Hunza is rich [...]. He is an Ismaili, and the Aga Khan gives him 300,000 German marks a year for the development of his country. However, his cousin across the river [the *mir* of Nagar, MH] is a strict [Twelver, MH] Shiite and a poor fellow" (Heckler Diary: 112).



◀ Figure 4.21

Foreigners and their cameras provided a platform for the rulers of Hunza and Nagar to project their desired image, showcasing their attire, equipment, and regalia. This 1954 photograph captures *mir* Shaukat Ali Khan in his Uyum Nagar palace. In this image, the *mir*, adorned with a sword and holding the Quran, presents himself before Gerhart Klamert's camera, embodying the persona of a devout oriental ruler.

Sources: Gerhart Klamert (1954): [No] 507 and [No] 267 [medium format slides]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

*Geographic Magazine* article by Jean and Franc Shor. Instead, the reporter couple wrote: “Hunza’s boundaries are indefinite” (Shor and Shor 1953: 485). The tale of Hunza’s undefined borders that *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan and his guides had shared with the Shors during their trip perfectly aligned with the portrayal of the fascinating ‘no man’s land’ that the two North American journalists intended to see in the mountainous region in between Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, and the Soviet Union. However, Hunza was far from being *terra nullius*. Its borders with the neighbouring principality of Nagar had been clearly defined for decades.

In the late 1860s, the Maharaja of Kashmir extended his domain northward, causing distress among the rulers of Nagar and Hunza. All three parties then asserted territorial claims over the villages and valleys of Chalt, Chaprot, Bar, and Budelas, which constituted a significant gateway to the Hunza Valley.<sup>7</sup> The Hunza-Nagar Campaign, the British invasion of the two principalities in 1891, forcefully put an end to this conflict. Control of the disputed territory between Chalt and Bar was subsequently awarded to Nagar (Kreutzmann 2020: 167). Consequently, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a corridor remained under the jurisdiction of the *mir* of Nagar, which had to be traversed by anyone travelling from Gilgit to Hunza.

It was this corridor that the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team, as well as Jean and Franc Shor, passed through, apparently without being made aware of its territorial status. One might wonder why the foreign travellers were not informed of their entry into Nagar’s territory by their guides and liaison officers upon arriving in Chalt. Whether this was due to negligence or a deliberate strategy of misinformation by *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan and his entourage can only be guessed at today. Whatever the case, the outcome remains the same: Within the images and writings disseminated by European and North American travellers, the *mir* of Hunza succeeded in expanding the reach of his sphere of influence beyond the confines of Nagar’s borders. In the eyes of a foreign audience, the boundaries of Hunza had become ‘indefinite’.

#### 4.4 Images of Hunza in German popular culture

After World War II, Hermann Buhl's successful ascent of Nanga Parbat redirected German attention toward expedition mountaineering. Much like in the 1930s, the stories and images brought back by climbers from the 'roof of the world' also captivated audiences beyond the mountaineering community. Remarkably, the genre of expedition film became one of the most popular film genres among West Germans in the 1950s (Parr 2014: 198). In 1955, Eugen Schuhmacher's film *Im Schatten des Karakorum* even won the *Bundesfilmpreis* (German Film Award). Equally popular were illustrated books detailing the ascent of high mountains in Asia. In a steadily growing number of publications, authors and publishers adopted a strategy that had already proven commercially successful in the 1930s: "Lots of pictures and minimal text!" (Dyhrenfurth 1935, V).

In the 1950s, photographs depicting the Hindukush, the Himalaya, and the Karakoram were an integral part of West German popular culture. This development was also influenced by advancements in photographic technology. After the war, photography became more user-friendly and cost-effective. Consequently, expedition photo collections grew larger and more diverse in terms of materials. In addition to black-and-white photographs in various sizes, there was a significant increase in the production of colour photographs for publication in books, advertisements, magazines, and slides used in lectures. Simultaneously, the distribution channels for expedition photographs expanded globally, and US-American depictions of high mountains won the attention of a grateful audience in West Germany.

The popularisation and internationalisation of expedition photographs had a notable impact on the themes treated in German mountain imagery. In the 1950s, the dramatic and hostile high mountain landscapes evoked by National Socialist propaganda gave way to idyllic, exciting, and even humorous scenes. The post-war German imagination surrounding High Asia can be described as colourful, seemingly apolitical, and full of social



Figure 4.22 ▲

Four members of the German Karakoram expedition pose with a yak. From left to right: Gottfried Neureuther, Gerhart Klamert, Erwin Stocker, and Sahib Shah. At higher altitudes, expeditions in High Asia often used yaks as pack animals. These animals, unfamiliar to most Europeans, became popular subjects for photographs and paintings (see Figure 2.1).

Source: Unidentified photographer (1959): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of Gerhart Klamert.

romanticism. This is also true for the collection of Gerhart Klamert, who, in 1954 and 1959, dedicated many of his photographs to camp life, the activities of his travel companions, as well as the country and its people

#### 4.4.1 Internationalisation of expedition imagery

With the end of the Second World War, nationalistic representations of European expeditions entered a crisis. The chauvinism that had characterised the image of expedition mountaineering since the 1920s was viewed with unease in the 1950s. This sentiment was particularly pronounced in Germany, the country that had undergone ideological and economic collapse and lost the Second World War. Additionally, following India's independence, even the British were forced to reassess their imperial narratives. As a result, mountaineers and their chroniclers across Europe sought to alter the image of high mountain expeditions. The emphasis shifted from highlighting the superiority of climbers from a specific nation to emphasising cooperation among climbers of different nationalities. At the world's highest peaks, expedition mountaineering began to present itself as a project that united people. Instead of *Führer, Volk und Vaterland*, the 'international rope team' (German *internationale Seilschaft*) took centre stage (Backhaus 2016: 168; Höbusch 2016: 155).

The most prominent example of the media's portrayal of an international rope team – and simultaneously, a prominent illustration of the conflicts originating in expedition photography in the post-independence era – was the British Mount Everest expedition of 1953. As part of a British expedition team, New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Nepali Tenzing Norgay achieved the historic first ascent of the world's highest mountain on 29 May 1953. Edmund Hillary captured the summit photograph that depicted Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, his face obscured by a thick hood, standing atop the summit with his ice axe raised triumphantly into the air.<sup>8</sup> The summit photograph was taken from a lower vantage

point. Indeed, this perspective triggered outrage in Nepal and India, giving rise to two pressing questions: If Tenzing Norgay was clearly seen standing above Hillary in the summit photograph, should he not be recognised as the first person to reach the world's highest peak? Why should the Sherpa have to share his glory and honour with the Westerner? (Isserman and Weaver 2008: 296–298)

The controversy surrounding the media portrayal of the first ascent of Mount Everest reveals two significant points. Firstly, it underscores that in the 1950s public acknowledgment of a mountaineering achievement was inherently linked to the visibility provided by photographs. Secondly, it signifies that the privilege of being prominently featured in photographs atop the world's highest peaks was no longer exclusively reserved for *white* men.

In 1953, the presence of expedition teams composed of individuals from diverse national or continental backgrounds was not a new phenomenon. Expedition staffing had always been multi-regional, diverse, or “hybrid” (Burnett 2002: 6). What was novel about the 1953 summit photo was that a Western climber had made an Asian climber's contributions and achievements visible to the public. Until then, the ‘white heroes’ had effectively obscured the intercontinental composition of expedition teams, thereby adhering to the premises of their colonial self-perception. Asian expedition members and expedition labourers were mostly presented as auxiliary extras or as subjects of scientific inquiry (Driver 2013: 429). Thus, the fact that expeditions in the 1950s increasingly portrayed themselves as ‘international’ projects does not imply that they had become more diverse. Instead, the term ‘internationalisation’ denotes a politically motivated change in how the composition of expedition teams was portrayed.

In this context, it is crucial to emphasise that the narrative of the ‘international rope team’ did not intend to dispense with the concept of ‘nation’ in expedition mountaineering. As Wibke Backhaus observes:

Mutual understanding between people of different nationalities presupposes the existence of different nations – [Within the



international rope team of the 1950s] national identification appeared to be indispensable and taken for granted. (Backhaus 2016: 173)

Yet, the emphasis on the ‘international’ composition of expedition teams offered a chance for actors, who had been historically overlooked as colonial subjects, to gain recognition as full members both of an expedition and of an independent nation state. Thanks to expedition photographs, climbers like Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, but also entities like the newly formed state of Pakistan became known and visible to the Western public. Hence, Pakistan mandated that European mountaineers in the Karakoram fly the Pakistani flag at the summit and provide photographic evidence to confirm it (see e.g., Herrligkoffer 1953: 13, 79; Figure 4.2).

The term ‘internationalisation’ not only characterises the shift in how expeditions were portrayed after the Second World War but also signifies the multiplication of distribution channels for expedition-related literature and imagery. In the aftermath of successful ascents of the world’s highest mountains in the early 1950s, a plethora of new publications emerged, with the most notable works authored by the pioneering climbers of Annapurna and Mount Everest (see Herzog 1952; Norgay and Ullman 1955; Hillary 1955). Simultaneously, during the 1950s, classic mountaineering literature began to be increasingly translated into various European languages, thus transcending national boundaries, and expanding its readership (Backhaus 2016: 170). As mountaineering literature gained wider dissemination, the images featured in books – drawings, maps, panoramas, and photographs – also garnered international attention. Interestingly, this phenomenon did not lead to an increased diversity of mountaineering imagery. Rather, in the long run, it contributed to the standardisation of the visual language employed in mountaineering images worldwide.

#### **4.4.2 Benchmark 1953 (part II): A new type of explorer discovers the 'end of the world'**

The publication that played a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of the northwestern Karakoram during the 1950s and 1960s did not have its origins in Europe or the mountaineering community. Instead, it emerged from the United States of America within the realm of journalism. Jean and Franc Shor embarked on journeys to the Hunza Valley, first in 1949 and then again in 1952, under the auspices of the National Geographic Society. Their reportage, titled „At world’s end in Hunza”, was featured in the October 1953 edition of *The National Geographic Magazine* and bears the rather bizarre subtitle “This strange Shangri-La near the Himalayas has few laws or taxes and no army; bridegrooms take mother on the honeymoon” (Shor and Shor 1953: 485). The article was accompanied by a collection of 31 photographs, 30 of which were presented in “natural colors”. The publication of „At world’s end in Hunza” marked a significant turning point in the way the Hunza Valley was represented: It added Hunza to the geographical imagination of the popular and mass cultures of North America and Europe.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1947, information regarding the Himalaya, Hindukush and Karakoram regions was mainly gathered and disseminated by expedition teams representing colonial governments and scientific institutions. Concurrently, novelists, particularly Rudyard Kipling through his fictional works such as *The Man Who Would Be King* and *Kim*, played a significant role in shaping European perceptions and imaginations of High Asia. In 1953, „At world’s end in Hunza” was conceived as a synthesis of these diverse sources and genres. The article was commissioned and published by the National Geographic Society with the aim of presenting authentic and scientific information. However, upon examination of the Shors’ article, it becomes evident that their writing was predominantly influenced by fictional and literary elements.

The extent to which the Shors drew inspiration from James Hilton’s

1933 novel, *Lost Horizon*, is apparent from the very first sentence of the article:

High up under the roof of the world, where the towering Himalayas reach eastward to Tibet and the rugged Karakoram Range stretches west to Afghanistan, lies the remote and mysterious land of Hunza, peopled by a race whose origins are lost in time. (Shor and Shor 1953: 485)

The plot of the novel *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton and the 1937 US film drama of the same name directed by Frank Capra is as catchy as it is fictional. In the early 1930s, three Britons and one citizen of the United States attempt to escape an uprising in British India. They board a plane, believing they are on their way to safety, until they spot the towering peaks of the Karakoram below and realise they have fallen victim to a hijacking. To compound their predicament, the plane encounters turbulence and is forced to make an emergency landing in the midst of the rugged and inhospitable mountain region. During this harrowing manoeuvre, the hijacker perishes, leaving the abductees in a seemingly hopeless situation. However, miraculously, a group of ‘natives’ discovers the four castaways and guides them over a challenging pass into a paradisiacal valley known as the legendary ‘Shangri-La’, where they are warmly welcomed and provided for.

Jean and Franc Shor stumbled upon Hunza “accidentally” after their travels in “Chinese Turkestan” in 1949 had taken an unexpected turn due to a “tribal war” (Shor and Shor 1953: 85). Similar to the four protagonists in *Lost Horizon*, the Shors, disoriented and fatigued, were rescued by a local guide who, according to Mr and Mrs Shor, guided them across an otherwise impassable high mountain pass. On the other side of the pass, they found themselves unexpectedly in a lush mountain oasis, a nearly ideal location where they were warmly welcomed. The article reads:

Villagers brought us food and gave us a bungalow in which to rest. We were in Hunza. The Mir, or King, of Hunza, Mohammed Jamal Khan, made us welcome. ‘I think you will like our country,’ he said. ‘Our lives are simple but pleasant. We

have few laws, almost no taxes, and no army. No one is rich, but neither is anyone in need. We are, I think, the world's happiest people'. (ibid.: 485)

The coincidence that led Jean and Franc Shor to Hunza and the warm hospitality they encountered in the valley likely owe more to the literary conventions of the 1950s and the demands of *The National Geographic Magazine* than to the actual circumstances of the Shors' journey. The themes of 'coincidence' and 'hospitality' had become recurring motifs in the reports and narratives of a new generation of explorers who began travelling in the Karakoram after 1947, thereby challenging the aging archetype of the colonial explorer.

Prior to 1947, most explorers had operated in the Karakoram with the backing or approval of the British Empire. As India gained independence, these colonial explorers not only lost their patron but also their political legitimacy. Consequently, in the 1950s, the spies, officers, and soldiers of the colonial era were replaced by the individual traveller, someone who ventured into these regions "with no official backing" (Shor 1955: 163).

Like the colonial explorers, the individual adventurers of the 1950s and 1960s did not embark on their journeys alone. In the high mountains of Asia, they relied on caravans comprising guides, horse leaders, porters, and soldiers. However, unlike traditional expedition participants, these individual travellers were usually not associated with any state-related institution or organisation. Travelling 'with no official backing' consequently meant journeying without institutional support and, thus, without any political mission or diplomatic agenda. These new explorers, much like the newly formed countries and nations they traversed, seemed to possess political independence. They organised and funded their travels mostly by themselves – often by selling the publication rights of their travel accounts, photographs, and films.

The travelogues, movies, and illustrated books of the new explorers removed the imperial and political aspects from the narrative of exploration and replaced them with a sense of individuality and

subjectivity, thus creating a more personal perspective. The official separation of exploration from politics also altered the way expeditions were organised, portrayed, and perceived:

An expedition is no longer solely a journey of exploration; it has also become a personal experience that individuals report back home as a ‘unique and original experience’. Rarely do natural objects like animal skins get brought back home, as was often the case in traditional expeditions. And if such objects are collected, it is primarily as ‘souvenirs’ rather than scientific evidence. Instead of photographs depicting the raising of a national flag on a mountain summit climbed for the first time or other forms of symbolic appropriation of newly discovered territories [...], there is a growing trend towards capturing images that focus on the media production itself. This includes scenes of the expedition cameraman filming [...] or the journalist and expedition leader engaged in writing and documentation. (Parr 2014: 186; see Figure 4.23)

Among Germans embarking on expeditions to the African continent, the figure of the individual explorer had already become popular in the 1920s, following the German Reich’s cession of its colonies (Parr 2014: 186). In the Himalayas and the Karakoram region, individual explorers only began to establish themselves after 1947, coinciding with the political independence of the Indian subcontinent. In a world of politically independent states, a traveller no longer explored the world covertly, i.e., against the will of the explored people, but rather with their consent or at their explicit request.

That was the case with Franc and Jean Shor, who returned to the Hunza Valley in 1952 on the invitation of the *mir* of Hunza, three years after their initial, serendipitous encounter with the valley. Under the supervision of *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan and their personal guide Nyet Shah, the Shors explored, described, and documented Hunza; inadvertently including Nagar in their documentation. Their findings were later consolidated into a vivid narrative spanning 34 pages, published in *The National Geographic Magazine*. This narrative depicted a land of grandeur

with majestic mountains and flourishing apricot trees, where every resident enjoyed robust health and enduring happiness well into old age. It portrayed a realm where husbands never overlooked their wedding anniversaries, and where harmonious living with one's family was fostered under the sagacious leadership of a benevolent ruler, removed from the constraints of modern civilisation. One could assert that, in those 34 pages, Jean and Franc Shor illustrated the realisation of an exotic American dream from the 1950s.



Figure 4.23 ►

Eugen Schuhmacher, filming for the expedition documentary *Im Schatten des Karakorum*, was photographed by Gerhart Klamert during the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): *[No] 127* [medium format slide, cropped]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

### 4.4.3 Sightseeing in Hunza

Despite its euphemisms and exaggerations, the article „At world’s end in Hunza” was composed with the intent of providing readers in the 1950s with a credible depiction of Hunza. This stylised portrayal of the valley, which idealised a life of economic isolation while concealing all signs of poverty and violence, adhered to the customary approach employed by *The National Geographic Magazine* in representing regions within the so-called ‘Third World’ (Vanderlinden 2007/2008: 31). Photography was intentionally employed to establish the credibility and authenticity of the written content:

Central to National Geographic’s scientific authority was its use of ‘straight photography’ in a realistic tradition [...]. With their sharp foci and conventional framing, realist photographs diminished the photographers’ and editors’ points of view and gave the sense of a more direct, unmediated relationship between the viewer and the photographic subject. As such, they gave the illusion that the images were direct transmissions of reality. (Vanderlinden 2007/2008: 31)

The textual content and visual language of articles in *The National Geographic Magazine* reflected an explicitly US-American view of the world (Lutz and Collins 1993: 15). However, this perspective did not limit the magazine’s popularity solely to readers in the United States; it also found its readership among Europeans. It is evident from Gerhart Klamert’s photographs that the German expedition mountaineer had come across the Shors’ article and used its pictures as a model for his own photographs (compare Figures 4.19, 4.24, and 4.25 with Shor and Shor 1953: 508, 506).

With their article „At world’s end in Hunza”, the Shors provided expedition travellers from North America and Europe with a guideline for a new approach to exploratory photography. What set these photographs apart was the deliberate avoidance of extreme camera angles. The practice of employing dramatic top-down views, often associated with colonial landscapes, and dramatic bottom-up views used in German mountain

photography during the 1930s, was abandoned. Instead, expedition travellers increasingly utilised photography to portray themselves. In the 1950s, mountaineers and expedition labourers adopting tourist-like poses – pausing and smiling for the camera – became popular subjects. The more such scenes found their way into expedition photo collections, the more the thematic boundaries that had long separated expedition, travel, and tourist photography began to blur.

In general, it can be observed that the visual language of exploration became increasingly self-referential over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The primary focus shifted away from the object of exploration, placing greater emphasis on the explorer, his or her emotions, and experiences. Like the Shors' article, which predominantly addressed the aspirations of the 1950s United States, the gaze – and consequently the camera – of German expedition mountaineer Gerhart Klamert also turned toward himself and reflected the concerns of post-war German society.

For Gerhart Klamert, the 1959 German Karakoram expedition evolved into an intense travel experience, the uniqueness of which allowed him to somewhat downplay the mountaineering setback his expedition team had faced on Diran. On 29 June 1959, Klamert made the following entry in his diary:

It is remarkable that I do not feel any regret about the decision to abandon Diran [...]. Every 'true' mountaineer might criticise us for our lack of persistence and for giving up prematurely. Does it bother us? [...]. Not at all. Instead, our journey was exciting and constantly captivating and there is probably nothing that engages every fibre of the self as much as travelling, observing, experiencing, each one leading to the other. And once this 'fever' has seized you – I believe it makes you experience the journey twice as strongly [...] Right now, I wish I had a bit more companionship. – But perhaps having an abundance of time is a good opportunity for self-discovery. (Klamert Diary II: 46)

By the late 1950s, mountaineers like Gerhart Klamert were no longer embarking on expeditions to compete in the 'race to scale the eight-



thousanders' on behalf of their respective nations. Instead, they journeyed to what felt like the 'end of the world' in search of a personal and existential experience. Their aim was to break free from the constraints of their own social conventions – the “confines of civilization” (Tobe 1960: Foreword) – and to discover themselves through these daring adventures.

The narrative of these adventures beyond ‘the confines of civilisation’ gained widespread popularity and manifested itself in books, photo books, films, and public lectures. Mountaineers and adventurers were frequently invited to share their tales of travel and exploration with the public, and Gerhart Klamert was no exception. In Germany, England, and South Africa, he spoke about his participation in the two Karakoram expeditions and delivered slide presentations whenever the opportunity arose.

Through these presentations and his photographs, the landscape and infrastructure of the northwestern Karakoram underwent a captivating transformation in front of the eyes of his audience and turned into a “scenery of great adventure” (KLA 02: 15). In one of his talk manuscripts, Gerhart Klamert personally wrote in English:

The only bridge connecting the two shores [of the Hunza river] is the longest suspension bridge in whole Central Asia. More than 135 yards long about 40 yards over the tumbling waters. A lop-sided rickety thing obviously not greatly used. Courage is said to be a thing of instinct once I read somewhere! Our instinct would have preferred another way! But there was none. So, we had to become heroes. We were obliged to use the steps which were, at times, more than 1 ½ yards apart from each other! (KLA 02: 16)

In the talks and publications of participants in Karakoram expeditions, the suspension and rope bridges of the Hunza Valley became symbols of a new type of Western explorer: the ‘hero without a cause’, as he or she might be characterised. This new hero did not risk his or her life for an empire or *Volk und Vaterland* but solely for the sake of the experience – along with the purpose of creating captivating photographs. In 1952, Franc Shor already had his wife take a picture of him in the middle of what

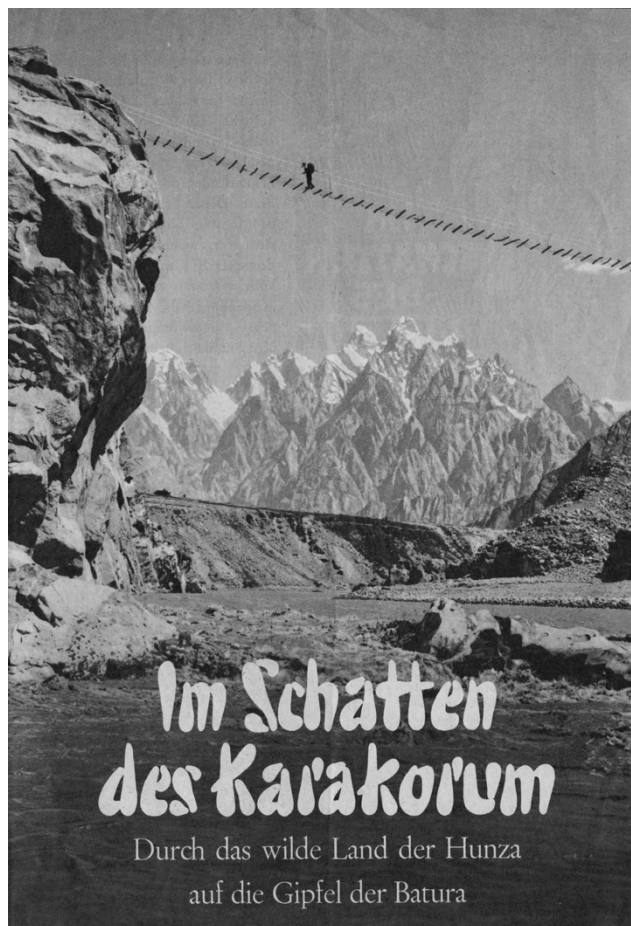


Figure 4.24 ▲

“In the shadow of the Karakoram: Through the wild land of the Hunza people to the summits of the Batura Mountains” – Cover of the programme booklet for Eugen Schuhmacher’s expedition film released in 1955.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): *Im Schatten des Karakorum* [booklet cover]. Reproduced from Kreuzmann 2020: 19.



▲ Figure 4.25

Gerhart Klamert is photographed crossing the 114-meter-long bridge over the Hunza River. The bridge connected the villages of Gulmit and Shishket. During the 1950s, this bridge stood as one of Hunza’s most admired sights for travellers from Europe and North America. However, its iconic status was short-lived, as a flood in the 1960s and “the surge of the Balt Bar glacier” in the 1980s “had led to the accumulation of several metres of sediments” (Kreuzmann 2020: 7). Consequently, the place looks markedly different today.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of Gerhart Klamert.

Gerhart Klamert claimed to be the ‘longest suspension bridge in Central Asia’. According to *The National Geographic Magazine*, Jean Shor had shouted to her husband: “Hurry and Cross [...] I don’t want to be a bridge widow!” (Shor and Shor 1953: 506).

In 1954, a year after the photograph of Franc Shor was published in *The National Geographic Magazine*, the members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team reached the very same bridge situated between the villages of Gulmit and Shishket. Much like the Shors, they also captured numerous photographs of themselves while crossing it. This motif would later become the hallmark or iconic symbol of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Pictures of the suspension bridge adorned book covers (see Pillewizer 1961), featured on various film posters, and adorned programme booklets (Figure 4.24). One of Gerhart Klamert’s photographs of the bridge was featured on the cover of the Austrian Alpine Club’s 1954 yearbook.

Building upon my prior examination of the colonial history of expedition photography in the northwestern Karakoram, it becomes apparent that the bridges of the Hunza Valley were not a novel photographic motif in the 1950s. This very suspension bridge, captured by Jean Shor and Gerhart Klamert, had also been documented by Aurel Stein in 1930 (Kreutzmann 2020: 7). Photographs of bridges, along with images of passes, roads, and fortresses, were extensively featured in colonial photographic records, including those from the Gilgit Mission of 1885–1886 (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5). Explorers like Bronislaw Grombchevsky and Reginald Schomberg had similarly contributed to the imagery of bridges in the Hunza Valley (Kreutzmann 2020: 86–88). Hence, it was less the choice of subject but its interpretation and meaning that set apart expedition photographs before and after 1947.

This analysis underscores that the significance and message conveyed by a photograph are not solely contingent upon its content but are profoundly shaped by the context in which it is presented. Within the domain of colonial expedition photography, bridges were depicted as

subjects of strategic military importance. However, in subsequent publications like *The National Geographic Magazine* and in the context of Gerhart Klamert's slide presentations, bridges assumed an altered role as captivating attractions. In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, expedition photography, which had previously served as a source of politically sensitive data, transitioned into a medium for capturing memories of adventure sites and tourist attractions (Figure 4.25). The same bridges that were once considered militarily important geostrategic assets reappeared as picturesque landscape elements or as challenges for personal feats and tests of courage.

In the 1950s, the northwestern Karakoram remained politically sensitive territory due to its proximity to the borders of Afghanistan, China, the Soviet Union, and India. Thus, it was not so much the political situation in the Karakoram region that changed, but rather how it was portrayed to Western audiences. Geopolitical aspects did not dominate the media coverage of the Hunza Valley in Europe and North America after the Second World War. Instead, publications, talks, and slide presentations by Western travellers portrayed Hunza as a backdrop for individual experiences and adventures, far from the civilisational confines and constraints of their own societies.

#### **4.5 Taming the wilderness with a smile: Women in representations of Hunza**

"You hardly see any women here", Karl Heckler noted in his expedition diary in May 1954, shortly after arriving in Gilgit. The geodesist further observed, "They work at home or in the fields. They walk unveiled, but if you meet one, she moves to the side and covers her face" (Diary Heckler: 56). This statement sheds light on the underlying cause for the limited representation of women in German expedition photo collections from

the 1950s and 1960s. Members of predominantly male expedition teams encountered significant challenges in establishing contact with local women, and capturing photographs of them was nearly impossible. Foreign male individuals in the Hindukush and Karakoram regions were granted permission to photograph women only under exceptional circumstances and in the presence of male attendants (see e.g., Schlenker 2015: 51, 82).

Nevertheless, women have played a significant role in Western representations of Hunza since the 1940s. Early photographs of female Hunza residents were not taken by male expedition photographers but by individual female travellers. These women, like their male counterparts, were foreigners; yet they managed to establish a connection with the women of Hunza. They were invited into homes, accompanied their female hosts while working in the fields, and were granted permission to photograph them.

Initially, photographs featuring women from Hunza were quite scarce. However, they gradually gained popularity in Europe and North America. The smiling countenances of Hunza women came to symbolise a specific notion associated with the Hunza Valley, where inhabitants were believed to enjoy healthy, long, and happy lives. I will delineate the connections between this romanticised concept of the Hunza Valley and the photographic portrayal of the region's women in Western publications.

#### **4.5.1 Feminisation of images and imaginations**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, far away from the Hunza Valley, discussions regarding health and nutrition emerged in both Europe and the United States of America. These discussions were a manifestation of widespread discontent with what was perceived as the 'modern' and 'industrialised' way of life. Criticisms were levied, among other things, against industrially processed foods, which were said to be unhealthy by proponents of

‘organic farming’ and ‘natural foods’ (Levenstein 2012: 108). A healthier and more natural countermodel to industrially processed food was surmised to have survived in regions of the world that, from a Western perspective, seemed distant from civilisation.

In that era, a growing trend of research in Europe and the colonies focused on nutrition and agriculture. Sir Robert McCarrison, a physician serving in the Indian Medical Service, was tasked with conducting a comparative study of the nutritional status of the impoverished population in India and the working class in Britain. In 1921, McCarrison reported that he had dedicated seven years of his research to Hunza, where he discovered a remarkably healthy and prolific population. He described them as “a race, unsurpassed in perfection of physique and in freedom from disease in general” (McCarrison 1921: 9). The physician attributed this exceptional health to their distinctive diet, primarily consisting of grains, vegetables, and fruits, which seemed to protect them from diet-related ailments, such as appendicitis. McCarrison’s accounts of this robust, long-lived ‘mountain people’ began to circulate in the 1930s and found a receptive audience, particularly in the United States of America:

Many people there were already entranced by James Hilton’s best-selling book, *Lost Horizon*, published in 1933, and the popular 1937 Hollywood movie based on it. These told of Shangri-la, a utopia in a Himalayan valley, closed off from the rest of the world, where people lived to be hundreds of years old in perfect health and harmony. Word soon spread that Hilton’s tale had been inspired by a traveler returning from the Hunza Valley. (Levenstein 2012: 109)

In the 1940s, the belief in the exceptional health and long lifespan of the Hunzukuts gained further prominence.<sup>9</sup> In addition to Robert McCarrison, the British writer Emily Overend Lorimer played a considerable role in promoting this idea. Alongside her husband, David Lockhart Robertson Lorimer, a former political agent in Gilgit and a researcher of local vernaculars, Mrs Lorimer spent a year in Hunza, specifically in the village of Aliabad, during the early 1930s.

In 1939, she authored a book detailing her experiences during her stay, titled *Language Hunting in the Karakoram*. This book presents a cheerful and enthusiastic account of her “impressions of the delightful people who for fourteen months in 1934–35 were our neighbours and our friends” (Lorimer 1939: 5). All the idealised aspects of life in Hunza, which Jean and Franc Shor would later report on in *The National Geographic Magazine* nearly 20 years later, are already present in *Language Hunting in the Karakoram*. These include descriptions of women-friendly wedding rituals (Lorimer 1939: 189), the exceptional health and beauty of the population (ibid.: 82), minimal tax burden, a fair legal system, and a benevolent ruler (ibid.: 120, 149), as well as a strong sense of family and community (ibid.: 83, 149).

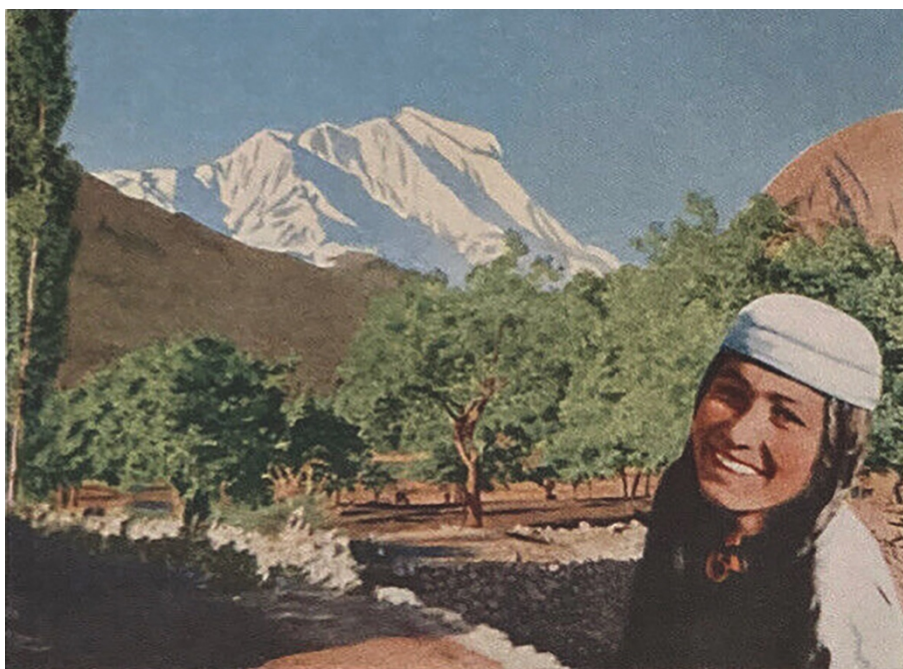
*Language Hunting in the Karakoram* garnered popularity especially among adherents of the health food movement. Swiss doctor Ralph Bircher not only thoroughly studied Emily Lorimer’s book but also paraphrased it – although without obtaining the author’s permission. In 1942, Bircher published *Hunsa: Das Volk, das keine Krankheit kennt* (Hunza. The people who know no disease), essentially a German copy of Emily Lorimer’s work. Ralph Bircher was the son of the nutritional reformer, Maximilian Bircher-Benner, whose dietary foods became widely popular as *Bircher Müsli* (Bircher muesli). As a skilled businessman, Ralph Bircher successfully linked his father’s raw food diet with the Hunza myth of health and longevity. In the ten years following its first publication *Hunsa: Das Volk, das keine Krankheit kennt* was reprinted four times and translated into several languages. Of course, it was not translated into English in view of Emily Lorimer’s *Language Hunting in the Karakoram*.

Ralph Bircher had not only adopted Emily Lorimer’s written content but also appropriated her photographs. The covers of the initial three editions of *Hunsa: Das Volk, das keine Krankheit kennt* featured a colorised photomontage (Figure 4.26). It was assembled from two of Emily Lorimer’s original black-and-white photographs. The montage was created by combining a portrait of a young woman with a second

Figure 4.26 ►

This image, which adorned the covers of several issues of *Hunsa: Das Volk, das keine Krankheit kennt*, was composed from two photographs by Emily Lorimer (see Lorimer 1939: following pages 224 and 288).

Source: Unidentified artist (1942): Cover picture of *Hunsa: Das Volk, das keine Krankheit*. Reproduced from Bircher 1942.



photograph featuring an orchard and the white peak of Rakaposhi in the background. The young woman is dressed in traditional Hunza attire. Her welcoming smile is directed straight at the viewer.

In the mid-1930s, Emily Lorimer had captured this image of a young woman, who she introduced as Gohir Nimo in her book *Language Hunting in the Karakoram* (Lorimer 1939: following page 224). In less than a decade after Emily Lorimer had captured Gohir Nimo's photograph, Ralph Bircher elevated her portrayal to the forefront of the Hunza myth. Remarkably swiftly, the photomontage journeyed from Bircher's book cover to the United States of America, eventually gracing the cover of Jerome Irving Rodale's publication, *The Healthy Hunzas*, released in 1948. In Europe and North America, continents that Gohir Nimo could never visit, she became a 'cover girl'. On these covers, she smiled for an audience she would never meet in person and promoted a diet that she herself likely could not benefit from, given the recurring food shortages experienced every spring by many in Hunza.



After the success of Ralph Bircher's and Jerome Rodale's books, a wave of new publications emerged in both Europe and North America, all centring on the alleged exceptional health and longevity of the Hunzukuts. In line with their predecessors, these publications prominently showcased photographs of cheerful women against the backdrop of lush mountain oases (see e.g., von Unruh 1955; Taylor and Nobbs 1972; Schaefer 1978; Wrench 2006). However, starting from 1952, these books no longer exclusively relied on Emily Lorimer's photograph of Gohir Nimo. Publishers procured fresh images from Hunza, and the book covers began to feature numerous nameless 'cover girls' and 'cover women' of varying ages. The image of a smiling woman wearing a Hunza cap had acquired its distinct significance and had become a symbol within Western imagination. To grasp the symbolic significance of this motif and the impact it had on reshaping the perception of Hunza, it is worthwhile to examine a travel poster from the 1960s.

In the early 1960s, the United Nations recognised the potential of tourism as a tool for advancing its development policy. As a result, 13 designated 'developing countries', including Pakistan, received UN funding for international tourism campaigns. These campaigns were intended to be integrated into existing development programmes and were consequently overseen by consultants from North America and Europe (Huber 2022: 327). It is within this international context of the 1960s that a travel poster was created to allure potential tourists to the Hunza Valley (Figure 4.27).

In the foreground of the painted poster, a free-floating woman's head is covered with the traditional Hunza cap. The face occupies a significant portion of the picture, and behind it, a green and white mountain landscape is visible. Above and below the motifs, an inscription imitating Urdu typography invites English-speaking tourists: "See Pakistan. Hunza (Pakistan) At World's End". The poster was published by the Bureau of Tourism, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan. However, the artist was likely not from Pakistan, as the work demonstrates a strong

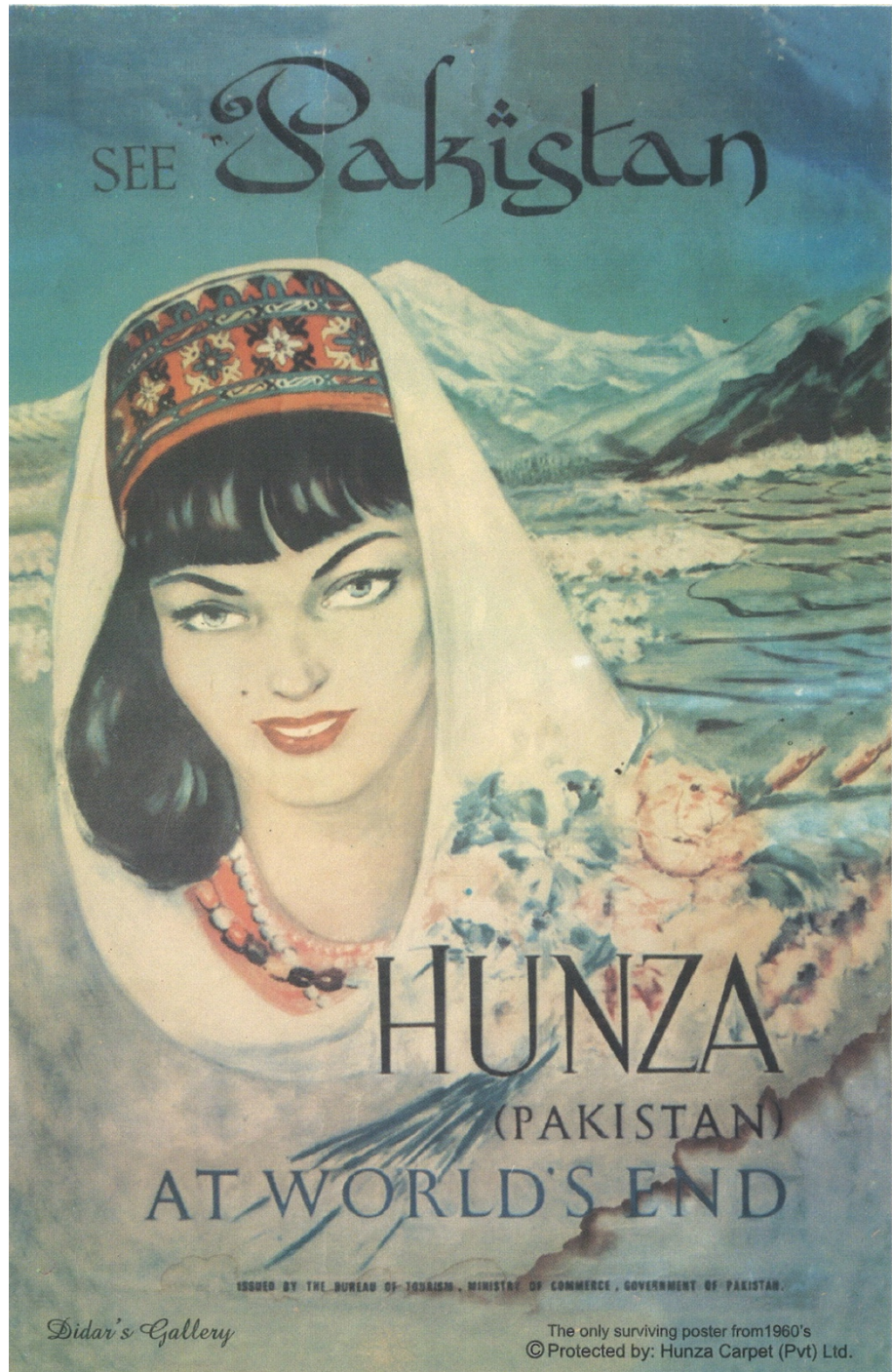


Figure 4.27 ►

This image is an enlarged reproduction of a postcard that was available in 2021 at the carpet shop *Didar's Gallery* in Karimabad. The owner of *Didar's Gallery* and collector, Didar Ali, owns one of the original posters from the 1960s.

Source: Unidentified artist (n.d.): *Hunza (Pakistan). At world's end* [post card]. *Didar's Gallery*, Karimabad. Copyright: Hunza Carpet.

familiarity with the design of North American advertising posters from the 1960s (see Ellis 2018: 14).

The artist's identity is unknown. Nevertheless, it is possible to elucidate the motif's origin. The painted poster is a composite artwork derived from two photographs taken by the Shors in Hunza and featured in the 1953 *National Geographic Magazine*. One of these photographs depicts a landscape (Shor and Shor 1953: 512–513), while the other portrays a young woman (ibid.: 494). Despite her not being named in the article, she is undeniably the central element in the travel poster. The painter of the poster has integrated numerous features from the photographed woman into the artwork, including her hairstyle, clothing, cap, veil, and necklaces, faithfully replicating both their form and colour.

Simultaneously, the artist has undertaken significant alterations to the woman's facial features to conform to beauty standards prevalent in the United States of America in the 1960s. The painter has lightened the complexion of the photographed woman, substituting her brown eyes with blue ones. Among her numerous birthmarks, the artist has preserved only one, transforming it into a beauty mark on her right cheek. Furthermore, the painted woman prominently displays high cheekbones, while her eyes and lips are adorned with heavy makeup, conjuring the image of a contemporary Hollywood beauty. Notably, the woman in the painting possesses a nose reminiscent of Audrey Hepburn's rather than that of the woman from the original photograph.

The background behind the woman's head showcases a verdant mountain oasis. When transferred to the poster, the Shors' landscape photograph underwent horizontal flipping. In line with the photograph, the mountains depicted in the poster recede into the distance. Consequently, Rakaposhi appears more as an element of a romantic alpine panorama rather than a representation of "one of the highest mountain flanks on earth" (Pillewizer 1961: following page 80). Against the backdrop of this alpine mountain range, white fruit trees flourish amid lush, green terraced fields. This blossoming landscape is further enhanced

by a sizable, colourful bouquet of flowers, occupying nearly a quarter of the entire poster.

The travel poster from the 1960s presents a picturesque mountain landscape, a significant departure from the prevalent depictions of Hunza by expedition photographers (see Figures 2.14, 4.5, and 4.24). Pictures promoting books, presentations, and films associated with mountaineering expeditions accentuated the virtues of adventure, heroism, and exploration. In contrast, the travel poster from the 1960s diverges from this pattern by conveying the enchanting beauty of the Hunza landscape and its inhabitants, notably its women.

A comparative analysis of these two image types underscores the evolution in the Western portrayal and perception of the Hunza Valley over time. Here, the conventional male explorer narrative underwent a transformation, coexisting alongside an emerging female narrative. This transformation commenced in the late 1930s with the publication of Emily Lorimer's photographs in her book *Language Hunting in the Karakoram* and endured through subsequent decades, propelled by economically driven actors such as Bircher, Rodale, and notably, *The National Geographic Magazine*.

The juxtaposition of expeditionary and non-expeditionary images distinctly illustrates the metamorphosis of the imaginative geography of Hunza. Over time, the perception of Hunza as a 'wild country' (Figure 4.24) has evolved into that of a welcoming travel destination. This transition predominantly reflects the evolving interests of European and North American actors in Hunza: The narrative of exploration and the perils of the unknown had been supplanted by the narrative of seeking the region's reputed amenities and a respite from the disenchantments of 'modern civilisation'.

#### **4.5.2 Women vs. wilderness: Two perspectives on Hunza**

In the history of British exploration in Hunza, Emily Overend Lorimer occupies a distinct position as one of the first women to spend an entire year in the region. However, during the 1930s, Emily Lorimer's activities, including travel, photography, writing, and publishing, were not unusual among British women of her status. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a growing number of British female citizens actively engaging in travel and writing, underscoring the expanding roles and significance they held in British society. In the context of the British colonies, women typically assumed roles as wives, mothers, nurses, teachers, or missionaries, embodying the more benevolent aspects of the European 'civilising mission' (Mills 1991: 22). They became integral to the broader narrative of colonial activity, and Emily Lorimer, with her multifaceted interests and activities, exemplified this evolving role.

Literary scholars Mary Louise Pratt (1985: 133) and Sara Mills (1991: 75) have categorised authors like Emily Lorimer as "the sentimental traveller". These authors deliberately avoid scientific inquiry, statistical analysis, or objectification in their narratives. Instead, the sentimental traveller's writing "gains authority from the fact that it is concerned with people as individuals. Here, individuals from the country are presented in dialogue with the narrator" (Mills 1991: 75). The notion of the sentimental traveller, as conceptualised by Pratt and Mills, can even transition from the realm of literature to the field of photography.

Emily Lorimer's photographic work in Aliabad contrasts with conventional scientific or anthropological surveys of that period. Her subjects did not adopt scientific or formal poses; instead, she captured them within their everyday environments, engaged in ordinary tasks. At the same time, the individuals photographed by Emily Lorimer appeared to establish a connection with the photographer and her camera, often pausing and posing for the photograph. Emily Lorimer, via her published photographs, introduced a new, sentimental, and explicitly female

perspective on Hunza. This female perspective highlights themes and motifs overlooked in previous male expedition photography. It focuses on the domain of women, which encompasses tasks like housekeeping and fieldwork, essentially capturing the essence of everyday life. As a result, Emily Lorimer's focus on female aspects of life in Hunza complements the male view of High Asia. Interestingly, Emily Lorimer herself viewed her photographic and literary work as complementary to that of her husband. In the opening sentence of *Language Hunting in the Karakoram*, she stated:

[...] the scientifically-minded of every sort, are once for all referred to the published and to the yet unpublished books and articles of my husband, Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. R. Lorimer, late of the Indian Army and the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India [...]. I have been concerned merely to set down our personal day-to-day experiences – they do not merit the name of adventures. (Lorimer 1939: 5)

The narrative of the male colonial explorer framed him as a daring adventurer or rational surveyor, venturing into the world's remotest corners and exploring uncharted territories often described as a 'pristine wilderness'. These narratives immediately linked the term exploration with the ideas of colonisation and civilisation (Green 1980: 23). In contrast, Emily Overend Lorimer did not conform to the archetype of these intrepid adventurers. Despite being far away from her European homeland during her stay in Hunza, her experiences were firmly grounded in the domestic realm of everyday life provided by colonial infrastructure. By travelling to the seclusion of Aliabad, Emily Lorimer did not expose herself to the perils of the wilderness; rather, she found herself "safely quarantined against 'the sick fatigue, the languid doubt', the unrest and fear and hustle of our civilisation" (Lorimer 1939: 6).

The colonial female perspective on Hunza is distinct from the colonial male perspective due to its different interpretation of the socio-spatial concept of 'remoteness'. From the female viewpoint, Hunza is not

perceived as a place situated amidst the wilderness, but rather as a realm beyond the ‘confines of civilisation’ – a secure refuge from the ‘unrest and fear and hustle’ of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Western urbanising societies. Here, remoteness is viewed as a positive contrast to civilisation. As a result, publications within the health food movement, heavily influenced by Emily Lorimer’s example, portrayed life in Hunza as an antidote to the ailments of so-called civilisation.

I designate Emily Lorimer’s photographic perspective on Hunza as ‘female’ due to its significant resemblance to the literary tradition associated by postcolonial literary studies with female travel writing. However, it is crucial to emphasise that labelling this perspective as female does not preclude its use by men. Indeed, the female or sentimental perspective on the Hunza Valley gained prominence primarily through its frequent adoption by male individuals. Books by authors such as Ralph Bircher or Jerome Rodale similarly embraced the perspective referred to as ‘female’ and reimagined Hunza as a realm that could be described as ‘counter-civilisation’.

Twenty years after Emily Lorimer, American journalist Franc Shor, together with his wife Jean also adapted the sentimental traveller’s perspective on Hunza, incorporating significant elements from Lorimer’s narratives and photographic techniques. Notably, in their article, „At world’s end in Hunza”, one-third of the featured photographs depict women – a marked departure from the gender ratio observed in expeditionary photo collections from the Karakoram; even in Emily Lorimer’s book, the proportion of female representation had only been one-fifth. In *The National Geographic Magazine*, Hunza ultimately morphs into an idealised space, a “strange Shangri-La near the Himalayas” (Shor and Shor 1953: 458). The women in the Shors’ photographic portraits are shown smiling or laughing; behind them extends the picturesque Karakorum landscape with its white peaks and blue sky.

The inclusion of women in the photographic and cinematic representation of remote spaces did not originate with the Shors or Emily

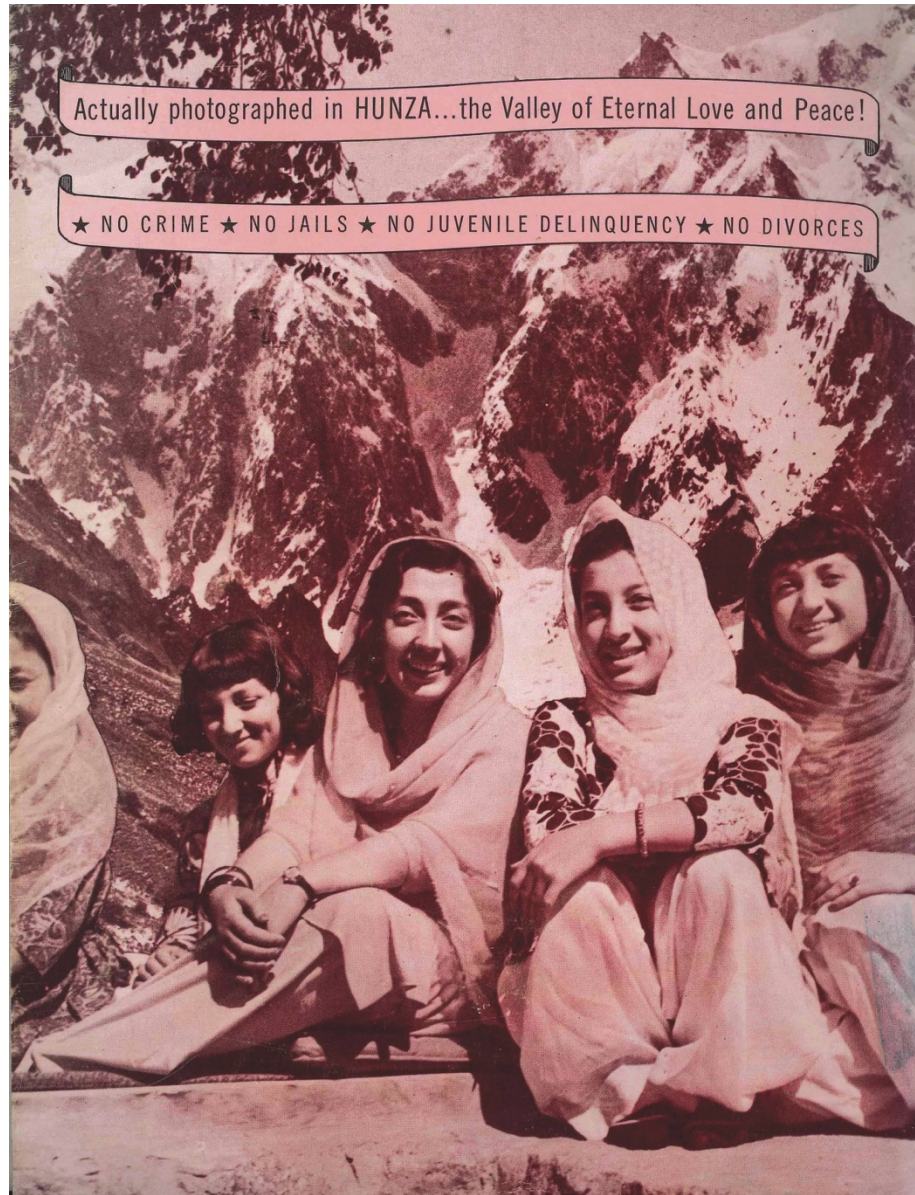


Figure 4.28 ►

Apart from the Shors, numerous other journalists and travel writers from the United States embraced the theme of 'Hunza women'. This image is featured on the back cover of the 1972 edition of the publication *Hunza*.

*The Himalayan Shangri-La* by Renée Taylor and Mulford Nobbs. In an effort to convey the image of the health and well-being of the Hunzukuts, only the women of the royal family are depicted in this photograph. The representation of Hunza through its women was an etic portrayal of the region. Women were exclusively photographed by outsiders, and the images were explicitly directed towards viewers in Europe and North America.

Source: Unidentified photographer (n.d.): *Actually photographed in HUNZA [...]*. Reproduced from Taylor and Nobbs 1972.



Lorimer. The portrayal of a joyful woman against the backdrop of a pristine landscape can be traced back to a pre-existing visual tradition, which also held prominence in the United States – the homeland of the Shors – where it bore considerable symbolic significance. As several authors, notably Richard Slotkin (1973) and later Susan Faludi (2007), have demonstrated, women in the white American imagination symbolise the territory acquired and safeguarded by the early colonists on the American Frontier. During the colonisation of North America, white settlers justified their violent mode of expansion by asserting the need to protect their women from the perceived barbarity of the indigenous population. The colonial imperative “demand[ed] that the wilderness be destroyed so that it can be made safe for the white woman and the civilization she represents” (Slotkin 1973: 554). Conversely, this meant that when women finally appeared on the scene, it signalled that the colonists had won their battle against the ‘wilderness’ and the ‘savages’, with civilisation arriving alongside the presence of women.

By the 1960s, North America had been entirely explored and colonised. However, the imaginations of the American Frontier and the colonial project of “winning a wilderness” (Frederick Jackson Turner, quoted in Turner and Faragher 1995: 32) remained pertinent and visually prevalent. Western movies, particularly those featuring John Wayne, continually refreshed the iconographic significance of women in the Frontier (Faludi 2007: 10).

The photographs by the Shors published in 1953 within their article “At world’s end in Hunza”, along with the travel poster from the 1960s, align precisely with this symbolic significance. The increasing visibility of women in 20<sup>th</sup>-century images of Hunza was both a precondition and a consequence of a new geographical imagination of the northwestern Karakoram. These images of women portray Hunza as a secure haven for Western travellers. The once wild Hunza Valley had transformed into a space even more tranquil, just, and beautiful than the civilisation within the United States of America. It is precisely this colonial American

imagination that the travel poster advertising Hunza in the 1960s captures: In the valley at the foot of Rakaposhi, where women smile joyfully at the viewer, the once-menacing wilderness has been tamed.

The travel poster, along with the books by Jerome Rodale and the Shors' article, targeted a new audience. These media were not intended for colonial surveyors or expedition mountaineers; instead, they aimed at a new group of Karakoram travellers and enthusiasts, including women, couples, and families. Their imagination was fuelled by photographic motifs that had remained largely unseen by the male gaze for nearly 150 years of exploration in the Karakoram: women.

Consequently, the motif of a smiling woman before a mountain oasis signals a growing shift away from the predominantly male perspective in narratives of exploration and travel. Commencing in the late 1930s, women assumed an integral role in the evolving visual discourse of exploration and travel in Hunza. While this new imagery of sentiment and femininity stood in stark contrast to the rugged masculinity prevalent in older explorer narratives, it is important to note that, akin to its male predecessors, it wielded an equivalent degree of Western hegemonic influence in both its origins and essence.

#### **4.5.3 Clash of imaginations: Old and new pictures of exploration**

Numerous authors who wrote about the lifestyle and dietary habits of the Hunzukuts did so without having personally visited Hunza. However, this did not prevent them from enriching their publications with a plethora of photographs supplied by individuals who had first-hand experience in Hunza. As mentioned before, Ralph Bircher conveniently used Emily Lorimer's photographs to illustrate his work. In contrast, Jerome Rodale assembled a diverse array of images from various sources for his book, *The Healthy Hunzas*. According to Rodale's own account, he spared no effort in this endeavour:

I was fortunate also in making contact with the present *Mir* of Hunza, M. Jamal Khan, having exchanged several letters with him. He writes a fine English and confirmed many of the important facts given in this book. With solicitude and interest in my project, he has supplied me with many photographs, including several of himself wearing modern English clothes (Rodale 1948: 8, emphasis in original).

The *mir* of Hunza played a pivotal role in promoting Hunza as a real-life manifestation of Shangri-La. Mohamad Jamal Khan did not author the numerous myths that circulated about his semi-autonomous principality. Nevertheless, he was a shrewd businessman who readily assumed the role others wanted to see in him. He possessed the acumen to manipulate and shape the narratives of foreigners about his homeland to his economic advantage. However, despite his considerable political skills, he ultimately could not prevent an inevitable conflict. The coexistence of both old and new images of Hunza, marked by the simultaneous dissemination of photographic representations featuring male adventurers in an unassailable wilderness alongside images of healthy, smiling women, gave rise to a clash of geographical imaginations. This clash manifested itself in the development of conflicts between two distinct groups: the participants in expeditions and the proponents of the health food movement. At the centre of this “great battle of opinions” (DAV 07), as designated by Ralph Bircher, was the most influential figure in Hunza: *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan.

In 1954, concurrently with the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, Irene von Unruh, a German physician, set out on a journey to Hunza. Her motivation was rooted in her enthusiasm for Ralph Bircher’s theory regarding ‘the people who know no disease’ (Bircher 1942). Her objective in the Hunza Valley was to undertake independent medical research on the population, with the aim of uncovering the enigma behind their remarkable health and longevity. Upon her arrival in Hunza, however, she quickly realised that many of the individuals she examined, and who sought her medical advice, were indeed facing severe health

challenges. A significant portion of her patients lived in impoverished conditions that had detrimental effects on their health. They endured the effects of malnutrition, worm infestations, and a range of ailments, including ocular, gastrointestinal, and pulmonary diseases, as well as infected wounds and fever. Additionally, it became evident that they lacked sufficient access to medical care (von Unruh 1955: 57–58).

While she was still in Hunza, Irene von Unruh communicated her insights in a letter to Ralph Bircher. Bircher responded defensively and with anger. He reached out to the *mir* of Hunza, whom he viewed as an ally, and wrote to him:

I just got a letter from Dr. Irene v. Unruh who now studied the Hunzas as your guest [...]. Dr. v. Unruh [...] writes however in a deep depression about the hygienic and health conditions of your people. She found them 'dirty and sick' and 'going to perish in filth', ridden by chronic eye disease in adults and children, by skin and mucus membrane infection, stomach and intestinal diseases and increasing incidence of tuberculosis. This seem to be appalling news. Everywhere people followed her, she writes, asking for treatment. Contrary again to what we knew before she found a large consumption of meat, sugar, tea and salt, even of alcohol and tobacco. Dr. v. Unruh says she met the German-Austrian expedition and learned they also were dismayed about these things. [...] I hope these news, however to be greatly exaggerated. But even then, the news that are going to be published by Dr. v. Unruh and Dr. Bernett may cause deep confusion and dejection among the friends of your people. (DAV 07)

The fact that Ralph Bircher, in his letter to Mohamad Jamal Khan, not only voiced complaints about Irene von Unruh but also mentioned Paul Bernett, left the latter in a state of distress. Much like Irene von Unruh, the physician of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakorum expedition had documented the partially precarious health conditions prevalent in the Hunza Valley (Pillewizer Diary: 55). Nevertheless, the members of the German-Austrian expedition had no intention of publicising their observations. Right after their return to Munich, in the autumn of 1954,

they began planning their subsequent expedition to the Hunza Valley. This upcoming endeavour, the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, necessitated their reliance on the goodwill of the *mir* of Hunza. Consequently, Paul Bennett felt compelled to draft a letter to Mohamad Jamal Khan, in which he distanced himself from Irene von Unruh:

Your Highness [...] We [the participants of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition] can only consider the acting of Mrs. von Unruh as a deed of a woman who does not know exeuropean [extra-European, MH] conditions and could not succeed in getting the real view on the Hunzas during the short time she spent there. When we had the honour of being your guests your Highness might have felt that we did not want to have too close connections with the lady. But under these forcing circumstances we have to pronounce it, that we distanciate [distance ourselves, MH] from the person of Dr. von Unruh and her acting. The Expedition spent beautiful hours in your country, with your Highness and our first class porters. [...] Everywhere in Pakistan and Germany we expressed our opinion to the authorities and Press. (DAV 08)

The entire incident appears not to have perturbed the *mir* of Hunza. It is possible that the *mir's* composed response was driven by a prudent intention to maintain his positive relationship with the former members of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Mohamad Jamal Khan had successfully persuaded the expedition team to extend an invitation to him to visit Germany. Ultimately, in 1962, the *mir* undertook this journey to southern Germany, accompanied by his brother Ayash Khan and his wife, *rami* Shams-un-Nahar.

In Bavaria, he received formal recognition as a state visitor, with *Kultusminister* (Education Minister) Theodor Maunz extending a formal welcome. However, the *mir's* visit primarily drew attention from the tabloid press. The 'monarch' was interviewed on topics related to the health, longevity, and overall happiness of the people in his 'kingdom'. Ironically, these articles did not overlook the fact that the *mir* had come to Germany, in no small part, to seek medical advice (see e.g., Der König

von Hunza 1962: 8). The majority of journals and newspapers that covered this visit perpetuated the myth of the ‘healthy Hunzas’. They portrayed Mohamad Jamal Khan as a modern ruler, a *Naturfreund* (nature enthusiast) who, “akin to King Solomon in biblical history, made wise decisions for the well-being of his land” (ibid.). Women’s magazines delved into the daily life of the royal family, with particular emphasis on the role of *rani* Shams-un-Nahar (ibid.). Local newspapers seized the opportunity to promote shops and businesses in their area of distribution. One reporter captured the *mir* and the *rani* purchasing sunglasses from the renowned Munich optician Pini (DAV 09); the press photographs featuring the ‘exotic’ visitors proved effective for the self-promotion of the *mir*.

The portrayals of Hunza as an eternal fountain of health, an ideal counter-civilisation, or a dreamland differed in various ways from those crafted by male expedition travellers. However, a conspicuous commonality emerged in their marketability. Much like the authors of the health food movement and the German tabloid press, several mountaineers participating in the 1950s Karakoram expeditions successfully sold and marketed their photographs, with Gerhart Klamert as one of the most active among them.

#### **4.6 Commodification of the view: The economic aspects of expedition photographs**

German expeditions to the Hindukush-Karakoram were expensive endeavours, the cost of which frequently surpassed one hundred thousand German marks (see e.g., StAL 05). To finance their ambitious undertakings, participants in German expeditions during the 1950s and 1960s partnered with sponsors from the private sector. Expedition photography played a pivotal role in facilitating this collaborative effort.

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Private sector support for expeditions primarily resulted in donations. Manufacturers and traders supplied expedition teams with essential items such as clothing, technology, outdoor and camping gear, food, and medicines. In return, expedition teams committed to generating product reports and capturing product photographs during their journeys. These product photographs constitute a considerable portion of the photographic collections from the 1950s and 1960s expeditions. For instance, in Gerhart Klamert's collection, approximately every tenth photograph features a sponsored product.

Another method of generating funds through expedition photographs was to sell them either during or after the journey. By doing so, expedition participants could offset their personal travel expenses and even generate a profit over time. Both large and small media companies acquired the rights to reproduce and exclusively use these images, effectively turning expedition photographs into a marketable commodity.

Gerhart Klamert's collection of photographs vividly illustrates the substantial influence of financial factors on the development of expedition photography in the 1950s. In the following sections, I will examine these economic influences in greater detail.

#### **4.6.1 Expedition participants as brand ambassadors**

Major expeditions relied extensively on financial backing from external donors. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, expeditions were predominantly funded by states, powerful rulers, and globally active trading companies. These institutional entities fulfilled a threefold role: defining the objectives of the expeditions, supplying funds for the costly journeys, and, by virtue of their position, negotiating travel regulations with political authorities in the expedition areas. With these mechanisms, the funding institutions sought to secure the success and safety of their investments. However, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the organisational and financial structure of European

expeditions underwent a transformation. Commissioning, financing, and patronage of expeditions became the responsibility of separate actors with different interests and expectations.

In the 1930s, the National Socialist state wielded significant authority and financial control over German expeditions, effectively serving as the exclusive entity responsible for commissioning and financing these ventures. While officially various associations were engaged in organising expeditions, they were, in practice, subject to stringent government oversight due to the policy of *Gleichschaltung* ('alignment'). After the collapse of the National Socialist state and the dismantling of *Gleichschaltung*, formerly state-affiliated organisations and associations (re-)emerged as autonomous entities within civil society.

These transformations also left their mark on the German Alpine Club and the German Himalaya Foundation. After 1949, these organisations took on the full responsibility for initiating and organising expeditions to High Asia in a politically independent manner. In contrast, the newly established government of the Federal Republic of Germany played a purely symbolic role. For example, in 1954, the Federal Minister of the Interior assumed the position of 'honorary patronage' for the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition (DAV 10).

During the 1950s, the Federal Republic of Germany was both unwilling and unable to secure adequate funding for the burgeoning number of German expedition teams and reconnaissance trips. To support their endeavours, expedition organisers had to seek out new sponsors, with an increasing reliance on the private sector. Consequently, a substantial number of private companies emerged as key contributors to expedition financing.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the states, potentates, and trading companies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German companies of the 1950s did not pursue any geopolitical interests in the expedition areas. These new sponsors, ranging from small family businesses to large industries, supported expeditions with the primary goal of attracting the attention of German customers. It was an integral part of their marketing strategy, and they considered



financing such expeditions a long-term investment. In exchange for their financial support and the contributions of goods, expedition teams committed to generating photographs and reports on behalf of their sponsors. As a result, product photography became a decisive factor in the collaboration between expeditions and their private sector sponsors.

The history of expeditionary product photography dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the earliest instances of this promotional photography was captured in January 1911 during the British Antarctic expedition. This photograph, taken by expedition photographer Herbert Ponting, features Frederick Hooper, a steward in the Royal Navy, in a relaxed pose as he sits on a wooden box in the midst of the Antarctic ice. What immediately draws one's attention in the image is the prominently displayed label on the wooden box, proudly showcasing the words 'Heinz Baked Beans'. The photograph vividly portrays Hooper savouring a tin of Heinz baked beans, revelling in the experience with evident satisfaction.<sup>11</sup> Geographer James Ryan, one of the few authors who have examined the profound influence of product photography on expeditions, succinctly characterised this photograph as "a blatantly staged piece of commercial marketing" (Ryan 2013: 27).

The British Antarctic expedition concluded tragically, with four members, including the expedition leader Robert Falcon Scott, getting lost, unable to return to the base camp. Cynically, it was this fatal outcome that drew significant media attention, ultimately playing a key role in the success of Herbert Ponting's product photographs (*ibid.*). Following its success in Antarctica, commercial photography became a practice widely adopted by expedition teams around the world.

German expeditionary product photography started comparatively late. While it is true that private companies in the German Reich also provided equipment to expedition teams heading to High Asia (see, e.g., Scheibe 1937: 9–16), this did not immediately result in extensive collaboration between expeditions and sponsors for marketing photography. The authoritarian German government, in power since

1933, held more influence over the expeditions than the private sector, which itself was under the government's sway. Consequently, the photographic practices of German expeditions in the 1930s revolved around subjects aligned with the political demands of the National Socialist government. These subjects included showcasing the German heroes on Nanga Parbat, entertaining relations with the 'Aryan' peoples of Central and South Asia, and prominently displaying the hoisted *Hakenkreuzflagge*.

While British expedition photography in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century began to portray the "explorer-as-advertiser" (Ryan 2013: 27), presenting the explorer as a consumer of adrenaline and canned beans, the Germans were engaged in crafting a distinct image of their explorers. German expedition photographers concentrated on depicting camaraderie on the one hand and self-sacrifice on the other. These images and ideals were disseminated widely through the fascist propaganda apparatus, embedding them in the national consciousness of the German Reich. Expedition photographs from High Asia symbolised the moral and physical superiority of *the* Germans, a sentiment that endured in the minds of many citizens of West Germany even after 1949. Therefore, in the 1950s, expedition photographs continued to serve as a potent medium for reaching the public. However, the conveyed messages shifted away from themes of camaraderie or the courage to sacrifice for the fatherland and aligned more closely with British and American models. Marketable items like cooking pots, tents, chocolates, and schnapps now became part of German expedition photography too.

On 3 July 1953, Sporthaus Schuster, a well-known sportswear shop located in the heart of Munich, had ample reason to celebrate. The shop had provided equipment for its employee, Hermann Buhl, who embarked on the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition. The achievement of the Austrian mountaineer on Nanga Parbat translated into a triumph for the marketing department of this family-owned business. Over the ensuing decades, Sporthaus Schuster continued to be a prominent sponsor and supplier for

mountaineering expeditions in southern Germany. A year after Hermann Buhl's expedition, in 1954, the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team also received substantial support: "Sporthaus Schuster [...] backed us unwaveringly with its expertise and equipment", expressed Mathias Rebitsch (1955: 104) in gratitude to the sponsor in his official expedition report.

The sponsors of West German expeditions in the 1950s and 1960s hailed from various industries. Alongside retailers specialising in clothing, sports, and camping gear, there were manufacturers of camera and film equipment, typewriters, stationery, as well as food, beverages, and pharmaceuticals who also participated actively. It was not unusual to find a sponsor list for an expedition containing several hundred company names (see e.g., DAV 11; StAL 13). Upon completing the expedition, team members were required to submit product reports along with photographs of the sponsored items to the respective sponsors. These companies then used these images for advertising, either in the public domain or within their internal company publications. This practice resulted in illustrated expedition reports becoming a form of 'advertainments'.

During public appearances, expedition travellers were obligated to publicly acknowledge and promote their sponsors. In October 1954, the former participants of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition conducted a press conference where they presented a series of photographs solely dedicated to the Perlon industry. The accompanying press release underscored the importance of Perlon products, stating, "the fate of the expedition depended largely on the PERLON rope" (DAV 12).

In addition to Perlon ropes, the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team, along with their high-altitude porters, were equipped with tents, trousers, anoraks, socks, and underwear all made from the synthetic fibre known as Perlon. To align with the sponsors' interests, the press conference expanded the expedition's scientific and mountaineering objectives to include the testing of "PERLON clothing and equipment under extreme conditions" (DAV 13: 1). As expected, the

evaluation from the product testers was highly positive. The press release reads:

The expedition participants almost returned from the Himalayas without their pants. From the simple kuli to the Mir of Hunza, everyone was thrilled and would have loved to own these trousers made of wool and PERLON. (DAV 12)

Perlon, the German equivalent of the American synthetic fibre Nylon, was primarily used during the Second World War to produce parachutes and tires. Following the war, the industry sought new markets for its synthetic fibre. In addition to the manufacturing of women's stockings and everyday clothing, their product range expanded to include outdoor apparel and sportswear.

It is worth noting that Perlon was not the sole product previously employed in wartime and then promoted by expedition teams. Among the products depicted in the photographs taken in the Hindukush and the Karakoram regions were adhesive products from UHU and Scho-Ka-Kola, a caffeinated chocolate that had been part of the Luftwaffe's rations. Other images included dextrose from the brand Dextro-Energen, Bahlsen biscuits, Bayer medications, as well as canned food and alcohol from various German manufacturers. The use of expedition photographs for advertising purposes influenced the content and messaging of these images. Product photography expanded the variety of subjects found within expedition photo collections, thus introducing new interpretations of the portrayed regions. The Karakoram mountains and the individuals featured alongside the products served as platforms for expressing German consumer desires.

Not only were products showcased, but brand names and company names, such as Sporthaus Schuster, were also promoted through photography. A black and white photograph from the Klamert Collection illustrates this. It features a group of four men, who, although not immediately discernible from the image, were among the load-carriers of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. In the

photograph, they are seated on the ground, with one of them holding a small label bearing the inscription “Sporthaus Schuster” (Figure 4.29). The evident poverty of these men, as reflected in the condition of their clothing, must have perplexed viewers familiar with the range of products offered by Sporthaus Schuster. The men were used to promote a shop that sold the very products they had no access to but needed badly, particularly safe mountain equipment and shoes.

The image featuring the four men holding the Sporthaus-Schuster sign is just one example of numerous German photographs depicting expedition labourers for promotional purposes. This aligned with the preferences of the sponsors. Many companies explicitly requested photographs of their products “alongside natives” (StAL 13: 1).

Nevertheless, interactions between members of the German expedition teams and the local population were primarily limited to the expedition staff. Consequently, the German travellers positioned their employees in front of the camera and captured them alongside the products which needed to be promoted.

Historically, advertising images have played a significant role in shaping geographical and cultural perceptions. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German advertising industry had shown a growing inclination to make use of colonial and exotic themes. The turn of the century witnessed a rapid increase in the production of goods in general. Employing foreign or exotic designs in advertising could give the promoted product an alluring, outstanding quality (Zeller 2008: 221). In the German Reich, colonial and stereotypical depictions of *Indianer* (American Indians) and *Mohren* (Blackamoor or black servants) were especially popular, each carrying its own associations of natural purity and sensual pleasure. Stefanie Wolter (2005: 40) aptly characterises the practice of creating a profit-oriented image of the ‘other’ as “commodity racism”.

Until the early 1950s, German expedition photographs taken in High Asia did not exhibit the exoticism and commodity racism found in colonial advertising images related to Africa or America.

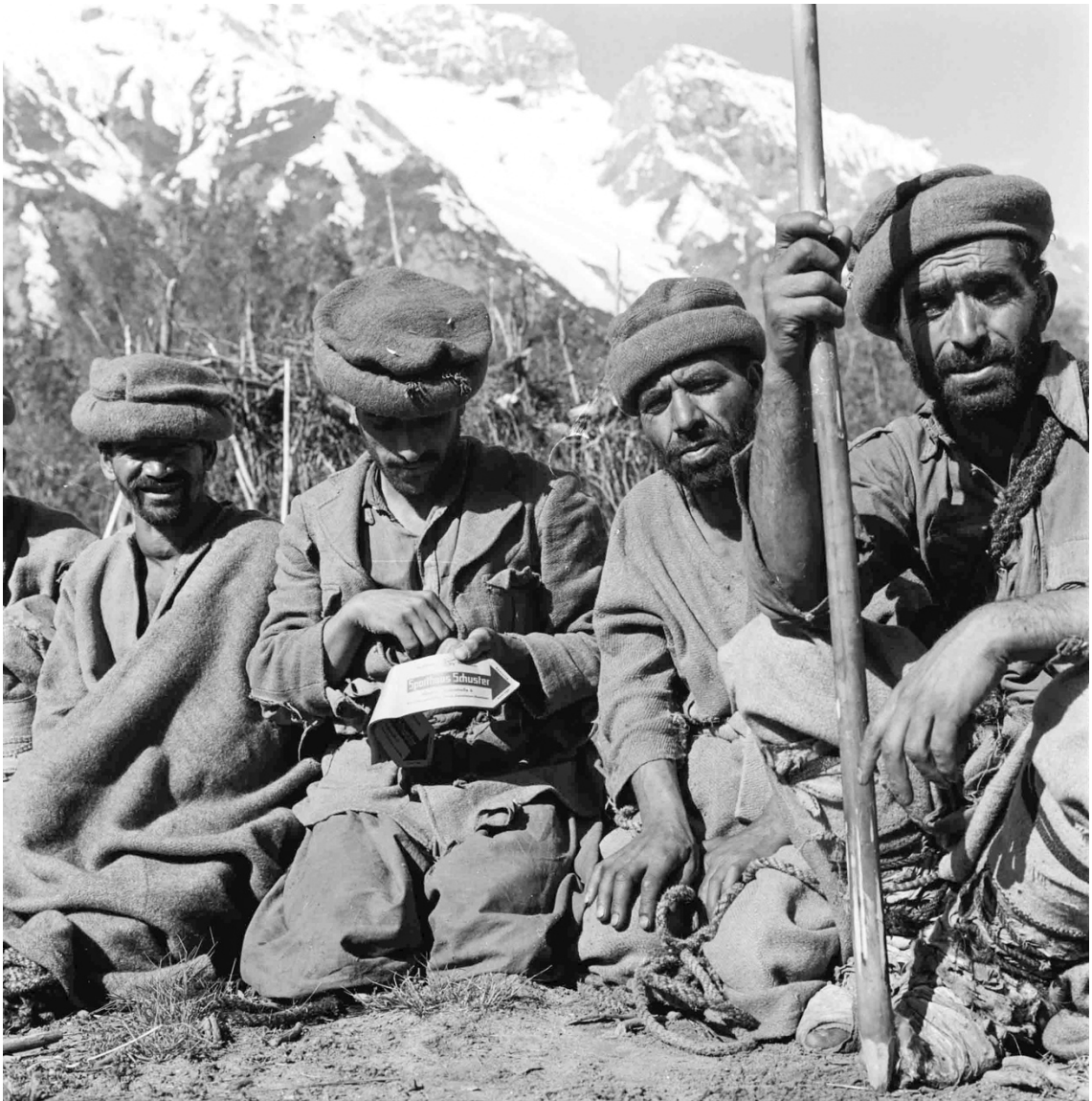


Figure 4.29 ▲

Sporthaus Schuster was among the sponsors of the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition. Here, a load-carrier in the service of the 1954 expedition is shown holding a small piece of paper with an arrow showcasing the name of the sports store.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): *[No]* 163 [medium format slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.



▲ Figure 4.30

In 1954, Gerhart Klamert captured a product photograph featuring multigrain and health food products, with high-altitude porter Johar Beg in the background.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1954): [No] 235 [medium format slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.



Figure 4.31 ▲

Camera manufacturers like Rollei, Leica, and Zeiss Ikon have a long tradition of using expedition photographs to advertise their products. This photograph was taken in August 1954 near the Babusar Pass as the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition team was journeying back to Rawalpindi.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1954): unnumbered photograph [35mm slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of Gerhart Klamert.



Accordingly, in the expedition films of the 1930s, the practice of product placement played a minimal role. However, this changed after the Second World War. In the 1953 film documenting the Willy Merkl Memorial expedition, product placement became especially prominent. Even the pivotal scene depicting Hermann Buhl's triumphant return from the summit of Nanga Parbat is interrupted by extensive commercial shots showcasing canned herring fillets.

In the 1950s, the sponsors, who were familiar with the presentation of advertising images from non-European countries, began to request the inclusion of 'natives' from the Hindukush, Himalayas, and Karakoram as advertising figures. Consequently, advertising and product photography introduced a novel element into the German representation of High Asia, namely, the concept of the 'exotic other'. As Joachim Zeller succinctly summarises:

In addition to colonialism and racial theories influenced by social Darwinism, it was the capitalist market that played a role in the construction of the 'essential Other'. (Zeller 2008: 20).

In 1959, the *mir* of Hunza assumed the role of an advertising figurehead when Gerhart Klamert captured an image of him holding the latest fashion catalogue, which belonged to the fashion boutique owned by his expedition companion, Willy Bogner (Figure 4.32). Still, the 'natives' of the Karakoram never became as popular as other racialized advertising figures in Germany. To this day, many Germans associate Sarotti chocolate with the *Sarotti-Mohr*, despite the fact that it has been replaced by the *Sarotti-Magier* (Sarotti mage) in 2004. In contrast, the *mir* of Hunza is unlikely to be associated with the current Bogner catalogue. Nevertheless, the Bogner company continues to incorporate themes and motives of expedition and exploration into their advertising campaigns, as evidenced by their 2022 advertisements featuring the slogan, 'Explore new terrains'.

Today, the term 'exploration' has evolved to signify an adventure that can be purchased, while 'high mountain expedition' is commonly



Figure 4.32 ▲

Mir Mohamad Jamal Khan is photographed with the latest Bogner fashion catalogue.

Source: Gerhart Klamert (1959): [No] 14/2 [medium format slide]. Private collection of Gerhart Klamert. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

associated with sporting challenges pursued by a wealthier clientele. Within this context, the world's leading brands of outdoor and photographic equipment continue to use expedition footage from non-European mountains in their advertising campaigns. Notably, in their 2018/2019 campaign, The North Face company adopted the theme "Athlete Tested, Expedition Proven" (DeAcetis 2019) as a testament to their products' reliability and performance in extreme conditions. In 2009, among others, extreme mountaineer Ueli Steck and mountain guide Robert Bösch became brand ambassadors for Nikon, the Japanese camera manufacturer. The enduring geographical imagination of the world's highest mountains as places where mountaineers push the limits of human potential and discover new horizons has persisted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in contemporary advertising.

#### 4.6.2 Expedition photographs as commodities

The potential to derive income from expedition photographs extended beyond product placement photography. During the 1950s, expedition participants also funded their endeavours by selling their own reports and images. For instance, the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition exclusively granted printing rights for their colour photographs to the magazine *Bunte Illustrierte* (DAV 15). Furthermore, the trade in expedition photographs developed into a private enterprise for select members of expedition teams.

Following the Karakoram expeditions of 1954 and 1959, Gerhart Klamert endeavoured to sell his photographs to various potential buyers. Preserved correspondences from him, housed in the archives of the German Alpine Club, reveal the challenges he faced during this sales process. In February 1957, after months of negotiations, Gerhart Klamert successfully sold 40 of his 1954 expedition colour slides to AGFA, a manufacturer of photographic films and laboratory equipment. AGFA

offered him a rate of ten Deutsche Marks for each of the 40 slides. Additionally, Gerhart Klamert received a separate payment of 100 Deutsche Marks for the seven-page picture descriptions included in the transaction (DAV 14).

AGFA had acquired Klamert's photographs for its company archive because the images had been captured using the company's own film material (*ibid.*). Apart from large corporations, other buyers of expedition photographs included scientific institutions and museums, which often showed interest in acquiring entire collections. Book and newspaper publishers, on the other hand, typically purchased only limited quantities of images but constituted the most frequent buyers.

As expedition photography increasingly embraced commercial applications, it also propelled advancements in photographic technology. Except for specialised scientific applications like photogrammetry, handheld cameras and photographic film had long replaced tripods and glass plates in expedition photography. The primary requirement for cameras and films was their compactness, user-friendliness, and ease of transport. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, most German expedition travellers carried multiple cameras and a variety of photographic films, available in various formats, from different manufacturers. By the early 1960s, in the context of commercial usage, colour film had become dominant over black-and-white film (see Schlenker 2015: 18).

The commercial use of expedition photographs had a lasting impact on the value of the photographs. Initially, during the 1950s and 1960s, their value increased due to lucrative sales opportunities. Apart from that, the commodification of photographs brought the legal aspects of authorship and copyright into prominence. Expedition photographers asserted their copyright claims and demanded compensation for the reproduction and distribution of their photographic creations.

Furthermore, the possibility of funding one's travel expenses through the production and sale of images brought about changes in the composition of expedition teams. It allowed individuals with only

moderate wealth to participate in expeditions, making these undertakings less exclusive. Conservative members of the Alpine Clubs of Austria and Germany regarded this transformation and the increasing commodification of expeditions with scepticism:

Until the beginning of the Second World War, it was still a matter of course that all participants in an expedition, without exception, had to raise a portion of the necessary funds themselves and demonstrate their financial solvency before the Alpine Club provided them with corresponding subsidies. Perhaps this practice was also influenced by the fact that the participants were, almost without exception, academics and amateurs who pursued mountaineering as a hobby rather than a profession. What a contrast to today's post-war procedures, where exceptional climbers essentially auction themselves to the highest bidder for expeditions – let alone the option of participating in an expedition by selling rights to photographs, publications, or lectures! (Schmidt-Wellenburg (n.d.): 33–34)

In the long term, however, the transformation of expedition photographs into commodities resulted in a depreciation of their value. While the overall quantity of images increased immensely, there was a noticeable decline in both the diversity of subjects and the quality of the photographs. Especially from a conservator's perspective, one must regret choices made by photographers during the 1950s and 1960s. Colour films, especially slide films, have proven to be significantly less durable and robust when compared to glass plates and black-and-white negative films. Today, it is not uncommon that expedition photographs taken in the 1890s are in much better material condition and better preserved than the colour photographs from the 1950s.

The worsening material conditions of expedition photographs are also due to private storage practices. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, expedition photographs were often entrusted to archives, ensuring their preservation in cool and dry environments. Conversely, since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, expedition photographs are often stored in private households. Exposure to humidity and fluctuating temperatures in domestic settings,

such as living rooms and attics, has taken a toll on many of these photographic objects. Consequently, a considerable number have suffered damage, severe discolouration, accumulated dirt, or fallen prey to mould infestations. Hence, the commodification and privatisation of expedition photographs has affected not only their intrinsic value but also their material condition.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, photographs have become ubiquitous, with even imagery from the Himalayas and the Karakoram readily available to anyone. Amidst this abundance of visual content, the genuine significance of historical expedition photo collections, such as the one curated by Gerhart Klamert, is easily overlooked. At first glance, Gerhart Klamert's images bear indeed a resemblance to the motifs found in contemporary photographs of mountaineers and individual travellers in the high mountains of Asia.

However, this superficial impression may lead to a misinterpretation if historical images dating back to the 1950s are simply conflated with their contemporary counterparts. It is essential to recognise that Gerhart Klamert's photographs do not adhere to present-day standards; rather, they represent the immediate predecessors of these standards, having played a pivotal role in paving the way for their development and establishment. Notably, the institutional context in which the German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition took place and Klamert's photographs were produced, differs markedly from individual journeys or commercial mountaineering expeditions that occur today.

The scientific significance of Gerhart Klamert's photo collection resides in its capacity to offer a diverse range of historical references. An examination of the collection has yielded valuable insights into three pivotal developments that either began or significantly intensified during the 1950s: the internationalisation, popularisation, and commercialisation of expeditions and expedition photography. The mountaineer's expedition photographs demonstrate a departure from the chauvinistic and fascist German high mountain photography of the 1930s,

transitioning towards a more internationalised visual language that emerged in the 1950s. On the other hand, the collection highlights the increased commercialisation of expeditions and expedition photography during the 1950s. This transformation led German expedition travellers to adopt the visual style of British colonial explorers and North American individual travellers.

Gerhart Klamert's photo collection thus represents a pivotal moment in the history of expedition photography. It documents the transformation wherein expedition photography evolved from a medium that provided unique and unprecedented insights into unexplored territories to a widely disseminated and popular form of visual storytelling about High Asia.

### Endnotes of Pages 169–271

<sup>1</sup> Several copies of Fritz Aumann's portrait of Hermann Buhl can be found in the archive of the German Alpine Club. Shelf mark: DAV EXP 3 FN.2.938.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed account of the history of the Sherpa high-altitude porters in British-colonial mountaineering expeditions see e.g., Isserman and Weaver 2008: 33–39, and Ortner 1999.

<sup>3</sup> The German-American Himalaya expedition had recruited men from Kashmir, Baltistan, and Hunza as high-altitude porters and guides. But fierce conflicts arose between the parties. The men in the expedition's service demanded their right to wages and tolerable working conditions, an attitude that the American expedition member Elizabeth Knowlton referred to as "native 'Bolshevism' – a term which seemed to be loosely used for any lack of submission to the white man's traditional authority" (Knowlton 1933: 78). As a result, all subsequent German Nanga Parbat expeditions of the 1930s again recruited Sherpas as guides and high-altitude porters.

<sup>4</sup> In the case of Hunza, insights gleaned from discussions with contemporary witnesses who recall the expedition system during the tenure of the last *mir* of Hunza indicate that any material possessions provided by expeditions to their high-altitude porters as part of their supplemental wages were required to be surrendered to *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan. The *mir* oversaw the centralised collection of these goods and subsequently redistributed them in accordance with his economic and political objectives.

<sup>5</sup> Indologist Hermann Berger (1998: 57) and anthropologist Karl Jettmar (1975: 276) both translate the terms *bitan* (Burushaski) and *daiyal* (Shina) as "shaman" or "soothsayer". Anthropologist Julie Flowerday (1998: 282) further elaborates on the concept: "A bitan can be a person of either sex with certain supernatural powers, e.g., the ability to tell what is happening at a distance and to foretell the future."

<sup>6</sup> According to Jettmar (1975: 221), a *rachi* can be considered a type of personal "guardian fairy" associated with the *bitan* or *dayial*.

<sup>7</sup> For a thorough examination, along with cartographic representations, of the historical geopolitical changes in the Hunza Valley, refer to Kreutzmann 2020: 167.

<sup>8</sup> A copy of the summit photograph taken by Edmund Hillary on 29 Mai 1953 is kept in the RGS-IBG Collections, Picture Library of the Royal Geographical Society. Shelf mark: S0001056.

<sup>9</sup> The favourable portrayal of the people of Hunza also served to create an ideological distinction between them and their neighbours in Nagar. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, numerous European travellers, notably Emily Lorimer and even the participants of German expeditions in the 1950s, attempted to depict the Huzukuts as superior to the Nagarkuts. Furthermore, it is important to note that the glorifying descriptions of longevity and health did not encompass the entire population of Hunza; rather, this discourse primarily referred to the Burusho people, the Burushaski-speaking portion of the population residing predominantly in Central Hunza. For a comprehensive



examination of the mythologization of Hunza that expands upon the discourse addressed here, please refer to the chapter titled “A plethora of Hunza myths revisited” in Kreutzmann 2020: 477–510

<sup>10</sup> To be exact, the engagement of the German private sector in funding expeditions had already been initiated and practiced during the era of Willi Rickmer Rickmers (Torma 2011a: 194). However, after the conclusion of the Second World War, private sponsorship experienced a surge.

<sup>11</sup> The original photograph captured by Herbert Ponting in 1911 is preserved at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge. Shelf mark: P2005/5/1063.



## **5 Collecting, archiving, and exhibiting the Hindukush: The photographs of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition**

For centuries, the acquisition of collectibles, artefacts, and specimens was a primary goal of expeditions. Beginning with the first major voyages of exploration in the early modern era, expedition teams embarked on the collection of both man-made and natural objects encountered during their missions, subsequently transporting these items to Europe. Much like visual representations, collected objects served the purpose of making the newly discovered and progressively colonised regions of the extra-European world tangible within European metropolises.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, museums which specialised in anthropology, ethnology, and natural history emerged in cities across Europe, North America, and their colonies. These institutions evolved into repositories that not only accumulated a diverse array of objects from around the world but also made them accessible for public exhibition. Museums quickly rose to societal prominence and gained political significance. They also gained the autonomy to allocate funds for expedition teams with a clear mission: collecting artefacts that adhered to their specific criteria. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, ethnological museums organised numerous collecting expeditions. One particularly noteworthy example from the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.

The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition was initiated and commissioned by the Linden Museum, an ethnological museum located in Stuttgart.<sup>1</sup> Under the leadership of museum curator Friedrich Kußmaul, the

expedition team embarked on a journey to the Hindukush in the Afghan province of Badakhshan, spanning from autumn 1962 to summer 1963. The mission's primary objectives included the acquisition of artefacts and materials associated with the culture of Badakhshan and conducting ethnological research. Additionally, the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition stood out as a remarkably ambitious endeavour in expeditionary visual documentation. The three German expedition members – Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy – produced more than 15,000 photographs throughout their journey (Krämer 2013: 116).

Like the 1,050 artefacts gathered by the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team members, the photographs they took have undergone curation in the aftermath of the expedition. A significant portion of these images has been incorporated into the collections housed by the Linden Museum. This circumstance prompts an analysis of the importance of expedition photographs within the context of ethnological museums. Here, the focus is to understand the similarities and differences between artefacts collected during expeditions and expedition photographs. Additionally, the investigation in this chapter aims to understand how the unique environment of ethnological museums has shaped the interpretation and significance attributed to these images.

To begin, I will provide an overview of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition within its historical context. I will investigate the motivations behind 20<sup>th</sup>-century expeditions that collected items and photographs for ethnological museums, as well as examine the methods employed by the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition in carrying out its mission. Following this historical contextualisation, my attention will turn to the curation procedures employed at the Linden Museum for organising the expedition photographs within several collections. Here, I will analyse the techniques for selecting, preserving, and using expedition photographs at the ethnological museum. My third objective is to enhance the understanding of the significance of expedition photography within museum exhibitions. In this context, the focus will be on how visual representations in

ethnographic exhibitions have informed and conveyed geographical imaginaries and cultural narratives related to the Hindukush.

### **5.1 The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition: An ethnological project in historical perspective**

After the collapse of the National Socialist state in 1945, German ethnology confronted a profound crisis of legitimacy.<sup>2</sup> The academic discipline had maintained a close association with the fascist government, with ethnological institutions actively endorsing and promoting National Socialist ideology. Furthermore, a substantial number of German ethnologists, along with anthropologists and physicians, were directly involved in the atrocities committed in the name of ‘racial theory’ (German *Rassenlehre*) and ‘racial hygiene’ (German *Rassenhygiene*) within the German Reich. As a result, in the aftermath of the Second World War, German ethnologists found themselves isolated from the international network of scholars in their field (Haller 2012: 62–64; Kramer 2016: 229).

During the 1950s, the first tentative efforts were made to reconnect with international anthropological discourse. In the newly established Federal Republic of Germany, ethnologists aimed to align themselves with anglophone anthropology, which was predominantly practiced by scholars educated in the United Kingdom and the United States. This focus placed a strong emphasis on empirical field research, and thus resulted in a resurgence of expeditionary science in Germany (Haller 2012: 63).

At the same time, scholars in the Federal Republic did not entirely disengage from the ethnological pursuits of the German Reich. Well-established schools of thought, particularly the cultural-historical school (German *kulturhistorische Schule*), continued to be influential. In the 1950s and 1960s, key themes in West German ethnology, echoing pre-war priorities, centred on the examination of human origins and the gathering and preservation of so called ‘material culture’ (Haller 2012: 66).

Friedrich Kußmaul stands as an individual who both witnessed and actively contributed to the revival of German ethnology following the Second World War. Born in 1920 to a farmer's household, Friedrich Kußmaul embarked on his academic journey in 1939 with the goal of becoming a teacher (Kußmaul and Haller 2011: 5). Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, he enrolled at the University of Göttingen, where he pursued a diverse curriculum, including geography. In 1946, following a brief period as a prisoner of war, he shifted to the University of Tübingen, where his scholarly interest in ethnology began to take shape. During his time in Tübingen, Kußmaul pursued studies in *Länder- und Völkerkunde* (regional studies and ethnology) under the mentorship of geographer and explorer Hermann von Wissmann. In 1954, upon the successful completion of his doctoral studies, Friedrich Kußmaul assumed a position at the Linden Museum in Stuttgart (ibid.: 6). Friedrich Kußmaul's dedication to the Linden Museum remained steadfast throughout his entire professional career, culminating in his appointment as director in 1971 – a position he held until his retirement.

In the late 1950s, while still holding the position of a curator, he conceived the idea of conducting an expedition to the Afghan Hindukush. In 2009, almost five decades after leading the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, Friedrich Kußmaul, then 88 years old, was interviewed by anthropologist Dieter Haller. During this conversation, Kußmaul expounded upon the motivations that had driven him to undertake an expedition to Afghanistan in the early 1960s:

I had stumbled upon a French book discussing Afghan history – it might sound quite peculiar, but that is how things were in those days. Within its pages, I encountered a description of an island in either a sea or a lake – it struck a chord with me, reminiscent of a tale featuring horses leaping from the sea. That inspired me to undertake a mission to locate this island, which I successfully accomplished [...]. It is situated in northern Afghanistan. (Kußmaul und Haller 2011: 7)

Besides the quest for a mythical island, Friedrich Kußmaul's expedition plans were also driven by career-oriented considerations. In the late 1950s, it became evident that his career at the Linden Museum had reached a standstill. This prompted the curator to actively seek opportunities for enhancing his academic standing through field research. His doctoral thesis, titled *Zur Frühgeschichte des innerasiatischen Reiternomadentums* (On the early history of Inner-Asian horse nomads), was a literature-based study, and since his affiliation with the Linden Museum in 1954, Kußmaul had been unable to undertake any empirical research trips. Therefore, the Badakhshan expedition was meant to serve as a litmus test for his capabilities as an ethnologist – a test he evidently passed with success. In an obituary dedicated to Friedrich Kußmaul, who died in September 2009, his long-time colleague Jürgen Zwernemann (2011: 2) lauded the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition as “the most significant event in Friedrich Kußmaul's academic career”.

The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition had a twofold purpose: to acquire artefacts for ethnographic collections and to conduct ethnological and anthropological research. This twofold mission was closely tied to its funding structure. On the one hand, the Linden Museum served as a source of funding for acquiring collection items. In 1963, the University of Mainz provided supplementary funding for the acquisition of ethnographic objects (Krämer 2013: 105; LiMu 02). On the other hand, in the initial planning stages, it became evident that the expedition would involve substantial travel expenses, and the resources of the Linden Museum alone were inadequate to cover these costs. Consequently, Friedrich Kußmaul recognised the necessity to secure additional financial support. In June 1961, he submitted an application to the German Research Foundation. In this application, the museum curator described the planned expedition primarily as a research trip.

The 1961 research proposal to the German Research Foundation sheds light on the author's intellectual orientation and elucidates specific conceptual trends within post-war German ethnology. Furthermore, it

offers clarity concerning the theoretical framework that underpinned the overarching objectives of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. As outlined in the research proposal, the primary aim of the expedition was to explore the Afghan Hindukush, with a specific emphasis on studying the ‘Pamir Tajik’ population. Kußmaul noted that:

The Pamir Tajik people [...] inhabit extremely remote areas and are considered the purest representatives of northern Iranians, mainly due to their use of Iranian residual languages [German *iranische Restsprachen*]. (StAL 01: 4)

He further suggested that researching the Persian-speaking Pamir-Tajik community could yield

[...] insights not only into recent developments within this specific group and their culture but also into the broader cultural history of Iranian peoples as a whole. (ibid.: 4–5)

Friedrich Kußmaul’s scholarly curiosity about the broader cultural history of Iranian peoples significantly influenced the selection of the research area. The museum curator chose the province of Badakhshan in the northeast of Afghanistan, anticipating the discovery of ‘remnants’ from ancient Iranian civilisations. This expectation was substantiated by the myth of horses leaping from a lake, which Kußmaul had encountered within the pages of a ‘French book’. In fact, this myth became an integral part of his 1961 research proposal:

It is reasonable to consider that historical myths related to water horses may have been preserved [...] in the northern regions of Afghanistan. These myths bear cultural significance within the collective mythological beliefs of all Iranian peoples. (StAL 01: 5–6)

The ethnologist’s enduring fascination with the mythical concept of the ‘water horse’ exemplifies a crucial aspect of German expeditionary research in High Asia: the quest to uncover the origins of the Aryan civilisation. In his 1961 research proposal, Kußmaul drew upon the theoretical underpinnings of German ethnology, particularly those of the cultural-historical school. Within this theoretical framework, myths



represented distinct expressions of worldviews and perceptions of reality. During prehistoric times, these myths purportedly exerted significant influence over the thoughts and behaviours of entire civilisations. In the modern era, however, it was assumed that unadulterated versions of these mythological worldviews had survived only in specific cultural enclaves and among certain ethnic communities.

This approach in cultural-historical myth research bears a striking resemblance to the linguistic inquiries undertaken by German scholars in High Asia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Much like the German linguist Wolfgang Lentz, who embarked on expeditions to the Pamir and Hindukush regions in search of traces of “Iranian residual languages” (Lentz 1937: 280), Friedrich Kußmaul’s objective was to travel to northern Afghanistan to explore the remnants of “ancient Iranian mythologies” (StAL 01: 4). Kußmaul was convinced that there must be a historical connection between the Afghan water horse myths and those found in ancient Greek and Germanic sagas.<sup>3</sup> This implies that his real interest was in the question of whether the Afghan water horse myth he had encountered in the ‘French book’ could be classified as a Proto-Indo-European myth – or one might also say, an Aryan proto-myth (German *arischer Urmythos*).

It is noteworthy that, in 1961, Friedrich Kußmaul conspicuously avoided using the term ‘Aryan’ in his application to the German Research Foundation. It appears that he recognised the problems which might arise if he had asked for research funding related to Aryans. Nevertheless, the proposal unmistakably resonates with Aryan-related research in the German Reich during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his research proposal, Friedrich Kußmaul categorised segments of the Persian-speaking population in northern Afghanistan as “Pamir Tajik” and “Iranian residual peoples” (StAL 01: 3, 5). This terminology was borrowed from the writings of the Pamir explorer Arved von Schultz, who, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was among the first German-speaking explorers in High

Asia to interchangeably use the terms ‘Pamir Tajiks’, ‘Iranian residual peoples’, and ‘Aryan population’ (see von Schultz 1914: V).

In 1935, participants of the German Hindukush expedition adopted von Schultz’s concept of ‘Iranian residual peoples’ and applied it to their research in the Afghan Hindukush. In Nuristan, the 1935 expedition team sought not only ‘proto-wheat’ (German *Urweizen*), and ‘proto-languages’ but also traces of what they considered the descendants of the ‘proto-Aryans’ (see Herrlich 1937: 168). Within this lineage of expeditions, encompassing the Pamir expeditions led by Arved von Schultz on the one side and the German Hindukush expedition of 1935 on the other, Friedrich Kußmaul conceptualised his Badakhshan expedition. Like those who had preceded him, the ethnologist regarded northern Afghanistan as a “centre of origin” or “gene centre” (German *Genzentrum*; StAL 01: 3; Roemer und Troll 1937: 3). In undertaking an expedition to the Afghan Hindukush, he aimed to gain insights into the common cultural and historical heritage of Indo-European peoples – or, though not explicitly stated, Aryans.

From today’s perspective, the numerous references to research conducted in the German Reich within Friedrich Kußmaul’s application for funding might seem surprising. However, they were consistent with the prevailing scientific ethos of the Federal Republic of Germany in the early 1960s. As a result, Friedrich Kußmaul’s application received approval from the German Research Foundation, securing an allocation of 68,000 German marks for the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition (StAL 09).

The funding provided by the German Research Foundation was the crucial factor that made the expedition possible. With additional financial support from the Linden Museum, the University of Mainz, and substantial in-kind donations from German industry and the private sector, the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team was able to embark on its journey to Afghanistan in July 1962.

### 5.1.1 Expedition team and itinerary

Compared to the large teams of the Karakoram expeditions organised by the German Alpine Club, the team of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition was small. It comprised three German participants, with Friedrich Kußmaul at its helm. Joining him was ethnologist Peter Snoy, who in the early 1960s held a position as a research assistant to ethnologist Karl Jettmar at the University of Mainz. In 1962, Peter Snoy had completed his doctoral thesis on *The Kafirs*. Furthermore, he brought a good amount of expedition experience to the team. The ethnologist had previously taken part in the German Hindukush expedition led by Adolf Friedrich between 1955 and 1956. Peter Snoy was acutely aware of the arduous and occasionally perilous conditions under which German ethnologists operated in High Asia. In 1956, he had personally witnessed his mentor, Adolf Friedrich, falling seriously ill during the German Hindukush expedition and subsequently passing away while still in Pakistan.

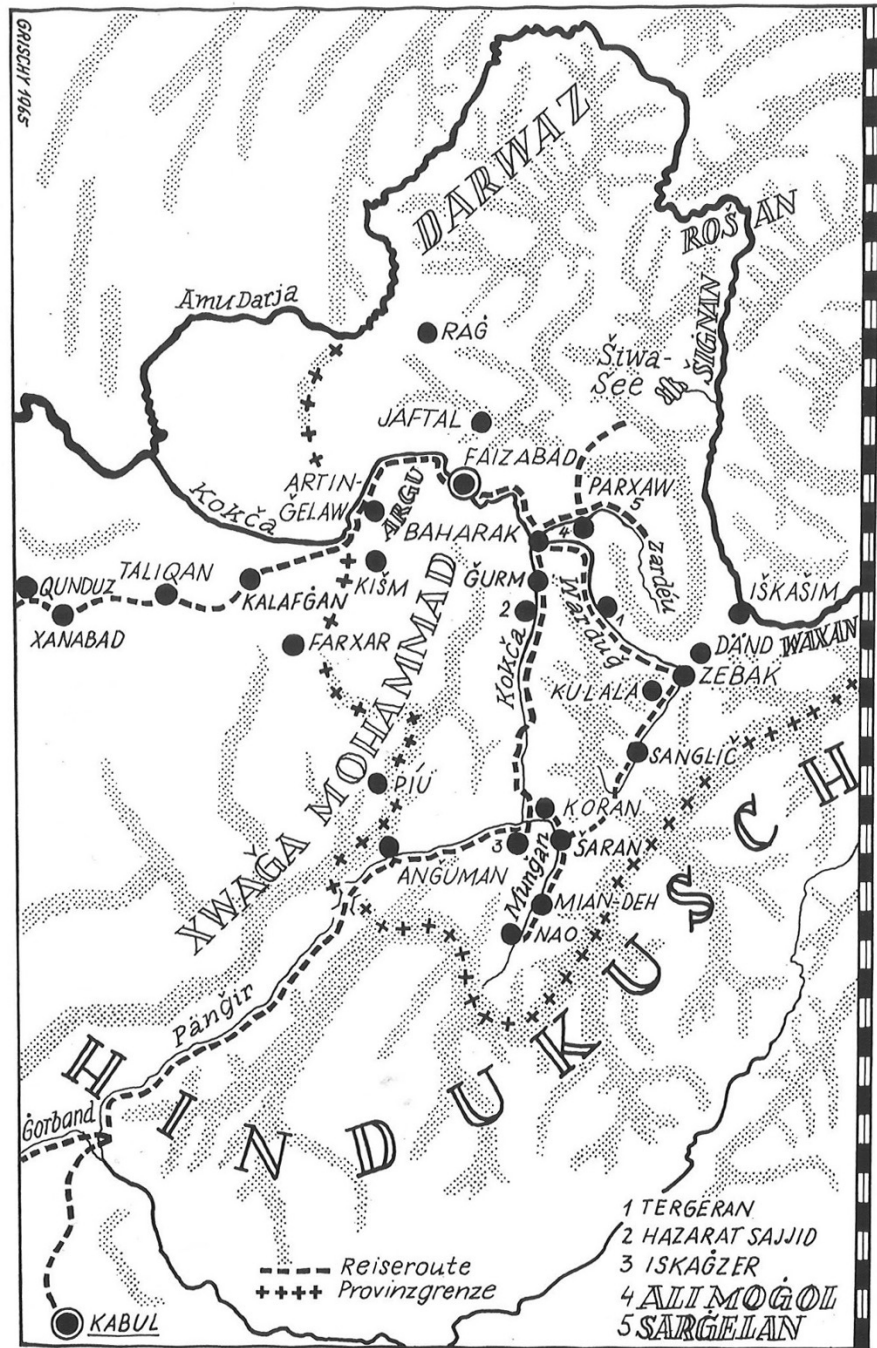
The third member of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition was Hermann Schlenker, a trained cameraman hailing from Schweningen. Schlenker had been engaged by the Linden Museum as expedition photographer. In addition to his responsibilities for the Linden Museum, Hermann Schlenker was also commissioned by the University of Tübingen. As part of this supplementary role, he conducted anthropological measurements and captured anthropometric photographs of individuals in northern Afghanistan, thereby providing data to the university's anthropology department (Schlenker 2015: 87–88).

Friedrich Kußmaul had initially conceived the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition with a larger team of German participants and a range of objectives that surpassed the realm of ethnology and anthropology. As evident from his correspondence in 1960 and 1961, the museum curator had endeavoured to secure the involvement of diverse scientists, including a linguist, a meteorologist, a botanist, and a physician, to join him on the expedition (see StAL 01: 9; StAL 02: 3; StAL 03). However, his requests

Figure 5.1 ►

Throughout their journey, the participants of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition relied on Russian map sheets. The ethnologists did not conduct any surveys or mapping themselves. After the expedition, G. Grischy, an illustrator at the Linden Museum, crafted several drawings depicting the province of Badakhshan and the route of the expedition. One of these sketch maps was included in Friedrich Kußmaul's expedition report, published in the museum journal *Tribus* in 1965. Each segment of the bar scale represents ten kilometres.

Source: G. Grischy (1965): *Abb. 1. Skizze der Provinz Badaxšan.* Reproduced from Kußmaul 1965: 19.



were declined, primarily owing to the expedition's limited financial resources.<sup>4</sup> The Linden Museum was unable to provide these scientists with a salary.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the expedition leader reluctantly accepted a proposal put forth by the German cultural attaché in Kabul, Dr Grüning, in 1961. This proposal suggested that the Linden Museum should extend an invitation to an Afghan scientist to join the expedition. The German cultural attaché hoped that the involvement of "a young Afghan" would also prompt the Afghan government to be "more generous in granting the necessary travel permits" (StAL 03: 2).

In the end, the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition included the participation of four graduates from Kabul University. The German team members deemed these scientists essential as interpreters, especially Abdul Raziq Palwal and Ghauth Shujayi, both of whom were fluent in German. Nonetheless, the collaboration posed challenges. Academic and work obligations often led the Kabul scientists to interrupt their work, leaving the German team members without interpreters during these periods. Throughout the journey, only one of the interpreters, Ghauth Shujayi, remained permanently with the expedition team. Others had to be replaced on two occasions: Zaher Zadran was replaced by Mohamad Omar Qureishi in December 1962, and in February 1963, linguist Raziq Palwal joined the team in place of Qureishi.

Despite the involvement of Afghan members in the expedition, obtaining the required travel permits proved to be challenging. Following extensive negotiations, the German expedition members eventually secured travel permits that granted them access to an area south of the provincial capital of Badakhshan, Faizabad. The expedition area included the districts of Warduj, Zebak, Sanglich, and Munjan (Kußmaul 1965: 13). However, entry into areas bordering both Pakistan and the Soviet Union, including the Wakhan Corridor, was strictly prohibited (*ibid.*: 11). Furthermore, even within the designated expedition area, the team's movements were monitored and regulated by both the Afghan government and local authorities.



Figure 5.2 ▲

Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy arrived in Kabul by plane on 1 August 1962. In the 1960s, the Afghan capital hosted a considerable number of German expatriates, and the German network facilitated the expedition leader's preparations. The image features the light blue Opel car that Friedrich Kußmaul had purchased from a German police officer. The expedition team initially intended to drive the car from Kabul to Faizabad, but reaching Badakhshan proved more challenging than anticipated. The car was not suited for the rugged roads of the Afghan hinterland, leading to frequent breakdowns. "The only advantage of the many breakdowns were the encounters with the locals", Hermann Schlenker (2015: 29) recalled.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1962): unnumbered slide [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



▲ Figure 5.3

On 23 September 1962, Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, Ghauth Shujayi, and Peter Snoy set out on their journey from Kabul in their Opel Caravan. However, just a few hours into the trip, the car experienced its first breakdown. To ease the load, the men decided to split up. Friedrich Kußmaul and Hermann Schlenker chose to drive the Opel to Badakhshan, while Peter Snoy and Ghauth Shujayi continued their journey by lorry. They reached Faizabad on 28 September, four days ahead of Kußmaul, Schlenker, and the ailing German vehicle. In this photograph, taken by Peter Snoy, Ghauth Shujayi is pictured in front of the lorry in the Farkhar Valley.

Source: Peter Snoy (1962): *E II D 1190 b* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



Figure 5.4 ▲

This photograph, taken by Hermann Schlenker on the morning of 7 October 1962, shows the expedition in front of the guesthouse in Jurm, where the caravan was loaded for the first time. In the picture, the expedition assistant, Gul Mohamad, wearing a red jacket, is positioned on the left. He dedicated nine months of service to the expedition. The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team had reached Jurm by car and then proceeded on foot into the valleys of Badakhshan. The decision to traverse the valleys on foot and horseback was not solely a result of the lack of infrastructure in Badakhshan. In fact, many places the team visited were accessible by car or lorry. Rather, the choice was driven by cost-effectiveness (see *Diary Kußmaul I*: 174–175). Source: Hermann Schlenker (1962): *E II D 1007 c* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



The field research in Badakhshan posed challenges far greater than Friedrich Kußmaul had anticipated. This heightened difficulty was partly due to the expedition becoming more labour-intensive than originally planned. The Afghan government imposed additional conditions for granting the travel permit. For instance, the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team was tasked with conducting meteorological measurements for the Afghan Meteorological Service (Kußmaul Diary I: 72). Furthermore, the German ethnologists were obligated to collect artefacts for an ethnographic collection intended for the museum in Kabul (Krämer 2013: 112–113).

The German team members departed from Stuttgart in July 1962. However, an extended stay in Kabul resulted in their arrival in Badakhshan only at the end of September 1962. Upon reaching the town of Faizabad, the expedition was composed of five members; the three Germans had been joined by interpreters Zahir Zadran and Ghauth Shujayi in Kabul. The governor of Badakhshan province received the expedition members and directed them to establish their base camp in the village of Baharak, situated approximately 40 kilometres from Faizabad. To facilitate this, they were provided with vacant rooms in the local post office (see StAL 04: 2).

On 7 October 1962, the expedition set out on its first journey to the valleys of Badakhshan (Figure 5.4). By this point, the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team had expanded to include Gul Mohamad, who assumed the role of a “cook-servant” (Diary Snoy: 25). To facilitate the transportation of expedition luggage, a substantial horse caravan had been engaged. However, the expedition team’s journey came to an abrupt halt only a few days later when, in mid-October 1962, Hermann Schlenker fell critically ill. The photographer had to be brought to Kabul and subsequently transported to Germany for medical treatment (Diary Snoy: 44). Hermann Schlenker spent the entire winter recuperating and could only rejoin the expedition team in April 1963. His absence meant that the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition had to persist in their work without a



Figure 5.5 ▲

This photograph, sourced from the private collection of Hermann Schlenker, captures the expedition photographer in the process of creating the film “E 684 Pashtuns – Weaving a Carpet”, produced for the *Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film* (Institute for Scientific Film) in Göttingen. The picture was taken in July 1963, either by Ghauth Shujayi or using a self-timer. At Lake Shewa, Hermann Schlenker produced a series of unique photographs. These pictures, however, have not been incorporated into the photographic collections of the Linden Museum.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1963): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Private collection of Hermann Schlenker. Reproduced by kind permission of Hermann Schlenker.

professional photographer for more than five months. This primarily impacted the documentation of cultural events, which greatly perturbed Friedrich Kußmaul. In March 1963, the expedition leader expressed his frustration in his diary:

Now, most of the work is done, and Hermann is not here! It is a heavy burden to bear; he had been clearly told to be here on the 5<sup>th</sup> [March 1963], and even on the 7<sup>th</sup>, he is not here. I am tense – and angry. He knows how much we cared about Nowruz. And now we are missing it, after all! What a load of crap! It feels like nothing is going our way. (Kußmaul Diary I: 169)

From December 1962 to March 1963, Peter Snoy and Friedrich Kußmaul spent the winter in two camps situated in the villages of Joybar and Charkoran in the Zardeo Valley. In March 1963, the winter camps were abandoned. The team led by Peter Snoy continued its work in the Munjan region, while the team led by Friedrich Kußmaul travelled to Zebak and Sanglich. After Hermann Schlenker's return to Badakhshan in April 1963, he embarked on a journey to the area northeast of Faizabad, extending as far as Lake Shewa. The photographer was accompanied by a caravan, interpreter Ghauth Shujayi, and a soldier named Rajab, who presumably served as a liaison officer.

In July 1963, another setback struck the expedition. Friedrich Kußmaul fell ill and had to return to Stuttgart. Peter Snoy then assumed the role of expedition leader and also shouldered the responsibility of assembling the three ethnographic collections. The simultaneous management of the expedition, ethnological research, and the acquisition and documentation of collected artefacts created a substantial workload and proved demanding for the ethnologist (Diary Snoy: 113–114). In the autumn of 1963, Snoy finally completed the assigned tasks in Badakhshan. At the base camp in Baharak, all expedition luggage was prepared for transportation and loaded onto chartered trucks. Alongside Hermann Schlenker, the ethnologist left Badakhshan for Kabul. Peter Snoy's final diary entry, in September 1963, concludes with a somewhat exhausted

remark: “It was good to escape the heat of Faizabad” (Diary Snoy: 117–118).

The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition did not unfold as seamlessly and successfully as Friedrich Kußmaul had envisaged. Nevertheless, it continues to stand out as one of the most comprehensive research undertakings in the annals of the Linden Museum (Krämer 2013: 101). This recognition is due to the diverse array of results it yielded. The expedition collected approximately 1,050 ethnographic artefacts and captured around 15,000 photographs, many of which remain within the Linden Museum’s holdings to this day (ibid.: 101, 116, 122).

### **5.1.2 Photographs of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition**

Not all the photographs taken by Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition have survived to the present day. Currently (as of 2024), the Linden Museum houses approximately 13,000 of their pictures. Within this extensive collection, only 4,000 photographs are original objects, comprising around 2,000 colour slides and 2,000 black and white negatives. The majority of the Badakhshan expedition photographs in the museum’s possession are duplicates and copies.

Among the photographic copies held by the Linden Museum is a small collection of photo prints created during the 1960s and 1970s for exhibitions, exhibition catalogues, and press publications. Furthermore, the museum houses a collection of over 10,000 contact prints stored in six ring binders, apparently compiled for documentation purposes (Figure 5.6). These contact prints, which are identical in size to the original 35mm negative strips from which they were produced, present challenges when one tries to reproduce and enlarge them which is not possible without compromising their quality. Nonetheless, they hold substantial research value. On the one hand, the chronological arrangement of the pictures



◀ Figure 5.6

The ring binders containing the contact prints serve as a valuable source. They allow to view the series from which individual shots were singled out for presentation. This particular image series captures Ghauth Shujayi reenacting the movements of Namaz for photographer Hermann Schlenker.

Source: Hermann Schlenker (n.d.): *[sheet No] 529* [contact print, cropped]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Unindexed collection of contact prints. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

within the ring binders offers insights into the order in which the films were exposed – a detail rarely found in written documentation. On the other hand, these contact prints serve as the last pieces of evidence for numerous film strips that appear to have been lost.

The historical and political significance of the 10,000 contact prints becomes especially evident in the case of the anthropometric photographs taken by Hermann Schlenker on behalf of the University of Tübingen. The expedition photographer claimed to have delivered approximately 600 anthropometric photographs of Badakhshan residents to the University of Tübingen (Schlenker 2015: 88). However, these photographs are no longer in the university's possession. The whereabouts of these anthropometric portraits remain uncertain. It is unclear whether they were deliberately destroyed due to their politically sensitive content or if they were inadvertently misplaced. Despite this loss, the contact prints preserved in the Linden Museum bear witness to the ambivalent agenda of post-war German ethnology at the university institutes of the Federal Republic after 1949.

The centrepiece of the Linden Museum's photographic holdings from the Badakhshan expedition is a curated selection of framed 35mm colour slides. Originally consisting of 1,400 slides, the collection labelled 'E II D' has endured and still comprises 1,137 slides. The E II D collection was one of two photo collections created by Friedrich Kußmaul after the expedition. However, the second collection, labelled 'E II S', for which written documents have been preserved, is no longer extant. What enriches the historical value of the E II D slide collection is the preservation of a card catalogue alongside the photographs, containing detailed descriptions of the images.

The subsequent discussion will predominantly focus on the E II D collection, a particularly compelling subject for analysis for two main reasons. Firstly, the E II D collection adequately represents the photographic work conducted during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. It includes photographs captured by all three members of the German team, spanning diverse subjects. The collection features ethnographic images, anthropological portraits, and images of geographical interest. Secondly, my attention is directed towards the E II D collection because it was explicitly curated for utilisation and preservation within the Linden Museum. The fact that it constitutes a photo collection within an ethnological museum has shaped the meaning of these slides.

## **5.2 Collecting photographs in the Hindukush**

Photography was an essential task of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team. The Linden Museum had engaged Hermann Schlenker, a professional photographer, for this task. Additionally, the ethnologists Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy were equipped with extensive photographic gear. This underlines the importance that the Linden Museum attached to expedition photography besides its emphasis on collecting artefacts and conducting research. It makes therefore sense to investigate the interplay of photography, research, and collecting practices during this expedition.

In the following sections, my argument revolves around the idea that the practices of photography and collecting artefacts during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition reveal significant similarities. By looking more closely at the fieldwork conducted during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition and by comparing photography to the collecting process, I intend to show that expedition photography can in fact be understood as

a form of ethnological collecting. In this perspective photography does not only serve documentation purposes but becomes an integral part of the collections of an ethnological museum. I will present a nuanced view onto the intricate relationship between expedition photography and the concept of an ethnological museum.

### 5.2.1 Friedrich Kußmaul's penchant for collecting

During the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, the responsibility of acquiring ethnographic items for three distinct collections – namely, one for the Linden Museum, one for the museum in Kabul, and one for the University of Mainz – was assigned to the expedition's two ethnologists, Peter Snoy and Friedrich Kußmaul. Peter Snoy's personal expedition diary reveals his opinion on the collection task, often depicting it as a challenging and at times, disagreeable undertaking (see *Diary Snoy*: 94, 104, 113).

In contrast, expedition leader Friedrich Kußmaul displayed a profound passion for collecting. Even before the expedition reached its research area in Badakhshan, the expedition leader had already spent over 1,000 German marks on potential museum objects acquired in the bazaars of Isfahan and Kabul (*StAL 05*: 1–6). This expenditure surpassed the initial budget designated for this phase of the journey. On 17 August 1962, while in Kabul, Kußmaul corresponded with his colleague Jürgen Zwernemann at the Linden Museum requesting additional funding:

Yesterday, I went shopping with the local Chargé d'Affaires, a fellow from Tübingen who is quite the carpet enthusiast (but tends to vent his frustrations about Kabul). As a result, the Linden Museum is now indebted to me. I bought a small tapestry, finely crafted, for 100 Afghani, and a Kafir dagger for 200 Afghani. I am still negotiating for an embroidery piece from Bukhara that is 350 years old, an impressive piece that is supposed to cost 5,500 Afghani. I am also currently haggling for

an incredibly beautiful old Sarouk rug, probably a Teke Turkmen rug, covering 25 square meters, which is reasonably priced due to its inconvenient size in Afghanistan; it is supposed to cost around 30,000 Afghanis. At home, it would never be available for less than 10,000 German marks.<sup>6</sup> I am not yet certain if I should acquire it because it is a substantial amount for a single piece, but I believe I will yield to temptation. If the Linden Museum decides not to keep it, it can undoubtedly be sold at a much higher price. As I continue to explore the bazaars in the following days, new bills will accumulate. This is straining our finances (just look at these prices!), and I would like to request that you [Jürgen Zwernemann] ensure that we receive at least 5,000 to 8,000 German marks as soon as possible. (LiMu 01)

The postal communication between Kabul and Stuttgart proved efficient. In a matter of days, the letter arrived at the Linden Museum, where Jürgen Zwernemann handed it over to director Hans Rhotert. In a response dated 24 August 1962, Rhotert straightforwardly declined Kußmaul's financial request. Additionally, the museum director made an effort to temper his employee's enthusiasm for collecting:

I am somewhat puzzled about the urgency of requesting an additional 5,000 to 8,000 German marks at this moment, given that you have access to the funds from the German Research Foundation.<sup>7</sup> I propose that you maintain meticulous records of your expenditures for the collection and keep us regularly updated on these financial matters. Likewise, we will maintain diligent records at the Linden Museum, allowing us to determine the necessary amounts to send your way. Regarding your purchases in the bazaars, it appears you made a prudent decision to seize opportunities in Persia, particularly in Isfahan. However, I would advise caution when it comes to acquiring a carpet collection. In Kabul, I would recommend a more reserved approach for the time being. After the completion of the expedition, and perhaps even before it, you will return to Kabul and will have gained a clearer perspective not only on what items are available for purchase but also on your budget. (LiMu 02)



The correspondence between museum director Rhotert and curator Kußmaul bears significance that extends beyond the scope of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. It addresses vital aspects of the ethnographic collection process, including considerations of what to collect, how to collect, and the financial aspects of acquisition. The discussion not only addresses crucial elements central to both expeditionary and ethnographic collecting practices but also raises a fundamental question: What does collecting mean in the context of expeditions organised by ethnological museums? This question can only be addressed with historical hindsight.

### **5.2.2 Historical excursus: Expeditionary collecting and the ethnological museum**

While some anthropologists have suggested that collecting is a universal human activity (see e.g., Helms 1988: 166; Corbey 1993: 340), this broad characterisation of collecting lacks precision and relevance within the context of my research. Consequently, I propose a more nuanced definition of the term, specifically tailored to the realms of exploration, expedition, and museum curation. Henceforth, when I employ the term 'collecting', I refer to a deliberate practice of assembling items into a collection. This definition aligns with the perspective articulated by anthropologist and museologist Sharon Macdonald:

Although delimiting 'collecting' to activities intended to form a 'collection' might at first seem tautologous, it serves to identify a distinctive type of object oriented activity in which items are selected in order to become part of what is seen as a specific series of things, rather than for their particular use values or individualized symbolic purposes. While in everyday language we might use the terms 'collecting' and 'collection' loosely to cover a wide range of practices (for example, collecting tax), it is analytically useful to distinguish 'collecting' as a self aware process of creating a set of objects conceived to be meaningful as a group. (Macdonald 2006: 82)

The idea that a collection of gathered objects can provide valuable insights about geographical space was both spread and significantly reinforced by the voyages of discovery conducted during the early modern period (Findlen 1994: 3). In the ‘New World’, European explorers confronted a crucial question: How could this uncharted portion of the world be made visible to their patrons and clients in the ‘Old World’?

There were two responses to this challenge: the first involved the creation of images, while the second entailed the collection of portable objects. On behalf of royal houses, trading companies, and colonial governments, explorers gathered a wide array of accessible objects, including artefacts and samples of stones, plants, and animals. The items they collected, along with the images they created, played a pivotal role in rendering the newly discovered places comprehensible over vast distances. Both practices – creating images and collecting objects – were rooted in the concept of representation, specifically, the idea that what is not physically present can be perceived through some form of substitution.

The practice of expeditionary collecting contributed to the increasing institutionalisation of sciences in early modern Europe. It not only introduced new research subjects but also expanded the scope of European-based scholars. Initially enigmatic and unfamiliar objects could be assimilated into established scientific classifications by placing them within the framework of a collection. To facilitate this integration, innovative scientific techniques for collecting, such as ‘inventory’ and ‘catalogue’, were developed. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the systematic comparison of collected objects had become one of the most fundamental methods in the sciences (Macdonald 2006: 83–84). This scientific application, in turn, heightened the demand for items collected on expeditions.

Since its beginnings, expeditionary collecting held socio-economic implications, which were key in shaping interactions between European expedition travellers and the ruling elite of the explored regions. Thus, expeditionary collecting also created new avenues for political action.

Collectibles became integral to diplomatic negotiations and contractual agreements. They were frequently presented as gifts to envoys of colonial governments or offered as tribute (Penny 2021: 17–18). In parallel, the areas explored during expeditions witnessed the emergence of economic structures revolving around the act of collecting. European expedition teams required local labour and expertise in the collection process. They had to employ interpreters, intermediaries, and porters to facilitate their endeavours. Some expeditions relied on slave labour for these purposes.

Expeditionary collecting inherently served as a demonstration of colonial power. It both symbolised and contributed to unequal power dynamics and violence. The act of collecting, essentially, involved European explorers, governments, and scholars gaining access to parts of the world that were previously inaccessible to them. Objects were often pillaged or looted and either sold for profit in Europe, retained as war trophies, or displayed as items of curiosity.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, expeditionary collecting underwent a fundamental conceptual transformation. From then on, it “aspired to be rigorous” (Bell and Hasinoff 2015: 1). This shift was influenced by evolutionary theories, which elevated the concept of ‘systematic’ or ‘comprehensive collections’ (ibid.). This idea was especially embraced by German physicians and scholars who aimed to establish the discipline of ethnology (German *Völkerkunde*) on these principles. Within the framework of developing German ethnology, the concept of curating ‘comprehensive collections’ was conceived as a method for organising objects to represent a wider phenomenon, such as a geographical region or a specific group of people, together with their history and culture, as a cohesive whole. Scholars, including Adolf Bastian, who is recognised as “the father of modern German ethnology” (Penny 2021: 3), regarded the global collection of ethnographica as a scientific method “to explore the total history of humanity” (ibid.: 7).

In conjunction with this scholarly development, a new type of institution emerged and gained recognition: the museum. Throughout the

19<sup>th</sup> century, museums specialising in ethnology, anthropology, and natural history evolved into institutions which stood at the forefront of expeditionary collecting endeavours. Initially, these museums had acquired collectibles by way of dealers and intermediaries. However, they soon adopted a more direct approach and commissioned collectors whose travels and expeditions were financially supported by the museums themselves. On behalf of their new clients, expeditions continued to play a central role in collecting, for they had developed into “the most elaborate form of [...] traffic between the field and the museum” (Jacknis 2015: 119).<sup>8</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, museums had a dual role: they functioned as systematic collection repositories and as public exhibition venues for these curated items. What set them apart from the royal chambers of art and curiosities in earlier centuries was their accessibility to the public. These institutions embraced an educational mission, with the goal of disseminating knowledge to visitors. Museum exhibitions encouraged visitors to delve into the displayed ‘order of the world’ and reflect on their own place in it (Macdonald 2006: 86).

In ethnographic exhibitions, groups of objects based on scientific, political, and didactic criteria were presented to the audience. Consequently, the order of the world as depicted in the museum was supposed to mirror the perceived ‘natural order’ of the world itself. Visitors came to ethnological museums not only for the sake of watching curiosities but also to gain a deeper understanding of the world, which meant to see it through the perspective of the collectors. As a result, European museums of ethnology and natural history played a central role in shaping geographical imaginations and disseminating geographical imaginaries.

The practice of expeditionary collecting predates the establishment of museums. However, museums have had a profound influence on the contemporary conception of collecting, surpassing any other modern institution in this regard. Sharon Macdonald even asserts that this

influence has been so pervasive, “that collecting is fundamentally museological, whether the museum is directly involved or not” (Macdonald 2006: 95). This raises the question: If all collecting is fundamentally museological – if “the museum inevitably infuses collecting” (ibid.) – then what distinguishes the act of collecting artefacts from collecting photographs?

Collecting photographs, much like collecting artefacts, played a vital role in shaping ethnology and anthropology as scientific disciplines. Ethnological museums, since their inception, have been involved in the collection not only of ethnographic items but also of photographs. These collected photographs offered early German *Völkerkunde* a means to define and establish itself as a legitimate scientific field. Moreover, in using photo series ethnology and anthropology gained the ability to make the subject of their study perceptible, comparable, and thus amenable to verification based on empirical evidence. Adolf Bastian, the founding director of the *Berliner Museum für Völkerkunde* (Berlin Museum of Ethnology), played a significant role in promoting the use of photographs for scientific purposes. In 1872, Bastian stressed the importance of photographic representations, saying that in order to

[...] firmly establish the emerging science of ethnology, it is imperative [...] to acquire and collect a substantial number of photographic representations of various human races. (Bastian, 1872: 392)

The idea of creating picture collections for comparative studies did not originate in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Comparative depictions of various ‘peoples’ can be traced back to the costume books of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kümin 2007: 48; Theye 1998: 52). However, in the medium of photography, ethnologists and anthropologists saw entirely new possibilities for studying ‘peoples’ and ‘races’ worldwide.

Scholars appreciated the richness of detail and the high degree of standardisation in the photographs. Photography also appeared to make the lengthy and arduous journeys outside Europe less necessary, if not

entirely dispensable in the foreseeable future. Some anthropologists believed that, with photographs, the subjects of study could be brought directly into their study rooms (Kümin 2007: 51). One such advocate was the Swiss anthropologist, Otto Schlaginhaufen. He emphasised the advantages of photography over other anthropological means of visualisation, such as painting or plaster casts. Schlaginhaufen explicitly suggested that “photography should be regarded as a [...] collecting method”, as it allowed for the precise collection of what could not be collected before: “the living object” (Schlaginhaufen 1915: 53–54). By living objects, Schlaginhaufen referred to “representatives of alien human races settled in distant and remote regions of the world” (ibid.).

Otto Schlaginhaufen was not only an anthropologist and a participant in numerous expeditions but also a *Rassenhygieniker* (eugenicist). Fortunately, his dehumanising views no longer find a place in contemporary German or Swiss ethnological museums. However, his racist worldview renders his concept of photography as a “collecting method” questionable. That is regrettable. Examining photography as a method of collecting, regarding photographs as collected items or even as objects of ‘material culture’ presents some hitherto untapped opportunities for research.

Treating photographs seriously as objects and products of people from different places and their mutual encounters contradicts the prevalent practices in ethnological museums. Typically, artefacts and photographs are stored separately and used differently, with fundamentally distinct qualities ascribed to each. This approach, as expounded by curator and historian of photography, Alison Nordström, affects the value and preservation of photographic objects negatively:

Within most [ethnographic] collections, few, if any, photographs have been accessioned, that is, treated like significant, unique museum objects. More than simply lacking an identification number, these fragile pieces of emulsion coated paper often lack the records of source, acquisition and use that characterise typical documentation of the masks, butter churns,

costumes, paintings and religious objects that museums own. Details such as maker, date, and materials, which are considered essential to understanding and interpretation of other fragments of material culture, seldom appear in institutional catalogues, even when the information is boldly incised into negative or print. (Nordström 1993: 209)

Despite Alison Nordström's critique being made 30 years ago, there have been only minimal changes in the handling of photographs in most ethnological museums. Consequently, I reiterate my suggestion that, in specific cases, expedition photography should be recognised as a form of ethnographic collecting. This assertion is justified when expedition photographs are incorporated into an ethnological museum.

The basis for my suggestion rests on three observations. First, both expeditionary collecting and expeditionary photography shared a common conceptual premise: representing geographical space or space-related concepts such as 'peoples' or 'culture' through visible objects. Second, both practices aimed to render the unseen visible and the unknown scientifically comprehensible. Third, the activities of collecting and photographing during expeditions were embedded within the same spatial, institutional, political, logistical, and economic structures. Collectors and photographers during expeditions relied on the same actors, services, and infrastructure. Even more so, the expedition collector and photographer were often the same person. In the case of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, the relationship between expeditionary collecting and expedition photography is obvious.

### **5.2.3 Collecting and photographing during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition**

The slides in the E II D collection showcase a wide range of motifs and subjects, reflecting Friedrich Kußmaul's multidisciplinary approach to

expedition photography. However, these slides, now a versatile source for researchers, initially faced resistance from certain ethnologists. Hans Rhotert, the director of the Linden Museum, not only disagreed with his employee's method of collecting artefacts but also criticised the expedition team's photographic practice, deeming it unsystematic and wasteful. These sentiments were expressed in the correspondence between the expedition team and the museum.

In August 1962, expedition photographer Hermann Schlenker sent the first set of exposed films from Kabul to the Linden Museum (see LiMu 03). The intention was to have the films developed in Stuttgart and then scrutinised for correct exposure and colour to avoid any unpleasant surprises. Given the prevailing light conditions in Afghanistan, the expedition photographers could no longer trust the readings of their German exposure meters. When museum director Rhotert reviewed the photographs, he deemed the colouring and exposure to be adequate but expressed dissatisfaction with the choice of motifs. In a letter dated 9 October 1962, he reprimanded Friedrich Kußmaul:

I have noticed that you have already taken an enormous number of photographs; however, only a small portion of them appear to be ethnographic in nature. I hope [...] that you will not exhaust your film supply while you are on the expedition. (LiMu 04: 1)

Expedition leader Kußmaul reacted calmly to the criticism:

Your encouragement to capture more 'ethnographic' photographs will naturally come to fruition when we encounter our actual research subjects. However, given that we operate in a relatively unexplored and less-travelled region, I also view it as a responsibility to document images of geographical significance. The *Lebensraum*<sup>9</sup> and its landforms are equally important, and I am inspired by the teachings of Wissmann, who was my mentor. (LiMu 05: 1; emphasis added)

Friedrich Kußmaul's mentor and doctoral supervisor, Hermann von Wissmann, was an Austrian-German geographer renowned for his



expeditions across the Arabian Peninsula. An essay titled “Hermann von Wissmann’s Contribution to Research on Arabia” elaborates on his significant impact in this field:

In his travelogues, geomorphologists and climatologists as well as geographers interested in vegetation, settlement, and economy will find a wealth of insights. The same can be said for scholars of the related sciences of geology, botany, ethnology, archaeology, [... and] oriental studies. (Blume 1980: 163)

Hermann von Wissmann’s holistic approach to expeditionary research intrigued Friedrich Kußmaul. Consequently, the Linden Museum curator aimed to imbue his own expedition with multidisciplinary significance. Kußmaul’s objective was to

[...] produce as comprehensive documentation of the research area as possible, consisting first of observation and data, and then of photographs, film, and sound recordings. (Kußmaul 1965: 12)

The expedition leader’s high ambition, along with the acquisition of artefacts for three different collections, further raised the logistical complexity of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. The collection process required a substantial workforce. Initially, the German ethnologists had to gain an understanding of potential collectibles, considering their local importance and value (see, e.g., Diary Snoy: 104). To achieve this, Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy relied on intermediaries who not only provided information but also established connections with producers and sellers of artefacts, initiating and conducting sales negotiations (Figure 5.8).

Moreover, the German expedition members relied on interpreters to communicate with the various parties involved in collecting, and they had to use caravans and employ porters to transport their ever-growing collection of artefacts. Compensation for all activities associated with the collection process was provided in the form of either monetary payment or goods furnished by the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team.



Figure 5.7 ▲

When creating the card catalogue, Friedrich Kußmaul paid attention to various aspects captured in the photographs, including landform features and cultivation practices. The image description for this photograph reads, “The Kokcha Valley above Jurm, before entering the gorge. In the background, the slope and terraces are clearly visible, with small horizontal mounds rising up the slope (indicating dry farming)” (index card E II D 1381 b).

Source: Peter Snoy (1962): *E II D 1381 b* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



▲ Figure 5.8

A crucial advisor to the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team on collection matters was Ashur Mohamad, the *arbab* of Shahrān. He is shown seated at a table in the Shahrān expedition camp, smoking. Standing behind him is another representative from the village. Also present are (from left to right) expedition assistant Abdul Qayum, Ghauth Shujayi, Raziq Palwal, and Peter Snoy. The items on the table – including a rake and a wooden spindle for spinning yak and goat hair – are now part of the Linden Museum collection. This photograph by Hermann Schlenker was taken in the early summer of 1963. Source: Hermann Schlenker (1963): *E II D 1099 c* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

Figure 5.9 ▼  
 Friedrich Kußmaul photographs  
 the first flowers of the year in the  
 company of his assistant Sher  
 Mohamad from the village of  
 Iskaser. This picture was taken by  
 Peter Snoy in Zardeo on 23  
 February 1963.

Source: Peter Snoy (1963): *[No]*  
*122-12* [35mm negative]. Linden  
 Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of  
 negatives (SBE). Reproduced by  
 kind permission of the Linden  
 Museum.

In a practical sense, the process of photographing during the expedition bore many similarities to the collection of artefacts. To capture images, Friedrich Kußmaul, Peter Snoy, and Hermann Schlenker had to rely on informants, assistants, interpreters, and porters. The luggage of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition contained eleven cameras of various models, including Zeiss Ikon, Hasselblad, Leica, Polaroid, and Kodak. Additionally, there were several hundred rolls of film, including both colour and black-and-white films in medium and 35-mm formats. The expedition's packing list also featured various lenses and adapters, exposure meters, flash units, batteries, tripods, developing tanks, and various cleaning utensils (StAL 06).

This photographic equipment was stored in large boxes that could only be transported through the valleys of Badakhshan with the assistance of



guides and their horses. However, not at every place where the expedition caravan stopped did the travellers have permission to take pictures. Much like acquiring artefacts, capturing photographs typically entailed negotiations with local authorities, necessitating the involvement of intermediaries, assistants, and interpreters. These negotiations often resulted in compromises, as village representatives agreed to allow photographic recordings only under certain conditions.

Like Hunza and Nagar, Badakhshan was not an uncontrolled territory where European travellers were free to take photographs without regard to local regulations. In the Afghan Hindukush, political representatives, particularly the *arbab* and the *al-aqdar*, frequently hindered the members of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition from accessing specific locations and photographing certain subjects.<sup>10</sup> Even though political actors in Badakhshan did not possess cameras or engage in photography themselves, they still influenced the photographic representation of their region.

A closer examination of expedition history highlights the varied strategies employed by individuals and groups in High Asia to shape the research and photography by foreign expedition travellers. One of these strategies entailed intentionally orchestrating the presentation of a specific region's 'culture' and 'nature', tailored specifically for foreign viewers and photographers. This specific approach, as previously described, was employed by the *mir* of Hunza. Actors in Badakhshan, however, pursued a different strategy. While *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan of Hunza willingly provided extensive information to the expedition photographers, interlocutors in northeastern Afghanistan demonstrated a remarkable reluctance to share information. Peter Snoy noted in 1963: "The level of knowledge, or rather the willingness to share information, is alarmingly low" (Diary Snoy: 103).

At first glance, the attitudes of the *mir* of Hunza and the local and regional decision-makers of Badakhshan towards foreign travellers and their cameras may appear disparate. Upon closer inspection, however, it

becomes evident that both attitudes were rooted in the same political motive. The presence of outsiders and their cameras compelled local elites to carefully navigate political decisions. They were cognisant that their actions in front of a camera would shape their portrayal and perception beyond their sphere of influence. Therefore, efforts to influence the way in which they and their community, as well as the population and region, were portrayed by individuals from other countries, were consistently incorporated into their foreign policy deliberations.

*Mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan of Hunza employed travellers as ambassadors or foreign correspondents for his principality. Through collaboration with Western journalists, scientists, and mountaineers, he aimed to defy the directives of the central government of Pakistan and advance his own political and economic agenda. The political actors in Badakhshan, however, maintained a reserved stance.

In the Afghan Hindukush, the residents and their representatives exhibited limited enthusiasm for extensive engagement. There was no inclination to entertain unnecessary collaborations, be it with the German ethnologists associated with the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, the Afghan central government, or even the Western world and its media. They sought to restrict photography and withheld information deliberately, leading to omissions in both the written records and the photographic documentation produced by the German members of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. Therefore, the impact of local actors on expedition photography in Badakhshan is evident not only in the content captured in the images but, above all, in the aspects that have been omitted. This realisation necessitates an analysis of the gaps in the E II D collection.

#### **5.2.4 A look behind the scenes of expedition photography**

During the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, the process of taking photographs extended beyond the photographer's interaction with those photographed. Various people who usually did not appear in the pictures played vital roles 'behind the scenes'. Their influence is evidenced in the E II D collection to this day. The artist and theorist of photography, Ariella Azoulay, suggests reading photographs as traces of an "encounter between those present in the situation of photography" (Azoulay 2012: 24). I aim to adopt and expand on this idea, intending to examine the photographs in the E II D collection as an encounter between those who produced the photographs and those involved or intervening in the production process.

When examining the E II D collection, the initial observation is the uneven distribution of images across different regions of Badakhshan. For instance, Munjan is documented with 300 photographs, whereas only 50 photographs cover the region of Warduj. The Sanglich and Zebak regions each have 150 images included in the collection. The differing number of images is indicative of the varying levels of intensity with which the ethnologists conducted research in the respective locations. However, there are also locations that have not been represented by photographs, even though, according to the plan devised by the expedition team, they were central to the research project. The Sarghalan region in the upper Zardeo Valley serves as a case in point.

Before the expedition, the German cultural attaché in Kabul, Dr Grüning, had cautioned Friedrich Kußmaul that the travel permit granted by the Afghan central government would "not protect the expedition team from the directives of the local rulers" (StAL 10: 2). Indeed, the revocation of travel permits by local decision-makers was a recurring obstacle. This is documented in multiple instances within the expedition diaries of the two German ethnologists.

In the winter of 1962, Peter Snoy planned to establish a camp in Mazar village in the Sarghalan region in the upper Zardeo Valley. Together with interpreter Ghauth Shujayi and assistant Gul Mohamad, Snoy intended to spend two to three months in Mazar, conducting intensive research and collecting artefacts. However, in the end, the expedition team could only spend a day in Sarghalan, as reported by Peter Snoy in his diary:

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, I rode up the valley with Ghaus and Gul to acquaint myself with Sarghalan, my future working area, and to scout for a place to stay. We spent the night in the village of Mazar, where I had planned to stay for the winter, and the Arbab kindly showed us a suitable house. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, we rode another 2 hours to Yasich, the last village in the valley, where there is a shrine under plane trees, and it is said to have a nearby hot spring. The weather was quite cold, and I was dealing with sore muscles (pain from horse riding!), so, whether foolishly or wisely, I did not feel up to taking photos. It became clear that this was not a good decision after we returned to Mazar. The person introduced to us as the house owner had changed his mind about renting the house to us, and unfortunately, we could not locate another suitable place. Consequently, we travelled back via Joybar to Baharak. (Diary Snoy: 55)

At the base camp in Baharak, the team received news that their travel permit to Sarghalan had been revoked. In distress, Peter Snoy sent Ghauth Shujayi to Faizabad to discuss the matter with the governor. Eventually, the governor relented, granting the expedition team permission to travel at least to the lower part of the Zardeo Valley. Peter Snoy continued in his report:

I was instructed to move to the village of Madrasan. Consequently, we travelled back to Sarghalan via Joybar to Madrasan, where, with the assistance of an employee from the Al-aqdar of Baharak, we found a house. Afterwards, we rode back to Baharak, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, my caravan departed [with the baggage, MH]. Initially, it rained, and then it started to snow. In Joybar, I received the news that we would not be able to move into the house in Madrasan. However, they had arranged another house for me. Well, that is the story of how I came to Chakoran. (Diary Snoy: 55–56)



This week-long episode, one might term it an ‘odyssey’, from the history of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition is revealing, shedding light on both the history of expedition travel and expedition photography. It demonstrates the significant reliance of European expedition participants on the ‘directives of the local rulers’. Additionally, it becomes evident how documentary gaps in the expedition archive emerged. These ‘white spots’ or ‘blanks’, whether on maps or in (photo) collections, should not simply be viewed as resulting from a lack of knowledge. In many instances, they can also be interpreted as an expression of potential intervention against the acquisition and appropriation of knowledge by foreigners. Therefore, documentary gaps can well indicate conscious acts of resistance against foreign exploration attempts.

Not only Sarghalan but also many other sites remained hidden from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team. On a micro-level, this was the case with the interiors of private houses. The German expedition members were typically accommodated in the *mehmaan khana* on the outskirts of villages or allowed to set up their tents there. On rare occasions, Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy were allowed into private houses, but they were not permitted to take photographs there.

However, the gaps in the ethnologists’ photographic documentation are not limited solely to places; they also extend to the representation of the population. There is a notable scarcity of images featuring women within the slide collection. The fact that images of women constitute barely one percent of the E II D collection is not due to a lack of interest on the part of the German expedition photographers. In his diary, Hermann Schlenker details the challenges involved in photographing Badakhshani women. On 11 April 1963, the cameraman intended to photograph and film the making of pottery, a task exclusively performed by women in Kulala village in the district of Zebak. However, the plan could not be put into action right away, as reported by Schlenker:

The mayor finally shows us around the village of Kulala, but not before keeping us waiting for half an hour. During this time, he

has his helpers hide the women of the village. Consequently, we do not get to meet any females. Aside from this, our guide is quite friendly. After a lengthy conversation about pottery, [interpreter Raziq] Palwal takes a risk and asks if we can film a woman at work. The answer: 'We are Muslims (men on the right path). None of us allows our wives to be seen or even photographed'. Well, men cannot do the pottery. After I have taken photographs of the village and the fields, we walk back down the path to Zebak, feeling deeply disappointed. I had envisioned it so nicely – filming the wet, shiny clay and the beautifully shaped pots and bowls. (Schlenker 2015: 84)

In addition to the religious reasons that the *arbab* of Kulala is said to have given, it was likely also the political influence of the *al-aqdar* of Zebak that thwarted the filming. The *al-aqdar* expressed scepticism, if not hostility, towards the expedition team, particularly regarding photography (Diary Snoy: 87; Schlenker 2015: 78).

Surprisingly, two months later, the filming nonetheless took place. To obtain permission to film the women potters of Kulala, Ghauth Shujayi had approached the governor in Faizabad on behalf of the expedition team (Diary Snoy: 87). The governor used his influence, and after protracted negotiations, Hermann Schlenker returned to the village of Kulala in June 1963 with his cameras and was allowed to film and photograph selected women at work. "However, only ladies of older age were admitted to the filming", Peter Snoy (quoted in Krämer 2013: 122) later reported.

Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that photography required the approval of political decision-makers. In most instances, obtaining the permission to film or photograph involved providing remuneration. Besides monetary payment, satisfactory compensation also encompassed items such as gramophones, vinyl records, and wristwatches. The Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition's 'gift list' also comprised photo cameras, calendars, and illustrated books featuring motifs from Germany (StAL 06).

Interestingly, the requested ‘gifts’ also included photographs. In return for consenting to be photographed, individuals would receive a personal portrait. To facilitate this, the expedition team had brought a Polaroid instant camera. In 1960s Afghanistan, people had to travel to a city to have their picture taken. In rural Badakhshan, the prospect of having one’s portrait captured was rare and likely held great allure for many. Consequently, the value of instant photographs could not be underestimated. By employing the instant camera, Friedrich Kußmaul also aimed to cultivate the trust of those who harboured doubts about the expedition:

We have fallen victim to quite a scam. Abdul Hafiz, the former Arbab [of Busht e Paskham], is spreading rumours about our work: Those who come to our camp do not respect Ramadan, they drink alcohol, and eat impure meat; and then I would not be a German, but a Russian smuggled in as a German to avoid suspicion. They say I spread communist propaganda and make people write on the Quran that they will become communists. That is what the gentleman says. An accomplice [...] joins in, and that is how the rumours spread in the valley. Dirty trick! [...] I have now enticed a few people with Polaroid pictures. That helped. However, it is quite expensive. Hopefully, it will get better soon. (Kußmaul Diary I: 139)

The interest of local actors in expedition photography has hardly been investigated yet. One likely reason for this research gap is that the images left behind in the expedition areas are hidden from scholarly gaze and access. The instant photographs taken by Friedrich Kußmaul in 1962/63 were left with their owners in Badakhshan. As a result, the meaning of the expedition photographs for the people in Badakhshan is inscrutable in the collections of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.



Figure 5.10 ▲

Three women potters from Kulala were photographed during the filming in June 1963. While women are rarely seen in the photographs of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, they played a significant role behind the scenes. Many of the artefacts collected by the expedition travellers were crafted by women. Kulala pottery is also part of the Badakhshan expedition collection at the Linden Museum.

Source: Hermann Schlenker (1963): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Private collection of Hermann Schlenker. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.

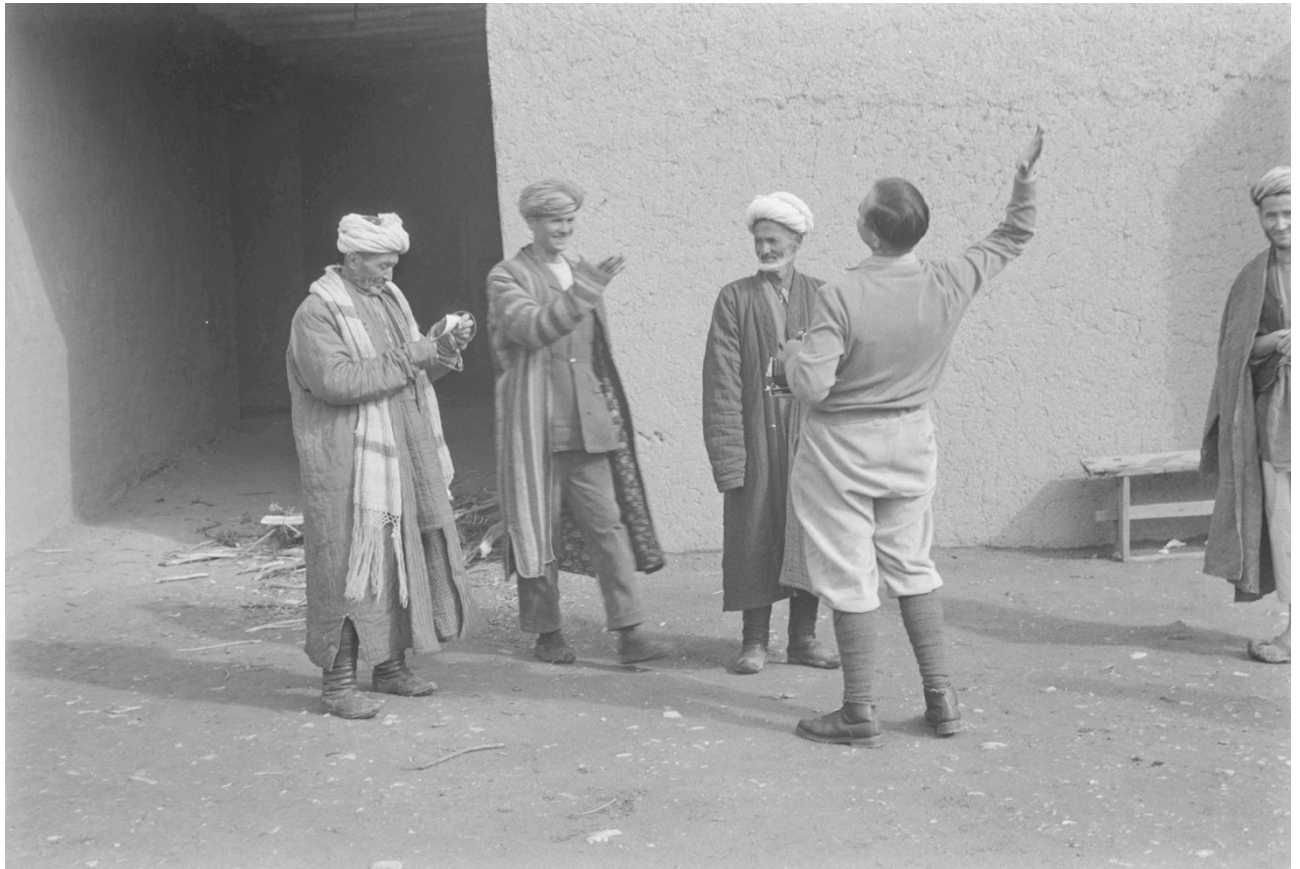
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◀ Figure 5.11

This photograph was taken in June 1963 in Shahran during the filming of the ethnographic film *E 746 Tajiks – Basket Weaving*. The accompanying brochure notes: “The women of Munjan are not bound by strict social constraints. They agreed to be filmed after a period of acquaintance. Maintaining a level of sensitivity in camera work, especially when capturing their faces, was considered a matter of decency” (Kußmaul und Snoy 1980: 12). However, the brochure overlooks that Hermann Schlenker’s sociable demeanour played a role in the opportunity to film and photograph two women weaving baskets. On multiple occasions during the expedition, Schlenker successfully garnered people’s support for his endeavours. In June 1963, he made the acquaintance of Ghulam Shah, who also became a crucial informant for Peter Snoy. Hermann Schlenker persuaded Ghulam Shah to allow the filming of his wife and mother. This picture shows his wife. Her name was not recorded. Nevertheless, some of the baskets crafted by her and her mother-in-law have been included in the Badakhshan expedition collection at the Linden Museum. Source: Hermann Schlenker (1963): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Private collection of Hermann Schlenker. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.





◀▲ Figures 5.12–5.14

Expedition leader Friedrich Kußmaul is photographed capturing an image of his informant, Anwar from the village of Joybar, using a Polaroid instant camera. In the 1960s, as Iris Trübswetter, a former expedition mountaineer, recalled, “almost every German expedition team travelling to the Afghan-Hindukush brought along an instant camera. We all knew that people appreciated a Polaroid photo, and it was a great way to make friends. What we always carried with us were cigarettes and an instant camera” (Iris Trübswetter, personal correspondence, 14/11/2020).

Sources: Unidentified photographer (1963): unnumbered photographs. [35mm negatives]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of negatives (SBE).

Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

### 5.3 Archiving Badakhshan

“Back from the Hindukush with a lot of luggage” (StAL 14) was the headline in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* on 12 November 1963. The completion of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition was covered by various regional newspapers. Their articles prominently underscored the wealth of ethnological findings and artefacts acquired by the expedition team. The *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* said:

After spending 15 months in Badakhshan, the members of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition have happily returned home. They bring back with them rich experiences and numerous valuable cultural items from various hill tribes [...], including household goods, carpets, wall decorations, and musical instruments. The contribution of photographer [Hermann Schlenker] is scientifically remarkable: 30 films were shot on 9,000 meters of 16-millimeter film for the Institute for Scientific Film in Göttingen, along with 15,000 photographic images for the Linden Museum and the Ethnological Institute of the University in Mainz. In addition, the expedition collected data through anthropological and meteorological measurements, as well as voice and music recordings. [...] Now that the great adventure is over, the scientific evaluation begins, a process that will undoubtedly span several years. (StAL 15)

Indeed, the processing of the expedition results carried out at the Linden Museum extended over several years. Both artefacts and photographs were systematically organised into separate collections; however, there was a noticeable discrepancy in the treatment of these collections. The artefacts underwent thorough documentation in the museum’s finding aids, after which they were prepared for storage and future exhibition. Conversely, the expedition photographs were curated by Friedrich Kußmaul, sorted into two collections, and then stored within the museum. Unlike the artefacts the photographs were not incorporated into the finding aids nor placed in the storage facility. Artefacts and photographs collected during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition were



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stored in separate locations and used for different purposes, each serving distinct roles within the institution. These roles will now be examined in more detail.

### **5.3.1 Creating a slide collection in the ethnological museum**

After the expedition, Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy pursued separate paths. In the autumn of 1963, immediately upon his return from Afghanistan, Hermann Schlenker dedicated himself to the editing of his expedition films and photographs, offering them for sale. Despite finding some clients, his earnings from this photographic and filmic work fell short of his expectations (Hermann Schlenker, personal conversation, 18/02/2018). Nonetheless, Schlenker's involvement in the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition proved beneficial. It marked the beginning of a long and successful career as an ethnographic filmmaker. Already in November 1964, he embarked on his next expedition, accompanying two ethnologists to Thailand (Schlenker 2015: 133).

Peter Snoy, who had been granted leave of absence by his superior, Karl Jettmar, for the Badakhshan expedition, resumed his duties at the University of Mainz. Friedrich Kußmaul returned to the Linden Museum and started to evaluate the expedition results.

At the Linden Museum, priority was given to the inventory of the artefacts, and the work commenced promptly. The processing of the photographs, however, began much later, only after 1965 (see StAL 16). In the museum, the photographs and artefacts underwent different processes. The approximately 500 artefacts collected by the expedition team for the Linden Museum were formally recorded in the museum's inventory register on 1 June 1964 (Krämer 2013: 122). This marked their official inclusion in the Linden Museum's holdings, imbuing them with a new significance and transforming them into museum objects: unique pieces authentically representing a particular culture.

In contrast, the photographs were not accorded the status of museum objects. It remains unclear whether the pictures were ever incorporated into an inventory or an official museum list. Presently, there are no surviving records from the 1960s that could attest to this. Furthermore, the expedition photographs were not stored alongside the artefacts in the storage facility. They were either placed in the museum's photo studio or in Friedrich Kußmaul's office.

The uneven handling of artefacts and photographs collected during the expedition led to their spatial and conceptional separation. The artefacts from Afghanistan were incorporated into the holdings of the Linden Museum according to established museum standards. They were treated as unique and authentic objects. Conversely, the photographs were treated according to archival standards.<sup>11</sup> They were kept as reference material and assigned the role of documents or media. Thus, while the artefacts were treated iconically, the photographs were given an indexical status. From this perspective, the distinction between artefacts and photographs in ethnological museums is not primarily an inherent difference but rather stems from the disparate treatment they receive. Its implications for the role of photographic collections in the ethnological museum become clearer if one examines the process of creation and the design of the E II D collection.

Before the expedition, Peter Snoy and Hermann Schlenker had made a contractual commitment to provide their photographs to the Linden Museum (Hermann Schlenker, personal conversation, 18/02/2018). Following the conclusion of the expedition, the challenging task of selecting individual images from the 15,000 photographs and organising them into meaningful collections fell to Friedrich Kußmaul, who had to manage this responsibility alongside his regular duties at the Linden Museum. The process of working on the expedition photographs extended over several years and was only concluded by the early 1970s. At least two photo collections were compiled: one labelled 'E II S', likely consisting of approximately 700 black-and-white photographs, and

another labelled ‘E II D’, comprising nearly 1,400 colour slides.<sup>12</sup> Under the curator’s supervision, a card catalogue with typewritten image descriptions was created for each of the two photo collections. In this context, Friedrich Kußmaul relied on assistants who handled “the necessary paperwork” (StAL 16).

While the pictures in the black-and-white photo collection cannot be located today (as of 2024) and must be considered lost, the photographs in the colour slide collection have been largely preserved in the Linden Museum. Of the original 1,400 colour slides, 1,137 have survived. The card catalogue of the E II D collection still contains around 1,260 index cards. Written records that provide information about Friedrich Kußmaul’s concept in creating the E II D collection are not available today. To understand more about the collecting concept, one needs to examine the E II D collection in its current state.

When examining the slides, what becomes most conspicuous is the restructuring of the original order of the film strips – achieved by cutting them up, framing individual images, and then rearranging them. The new arrangement of the photographs in the collection is not chronological. It does not follow the date they were taken, a fact that makes it nearly impossible to deduce information about the expedition’s itinerary from the photos. Obviously, aspects of time and itinerary played a subordinate role in the creation of the E II D collection.

The new order of the pictures was established by manually numbering the slide frames. Each slide in the collection was assigned an individual number between 1000 and 2517 and a letter between ‘a’ and ‘c’. These letters indicate the photographer: ‘a’ for Friedrich Kußmaul, ‘b’ for Peter Snoy, and ‘c’ for Hermann Schlenker. By labelling the slide frames, each slide could be assigned an index card in the catalogue, which, in turn, contains an individual image description.

The logic of the collection is challenging to discern by simply examining the series of pictures without consulting the card catalogue. It is not possible to identify a systematic sequencing of the photographs

within the E II D collection. This lack of coherence is attributed to Friedrich Kußmaul, who did not establish a consistent pictorial language. Landscape shots are juxtaposed with portraits, close-ups, wide-angle shots of animals, and ethnographic photographs featuring people. Additionally, the collection encompasses aerial photographs and touristic views of urban sights. The arrangement of the slides is not based on photographic information such as the date of capture, formal design, or content of the images. Consequently, despite being a collection of photographs, the E II D collection was not curated according to criteria immanent to the photos and their content.

The significance and organisation of the E II D collection become apparent when consulting the card catalogue. Only then Friedrich Kußmaul's decision to categorise the collection based on ethnological and geographical criteria becomes evident. The catalogue is divided into eight sections, with the order determined by Roman numerals. The initial three sections, Sections I to III, pertain to the expedition team's travel, research, and collection activities. Section I, titled 'Expedition', comprises 100 index cards. This is succeeded by Section II, 'Travels in the Country (excluding Badakhshan)', consisting of 200 index cards, and Section III, 'Travels in Badakhshan', which also includes 200 index cards.

The first two sections of the photo collection contain several photographs that were not taken within the expedition area; these images were added to document the journey from Germany to Afghanistan. A series of aerial photographs taken by Peter Snoy from a plane over Tehran are accompanied by portraits of men in the bazaars of Isfahan and images of cultural events in Kabul. The first two sections of the collection also include images intended to provide general information about Afghanistan's geography and infrastructure. The images depict scenes described in the card catalogue as "Lorry on road" (index card E II D 1178 b) or "Nomads with their herd on the way to Bamyan" (index card E II D 1122 c). Additionally, photographs depicting key moments of the expedition are included in the first three sections of the collection, such as

“The [expedition] caravan on the march” (index card E II D 1381 b) or “The caravan is loaded for the first time” (index card E II D 1007 c).

The subsequent five sections of the collection distinctly differ from the first three. Sections IV to VIII are named after the Badakhshan regions explored by the members of the expedition. Section IV, labelled ‘Warduj Valley’, consists of 50 index cards; section V encompasses 250 index cards assigned to photographs taken in ‘Baharak and Zardeo’. Section VI, titled ‘Munjan’, contains 300 index cards, followed by 150 index cards in section VII – ‘Zebak’, and another 150 index cards in section VIII – ‘Sanglich’. In these sections, with a few exceptions, images from the expedition are omitted. Instead, photographs of geographical and anthropological relevance are included, with individual index cards featuring additional scientific-thematic headings such as ‘economy’, ‘religion’, ‘vegetation’, ‘traffic’, ‘wedding’, or ‘portraits’.

I have provided details on the structure of the collections here because it has determined the arrangement of the photographs and, consequently, their meaning. The most notable feature of the E II D collection is that photographs documenting the presence of the expedition (sections I–III) have been separated from those that do not depict the expedition (sections IV–VIII). While 500 photographs, constituting one-third of the collection, depict the expedition as a research trip and introduce the research area of Badakhshan as a part of Afghanistan, the majority of the collection, amounting to 900 photographs, portrays the region of Badakhshan seemingly beyond the context of the expedition – presenting it as a region ‘as it is’.

Interestingly, Friedrich Kußmaul employed a similar approach in his writings on Badakhshan. In 1965 Friedrich Kußmaul published his “Preliminary report on the travels and work of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition” in the Linden Museum’s journal, *Tribus*. The report commences with a section titled “The journey: Tasks and itinerary” (Kußmaul 1965: 11–18) and then presents general observations on the

“*Landeskunde* of Badakhshan” (ibid.: 18–28, emphasis added). Only after these sections does the author delve into the concrete results of the field research, which are summarised under headings such as “settlement” (ibid.: 29–36), “economy” (ibid.: 38–74), “society” (ibid.: 74–88), and “spiritual culture” (ibid.: 88–96).

When comparing the photo collection with the “Preliminary report”, the structural similarity becomes evident. In this light, the E II D collection serves as the photographic equivalent of Friedrich Kußmaul’s ethnographic text. Both the report and the collection of photographs present two distinct perspectives to a reader or viewer – Badakhshan as a research area and Badakhshan as a place inhabited by people or *Lebensraum*. However, crucial to the understanding of the photo collection is the following: It is not the content of the images but the way they have been arranged – according to Friedrich Kußmaul’s scientific principle of order – that distinguishes Badakhshan as a field of research and a *Lebensraum*.

The significance of the photographs in the E II D collection for museum curator Kußmaul becomes apparent only when considered in conjunction with the text – specifically, with the card catalogue and the “Preliminary report”. This observation invites for a broader consideration of the relationship between pictures and texts, an aspect that has not been examined so far.

### 5.3.2 Relationship between image and text in the E II D collection

Friedrich Kußmaul regarded the photographs in the E II D collection as representations within the field of *Länderkunde* (regional studies). Unlike scientists like Karlheinz Paffen or Wolfgang Pillewizer, who considered the northwestern Karakoram as *Landschaft* (landscape), Friedrich Kußmaul aimed to portray the Hindukush region of Badakhshan in its uniqueness,

i.e., ideographically as *Land*. For Kußmaul, Badakhshan was a self-contained, structural unit, namely a “high mountain region” (*Hochgebirgsland*; Kußmaul 1965: 20):

The province [of Badakhshan] lies on the eastern outskirts of the Bactria region. It shares loose connections with Bactria through some old roads, yet it is also separated by challenging, often impassable roads and imposing mountain slopes. Badakhshan was therefore predestined to develop a life of its own in the course of history. (Kußmaul 1965: 18)

It was precisely this ‘life of its own’ that Friedrich Kußmaul sought to present and highlight in the E II D slide collection. The criteria used by him in selecting photographs for the collection were not understood well by photographer Hermann Schlenker. He considered the majority of the photographs assembled by Friedrich Kußmaul in the E II D collection to be “boring pictures” (Hermann Schlenker, personal conversation, 18/02/2018).

It is apparent that appealing aesthetics played a minor role in the selection of photographs for the E II D collection. Although Hermann Schlenker provided professionally composed photographs to the museum (see e.g., Figure 5.16), most of the collection consists of seemingly amateur snapshots taken by Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy. Similarly unpretentious, the image descriptions in the card catalogue do not hint at the exceptional but explicitly at the ‘typical’.

Sifting through the card catalogue, it seems that almost everything the photographers encountered was typical of Badakhshan in one way or another. The index cards point to a “typical landscape” (index card E II D 1282 a), a “typical teapot” (index card E II D 1307 b), a “native” wearing a “typical Badakhshani dress” (index card E II D 1389 b), a goat as “a typical representative of its race” (index card E II D 1504 a), or “in the background, a (non-plastered) house wall in the typical style of masonry” (index card E II D 1534 a). Yet, a written description was not

Figure 5.15 ►

Friedrich Kußmaul and Hermann Schlenker (see Figure 5.15) held contrasting views on what are the best expedition photographs. This is evident in a comparison of two pictures taken during Buzkashi tournaments near Faizabad in October 1962. Notably, Friedrich Kußmaul chose not to incorporate any of Hermann Schlenker's dynamic Buzkashi photographs into the Linden Museum collections.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1962): *E II D 1251 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



Figure 5.16 ►

Hermann Schlenker's photographs are aesthetically sophisticated pictures. The professional photographer dedicated considerable time to selecting motifs and achieving unique compositions in his pictures. In contrast, Friedrich Kußmaul, following the approach of *Länderkunde*, explicitly aimed to depict the everyday or typical aspects of Badakhshan.

Source: Hermann Schlenker (1962): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Private collection of Hermann Schlenker. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.





always necessary to convey the typical nature of the photographic motif to the viewer. Anthropology had long established its own visual language of the typical, particularly through anthropometric and anthropological portrait photography.

The E II D collection contains numerous anthropological portraits scattered throughout the eight sections. Additionally, anthropological portraits have been compiled into a series of images in section ‘V – Baharak and Zardeo’, where Friedrich Kußmaul has put together a 29-part series of pictures under the heading “portrait photographs” (slides E II D 1540 a – E II D 1568). The card catalogue does not provide information about the date or the location where these photographs were taken. Nonetheless, a comparative examination of Friedrich Kußmaul’s diary suggests that these portraits were taken at the end of February 1963 in the village of Yarim, where many people from the valley of Zardeo had gathered on the occasion of the festival of ‘Id e Khurd’ (see Kußmaul Diary I: 156).

The 29 portraits depict the faces of 24 men and five children, three girls and two boys. The images, all close-up shots, detail the shape of the eyes, nose, ears, and faces of each person with great clarity. Extraneous pictorial elements that might divert a viewer’s attention from the physiognomy of the photographed faces have been avoided. Through their formal design, these images present those photographed as ‘anthropological types’, thereby positioning them as subjects of physical anthropology. Surprisingly, only one of the 29 pictures was described with an overtly racializing statement. The index card for image “E II D 1552 a” reads:

Mir e Kalon from Joybar, the Arbab of Pejuj. Mir e Kalon is a grandson of the last Mir of Jurm; his father had married into the valley. The anthropological type clearly shows ‘Turkish’ traits.  
(Index card E II D 1552 a; Figure 5.17)

In contrast, the index cards for the remaining 28 pictures offer details about the origin, residence, profession, or social status of the individuals captured. For instance, in the description of picture “E II D 1548 a”, the featured man is characterised not as a racial type but as a socio-economic type:



Figure 5.17 ▲

The anthropological portrait of “Mir e Kalon from Joybar, the Arbab of Pejuj”.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1963): *E II D 1552 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



▲ Figure 5.18

The anthropological portrait features Anwar, one of the ethnologists’ informants from the village of Joybar.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1963): *E II D 1548 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

Anwar, [...] one of the cleanest and most talented men we met in the valley. He was about 40 years old and had two grown-up daughters (one married) and two adolescent girls” (Index card E II D 1548 a; Figure 5.18).

In the card catalogue, Friedrich Kußmaul refrained from providing detailed descriptions of the anthropometric image content, as this aspect was already sufficiently clear from the formal image design. The curator was more concerned with enriching the image information by providing data which could not be deduced from the photographs. The formal design of the pictures and their textual content diverge but mutually complement each other. In this synergy, the image and the text are “mutually generative” (Edwards and Morton 2015: 17). Friedrich Kußmaul thus introduced two distinct avenues for interpreting the portraits in the E II D collection – either as objects of study in physical anthropology or as subjects of social anthropology – presenting a comprehensive portrayal of the “various types of people indigenous to the valley” (index card E II D 1538 a).

Friedrich Kußmaul, however, did not share all the information he had gathered about the individuals he photographed with the viewers of his slides. Instead, he intentionally left out certain details, both in the images and the accompanying texts. These omissions mainly revolve around the role these individuals played in the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. A significant number of the men portrayed were not merely casual or brief acquaintances of the expedition team but rather served as its informants, intermediaries, and long-term companions. As can be gleaned only from the private diaries of Friedrich Kußmaul, which were not intended for publication, the aforementioned Mir e Kalon, the *arbab* of Pejuj, was one such informant. On 23 January 1963, Kußmaul made a short note into his diary: “The day after tomorrow Mir e Kalon wants to come with me to Pejuj. So, I am slowly getting to know the valley” (Kußmaul Diary I: 113; see also Kußmaul Diary I: 141, 165).

The *arbab* of Pejuj's self-perceived role when he stood before Friedrich Kußmaul's camera can only be a matter of speculation. Did he choose to be depicted exclusively as the "Arbab of Pejuj", as stated on the index card, or did he additionally perceive himself as the host and negotiating counterpart of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition? – Despite receiving guidance and insights from individuals like the *arbab* of Pejuj and Anwar from the village of Joybar, Friedrich Kußmaul documented his informants solely for anthropological purposes, without explicitly acknowledging their contributions to his knowledge about the region.

The separation between information and its source, i.e., the informant, is a common characteristic in the history of expeditionary anthropology. In the context of German exploration in High Asia, the expeditions of the Schlagintweit brothers stand out as the earliest example of this practice. Throughout their journey, the brothers were captivated by the "most interesting variety of tribes and religions" (von Schlagintweit 1869: 42) among their team members, a phenomenon that, according to Hermann von Schlagintweit, turned their camp into "an ethnographic museum of living objects" (ibid.). This anthropological fascination led the Schlagintweit brothers to create plaster casts of the heads, hands, and feet of several members of their expedition team (Driver 2015: 13).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, numerous European members of expeditions generated illustrations and images of their collaborators, hosts, and informants for scientific purposes. This was largely driven by the accessibility of these individuals for the intended scientific objectives. Interactions between foreign travellers and local residents in the visited regions were frequently brief and characterised by mutual distrust. Contact with members of local societies was primarily facilitated through working relationships within the expedition team. As a result, the expedition camp was regarded as the primary anthropological field by many European explorers, with those employed to assist in exploration becoming subjects of exploration themselves. Therefore, it can be inferred that many individuals portrayed during expeditions, and whose anthropological portraits are now housed in museums and archives, were indeed well-

acquainted with their photographers. Even if their identities are no longer recognisable today, the individuals captured in anthropological portraits may have played a pivotal role in shaping the global history of exploration and expeditions.

The analysis of the ‘portrait photographs’ from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition provides an additional perspective on anthropological portrait photography. A detailed examination of the history of these images reveals more than the representation of men as types in physical or social anthropology. These portraits also capture the faces of individuals who maintained constant contact with the German ethnologists, providing them with ethnological data, travel permits, and collectible items. Illuminating the contribution of these individuals to expeditionary travel, as well as anthropological and ethnological research, is a crucial aspect of contemporary photographic provenance research, and it is often in the photographs themselves that one can find the information necessary to identify these individuals. Unintentionally, one might say, their faces, and that is their individuality and identity, is preserved and documented in anthropological pictures which were originally meant to serve quite a different, if not even opposite, purpose: to capture them as types and representatives, stripping them of their individual identity and achievements, which played no role in the documentation of ‘racial types’ and in racialized discourses.

#### **5.4 ‘Hidden histories’ in the expedition archive**

The image content of slide “E II D 1669a” is outlined on the index card from the card catalogue as follows:

Shahran. At work in the mosque garden, our interpreters engage in conversation with two natives while seated on a local gilam (a rug crafted from a blend of sheep’s wool and goat’s hair). The obligatory tea must not be missing. (Index card E II D 1669 a; Figure 5.19)



Figure 5.19 ▲

Photographed in the expedition camp in Shahrān. From left to right: Ashur Mohamad, the *arbab* of Shahrān, expedition interpreters Zahir Zadrān and Ghauth Shujayī, and the expedition's assistant, Gul Mohamad.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1962): *E II D 1669 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

By closer examination of the slide, I have uncovered additional information that enriches the description and interpretation of the picture. The photograph, captured on 13 October 1962 by Friedrich Kußmaul, showcases four men in the garden of the mosque in Shahran – a site designated by the *arbab* of the village as a camp site for the expedition. The individuals in the photograph, from left to right, include Ashur Mohamad, the *arbab* of Shahran, expedition interpreters Zahir Zadran and Ghauth Shujayi, and the expedition’s assistant, Gul Mohamad. It is noteworthy that these four men played a crucial role in contributing to both the collection of artefacts and the ethnological and photographic output of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition (see e.g., Figure 5.8).

Throughout the history of exploration, European expedition members relied on the collaboration of interpreters, assistants, intermediaries, and local politicians or authorities. As noted by Felix Driver and Lowri Jones (2009: 5), expeditions in High Asia “evidently depended on local support of various kinds – for food, shelter, protection, information, communication, guidance and solace.”

Nevertheless, European historiography has often assigned only subordinate roles to non-European expedition members and collaborators. Their contributions have frequently been downplayed in archival and museum records, as well as in expedition reports, reducing them to the status of research subjects or simply ‘natives’. In publications by European authors, non-European individuals engaged in expeditions – such as load-carriers, porters, advisors, hosts, and intermediaries – are rarely portrayed as active protagonists with their own economic, political, and personal interests. Even less frequently are the concerns of these actors acknowledged as valid or scientifically relevant. Consequently, the contributions of non-European individuals to the history of expeditions remain largely invisible.

In recent years, academic efforts have challenged the prevailing Eurocentric narrative that has dominated the historiography of exploration. Notably, geographers Felix Driver and Lowri Jones identify the contributions of non-European participants in the European project of exploration as “hidden histories” and emphasise:

We need to make room in our histories for the local partners, guides, porters, fixers, interpreters, traders and officials who made journeys of exploration possible [...]. (Driver and Jones 2009: 5–6)

However, the challenge for ‘us’ as contemporary authors is that ‘we’ must base our research on historical records in which earlier authors deliberately concealed information on non-European influences. Questioning the Eurocentric view on the history of exploration, therefore, requires new perspectives on old materials.

In the following paragraphs, I will present the results of my research, uncovering the history of Gul Mohamad, an Afghan participant in the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. In the absence of alternative sources, I have traced Gul Mohamad’s contribution to the expedition using German records, including photographs from the E II D collection and those taken by Peter Snoy. I have supplemented this information with data obtained from the expedition’s archival records.

#### **5.4.1 The ‘hidden history’ of Gul Mohamad**

In late September 1962, Peter Snoy and Ghauth Shujayi were the first members of the expedition to arrive in Faizabad, the provincial capital of Badakhshan. Snoy immediately embarked on a quest to find the ideal candidate to take on the role of a ‘cook-servant’ for the expedition (Diary Snoy: 25). Two candidates were introduced to him for consideration. Following their initial meeting, the ethnologist made an entry in his diary, describing one of them, named Gul Mohamad, as “an unmarried man from Paghman currently employed in the civil service in Faizabad” (ibid.).



The second candidate for the position requested a salary of 1,000 Afghani, which exceeded three times the amount the German expedition participants were willing to pay (Diary Snoy: 28). In contrast, Gul Mohamad accepted the terms of a 300 Afghani salary and made the commitment to resign from his previous position in Faizabad to join the expedition team. As a result, on 2 October 1962, Gul Mohamad officially became an employee of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.

On 3 October, the expedition team travelled by car and lorry to Baharak, where they set up their base camp. Continuing their motorised journey from Baharak, they arrived at the village of Jurm, the starting point for their planned exploration of the southern and eastern valleys of Badakhshan on horseback. Shortly before their departure from Jurm, a colour slide was captured on 6 or 7 October 1962, also featuring Gul Mohamad, the newest member of the team. The image showcases a group of eight men posing for the camera around a table on the terrace of the *mehmaan khana* (Figure 5.20). According to the caption on the index card, the men were:

From left to right [...]: Interpreter Zahir Zadrán, interpreter Shujayi, Hermann Schlenker, Dr Kußmaul, Dr Snoy; seated in front: our servant Gul Mahmad from Paghman. In the background, two servants from the guesthouse in Jurm. (Index card E II D 1036 a)

Like the other men, Gul Mohamad looks directly into the camera. However, in contrast to the other members of the expedition team, he is not seated at the table but squatting on his heels in the foreground. His posture creates the impression that he had been serving the five expedition members at the table just a moment before and had briefly interrupted his work for the photograph.

The scene is bathed in sunlight, casting a warm glow on the smiling and partly laughing faces captured in the photograph. The gestures and facial expressions of the pictured men, the well-thought-out composition, as well as the vibrant colour and lighting conditions, collectively contribute



Figure 5.20 ▲

Photographed in early October 1962, in front of the *mehmaan khana* in Jurm. From left to right: Zahir Zadran, Ghauth Shujayi, Hermann Schlenker, two residents of Jurm, Friedrich Kußmaul, Gul Mohmad, Peter Snoy. The photo was likely taken using a self-timer.

Source: Unidentified photographer (1962): *E II D 1036 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

to making this photograph a beautifully composed shot – a photographic keepsake capturing a delightful moment during the expedition. According to its design, the photograph could be considered a souvenir photograph – a “reminder of personal experience” (Schwartz 2004: 16) – as commonly seen in tourists’ travel photography. Pictures like slide “1036 a” are seldom found in the E II D collection. Nevertheless, it is from such non-scientific images that one can glean valuable insights into the structure of the expedition team.

By meticulously examining the E II D collection for Gul Mohamad, he can be discovered in numerous pictures. He is frequently positioned on the left or right edges of the photographs, actively involved in tasks such as packing boxes or loading horses (Figures 1.1 and 5.4). In other photographs, he was captured as a rider positioned at the rear of the expedition caravan (Figure 5.7) or amidst a celebrating crowd at a wedding party. However, the group photo taken in October 1962 is the only slide in the E II D collection that prominently features Gul Mohamad in the foreground, and his name is mentioned only once in the card catalogue.

Research reveals that he also appears in another collection at the Linden Museum – specifically, in a compilation of black-and-white negatives, mainly taken by Peter Snoy. Gul Mohamad and Peter Snoy collaborated in Badakhshan for nine months. Throughout this period, the ethnologist consistently captured photographs of his assistant at work (Figures 5.21 and 5.22). Peter Snoy also made several references to Gul Mohamad in his written records, both in his diary and in the catalogue where his photographs are listed.

Peter Snoy’s photographs reveal the familiarity between Gul Mohamad and his photographer, highlighted by Gul’s facial expressions. In some of these images, he is captured looking up from his work and smiling directly at the camera. At first glance, they give the impression of typical souvenir shots by a traveller or tourist. However, considering the context in which these photographs were taken, it is evident that they differ significantly from other types of travel photographs.

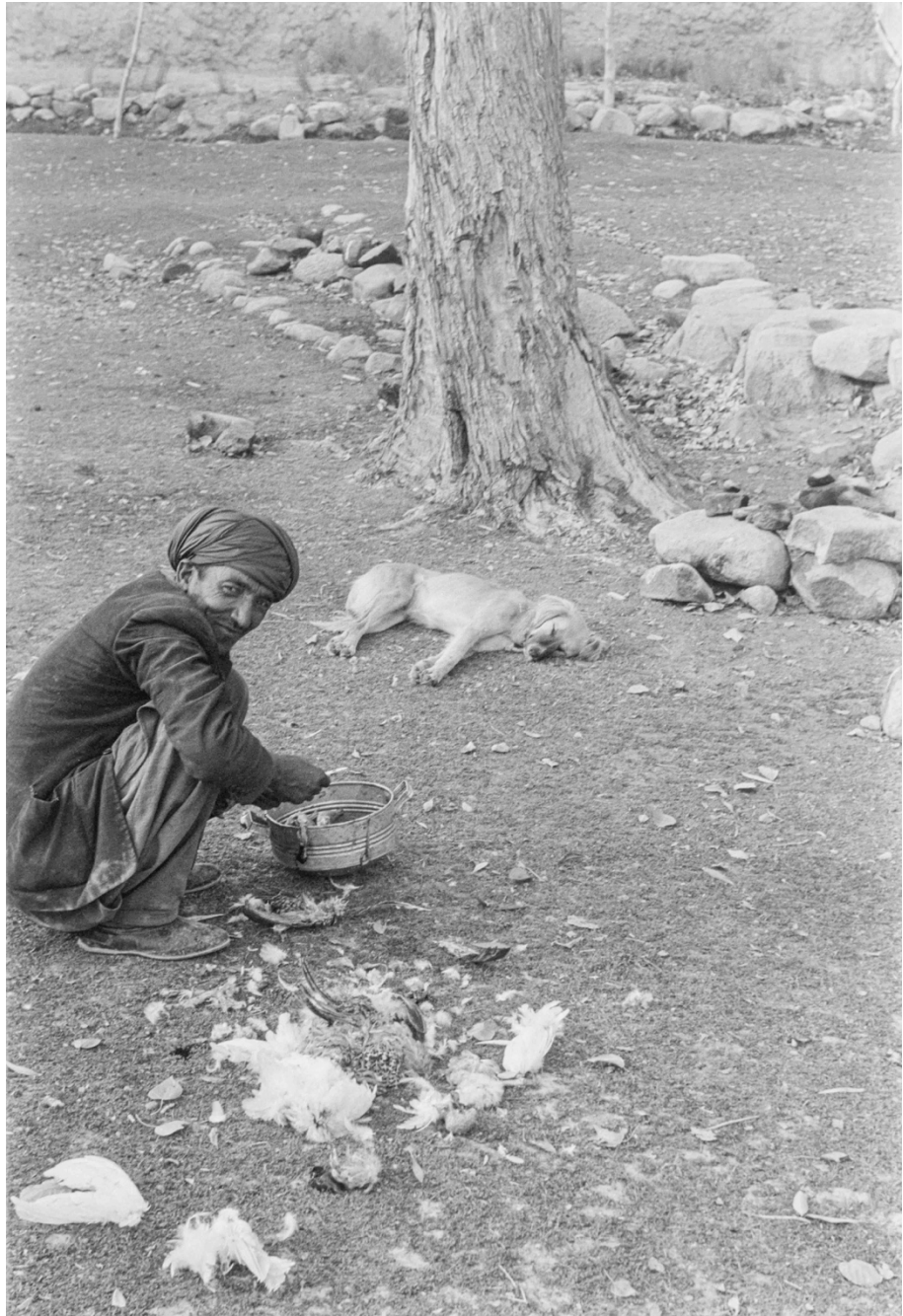


Figure 5.21 ►

Gul Mohamad preparing a meal at the expedition camp in Shahrān, photographed by Peter Snoy on 21 October 1962.

Source: Peter Snoy (1962): *[No] 107-30* [35mm negative]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of negatives (SBE). Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



▲ Figure 5.22

In the winter camp in Charkoran, Gul Mohamad is photographed by Peter Snoy while firing up the furnace.

Source: Peter Snoy (1962): [No] 113a-46 [35mm negative]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of negatives (SBE). Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

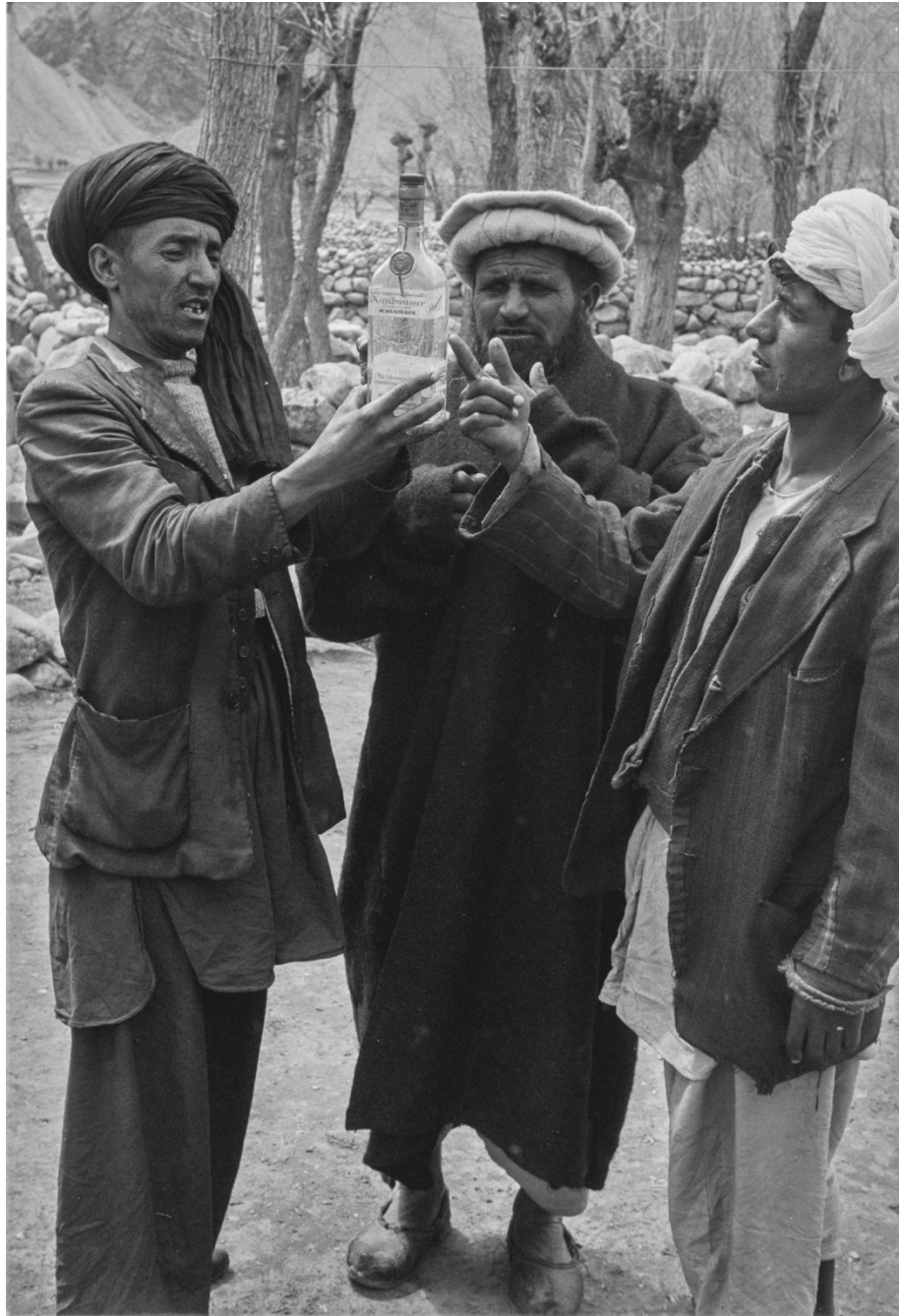


Figure 5.23 ►

This photograph, taken by Peter Snoy at the expedition camp in Shahrān, was produced to showcase a bottle of cherry schnapps sponsored by the manufacturer *Schladerer*. The image depicts, from left to right, Gul Mohamad, a visitor from the village of Prazan, and expedition assistant Zaher.

Source: Peter Snoy (1962): *[No]* 131-29 [35mm negative]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of negatives (SBE). Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

Gul Mohamad is portrayed not as a tourist or traveller but as an expedition labourer. This distinction is crucial for interpreting and classifying the genre of these photographs. In contrast to typical travel or souvenir photography, which often captures scenes of adventure, exoticism, or sightseeing, these images bear a resemblance to a photographic genre known as ‘worker photography’. Approaching these photographs as depictions of a labourer, rather than idyllic travel scenes, prompts a significant shift in perspective. The beholder’s focus is redirected towards the everyday responsibilities, challenges, and working environment of wage labourers during expeditions.

This perspective broadens the scope within which expedition photography can be analysed, interpreted, and comprehended. When one sees expedition photographs as a record of a working situation, expeditions cease to be viewed merely as exotic adventures ‘at world’s end’. Instead, the images become open to inquiries from a sociological and socio-critical point of view. The photographs from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition are therefore valuable historical sources for investigating working conditions in an international or transregional ethnological project in the early 1960s.

Gul Mohamad was initially hired as a ‘cook-servant’, with official tasks that included catering for the expedition team, shopping at the bazaar, managing supplies, and arranging the camp (Diary Snoy: 30). However, within a few days of his hiring, it became evident that his role extended beyond that of a mere cook and camp manager. On the afternoon of 8 October 1962, a day after the expedition had set out from Jurm, the team reached the village of Hazrat-e Said, where the Germans were accommodated “fairly well” by the *arbab* of the village “in a brand-new house” (Diary Snoy: 34). “We were all righteously tired”, Peter Snoy described the situation in his diary the following day:

Nevertheless, we still engaged in a conversation with the Arbab in the evening, even though he did not have much information. [...] He gave an unexpectedly low figure for livestock, and after

the discussion, our servant Gul Mohamad accused him of being a liar. Gul suggested that the Arbab might have thought we were from the tax office, as someone with so little property could not possibly afford to construct a house like the one we were staying in. (Diary Snoy: 34)

Much like on 8 October 1962, Gul Mohamad actively participated in various conversations throughout the expedition and expressed his opinions. However, in the publications by Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy, he is not mentioned as either an informant or a research assistant. This, among others, illustrates the clear distinction European research drew between scientific and non-scientific members of an expedition team.

The hierarchical distinction becomes most apparent in the employment conditions of the various expedition personnel. A review of the accounts reveals that interpreter Ghauth Shujayi, who served the expedition team only slightly longer than Gul Mohamad, was compensated with 15,000 Afghani for his services. Additionally, he received 9,200 Afghani for equipment and reimbursement of travel expenses, along with a tip of 14,000 Afghani. In contrast, Gul Mohamad received a payment of only 4,100 Afghani for nine months of work, along with new clothes and shoes valued at 700 Afghani, and a “baksheesh” of 50 Afghani (StAL 17: 17). After the expedition, Friedrich Kußmaul himself admitted that he had aimed to save money when compensating the expedition’s ‘servants’:

Dr Snoy and I worked independently, and consequently, we had two servants accompanying us for most of the trip. We chose to hire locals from the expedition area to minimise costs. While it appeared to be a smart financial decision, in hindsight, these individuals proved to be quite clumsy and, in many instances, not very helpful. Next time, I would certainly consider hiring servants from Kabul or Kunduz instead. (StAL 17: 4)

The description of Gul Mohamad’s role in the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, as he would have articulated it himself, remains tentative since the German sources do not provide clarity on this aspect. According to



Peter Snoy's diary, however, Gul gradually became indispensable to the expedition team as the journey unfolded. He took on the role of a 'go-between', forging strong connections with the residents in the research area. This facilitated the ethnologists in establishing previously inaccessible relationships. Moreover, Gul Mohamad used his connections and abilities to provide his German employers with information they would not have acquired otherwise. "Our cook, Gul Mohamad, proves to be a skilled detective" (Diary Snoy: 58), Peter Snoy noted in his diary in January 1963.

The fact that Gul Mohamad seemed to be trusted by various people in the expedition area raises questions about his social position in Badakhshan. Despite mentioning to Peter Snoy that he was from Paghman, a town near Kabul, the circumstances of his arrival in Badakhshan remain unclear. Was he a commercial traveller when he came to Faizabad? What kind of employment did he have in Faizabad before the expedition? Did he create any records, either oral or written, of his experiences with the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition? – The available documents in the German expedition archive do not provide answers to Gul Mohamad's background. Nevertheless, they offer insights into the immediate consequences of his participation in the expedition.

In the 1950s and 1960s, expeditions served as crucial stepping stones for professional careers. Notable individuals who achieved success in this regard include Wolfgang Pillewizer, Hans-Jochen Schneider, and Hermann Schlenker. Friedrich Kußmaul also embarked on his journey to the Hindukush with the expectation of enhancing his career prospects. However, it was not solely the European expedition members who could reap the benefits of expedition involvement. The linguist Abdul Raziq Palwal, for example, built his international scientific career on his participation in expeditions led by Georg Morgenstierne, Klaus Ferdinand, and Friedrich Kußmaul (see e.g., Abdul Raziq Palwal 1969 and 1985). For wage labourers as well, expeditions, despite offering only

temporary employment, enhanced their personal career opportunities, as illustrated by the biography of Gul Mohamad.

During the nine months that Gul Mohamad worked for the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, he assumed increasing responsibilities, expanding his scope of action and activity. In March 1963, Peter Snoy noticed a change in his assistant's demeanour. When interacting with informants, Snoy wrote in his diary,

Gul [...] goes to great lengths to present himself as a sahib and soldier responsible for me [...]. He knows how to position himself and allows himself to be called an interpreter. (Diary Snoy: 66)

Altogether, Gul Mohamad spent more time in the expedition area than the scientific expedition participants. In both November 1962 and May 1963, Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy had temporarily halted their work in Badakhshan to travel to Kabul and Kunduz, accompanied by the Kabul interpreters. Meanwhile, Gul Mohamad remained in Badakhshan, overseeing the expedition camps. In May 1963, according to Peter Snoy, Gul Mohamad started to generate additional income through the trade of opium and supplies from the expedition camp (Diary Snoy: 88–89). Moreover, it appears that he substantially expanded his network of contacts during this period. In June 1963, Gul became engaged to the “12-year-old daughter of Lal Beg” (ibid.: 88). Lal Beg, the father of the future bride, held a prominent position in the village of Pejuj and served as one of the expedition team's key informants.

Upon Peter Snoy's return to his camp in late June 1963 after a brief absence, he learned about Gul's engagement. Furthermore, Snoy discovered that the expedition camp, which Gul was supposed to be overseeing, was nearly empty. He noted in his diary:

Sugar, tea, and flour had been completely consumed, with hardly any petroleum left. Our supplies of fat and rice were running low. Strangely, a tin of sweets had disappeared. The fabric worth 500 Afghani, sent by the Hakim of Jurm, ended up as a gift for Lal Beg. Furthermore, an investigation confirmed Gul's involvement in opium sales. Palwal shared additional

details about Gul's schemes. Consequently, I made the decision to dismiss Gul on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> [of June 1963]. (Diary Snoy: 88–89)

This marked the conclusion of the cooperation between the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition and Gul Mohamad. However, Gul's interference in the expedition's plans did not end with his dismissal. In the village of Pejuj, he had gained influence. The filming, which was initially arranged with Lal Beg's family, especially Gul Mohamad's future mother-in-law, was now cancelled. As noted by Peter Snoy with consternation, "here, Gul has obviously caused us trouble" (Diary Snoy: 89).

#### **5.4.2 Making room for ambiguity in the photo archive**

During the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, Gul Mohamad assumed various roles – serving as a cook and camp manager, interpreter and go-between, self-proclaimed 'sahib and soldier', loyal assistant and independent entrepreneur. However, in the E II D collection, his multifaceted and contradictory role has been limited to that of a 'servant' or 'native' (index cards E II D 1036 a; E II D 1669 a). He shares this fate with many other men and several women who served the expedition team for short or long periods. In the slide collection, they became nameless extras; they were anonymised.

In the following discussion, I use the term 'anonymisation' to refer to an archival practice wherein text and photographs undergo manipulation to permanently prevent or at least significantly complicate the identification of individuals depicted in the images. The anonymisation process in the photo archive involved withholding specific attributes of the individuals depicted, such as personal names or official titles. From the perspective of history of science, a more problematic aspect is the deliberate concealment of the political or economic relationships between the individuals photographed and their respective photographers.



Figure 5.24 ▲

The image description provided by the card catalogue states: "Landscape: central valley of Zardeo, looking east. The slope on the sun-exposed side of the valley and the floodplain [...] are snow-free. Only the northern slope [...] of the valley still has some snow. Clouds frequently linger over the valley. Photographed at the end of February" (index card 1443 a). The image description, however, omits any mention of Sher Mohamad, one of the expedition assistants, clearly visible in the foreground of the photograph.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (1963): *E II D 1443 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

This omission has left a lasting impact on how the history of expeditions is told. As a result of archival anonymisation practices, the history of exploration is still predominantly portrayed as a European achievement.

In British colonial archives, expedition photographs were sometimes cropped and retouched, effectively excluding non-Europeans, such as guides or porters, from the historical records. This practice aimed to highlight the colonial explorer and elevate his achievement to that of a 'lone hero'. Explorations conducted in the name of the British Empire were intended to be portrayed as the exclusive

[...] work of exceptional individuals under extraordinary circumstances – men and women venturing forth on some incredible journey, surviving against all odds. (Driver and Jones 2009: 5)

The photographs in the E II D collection have not undergone manipulation on the image plane. They were neither cropped nor retouched. Instead, the manipulation was executed on the text level. In the card catalogue accompanying the slide collection, anonymisation primarily occurred through omission. This implies that even though a person is clearly visible in the foreground of a picture, his or her presence is not acknowledged in the description provided on the index card (see Figure 5.24).

Another form of anonymisation employed in the slide collection becomes apparent when revisiting slide "E II D 1669 a" (Figure 5.19). In order to ascertain the date of the shot and identify the individuals depicted, it was necessary to compare an array of archive documents, photographs, and field notes. This investigation revealed that the photograph, which was taken on 13 October 1962, features Ashur Mohamad, the *arbab* of Shahrān, along with interpreters Zahir Zadran and Ghauth Shujayi, as well as Gul Mohamad. These pivotal details underwent simplification in the image description and were watered down to the statement "our interpreters engage in conversation with two *natives* [...]" (index card E II D 1669 a, emphasis added).

The use of the collective term 'native' has a notable impact on the interpretation of the slide "E II D 1669 a". It anonymises the *arbab* and Gul Mohamad, thereby obscuring the roles they played in the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition.

Referring to *arbab* Ashur Mohamad as a 'native' may not be inherently incorrect. However, it conceals the expedition's reliance on the village representative. From the picture it is evident that the four men are engaged in conversation. However, the specific topic of their discussion cannot be discerned, creating a potentially ambiguous situation. In this context, it is both possible and likely that the *arbab* had provided information to the interpreters about the village of Shahran and the district of Munjan (see Kußmaul Diary I: 36; Diary Snoy: 39).

In his role as *arbab*, Ashur Mohamad was responsible for the accommodation and security of the foreign travellers. It was he who designated the expedition team's campsite in the mosque garden of Shahran (*ibid.*). Consequently, it is conceivable that organisational negotiations occurred with the *arbab*, potentially involving discussions about campsite rent or negotiations regarding porter rates. However, the term 'native' fails to imply any of these responsibilities and the ensuing agency of this 'native'. In this portrayal, Ashur Mohamad is not presented in his roles as a village representative, business partner, or contact person for the expedition. Instead, he is depicted as an interviewee with minimal involvement in the expedition. The term 'native' reduces the *arbab* to an anonymous role and remains silent on his power and influence.

The application of the term 'native' to Gul Mohamad, on the other hand, constitutes a distortion of facts. Based on the information Gul Mohamad shared with Peter Snoy about himself, it is evident that he hailed not from Badakhshan but from Paghman (Diary Snoy: 25). Even if he had familial connections to Badakhshan – information that can neither be confirmed nor dismissed – he was certainly not interviewed by the Kabul interpreters in the capacity of a native informant.

The label 'native' serves to anonymise both the expedition assistant Gul Mohamad and the *arbab* of Shahrān. Simultaneously, it relegates these two individuals to the status of extras in a staged portrayal of ethnological fieldwork. The concept of the 'native' acts as a catalyst: it stimulates the production of ethnological data without being consumed or corrupted by it. Unlike a business partner or an employee, the native is imagined to lead an independent life, separate from the expedition and the explorer. The natives' supposedly neutral stance towards the expedition turns them into 'authentic' sources for European scholarship. Consequently, their statements are regarded as representative of the culture under investigation. The anonymisation of individuals who participated in research and exploration, and their categorisation as 'native' in the ethnographic archive, was a way to generate authentic, i.e., scientifically credible, images and texts.

However, this anonymisation tends to create only a semblance of authenticity. As shown, these 'natives' were deeply involved in the expedition and its research. They were not clear-cut objects of research but co-produced it. Thus, the anonymisation can be regarded not only as an attempt to conceal a person's name and his or her agency, but also as an attempt to create an impression concerning the object of research, and thus the data gained studying it, which is not substantiated by reality.

In the field of expeditionary anthropology, non-European individuals, such as informants, advisors, and guides, were intentionally anonymised for centuries. Their contributions to what is commonly referred to as 'European anthropology' were systematically excluded from the archive. The anonymisation in both textual descriptions and images was carried out to construct documentation that could be bestowed with the scientific label 'authentic'.

The realisation of this method in the second half to the 20<sup>th</sup> century has led to a crisis of ethnographic representation and marks the beginning of a gradual revision of this practice. This 'crisis of representation' in ethnology and social anthropology was sparked by the posthumous publication of Bronislaw Malinowski's field diaries in the late 1960s. The

social anthropologist had maintained detailed records of his fieldwork conducted in New Guinea and the Trobriand Islands during 1914–1915 and 1917–1918. His private notes, published in 1967 under the title, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, left a shocked readership in their wake. Bronislaw Malinowski had been widely regarded as the pioneer of the anthropological method of ‘participant observation’. His book, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, had marked the conclusion of imperial armchair anthropology and the commencement of a novel approach to social and cultural anthropology. Malinowski, unlike any other, embodied an anthropologist’s commitment to engage with a ‘foreign culture’ and describe it without bias (Kurt 2012: 55).

However, his personal notes, published in *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, presented a different image of the researcher. Rather than immersing himself in the everyday life of New Guinea, Malinowski regularly withdrew to his accommodation. Frequently experiencing feelings of despair, loneliness, detachment, and anger, he deviated from the active participation and observation he had advocated in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Instead, he anxiously awaited the ship that would deliver mail and news from Europe. The publication of Malinowski’s personal notes thrust the world of anthropology into both a scientific and existential crisis: To what extent were ethnographic studies credible and authentic, after all?

The crisis of representation prompted a plethora of publications, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, with one of the most renowned still being the book *Writing Culture* by George Marcus and James Clifford (1986). Visual anthropology and social anthropological photography were significantly impacted by these debates. Scholars in these fields responded to the ‘crisis’ by increasingly employing auto-photographic methods. Instead of being photographed, individuals from the communities under study were now encouraged to capture images themselves. This approach remains highly popular today and has transcended from anthropology to its neighbouring disciplines. It has also led to novel photographic results



in the fields of geography and high mountain research (see e.g., Butz and Cook 2020).

The *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* defines auto photography as “an ethnographic field research method that attempts to ‘see the world through someone else’s eyes’” (Thomas 2009: 244). In alignment with this, other researchers have underscored that auto-photography helps to “make the research process more *authentic* for both researchers and participants” (Noland 2006: 1, emphasis added).

It is striking that most scholarly contributions addressing the crisis of representation diligently strive to restore ethnographic authenticity. These efforts are especially apparent in the continuously growing body of literature on auto-photography since the 1970s. Only a few (visual) anthropologists and geographers have, to date, addressed the fundamental question of whether creating authentic representations through photography is even possible.

From a constructivist perspective, scientific and anthropological photographs do not function as authentic documentation of events. Instead, these images are (intentionally) crafted, processed, and used with the aim of creating what is intended to be perceived as authentic documentation. My objective in contextualising and interpreting the photographs from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition is to examine the various practices that have informed the creation and subsequent use of these photographs as authentic sources of anthropology and ethnology. This approach becomes clearer when revisiting the slide “E II D 1669 a” (Figure 5.19).

The slide captures four men in conversation. It is probable that Friedrich Kußmaul spontaneously took this photograph, creating a candid snapshot. Nevertheless, the possibility that the conversational scene was staged for the photograph cannot be entirely dismissed. Through archival research, I could establish the identities of the four men in the image and recognise the contribution of each of them to the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition in various capacities. Among them is the *arbab* of Shahrān,

who, at the time of the shot, might have been representing his political and economic interests to the foreign expedition or providing information of anthropological relevance. Due to the lack of sources, the precise details of the conversation remain unclear.

Additionally, the two scholars from Kabul are identifiable, along with the expedition staff member Gul Mohamad from Paghman, who, as previously elaborated, assumed diverse roles during the expedition. In view of the insufficient sources, the specific role he played in the conversation on 13 October 1962 likewise remains unclear.

Several months after the expedition concluded, the slide was framed, numbered, and catalogued as part of the E II D collection. During this procedure, curator Friedrich Kußmaul appended a written description, condensing its multifaceted meanings and uncertainties into a specific interpretation. The comparative examination of image content, historical image description, and recent research findings elucidates the substantial influence exerted by Friedrich Kußmaul on the interpretation of the image.

The anonymisation of Gul Mohamad and Ashur Mohamad transformed what might have been an open and historically ambiguous scene into a clearly defined event. The image description labels the slide as portraying 'natives and interpreters at work' (index card E II D 1669 a), thus it presents a snapshot of a fieldwork environment. Looking at the image does not disclose any hierarchical dynamics among the depicted individuals. The scene only transforms into a clearly defined ethnological setting and distinguishes between researchers and the researched through the accompanying image description. However, the question of whether Friedrich Kußmaul overlooked the identities of the individuals during archiving or intentionally anonymised them to present an unequivocal representation of ethnological fieldwork remains unanswered.

The content of the slide "E II D 1669 a", ostensibly unequivocal as per the image description in the card catalogue, unveils its inherent ambiguity or polysemy only upon closer scrutiny. Such properties pertain to most

images in the E II D collection. Nevertheless, they should not be regarded as an epistemic limitation; instead, they offer a potential for future research. Actively seeking ambiguity and adding “new layers of interpretation” to the photo archive provides an opportunity to unveil the “hidden histories of exploration” (Driver 2015: 14, 16). By incorporating these obscured historical narratives into the historiography of expeditions, a broader and more nuanced understanding can emerge, challenging conventional Eurocentric perspectives.

If, as suggested by Felix Driver and Lowri Jones, ‘we’ scholars should “make room in our histories for the local partners, guides, porters, fixers, interpreters, traders, and officials who made journeys of exploration possible” (Driver and Jones 2009: 5–6), this can be achieved by creating space for ambiguity, polyphony, and uncertainties within the photo archive. The necessary precondition is to part with the idea that photography generates authentic, genuine, or unambiguous representations.

## 5.5 Exhibiting the Hindukush

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the outcomes of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition were showcased in multiple exhibitions. These ethnographic exhibitions not only presented the collected artefacts but also featured audio recordings, films, and numerous photographs produced during the expedition. Moreover, two exhibitions held in Stuttgart and Zurich during the early 1970s introduced a *Multivision* – a slide presentation comprising around 200 slides from the E II D collection, projected onto a screen, and accompanied by an audio commentary (StAL 11; StAL 12). Curator Friedrich Kußmaul, a key contributor to the exhibition preparations, placed significant emphasis on the simultaneous use of diverse media. Specifically, he claimed that the multi-image slide presentation provided

visitors with the opportunity

[...] to directly acquaint themselves with the people of the Hindukush, their environment, daily lives, and activities. In this way, exhibition visitors are given the opportunity to see the displayed artefacts, which have been removed from their cultural context, in their original setting. Consequently, exhibition visitors can immerse themselves in the culture as a whole. (Kußmaul 1972: 9)

The displayed photographs included portraits and landscapes. However, the majority illustrated the practical use of the collected and exhibited artefacts. These ethnographic photographs played a crucial role in the exhibitions by conveying the significance of the artefacts from rural Afghanistan to urban audiences in Germany and Switzerland. In the following, the role of expedition photographs in shaping ethnological perceptions and geographical imaginations within exhibitions will be outlined in more detail.

### **5.5.1 Badakhshan on display**

In the decade following the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, the expedition photographs were shared with the public through various means. One was slide lectures. Friedrich Kußmaul delivered these lectures not only in Stuttgart but also in other cities across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (Rhotert 1964: 9).

In late June 1965, Friedrich Kußmaul received an invitation to speak at the University of Bonn in the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. This lecture, titled *Between Pamir and Hindukush*, was also attended by Hamed Mahmoud, the First Secretary of the Royal Afghan Embassy. Following the event, Hamed Mahmoud expressed his “highest appreciation [...] for the style of the lecture, as well as the quantity and quality of the slides shown” (StAL 18). In his letter addressed to the Linden Museum, the First Secretary elaborated:

I first travelled to Badakhshan 20 years ago when I was a young man. At that time, the landscape left a profound impression on me. Experiencing it again through your lecture and pictures, after all these years and being so far from my homeland, was truly moving. (StAL 18)

On behalf of the Afghan Embassy, First Secretary Hamed Mahmoud conveyed interest in purchasing or borrowing certain slides. He expressed, “We would be very pleased if we could reach a broader audience of Afghans residing here in Bonn by presenting your slides” (StAL 18). However, Friedrich Kußmaul declined to release slides from the museum holdings, explaining that “many are only available to us once” (StAL 19).<sup>13</sup>

Representatives from Afghanistan sought to examine the outcomes of the Badakhshan expedition not only in Bonn but also in Stuttgart. In 1964, a 40-member delegation from the Afghan diplomatic mission visited the first exhibition showcasing the findings of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition (StAL 20). The exhibition, titled *Afghanistan: Sammlungen unserer Expedition 1962/63* (Afghanistan: Collections from our expedition 1962/63), held in the atrium of the Linden Museum, presented visitors with not only artefacts but also photographs collected in Badakhshan.

One of the few documents that still provides insight into this exhibition is a short film broadcasted on television during the *Abendschau* (Evening Show) on 5 May 1965.<sup>14</sup> The three-minute film offers an impression of how both artefacts and photographs were exhibited together. One section of the exhibition was dedicated to agricultural practices in Badakhshan. On display were several hoes, a yoke for harnessing two oxen, and a large wooden plough. Behind each exhibited object, photographs were displayed, illustrating how the artefact was used.

In the exhibition, the photographs served two primary functions. One was to render the museum objects on display recognisable as cultural artefacts. The exhibition curators in Stuttgart could not assume that visitors to the Linden Museum were familiar with the agricultural tools used in Badakhshan. Therefore, a visitor from Stuttgart attending the

exhibition might not have been able to identify the wooden objects presented as agricultural implements. Nevertheless, the curators could reasonably expect that all museum visitors possessed the ability to interpret photographs. The photographs, therefore, had an explanatory function: by looking at a photograph which featured a man ploughing a field, the large wooden object on display became recognisable as a plough.

The second function attributed to the photographs in the exhibition was to authenticate the museum objects on display as artefacts from another place and culture. While the plough on exhibit was no longer in the possession of an Afghan peasant but had become the property of the Linden Museum, and although it was no longer used as a plough but rather as an exhibit, the photograph of the plough in use made it clear to the observer that it was originally not a museum piece but an agricultural implement.

In this manner, photographs in ethnographic exhibitions widen “the boundaries of objects by including more of what was left behind” (Edwards 2001: 186). In other words, by showing an object in its ‘original environment’, photographs counterbalance the unfamiliarity of artefacts in an ethnographic exhibition. The photographs enable viewers to understand not only the nature of the object on display but also the fact that it has been brought from another place. Photographs function as a visual guide that leads the observer beyond the confines of the museum space towards an unfamiliar space, for example *Afghanistan*, thereby evoking a certain imagination of it.

Thus photographs become privileged sites for communicating a feeling of cultural immersion, a sort of substitute for the personal experience of fieldwork, presenting authoritatively what could have been seen. (Edwards 2011: 161–162)

The idea to present artefacts produced by non-Europeans together with photographs by European authors was not at all new in 1964. In museum contexts, photographs have always been “made to be seen” (Banks and Ruby 2011). No sooner had photography been invented than

it had inspired the idea of a “Musée photographique des races humaines” (Serres 1845: 243). The idea of a ‘photographic museum of human races’ originated in Paris in 1845 but was soon taken up by German-speaking anthropologists (Theye 1998: 58). The *Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (Society for anthropology, ethnology, and prehistory) in Berlin – its founder was Adolf Bastian – commissioned photographer Carl Dammann from Hamburg to produce a photo album with representatives of the most important ‘ethnic groups’ from all continents. To find suitable photographs, Carl Dammann collected pictures from various sources, including, of course, expeditions (Kümin 2007: 50–51). Eventually he compiled 642 pictures on fifty panels.

When the *Anthropologisch-Ethnologische Album in Photographien* was published in the early 1870s, it provoked different reactions. British anthropologist Edward Tylor (1876: 184) described the album as “one of the most important contributions ever made to the science of man.” Other scholars however found the album less convincing. Critics particularly took offence to the lack of “distinction between anthropological and ethnological representations” (Bastian 1872: 392).

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, anthropologists and ethnologists widely disagreed about the ideal content and composition of photographs. Many scholars, particularly those focused on physical anthropology, favoured posed photographs, believing that only such images could provide objective insights. On the other hand, scholars less concerned with physical features and more interested in the culture of ‘foreign peoples’ criticised posed photographs as a form of ‘staging’ and ‘alienation’. Among the harshest critics of posed photography was the British scientist and explorer, Everard im Thurn. In 1893, he published an article on the “Anthropological uses of the camera”, in which he stated:

Just as the purely physiological photographs of the anthropometrists are merely pictures of lifeless bodies, so the ordinary photographs of uncharacteristically miserable natives [...] seem comparable to the photographs which one

occasionally sees of badly stuffed and distorted birds and animals. (im Thurn 1893: 186)

Everard im Thurn argued for a photographic representation of people as “living primitive folk” (im Thurn 1893: 185). For him, this meant not photographing people after making them pose, but depicting them in their “natural state” and their “natural surroundings” (ibid.: 186). Im Thurn, however, admitted that it was extremely difficult to photograph ‘primitive folk’ in their natural state “even in these days [of 1893, MH], when so many travellers carry cameras” (ibid.). The problem, according to Everard im Thurn, was that the ‘primitive’ did not show their true nature in the encounter with the ‘white man’:

During my many years acquaintance with these Caribs, both in their native wilds and during their brief visits to the town, I have often been struck by the marvellous difference in their appearance when seen under these two differing conditions. It is true that in his natural surroundings the Carib is but very lightly clad, whereas, on the rare occasions when he enters the town he sometimes, but by no means always, puts on a fragmentary and incongruous piece or two of the cast-off clothing of white men, intending, by no means successfully, to adorn his person. (im Thurn 1893: 186)

Im Thurn concluded that it was “practically impossible” for a photographer to capture the “natural state” of the Caribs unless they were photographed “without their knowledge” (ibid.: 190).

Photographs that were produced to showcase individuals in their ‘natural surroundings’ and as representatives of a specific ethnic group can be referred to as ‘ethnographic photographs’ (see e.g., Norström 1993; Pinney 2011: 139). To this day, this type of photograph is a common way of representation in social-cultural anthropology and human geography. By contrast, posed photographs, especially anthropometric photographs, such as those produced by Hermann Schlenker during the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, have fallen into disrepute. They are widely considered as a racist, humiliating, and inhumane way of portraying human beings.





◀ Figure 5.25

Seventy years after Everard im Thurn, Friedrich Kußmaul also emphasised the contrast between 'native' and 'European' clothing. The image description provided by the card catalogue reads: "Old rich farmer from Iskatul with a captured eagle owl. He is wearing an imported European jacket in addition to his normal Afghan cotton robe [...]." However, the fabric of the jacket raises doubt about its European origin; it might have been made in Pakistan.

Source: Friedrich Kußmaul (n.d.): *E II D 1979 a* [35mm slide]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: E II D Collection. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

Ethnographic photographs distinguish themselves from anthropometric photographs and anthropological portraits in several aspects, starting with the composition of the images. Anthropometric photographs and anthropological portraits, frequently close-ups, reduce a person to his or her physiognomy. Anthropometric photographs are made to reveal only the body or specific body parts of the individuals being photographed. In contrast, ethnographic photographs capture a broader scene. They are wide shots and even if the individuals depicted are at the centre of the picture, the frame includes much more than just them. Ethnographic images are meant to show people in ‘their very own environment’ – Friedrich Kußmaul would have called it *Lebensraum*.

As Everard in Thurn had proposed, the hallmark of ethnographic photographs is their semblance of naturalness and authenticity. Hence, the photographer strives to stay unnoticed, or at least give the impression of being unnoticed, by those being photographed while capturing the images. Consequently, ethnographic photographs, including those in the E II D collection, frequently resemble amateur shots or snapshots.

Ethnographic photography was not expected to adhere to any artistic or aesthetic standards, as the primary criterion was “anthropological naturalism” (Edwards 2011: 160). This was often achieved by deliberately omitting the dimension of aesthetic appeal. Ethnographic photographs are meant to convey immediacy and suggest to the viewers: “This is what you would see had you been there with me – observing” (Clifford 1988: 22).

However, researchers and photographers on expeditions were not only observers. They, too, became subjects of observation. In expedition areas, those taking photographs were monitored, regulated, and sometimes restricted from capturing certain activities. While participants in the German expeditions to the Hindukush-Karakoram occasionally took photographs covertly, clandestine images constitute only a small portion of their collections. One of the reasons was that such attempts usually yielded unsatisfactory results. These photographs tended to be blurred or incorrectly exposed.

Since it was hardly possible to photograph the people being researched ‘without their knowledge’, anthropologists found other ways to make their pictures look natural and authentic. The ethnographic paradigm of naturalness often led field researchers and expedition photographers to orchestrate situations of anthropological interest, with those being photographed asked to re-enact certain activities. In the Hindukush-Karakoram, for instance, it was customary for anthropologists to pay the *dayal* or *bitan* for his shamanistic sessions in front of the camera (Jettmar 2018: 304). How hard it was to achieve ‘natural results’ is exemplified by Hermann Schlenker’s attempt to record pottery works in the village of Kulala. It took him two months of patience and considerable negotiating skills to film women making pottery in what appeared to be an everyday setting.

Today, when examining ethnographic photographs and films, it is crucial to understand that many anthropologists were active participants in the scenes they documented, often orchestrating them themselves. One of the most famous examples of this practice is found in the work of Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead. In their scientific photo-essay, *Balinese character: A photographic analysis*, they candidly addressed this aspect:

In great many instances, we created the *context* in which the notes and photographs were taken, e.g., by paying for the dance or asking the mother to delay bathing of her child until the sun was high. (Bateson and Mead 1942: 50, emphasis in original)

Probably Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson were so frank about their own intervention in the photographic process, because they did not see it as such. In their essay, they emphasised that their approach was

[...] very different from making people pose for photographs. Payment for theatrical performances is the economic base upon which the Balinese theater survives, and the extra emphasis given to the baby served to diminish the mother’s awareness that she was to be photographed. (Bateson and Mead 1942: 50)

Strictly speaking, it is true that neither the photographs of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson nor those of Hermann Schlenker show people in an artificial pose. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that their photographs were often recordings of staged events. The staging was executed in a manner that those who would see the photographs would not notice how much effort had been necessary, how long the photographer had negotiated, how much money had been paid, and how many kilometres she or he had travelled. The staging precisely consists in the fact that it disguises the encounter between the photographer and those photographed, hiding the fact that the ‘culture’ depicted was not as untouched, pristine, and uninfluenced by ‘white men and women’ as the viewer of the photograph was made to believe.

### **5.5.2 ‘Mountain peoples’ in the exhibition catalogue**

The first exhibition organised by the Linden Museum in 1964 was followed by conceptually expanded and larger exhibitions in Heidelberg (1965–1966), Stuttgart (1972), Zurich (1973), and Berlin (1973). In Stuttgart and Zurich, artefacts and photographs from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition were presented alongside objects and photographs from the 1955/56 German Hindukush expedition. Bringing them together was the result of many years of cooperation between the Linden Museum and ethnologist Karl Jettmar. Along with Peter Snoy, Karl Jettmar had participated in the German Hindukush expedition led by Adolf Friedrich and later became a close advisor to the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition team. The extended exhibition concept placed the artefacts and photographs collected by the Badakhshan expedition team in a new context.

The exhibitions in the *Forum für Kulturaustausch* (Forum for cultural exchange) in Stuttgart and in the Ethnological Museum of the University of Zurich were titled *Bergvölker im Hindukusch* (Mountain peoples in the

Hindukush). Thus, the concept of these exhibitions broke away from Friedrich Kußmaul's original idea of presenting Badakhshan as an independent and individual geographical unit. Instead, the museum objects and expedition photographs were now supposed to represent the entire Hindukush and the various 'mountain peoples' living there.

A thorough examination of the catalogue published in 1972 on the occasion of the two exhibitions in Stuttgart and Zurich reveals the impact of this concept on the information provided by the expedition photographs. The exhibition catalogue is intriguing not least because the editor, Hermann Pollig, and the authors Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy, did not adhere to the usual conventions (Krämer 2013: 115). Unlike typical exhibition catalogues of that time, which contained museum-made photographs of the exhibits, this catalogue contains photographs taken by the German Hindukush expedition and the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, accompanied by short explanations. With the exception of some landscape photographs and anthropological portraits, the catalogue mainly features ethnographic photographs.

Altogether, great care had been taken to avoid showing the activities of the expedition teams. Barely more than two photographs discreetly testify to the German presence in the Hindukush (see Pollig 1972: 35, 77). In the catalogue, the descriptions of the photographs are brief and general in nature, often lacking crucial information. The publication includes black and white photographs captured by Adolf Friedrich, Friedrich Kußmaul, Hermann Schlenker, and Peter Snoy. While their names are briefly mentioned at the beginning of the catalogue, the photographs are not attributed to their respective authors. They are presented as if they could stand on their own as objective sources, free from human intervention.

The subjects of the photographs were even more consequently anonymised than the photographers. The Afghan informants, intermediaries, and hosts, whose pictures are featured in the catalogue, have not been acknowledged as contributors to the expeditions. None of them has been mentioned by name or honorary title, thus relegating them

Figure 5.26 ►

This picture taken by Hermann Schlenker was included in the 1972 exhibition catalogue (see Pollig 1972: 73). The accompanying image description emphasises the displayed bullet-shooting bow and its use for bird hunting. However, the image description does not mention the man wielding the bow, Ghulam Shah from the village of Shahran.

In 1963, Ghulam Shah, an informant and close advisor to the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, had crafted the bow specifically for the German ethnologists' collection. He also agreed to be photographed and filmed by Hermann Schlenker during the process.

Source: Hermann Schlenker (1963): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Private collection of Hermann Schlenker. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.



to the status of 'native extras' in a representation of the Hindukush curated for the gaze of German and Swiss viewers. Furthermore, it is notable that the picture descriptions do not contain any time references, placing the people on display in a seemingly timeless, ahistorical world. The sense of timelessness is accentuated by the use of the present tense in the accompanying text, concealing the fact that the catalogue was published when the photographs from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition were already a decade old, and those from the German Hindukush expedition almost two decades.

The absence of time references and the anonymisation of the photographed individuals aligns with what Johannes Fabian terms the "denial of coevalness" or the "*allochronism* of anthropology" (Fabian 1983: 32, emphasis in original). In a similar vein, Bernhard Gissibl (2019: 16) has coined the phrase "invention of anachronistic space" to describe this anthropological and ethnographic practice.

The individuals captured in the expedition photographs and the readers of the exhibition catalogue, although in fact each other's contemporaries, seem to live in different epochs or stages of development. The impression of 'allochrony' is reinforced by the systematic concealment of the presence of the photographers and their collaborators. The exhibition catalogue portrays the so-called 'mountain peoples' of the Hindukush as inhabiting an "'authentic' pre-contact past" (Nordström 1993: 211). This past, as articulated by Alison Devine Nordström,

[...] has little to do with the present of the dominant, picture-making culture, culturally shared technological change, or current political and economic realities. (Nordström 1993: 211)

The exhibition catalogue predominantly features ethnographic photographs, showing scenes in the style of anthropological naturalism. The composition of these photographs, however, does not appear to be the outcome of a particularly discreet recording process in the field, as advocated by im Thurn in 1893. Instead, it resulted from a meticulous selection of images in the photo archive, as illustrated by the following example.

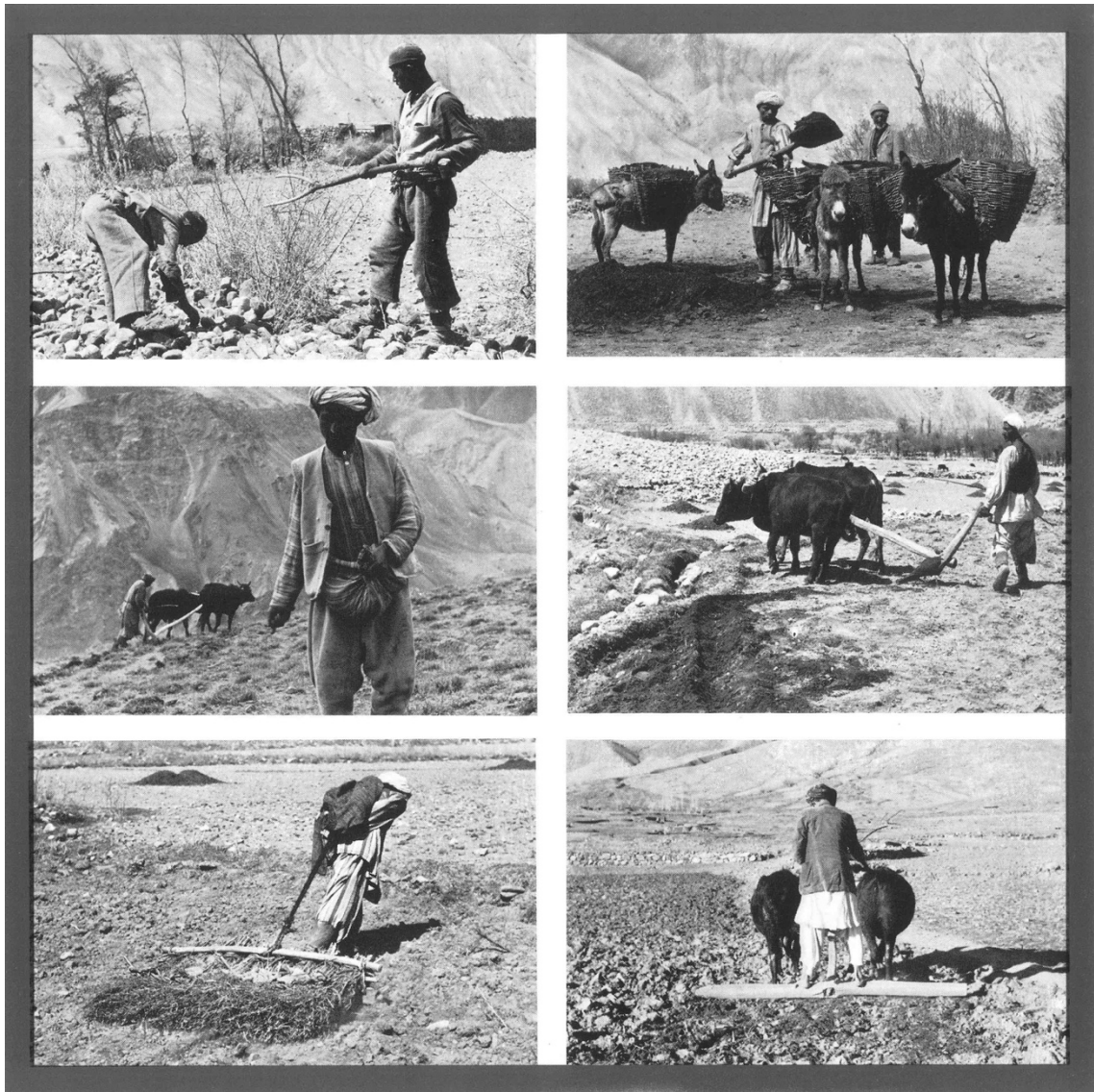


Figure 5.27 ▲

In the 1972 exhibition catalogue, these six pictures were compiled to provide an overview of various agricultural practices in the northeastern Hindukush.

Source: Hermann Schlenker and Peter Snoy (1962/63).  
Reproduced from Pollig 1972: 39.



A six-part series of photographs in the exhibition catalogue shows men in the “northeastern Hindukush” working in the fields (Pollig 1972: 39). The final picture in the series shows a man harrowing a field with the aid of an “implement pulled by oxen and weighed down by the weight of the driver” (ibid: 38). In the catalogue image, the man standing on the harrow has his back to the viewer, with his head tilted forward and his gaze focused on the field in front of him (Figure 5.27).

The original photograph, which was used as the basis for the sixth image in the catalogue series, is still present in the photographic collections of the Linden Museum today. The examination of the negative strip reveals that the photographer, either Peter Snoy or Hermann Schlenker, captured the harrowing man not once, but twice. The second picture, taken immediately after the first but not included in the catalogue, shows the man facing the photographer after turning around. In this image, he grasps the tail of the right ox, presenting a relaxed demeanour as he smiles directly into the camera, evoking a resemblance to a windsurfer on a boom (Figure 5.28). The negative provides evidence that the photographed man was aware of the camera and responded with a ‘modern’ gesture – much like any European reader of the exhibition catalogue would, with the obligatory smile for the camera. Despite having the option to choose from an extensive pool of over 15,000 images portraying the encounter between the photographer and those photographed, the authors of the exhibition catalogue made a deliberate decision to exclude such images from the gaze of the public.

In the preface to the catalogue, Friedrich Kußmaul assures the readers that they can expect images of

[...] isolated mountain valleys, considered living museums where much has been preserved that has long since disappeared in other parts of the world. (Kußmaul 1972: 8)

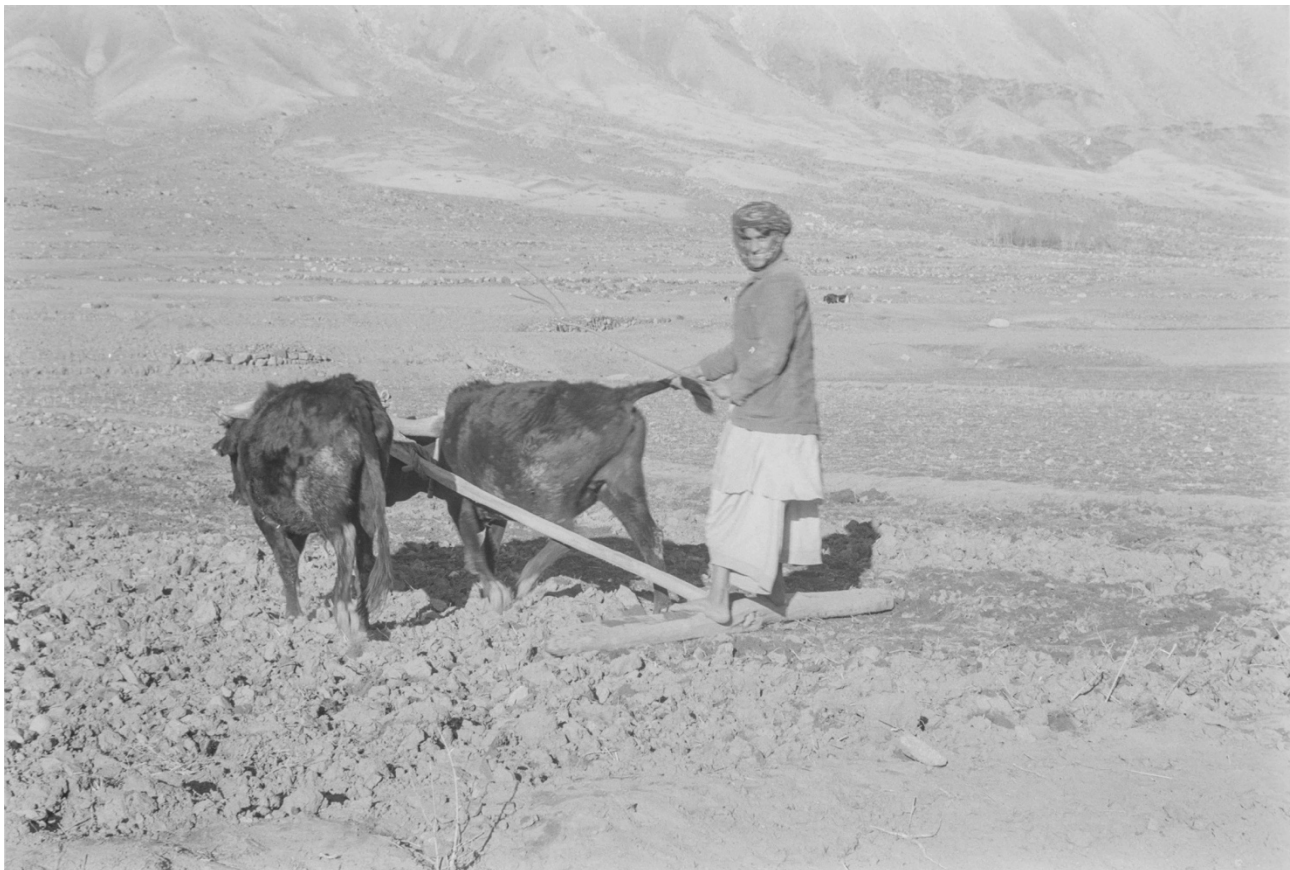
Photographs where individuals looked directly into the camera were deemed undesirable from an ethnological point of view, as this direct gaze conflicted with the concept of documenting the ‘native’ in their ‘natural

Figure 5.28 ▼

The picture captures a young man harrowing a field, taken by either Peter Snoy or Hermann Schlenker near the village of Jurm.

Source: Unidentified photographer (n.d.): *[No]* 230-24 [35mm negative]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of negatives (SBE). Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

condition'. If the gaze and gesture of the photographed towards the photographer had been exhibited too, they would have revealed the contemporaneity of the photographer and his subject and would have been regarded as an undeniable testament to their encounter in real life. When the gaze is returned it threatens and spoils the inherited self-conception of social and cultural anthropology, since it questions the authority and mission of the anthropologist who seeks to document the 'untouched' and to present and preserve it in its 'natural state'. In ethnographic photographs, the act of returning the gaze thus becomes a form of resistance, allowing the photographed to successfully resist being relegated into a 'pre-contact past'.





◀ Figure 5.29

Like ethnographic photography, anthropological portraiture was supposed to avoid disclosing any connection between the photographer and the subjects. Consequently, expressions like smiling or laughing were generally discouraged. However, the contact prints at the Linden Museum include portraits that present the residents of Badakhshan in a more personal light, capturing them as distinct individuals.

Source: Hermann Schlenker (n.d.): [sheet No] 529 [contact prints, cropped]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Unindexed collection of contact prints. Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.

### **5.5.3 Ethnographic expedition photography: Echoes and repercussions**

In contemporary social and cultural anthropology, anthropometric photographs and anthropological portraits are considered highly problematic. These pictures are recognised as manifestations and evidence of the violence inherent in European colonial and imperial agendas. Over the last 30 years, numerous publications on the history of anthropology have thus critically examined anthropometric photography. In contrast, there has been little critical engagement with ethnographic photography. Yet, photographs in the style of ‘anthropological naturalism’ have also been deeply politicised.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scientific institutions and museums have used ethnographic photographs to propagate a geographical imagination of non-European ‘peoples’ living in “spaces [...] on the edge of history” (Kußmaul 1965: 20). Ethnographic photographs were collected, published, and exhibited to produce and reinforce a Eurocentric worldview that framed non-European ‘peoples’ or ‘cultures’ as existing in remote, timeless regions, – “living museums” (Kußmaul 1972: 8) – separate from the historical progress associated with ‘civilised’ or ‘industrialised’ societies. Ethnographic pictures depicted these spaces as static and unchanging, reinforcing colonial narratives that portrayed them as primitive or less developed. The portrayal of large parts of the world as “anachronistic space” (Gissibl 2019: 16) produced and reproduced an evolutionarily justified hierarchy, placing Europe and North America in a perceived superior, more advanced position compared to the rest of the world.

This evolutionist imagination was undoubtedly cultivated in Europe, but it rapidly spread around the world through colonial, nationalist, scientific, developmental and touristic discourses. By the 1960s, it had also permeated the thinking of influential economic and political leaders in Afghanistan. This is, among others, illustrated by an anecdote recorded in

one of Friedrich Kußmaul's expedition diaries. During the Badakhshan expedition, Friedrich Kußmaul and Peter Snoy spent November to December 1962 in Kunduz. There they visited the Spinzar Cotton Company, then one of Afghanistan's most profitable factories. The German ethnologists were invited by Gholam Serwar Nashir, the company's president and a prominent businessman and politician, to visit his personal library and museum. Afterwards Friedrich Kußmaul documented his impressions succinctly:

The museum is a spacious room containing [Gholam Serwar Nashir's, MH] private library and his collection of archaeological and ethnological artefacts. Surprisingly, fifty percent of the library consists of European literature, [...] even though the man does not speak a single European language [...] We communicate through an interpreter [...]. The factory owner is familiar with Badakhshan and has suggested to the government the idea of preserving this province as a 'museum' [...] while developing hotels and other businesses to promote tourism. (Kußmaul Diary I: 65)

Friedrich Kußmaul's personal memories provide evidence of how, by the 1960s, the concept of 'living museums' had expanded beyond European exhibition halls and transformed into a development strategy. Political and economic isolation had turned several high mountain regions of Asia, including Badakhshan, into marginalised areas (Holzwarth 1990: 226–228). In the Hindukush-Karakoram regions, the scarcity of wage labour led many men to seek employment as migrant labourers in the cities of Afghanistan or Pakistan. For others, employment opportunities provided by foreign expedition travellers, scientists and mountaineers, were rare yet significant. Tourism appeared to offer additional and more frequent income opportunities.

Indeed, in the 1970s, several regions of the Hindukush would become increasingly popular as tourist destinations. Although travel regulations in the Afghan-Pakistani borderland remained restrictive, the expansion of road infrastructure expedited the development of tourism in selected

areas. Tourists journeyed to the Hindukush from both the Afghan and Pakistani sides, often retracing the routes taken by expedition teams in the 1950s and 1960s. Strikingly, in the mountainous regions, the interest of European tourists paralleled that of European explorers; they, too, aspired to marvel at 'living museums'.

In 1975, ethnologist and expedition traveller Karl Jettmar elucidated this phenomenon, providing detailed insights into the situation in the Pakistani district of Chitral, located not far from the Afghan border:

The impact of tourism on the Kalasha community in Chitral should not be overlooked. The Kalasha people are widely regarded as the primary attraction in the region, drawing visitors from the lowlands [of Pakistan] who seek to appreciate the culture and capture many photographs. Regrettably, due to the praise bestowed upon Kalasha women by a creative Persian author, there exists a considerable anticipation regarding their beauty. Europeans, on the other hand, are driven by a distinct curiosity [...] They aim to discover a well-preserved fragment of antiquity in Chitral – a kind of Arcadia where both people and gods remain unaffected by the passage of time. (Jettmar 1975: 327)

However, historical events hindered the long-term development of tourism in the Afghan Hindukush. In April 1978, a communist-led coup d'état unfolded in Afghanistan, sparking a widespread uprising. The situation intensified in December 1979 when the Soviet Union intervened militarily and established a new, pro-Soviet government. Since then, the country has been ensnared in persistent conflict and warfare. Following the Soviet invasion, West German companies, institutions, and individuals withdrew from Afghanistan, leading to the termination of scientific and economic cooperation.

Only a few scholars from Western Europe continued their studies in Afghanistan. Among them were Swiss ethnologists Edwin Huwyler and Iren von Moos. Between 1974 and 1984, Iren von Moos travelled several times to the Munjan Valley (Tanner 1996: 9), where Peter Snoy had conducted research ten years earlier during the Badakhshan expedition.



▲ Figure 5.30

In the 1960s, both domestic and international tourism had taken root in Afghanistan. On August 8, 1962, the members of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, accompanied by German diplomats, left Kabul on a trip to visit the ancient Buddha statues of Bamyan, the Shahr-e Zuhak (Red City), and the deep blue lakes in Band-e-Amir. Amidst these landscapes, it was the residents of rural Bamyan who caught the interest of the foreign visitors. In this particular image, captured by Peter Snoy, Hermann Schlenker and the wives of two German diplomats are seen photographing a peasant during the harvest.

Source: Peter Snoy (1962): [No] 70-53 [35mm negative]. Linden Museum, Stuttgart: Collection of negatives (SBE). Reproduced by kind permission of the Linden Museum.



Figure 5.31 ▲

In the 1960s, development discourses were characterised by the dichotomy of 'tradition' and 'modernity,' a theme that Hermann Schlenker repeatedly took up in his photographs. This picture was captured in the summer of 1962 not far from Kabul.

Source: Hermann Schlenker (1962): unnumbered photograph [35mm negative]. Private collection of Hermann Schlenker. Reproduced by kind permission of the photographer.



However, Iren von Moos not only diverged from the expeditionary approach but also pursued research topics distinct from those of her male predecessors. She focused on gender roles, particularly women's areas of life, and from 1979 onward she began investigating the impact of the war on the local population in Badakhshan. In fact, Iren von Moos' research was acknowledged by former expedition travellers. Peter Snoy, for instance, wrote the epilogue for her book *Die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse im Munjan-Tal und der Opiumgebrauch der Bevölkerung* ("The economic conditions in the Munjan Valley and the opium use among the population", von Moos 1980).

Yet, the change in political climate impacted the work and research directions of most West German scientists and anthropologists who studied Afghanistan. The violent conflict made fieldwork unfeasible, leading some researchers to shift their focus to the Pakistani regions of High Asia. Others, such as Wolfgang Holzwarth, pursued alternative approaches by shifting their empirical research projects towards historical studies (Holzwarth 1990: 7; see e.g., Holzwarth 1980). As a result of the Soviet invasion, in the 1980s, many West Germans began to view Afghanistan from a more distant perspective, both geographically and conceptually.

This process, broadly outlined here at the macro level, is also evident at the micro level. At the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, there was a notable shift in how Afghanistan and, specifically, the legacy of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition were approached. This transformation was not least visible in the treatment of the expedition's photographs. The changed circumstances in the Afghan Hindukush reduced the contemporary relevance of these photographs. As they were no longer featured in exhibitions or slide presentations, they gradually faded into obscurity.

Indeed, the fate of the E II D collection after the late 1970s remains uncertain. Friedrich Kußmaul retired in 1986. Further personnel changes at the Linden Museum likely resulted in a loss of institutional memory concerning the photographs. Moreover, the slides and the card catalogue

were stored in separate rooms, which made identifying the items even more difficult. Despite its physical presence, the E II D collection remained undocumented in the museum's finding aids: it had become an unknown entity within the Linden Museum.

It was not until several decades later that the E II D collection was rediscovered, or more precisely, recognised, in what can be described as a 'fortunate coincidence'. This event unfolded when former expedition participant Peter Snoy visited the Linden Museum in 2009. Guided through the Oriental Department's exhibition by curator Annette Krämer, Peter Snoy unexpectedly recognised some of his own expedition photographs that had become part of the permanent exhibition, likely in the late 1970s. Later, with Peter Snoy's assistance, the slides of the E II D collection could also be re-identified as photographs from the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. Drawing on his personal recollections, Peter Snoy supported Annette Krämer in reactivating the slide collection. The card catalogue was rediscovered and identified as matching the E II D slide collection. Following Peter Snoy's death in 2012, additional field notes, diaries, and photographs from his personal estate were integrated into the Linden Museum's holdings (Krämer 2013: 101).

Against this background, 2009 is a milestone in the history of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition photographs. It marks the beginning of their historical reappraisal and the establishment and expansion of a comprehensive expedition archive. Since then, the E II D collection has received renewed attention, albeit of a different kind than in the 1960s and 1970s. These photographs no longer serve as 'authentic' documentation of contemporary life in Badakhshan. Today, they provide an opportunity for the museum and anthropologists to investigate and reconsider their historical connections to the Hindukush regions of Afghanistan. This endeavour involves not only preserving the photographic collection but also reassessing the Federal Republic of Germany's involvement in the Hindukush and its role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Endnotes of pages 275–378

<sup>1</sup> The origins of the Linden Museum, currently one of Europe's largest ethnological museums, date back to 1882 when the *Württembergischer Verein für Handelsgeographie und Förderung deutscher Interessen im Ausland* (Württemberg Association for Commercial Geography and the Promotion of German Interests Abroad) was established in Stuttgart. Two years later, the association founded a museum for the collection of goods and artefacts from colonial territories. After the turn of the century, the museum experienced significant growth, acquired its own building, and was officially inaugurated and named the 'Linden Museum' in 1911. Despite remaining privately owned for the subsequent six decades, in 1953 the city of Stuttgart agreed to cover the museum's expenses. Eventually, in 1973, the state of Baden-Württemberg formally assumed sponsorship of the museum. Since then, the Linden Museum has operated as a state museum.

<sup>2</sup> In the German context, the controversial history of the discipline is reflected in a decades-long debate about a suitable name. After the Second World War, *Völkerkunde* was gradually replaced by *Ethnologie*. German ethnologists saw their object of study as individual ethnic groups and their respective cultures. Since the 1990s, the term *Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie* (social and cultural anthropology), borrowed from English, has gained prominence in German universities. This shift in terminology indicates a departure from a focus on ethnicities. Instead, social and cultural anthropology aims to investigate the diversity of people and cultures in their global interrelations. In October 2017, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde* renamed itself the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie*. I use the term 'ethnology' (German *Völkerkunde* or *Ethnologie*) to refer to the self-designation of West German researchers or institutions. 'Anthropology', however, encompasses the entire discipline and its various historical and current forms. When writing about 'physical anthropology', I am referring to a branch of anthropology that primarily focuses on the study of biological aspects of humans. When I mention 'racial anthropology' (German *Rassenkunde*), I am referring to a biological and political notion of anthropology that became prominent, especially in the contexts of German colonialism and National Socialism.

<sup>3</sup> For a deeper understanding of the symbolism associated with horses and water in ancient Greek mythology, refer to Baum 1991: 67.

<sup>4</sup> While most male scientists declined the offer, several women showed interest in the expedition. This is evidenced by preserved letters to the Linden Museum. For instance, in 1960, journalist and photographer Lore Hundsdofer wrote to museum director Hans Rhotert: "I am eager to join your expedition as solo travel to Central Asia seems unlikely for me [...] The region has always fascinated me [...] I am in excellent health and active in sports, especially skiing, canoeing, and camping, and I assure you I will not be a burden but am always ready to contribute to a good cause" (StAL 08). Despite several expressions of interest, no women joined the team.

<sup>5</sup> Even Hermann Schlenker did not receive a salary. The Linden Museum covered his travel expenses. Additionally, he was granted commercial rights to his own

photographs and film footage (Hermann Schlenker, personal conversation, 18/02/2018).

<sup>6</sup> In his final report on the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition collection (StAL 05: 15), Friedrich Kußmaul notes that one Afghani was valued at 0.075 German marks. This figure likely represents an average, as a more thorough examination of the account exposes notable fluctuations in the exchange rate.

<sup>7</sup> In the same letter, Hans Rhotert reminds Friedrich Kußmaul that the German Research Foundation had allocated 35,000 German marks for the acquisition of collectibles.

<sup>8</sup> For a more comprehensive account and critical reflection on the history of collecting in the (German) ethnological museum, refer to Penny 2021 and Savoy 2022.

<sup>9</sup> The term *Lebensraum* holds various meanings. In the context of Friedrich Kußmaul's letter, it can be translated as environment, surroundings, or habitat. Simultaneously, the term carries a political aspect, notably influenced by the National Socialists' blood-and-soil ideology. In this interpretation, *Lebensraum* underscores the unity of a racially-defined people with their settlement area. Such an interpretation is also plausible in this context. As Friedrich Kußmaul did not elaborate further on the concept of *Lebensraum*, I have opted to retain the German original.

<sup>10</sup> In the context of Badakhshan, *arbab* and *al-aqdar* are terms denoting political offices with varying degrees of influence. *Arbab* can be understood as a 'village leader' or 'village representative', while *al-aqdar* can be translated as the 'head of the district authority'. For an account of the historical development of these two offices, refer to Kußmaul 1965: 82.

<sup>11</sup> In recent decades, the notion of the 'archive' has been embraced by diverse disciplines and applied across numerous fields (Schwartz and Cook 2002: 2). This trend has frequently resulted in intriguing and novel scientific perspectives. However, it has also blurred the distinction between the concept of archiving and other practices of collecting and preserving. For a more 'traditional' yet distinctly clear differentiation between museum and archival practices, see Reimann (2004).

<sup>12</sup> The designation of the collection 'E II D' raises questions: E could be the abbreviation for *Expedition*, and D could stand for *Diapositiv*. Does the numbering 'II' indicate that there was also an 'E I D' collection in the 1960s, which is now lost?

<sup>13</sup> Following the 1960s, Friedrich Kußmaul continued to respond with similar restraint to additional requests. However, this did not prevent gaps from appearing in the E II D collection. With an initial inventory of 1,400 slides assumed, there was a loss of approximately 270 slides. The exact knowledge of when these objects were lost remains uncertain – whether it happened under the supervision of Friedrich Kußmaul or at a later point in the 1980s.

<sup>14</sup> *Museum im Magazin*. Television report on the Linden Museum in the SWR Abendschau, 3 minutes, dated 15/05/1965. Retrieved from <https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/swr-retro-abendschau/museum-im-magazin/swr/Y3JpZDovL3N3ci5kZS9hZXgvdzExNjEwNTY> on 28/11/2023 (accessed December 15, 2023).

## 6 Conclusions

By the late 1960s, the era of “major German expeditions conducting high mountain research” (Uhlig und Haffner 1984: 19) was gradually coming to an end. Since the 1970s, most undertakings labelled as ‘high mountain expedition’ have been privately organised and commercially oriented. These expeditions are tailored for individual travellers, who cover their own expenses. Most anthropologists and geographers have turned away from the expeditionary approach to high mountain research in the Hindukush-Karakoram. Since the 1980s, there has been a noticeable shift in methodology, with a preference for stationary field research conducted by individual scholars (see e.g., Tahir Ali 1983; Kreutzmann 1989; Butz 1993). In the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new methods and technologies such as digital photography and spaceborne remote sensing have superseded expeditions as visualisation projects. Many decades after the last analogue photographs were taken by scientific expedition teams, it is now time to assess the value of these images as anthropological, geographical, and historical sources.

I have examined several collections of expedition photographs in three case studies. These collections were compiled from photographs taken by members of the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition, the 1959 German Karakoram expedition, and the 1962/63 Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition. The examined photographic material has shown a remarkable diversity. It includes glass plates, flat and roll films, as well as reversal and negative films. Moreover, the photo collections cover a wide range of different topics, including anthropological, ethnological, geographical, geological, glaciological, and topographical aspects.

Nevertheless, the comparative analysis has revealed that all photographs share common characteristics that allow them to be classified as 'expedition photographs'.

Expedition photographs have unique characteristics that distinguish them from other types of travel photographs. Therefore, it is of epistemic significance to acknowledge 'expedition photography' as a distinct genre. However, unlike many other genres of photography, such as sports or architectural photography, expedition photography is not defined by a specific image content. In this respect, expedition photography is more akin to the genres of studio or documentary photography. Whether a photograph can be categorised as an expedition photograph depends on the conditions under which it was produced, disseminated, and viewed. Thus, expedition photographs are defined by features that are not immediately visible in the images, namely the circumstances of their creation and use.

Since the early voyages of exploration, expedition teams were tasked with producing pictures. With the help of expedition images rulers, politicians, military personnel, and scholars in Europe gained visual access to other parts of the world. The mindset of exploration and colonialism and the emergence of mass media fuelled the scientific need as well as the popular desire for more and more of those images. That was achieved by the invention and development of photography. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the expedition emerged as a method to acquire comprehensive spatial knowledge through photography.

The extent to which 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century expeditions were tailored to the needs of photographers is remarkable. The organisational structure of these undertakings predetermined the financial and legal framework for both long-distance travel and photography. Large expedition caravans ensured the mobility of photographers and the transport of their equipment. The composition of expeditions was typically diverse, with members from both outside and within the regions under exploration. Local team members facilitated the access of foreign photographers to information and photographic subjects, including landscapes, people, and other relevant features.

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In her collection of essays *On Photography*, writer Susan Sontag (1977: 1) stated, “to collect photographs is to collect the world.” This is particularly true for expedition photographs. Their value increased with their accumulation. Only large collections of expedition photographs provided the aspired ‘comprehensive overview’ of the areas explored. Photographic technology has allowed scholars to ‘collect the world’ on an ever-larger scale.

Until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, photography in ‘remote’ areas was a privilege reserved for expeditions. Consequently, the very act of taking photographs during expeditions became a performance of the explorers’ technological, economic, and scientific superiority over those being photographed. The contents of expedition photographs often mirror this power imbalance. Through image composition, later manipulation and presentation, the photographed individuals were frequently reduced to ‘racial types’, ‘natives’, or nameless extras. Spaces under exploration were shown and labelled as ‘remote’, ‘wild’, ‘pristine’, uninhabited, and unclaimed. Thus, for many decades, expedition photographs served as tools to establish a connection between space, power, and knowledge.

Looking at expedition photographs meant being able to see ‘the world’ without travelling. It also facilitated the immediate comparison and classification of places and regions. In this sense, collecting expedition photographs was a way to see the world in a certain order. It produced, among other things, biased or hegemonic geographical imaginations; or as Joan Schwartz (1996: 31) put it, photographs “presented not just topography but ideology.”

To find out how expedition photographs have contributed historically to a specific, predominantly German scholarly understanding of different regions in the Hindukush-Karakoram, I have used the concepts of geographical imagination and imaginative geographies. Moreover, I have looked at the photographs of selected expeditions from a constructivist perspective. In this way three specific views on the Hindukush-Karakoram have been delineated. They emerged from three different positions in the

scientific and socio-political discourses of the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the German Reich, expeditions to the highest mountains in the world had gained both political and public significance. For about two decades following the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, expeditions continued to be of public interest. They were organised by associations such as the German Alpine Club and the German Himalaya Foundation. They were commissioned by museums and received financial support from public sources, including the German Research Foundation and several public universities. Expedition findings – data, text, photographs, and films – were tailored to the needs and interests of researchers, curators, and the larger public. Photographs were disseminated through books, newspapers, scientific articles, exhibitions, and exhibition catalogues. Photographic collections and slide presentations were specifically addressed to a German audience.

The examined photogrammetric and photographic images from the 1954 German-Austrian Himalaya-Karakoram expedition portray the Karakoram as a high mountain landscape. Framing the northwestern Karakoram in this way facilitated its comparative examination alongside landscapes of a similar type. In particular, the comparison with the Alps enabled German geographers and geoscientists to apply their knowledge and methods developed in the Alps to the exploration and understanding of the Karakoram. Moreover, it was their expertise as high mountain researchers acquired in the Alps that legitimised their scientific interest and presence in a region more than 7,000 kilometres away from Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The photographs taken by expedition mountaineer Gerhart Klamert in the northwestern Karakoram in 1954 and 1959 reflect changes in both German expeditions and West German society. In the aftermaths of the Second World War and the first ascent of Nanga Parbat in 1953, the politicised and martial image of German mountaineering in High Asia had lost its function. New narratives, that accentuated international travel and



individual experience, emerged. Accordingly, Gerhart Klamert's photographs drew on and contributed to a popular German imagination in the post-war era. They present the Karakoram as a retreat 'at world's end', and as a place for adventure and new experiences. The principality of Hunza, above all, was photographically depicted and constructed as a place onto which war-weary German viewers could project both their longing for peace and health and their wanderlust.

For their part, the ethnologists of the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition in 1962 were influenced by the concepts of *Länder- und Völkerkunde* (regional studies and ethnology). This influence is evident in the slide collection 'E II D' compiled by Friedrich Kußmaul for the Linden Museum. The E II D collection presents Badakhshan as an independent spatial unit, as *Land* and *Lebensraum* of the 'Pamir Tajiks' and other 'mountain peoples'. This visual narrative mirrors older, specifically German perceptions of the Hindukush as a "depository" (Roemer and Troll 1937: 3).

The slides in the E II D collections portray the residents of Badakhshan as 'remnants' or *Restvölker* who inhabit a 'pre-contact past'. Accordingly, they display the explored region as a "living museum" (Kußmaul 1972: 8). This imagination originated from European colonial and specifically German racist notions of superiority but also aligned with more contemporary theories of modernisation and development prevalent in the 1960s in West Germany. In museum exhibitions, visitors were presented with Badakhshan as an 'other' place, that is as a country that represented a sharp contrast to the Federal Republic of Germany. By looking at the photographs and contrasting the depicted 'traditional' or 'pre-modern' way of life in Badakhshan with their own lifestyle, German exhibition visitors could identify themselves with their own urban modernity without negating the post-war nostalgia for the lost past.

The three different case studies analyse three different imaginative geographies one by one, highlighting their respective nuances, inherent contradictions, and their role in scientific, media, or museum contexts.

However, elements of each of the three viewpoints on 'High Asia' can be found in each of the collections presented in this work. They entertain a visual dialogue and put each other in perspective.

Popular notions of exploration as adventure and the Asian high mountains as the 'roof' or 'end of the world' have informed the geographical imagination of mountaineers but also that of scientists and ethnologists. Each of these three viewpoints are intertwined. During their travels ethnologists were as dependent on maps and topographical notions of the world as geographers and mountaineers. Mountaineers, like Gerhard Klamert, marvelled at the cultural performances in the Hunza Valley, as if they were walking through a 'living museum', an idea that also informed ethnologist Friedrich Kußmaul's approach to the Afghan Hindukush.

Despite their differences, all the examined photo collections depict the Hindukush-Karakoram as a space of significance for the German geographical imagination of the world. The expedition photographs were intended to be authentic representations of a certain space and the people who inhabited it. At the same time, they also helped to designate the place of Germany, German science, and West German society in the new, post-war global world order. Furthermore, these photographs mark a distinct phase in the history of exploration and expedition. They were created against the backdrop of post-war modernisation and development discourses, movements of anti-colonialism and independence, and the establishment of new nation states and economies.

Still, emphasising the importance of expedition photography for the German geographical imagination does not imply ignoring, underestimating, or obscuring the agency and contributions of actors from the photographed areas. Expedition photography involved more than just pressing the shutter button. Photographers in the 1950s and 1960s had to ask for permissions to photograph, and they needed help in the selection of their subjects. They were dependent on intermediaries, personal assistants, as well as a large workforce. Despite expedition labourers and intermediaries being frequently anonymised or made nameless in the

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expedition archive, it has been possible to re-identify some of these actors and recognise their specific contributions to the history of expeditionary science and ethnology. As a result, the historical analysis has brought to light the influence of various actors on expedition photography.

The examination of Gerhart Klamert's photo collection has revealed how *mir* Mohamad Jamal Khan informed the image production of foreign visitors in Hunza. Indeed, regional potentates and local representatives in the areas under exploration played a significant role in shaping the way expedition photographers depicted a place. Some actors, like the *mir* of Hunza, were even able to exploit the presence of foreign photographers to their political and economic advantage.

Expedition photography was also a way of entertaining diplomatic relations and a means of establishing business connections. During the Stuttgart Badakhshan expedition, for instance, photographs were used as gifts, means of exchange, and negotiation tools. This highlights the wider impact of expedition photography. It extended beyond the societies of the photographers, reaching the individuals and communities photographed.

Investigating these 'hidden histories' of expedition photography opens up novel perspectives on expeditionary science and the Age of Exploration. Yet, adding these "new layers of interpretation and new kinds of evidence" (Driver 2015: 16) to the photo archive does not mean to trivialise the asymmetric power structures inherent in the project of exploration and its violent manifestations. Rather, it allows for the recognition of the strategies of resistance and re-appropriation of images made on expeditions.

The history of science perspective applied has shown that photographs taken by explorers can be valuable sources in today's anthropology, geography, and for ethnological museums. Viewed in this way, expedition photographs are important historical sources not only for the history of geography but also for today's quest to dismantle the hegemonic perspectives from which they were once taken.



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