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MASTER'S THESIS

**THE ROLE OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY IN
ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS**
THE CASE OF FRED BOISSONNAS AND MOUNT OLYMPUS
NATIONAL PARK

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Fred Boissonnas a Národní park Olymp

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Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Bachelor's Thesis/Master's Thesis, Dissertation independently on the following topic:

The role of landscape photography in the establishment of National Parks.
The case of Fred Boissonnas and Mount Olympus National Park

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

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Abstract

The first part of this paper examines the fundamental principles of landscape photography starting with the formation of landscape as a concept and a painting genre, up to landscape photography and its various identities as an art medium, a document, an imperialistic weapon and a tool of identification. The beginning of landscape photography is presented with special focus on mountain photography. The theme moves to the American West where the first National Park was born, an institution that can be both praised for bringing people closer to nature, and blamed for keeping people away from direct natural experience.

The second part analyses the case of Swiss photographer Frederic Boissonnas and his relationship with Mount Olympus. The reasons that brought him to Greece, the first ascent to the summit of the mountain in 1913, his other two expeditions in 1919 and 1927, and his promotional campaign for Mount Olympus National Park are considered. Finally Boissonnas' actions for the establishment of the Park are studied in order to understand the role his photographs played in preserving the natural and cultural landscape of the area.

The overall objective of the paper is to extend the research about the formation of National Parks to the region of modern Greece. By studying the subject matter of Fred Boissonnas' lens, it aims to reveal the role landscape photography played in the physiognomy of the National Park institution.

Abstraktní

První část této diplomové práce zkoumá základní principy fotografie krajiny, počínaje formováním krajiny jako konceptu a žánru malby a konče fotografií krajiny a jejími různými identitami jako umělecké medium, dokumentární forma, zbraň imperialismu nebo prostředek identifikace. Počátek fotografie krajiny je představen s důrazem na horskou fotografii. Práce se zaměřuje především na západ USA, kde byl založen první národní park – instituce, která je vyzdvihována za to, že přivádí člověka blíže přírodě a zároveň kritizována za to, že ho od přímého prožitku přírody vzdaluje.

Analýza druhé části práce se zaměřuje na případ fotografa Frederica Boissonnase a jeho vztahu k hoře Olympu. Jsou v ní zkoumány důvody, které ho přivedly do Řecka, jeho první výstup na vrchol hory v roce 1913, další dvě expedice na vrchol Olympu v roce 1919 a 1927 a jeho kampaň na propagaci Olympského národního parku. Závěr práce zkoumá motivy Boissonnase k založení národního parku ve snaze pochopit úlohu, kterou jeho fotografie hrály v uchování přírodní a kulturní krajiny této oblasti.

Ústředním cílem práce je zahrnout do výzkumu týkajícího se formování národních parků i region moderního Řecka. Nazřením tohoto tématu skrz objektiv Franze Boissonnase usiluje tato práce o identifikaci role, kterou fotografie krajiny hrála v utváření fyziognomie instituce národního parku.

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Abbreviations

C.F.A. Club Alpin Français

E.O.S. (later E.O.O.A.) Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering and Climbing

S.A.C Swiss Alpine Club

US United States of America

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1. Introduction

In summer of 1913 three men, a chamois hunter, a photographer and an art historian climbed the peak of Mount Olympus of Thessaly. Until then the mountain was a land of myths and legends that pilgrims and guerrilla groups were using as sanctuary from outer world, and locals as a source of raw material. The story of the Swiss Frederic Boissonnas, that together with Christos Kakkalos and Daniel Baud-Bovy are recorded as the first people who climbed the mythic mountain, motivated a research about the role that the photographer played in the creation of the first National Park in Greece.

Through understanding the readings which the medium of landscape acquired the last centuries, and the ground on which the institution of National Park flourished, the objective of this paper is to expand the field of study to Greek landscape, and in specific to the area of Mount Olympus. The final scope is observe how Fred Boissonnas, apart from participating in the group of the first recorded ascent of the mountain, with his photographs and actions, altered the significance, imaginary and symbolism of the mythic earth massif.

Due to lack of studies on Fred Boissonnas' role to the establishment of Olympus National Park, the research began from Boissonnas' archive that is held in Thessaloniki Museum of Photography. Adding to it, texts about other landscape photographers and other National Parks were examined. The photographers were selected based on two points; the subject of their work and their implication with governmental, scientific or enterprising bodies. Landscape photographers of the early years of the medium, that either worked on the unmapped terrain, took part in land surveys or were pioneers in mountain photography are in focus. By reading upon their approaches and assignments,

and the uses of the photographic material they produced, the effect their images had on forming public opinion about landscape is considered. Personal communication with curator and archivist Veronica Lisino from Museo Nazionale della Montagna of Torino, and study on the Museum's archive, was a significant element in the inquiry on early mountain photography.

Literature on different cases of National Parks is studied, with special focus on Yellowstone National Park and the Swiss National Park model. The works of David A. Clary and Patric Kupper were the main sources at this point. Throughout the research, the most relevant findings with the case of Fred Boissonnas and his role in the establishment of Olympus National Park came from the works of Warwick Hall and C. Michael Frost on tourism and National Parks, and the work of Wilko G. Von Hardenberg about the National Parks in Italian Alps, so their analyzes were used as the base for exploration.

The absence of commentary on the material of Fred Boissonnas from Mount Olympus and the, often, incomplete documentation of the files from the photographer, in some occasions redound to dead end, so additional sources were looked upon. One such source was the archive of the Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering & Climbing. Personal communication with PhD researchers Estelle Sohler from University of Geneva and Ioannis Kyritsis from Aristotle's University of Thessaloniki, that conducted surveys on the work of Fred Boissonnas, was also important addition to the research.

In the first chapters, the era of late 18th century until the end of 19th century is reviewed, in order to understand the cultural surrounding wherein the National Park appeared, and also in which Fred Boissonnas grew up and became famous photographer. The evolution of the concept of landscape, and, the modifications it acquired with the advent of photography, the appearance of mountaineering and the spread of massive travel and tourism is analyzed, to present the

complex purport that a photographic mountain expedition of that period could carry. Early landscape photography in American West and in Alps, Himalaya and Pyrenees is examined, to display the conditions under which landscape photographers approached unexplored terrains. Two land surveys, one of which gave birth to the first National Park are showed, to introduce the mentality of the time about the mapping of Earth. The case of Yellowstone National Park is examined, as it was the institution that triggered the National Parks wave around the world – and the formation that inspired Fred Boissonas –, as well as the Swiss model of National Park, which was the main alternative National Park's Model.

In the second part the case of Boissonas and Mount Olympus is investigated. Which was the significance of the mountain for the newly established Greek nation-state? Who was the Swiss photographer? Which were reasons that brought him to Greece? What happened in his three photographic expeditions on the mountainous landscape? Finally, the acts of Boissonas for setting up Olympus National Park are recorded, in order to present the various ways with which photography can create new imaginaries and alter old ones. The final part is a discussion around the individual research sections and the overall outcome of the study.

2. Notations and basic definitions

2.1 Origins of landscape

Landscape always greets us as space, as environment, as that within which 'we' find – or lose – ourselves.¹

Soon after its appearance in language in 1598², the word landscape was attributed with the extended meaning of “a picture depicting an expanse of scenery.” Its Middle Dutch origin (*landschap*: *land*=region and *-scap* = ship or condition³) referred to a piece of land, a terrain. The merging of the term that refers to a piece of land, with the term that describes the representation of a piece of land happened over several centuries. However after 1980 a discourse has developed that advocates for the separation of landscape from its representations. Until then, someone interested in landscape would mainly discover the sub-genre of Landscape Art – the history of the visions of landscape. Recently another approach has appeared that deals with landscape as a medium and includes the art genre.

This approach is based on the initial meaning of the term landscape: a piece of land, a terrain. Like Mitchell defines, landscape is a “physical and multi-sensorial medium (earth, stone, vegetation, water, sky, sound and silence, light and darkness, etc.) in which cultural meanings and values are encoded”⁴. Within its space “humans communicate with each other and with *the other*, the non-human”⁵. Not all civilizations interpreted the human-environment relationship as landscape⁶, nor did they interact with landscape as the container of their

¹ Mitchell, W.J.T (ed) *Landscape and Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2002. p. 2

² Merriam Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/landscape> (Accessed 2016.03.08)

³ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=landscape&submit.x=48&submit.y=26> Accessed 2016.03.08)

⁴ Mitchell, W.J.T. 'Imperial Landscape'. *Landscape and Power*. 2002. p. 14

⁵ *Idid*. p. 15

⁶ Lisino, V. 2015. *Fragments of an immense landscape: Mountains in photography 1850-1870*. Turin: Museo Nazionale della Montagna. p.



fig. 1. Salvator Rosa. Mountain Landscape with Figures and a Man Bathing.
1615-73

existence. This interpretation began in the Western world around the 16th century; as humans slowly moved away from nature, a need to create bonds with it emerged. Landscape developed as a mediator between the human and the non-human, and as a message⁷ of form and mentality that reflected the relationship of modernizing, Western people with nature. Nature, from a vantage point of life and memory, was receding as distant scenery and memento and people were becoming its viewers. Simultaneously, earth sciences like geology, topography and cartography – products of an orthonormal, Cartesian reading of the world – began to supplant the prehistoric cosmologies and ancient myths of the origins of nature. Coordinates were carved into the dwellings of celestial beings, and scientific observatories squatted the lands of local mythologies.

While landscape evolved to a form that could be perceived and understood through maps and paintings, its history was modified into a narration of records of national and private title deeds. Landscape art was where landscape as

⁷ McLuhan, M. 1964. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. pp. 7



fig. 2. Claude Lorrain - Pastoral Landscape. 1646-47



fig 3. Nicolas Poussin. Ideal landscape or Landscape with buildings or Landscape with three men. 1651 - 1653

property and as depiction met. It flourished in periods in which owners or occupiers of land desired to display and mark their acquisitions, or when its original inhabitants were dislocated from it: during the Roman Empire, at the height of China's imperial power, during the Dutch Golden Age, in Victorian England⁸, during German Romanticism and the Industrial Revolution.

Many art historians place the beginning of landscape art between the Renaissance and the mid 16th century. In this period, art patrons started to seek after secular themes, bringing to the fore what was for classic and religious painting merely background material. Many versions of art history note that the Dutch bourgeois were the first to desire depictions of topographical views for decorative purposes, while other, less famous, narratives place the origins of landscape painting much earlier in the Hellenistic and Roman periods or in ancient China. It is generally accepted that for Western Europe landscape became popular during the Golden Age of Dutch painting, although outside of the Netherlands the conservative Academies of France and Italy kept it in the background until the 17th century and the birth of Classical landscape.

Classical landscape was inspired by Arcadia, a province in ancient Greece that artists represented as a place of idyllic, pastoral beauty. The actual Arcadia was in fact quite the opposite; it was famous in its time for its brutal inhabitants and carnal rituals and was redesigned⁹ in order to fit within the Classical imaginary.

Arcadian landscape had all its elements positioned as if by divine symmetry and perfection, making it easier for traditional painters and the potent Academies to befriend. During the 17th century the works of the Flemish Paul Bril, the Italian Salvador Rosa (*fig.1*), and Claude Lorraine (*fig.2*) and Nicolas Poussin (*fig.3*) of France set the foundations for the independence of the landscape genre, and also for the popularizing of types of landscape painting.

⁸ Mitchell, W.J.T. 2002. 'Imperial Landscape'. *Landscape and Power*. pp. 9

⁹ Schama, S. 'Arcadia Redesigned'. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: Knopf. 1995. pp. 517 - 578

During the 18th century, having a proper opinion on landscape was “a valuable social accomplishment” even for non-artists, and in order to perceive a “correctly composed landscape” people would “rearrange objects in the imagination”¹⁰. About the same period a new optical instrument appeared; the Claude mirror was a black, convex mirror through which one could see a reflected view of their surroundings. It moderated differences in distances and colors and was described as a tool to improve nature, “like Claude Lorraine”¹¹. By the middle of the century a dialogue on the notions of the *sublime* and the *beautiful* had emerged. This dialogue eventually offered a vocabulary to categorize and articulate the feelings that landscape generated, and to distinguish typologies of landscape paintings. The sublime was for astonishment, pain and terror. It evoked passion, danger and power. Beautiful was for love, softness, and smoothness, communicating calmness, safety and pleasure.¹² Between these two lay a third term, the *picturesque*, indicating the scenery that was suitable for composing a picture. With aesthetic rules, optical instruments and linguistic terms mediating between humans and their experience of the natural environment, the confusion of a piece of land with its depiction gradually became commonplace.

As the natural environment was simplified into a composition pattern, the landscape genre was consolidated. In the early 19th century, the Romantic painters Caspar David Friedrich, Joseph William Turner (*fig.4*) and John Constable (*fig.5*) found in landscape a sanctuary from modernization and through their paintings praised *the lost paradise*. Many artists of the German Romantic movement implied nationalistic tendencies through their art and Friedrich was one of them. In his works, isolated human figures and religious forms are placed

¹⁰ Barrell, J. *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1972. p. 3

¹¹ Pike, B. *Catalogue description of Claude Lorraine mirror*. *Illustrated Descriptive Catalogue of Optical, Mathematical and Philosophical Instruments*. 1856. p. 32

¹² Burke, E. 1756. *Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*. eBook The Project Gutenberg of Burke's Writings and Speeches, Volume the First



fig. 4. J.M.W. Turner , Mer de Glace, in the Valley of Chamouni, Switzerland.
1803



fig. 5. John Constable. Weymouth Bay. c. 1816



fig. 6. Caspar David Friedrich. *The Cross in the Mountains* (c. 1812)



fig. 7. Albert Bierstadt. *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*. 1863

in mystic landscapes, reflecting the metaphysical relation between humanity and the natural world (*fig.6*). They also conveyed "his melancholy temperament, over the French occupation"¹³. This contrasts with English Romanticism that used art to dramatize and praise the miracles of nature. Turner and Constable developed their concepts of the sublime and the beautiful beyond the merely picturesque, elevating them to the scriptural.

Around the 1830s large bodies of landscape work came from the Hudson River School in the United States, the Barbizon School in France and the Düsseldorf School of Painting in Germany. The Hudson River School was influenced by Romanticism and Transcendentalism and provided some of the first depictions of the American countryside and wilderness extending across New England, the West and Latin America. Outstanding members were its founder, Tomas Cole, and Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt (*fig.7*) both of who accompanied government land surveys to document the expanding country with their drawings. The Barbizon School extended the subject matter within landscape by adding elements of rural life. In the same period Jean-Baptiste Corot and Gustave Courbet integrated Impressionist and Realistic approaches to landscape, releasing it from its Romantic and Classical traditions.

The 19th century was the period of maturation for landscape as solely an art genre. The developing technology of photography could capture the most detailed and the most abstract natural forms, and its advent added an extra layer of mediation between humans and their environment. As people had increasing difficulty reconnecting with nature, they found it easier to interact with its depiction. As Friedrich said, "Art stands as the mediator between nature and human. The original is too great and too sublime for the multitude to grasp."¹⁴

¹³ Lukacher, B. 'Landscape art and Romantic Nationalism in Germany and America'. *Nineteenth century art : a critical history*. 2011. London: Thames & Hudson. p. 150

¹⁴ Quoted in Lukacher, B. 'Landscape art and Romantic Nationalism in Germany and America'. 2011. p. 150

2.2 Photography and landscape

Formally presented in 1839, photography already counted many years of germination in the laboratories of inventors and painters. The former were motivated by the tendency of the era to apply scientific techniques to any subject and aimed to find relations between light and chemical substances. The latter were intrigued by the visual power of the camera obscura¹⁵. When photography appeared, it fitted with the times, both as a scientific invention and as art. As a scientific invention working with light and chemical elements, it never lied and was never mistaken. As an art form written with "the pencil of nature", it could inscribe reality better than any painting, engraving, or topographical sketch. Even as some artists and art critics deplored it, with the support of the bourgeois that saw a medium that fitted their standards of taste and affordability, photography steadily gained popularity between art and science.

Photography had one unique ability that was praised by everyone. It could grasp a point in space-time and relocate it elsewhere intact. People photographed subjects they did not want to lose or forget, motivated either by vanity to keep a copy of a memory, or by sentimentality to maintain something that could be damaged. Mid-19th century society, exhausted from immigration, and war watched as industrialization irreversibly distorted nature. Photography was a way to protect a past reality, even if it was in a chemical replica.

Initially exposure times were too long to capture human beings, so static buildings bathed in sunshine became the ideal themes for the first photographic experiments. Nicephore Niepce took the first existing photograph from his window in Le Gras in 1827, after an exposure of more than eight hours. In 1838,

¹⁵ Literally a dark room that enabled light to enter through a hole in a wall facing another wall or plane on which the projected image appeared in natural colors'. Rosenblum, N. *A world history of Photography*, 4th ed. New York: Abbeville Press. 2007. p. 192

Jacques Daguerre captured a human figure on a photograph for a first time by accident – a man standing still while having his shoes polished – while making a daguerreotype of the cityscape from his window (*fig.8*). Henry Talbot, a regular user of the Claude mirror, describes in *Pencil of Nature* how he was inspired by photography, as he couldn't draw the mirror's image efficiently.¹⁶ After the invention of his technique in 1839, he used facades of buildings for photographic experiments (*fig.10*). Anton Martin (*fig.11*) Joseph Saxton and did the same in Vienna and in Philadelphia already from 1839.

The themes of landscape and cityscape were related for technical reasons, but did not only thrive because of them. During the period, scenic views were becoming popular in oil and watercolor painting, as were engravings and lithographs depicting exotic places, rural places and famous monuments. Photography had the ability to accurately depict details and began to be preferred for its precision and, until the technology for photographic reproduction was developed, was widely used as a source of information for engravers and lithographers. Daguerreotypes were difficult to make in the field and their use was limited to panoramic views and stereographs, most often illustrating urban panoramas. Calotypes were duplicable and easier to handle in the field and after the technical improvements of 1850s that upgraded their resolution they became the main technique for landscape photography. Until then landscape was popular among middle class travelers who collected souvenirs, people who could not travel and publishers. The improved Calotype turned landscape photography into a massive business and the idea of the photographic campaign came into view.

Governments and individuals used Calotypes to produce propaganda images in the service of their policies and programs. Napoleon III was one of the first to use photography as "a tool integral to his expansive domestic and foreign

¹⁶ Talbot, H. *The Pencil of Nature*. 1844. eBook The Project Gutenberg, downloaded from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/33447/33447-pdf.pdf>

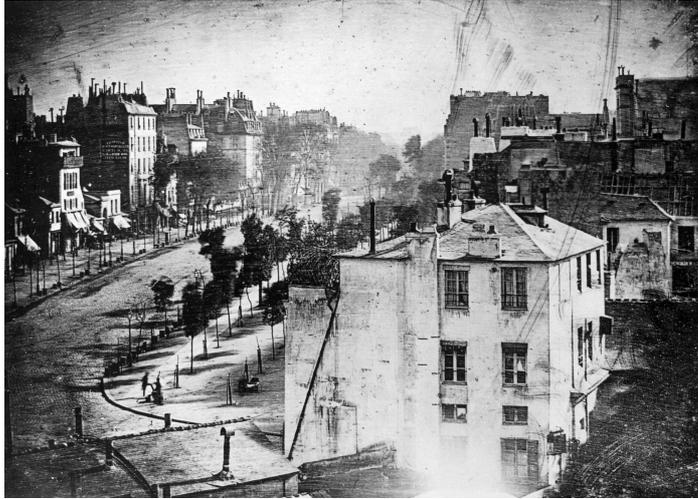


fig 8. Jacques Daguerre. Boulevard du Temple. 1838

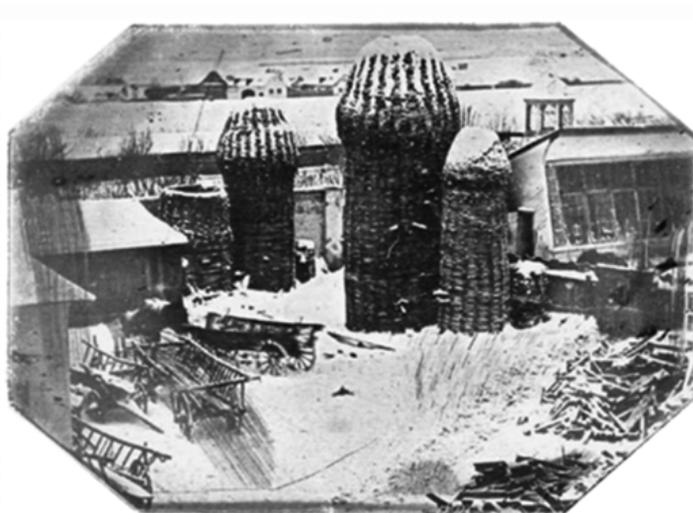


fig. 9. Anton Martin. Winter Landscape. 1839



fig. 10. Henry Talbot. Queen's College, Entrance Gateway,
Oxford. 1843

programs"¹⁷, ordering documentations from the streets of Paris to the peaks of the Alps. Similar initiatives began in England and the United States. British noblemen, and sometimes noblewomen, spread across the British Empire to photograph and to establish local photography studios and publishing houses. Their photos, apart from advertising touristic itineraries, supported British imperialism through the presentation of the colonies as Crown land and the implication of British superiority. Wet collodion and albumen prints also shaped the image of the American West. As foreigners to the expanse of American land, United States civilians had to discover the new continent. Governmental carriers and rail companies funded surveys in search of new lands for use and investment, and hired photographers to document them.

For the first 30 years of photography, landscape was attractive to photographers despite their having to carry a whole dark room with them in the field. They documented the beauty of the countryside for the masses that fled to the cities, the grace of the colonies for royal families, railroad lines for construction companies and picturesque views for tourist souvenirs. After the 1880s the invention of dry plates and roll films changed the approach to landscape photography. Landscape photographers that had been fascinated by undertaking large efforts to make photos of isolated places, began to lose their interest in the technical aspects of the medium and criticized the images that were produced with the new techniques as mere repetitions of trivial views.

2.3 Travel and tourism

Although exploration and tourism are found in ancient times, the first known use of the word "travel" can be traced to the 14th century.¹⁸ The origin of the term

¹⁷ Rosenblum, N. *A world history of Photography*. 2007. p. 100

¹⁸ Merriam Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/travel> (Accessed 2016.03.07)

travel is found in the Old French word *travailler* and in its initial form, *travail*, it meant "hard work, tribulation, agony or toil"¹⁹ and was related to hardships and risk. Those who could afford to travel or were obliged to for trade, pilgrimage or education, had to travel for weeks or even years under difficult conditions and many times they produced travel literature and histories to share their experiences. The introduction of the steam machine can be seen as one starting point for travel; after its introduction, travel became a mass avocation. Steam machines transformed the notion of distance and made travel possible for middle and lower classes. The former traveled for business, leisure and recreation, while the latter in search of a better future.

When tourism appeared in the late 18th century it had a similar meaning to travel and the terms were used interchangeably.²⁰ European and American noblemen mainly followed a standard itinerary, the most famous being the Grand Tour and the Fashionable Tour. The Grand Tour included mainly cultural sites, Classical and Renaissance monuments, locations of art pieces and theaters and was a generally safe undertaking for the traveler. Parts of it though, like the passage from Switzerland to Italy through the Alps, were physically and mentally demanding, challenging the traveler's courage and, often, their masculinity. As there were no Classical or Renaissance monuments in the United States, the Fashionable Tour was comprised of natural monuments: Saragola Springs, Lake George, Niagara Falls and other lakes and mountains. Other popular destinations were the colonies of Near and Far East Asia and the East Coast of the USA, journeys affordable only to the middle class and above and thus an indicator of social status.

Photography became connected with travel and tourism immediately. Working

¹⁹ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=%20TRAVAIL> (Accessed 2016.03.07)

²⁰ Armstrong, H. 'Spectacle and Tourism as the Faustian Bargain', in Gordon, E (ed) '*Spatial Experience: Media and the Production of Place, Spectator: The University of Southern California Journal of Film and Television*' 21(1). 2002.p. 20.

either as inspiration for or documentation of traveling, photography suited the new forms of transportation as both amended time and distance. Artists traveling for inspiration, tourists without drawing skills and scientists collecting research data used photography to capture what was picturesque, spectacular and remarkable. Those who could not afford a camera or did not know how to use one were willing to pay for photographs taken by professionals and photographic souvenirs depicting standard views of known scenes and monuments became increasingly popular.

Photography gradually adopted the function of presenting the world to travelers and non-travelers alike. Photographs that were then "synonymous with truth" and a "substitute for firsthand experience"²¹ shaped public opinion about foreign cultures and places. Muslim countries were thought as corrupt and unethical, India as exotic but poor and decadent, Africa as a land of wild animals and even wilder people. In contrast stood the romantic ruins of Italy, the picturesque Swiss countryside and the ambitious cities of the United States. Photographs cultivated stereotypes of Western superiority and formed ideas, illusions and expectations of places for people who had never visited them, as well as for people who had.

Landscape photography, with its appealing combination of detail, impersonality and embellishment, was an ideal subject for souvenirs. The beautiful and picturesque visions of landscape that had dominated the market since the Romantic period, although considered good for decoration, were not considered acceptable for tourism. Tourist photography referred to a pre-arranged life elsewhere or to the lives of others. Because the sublime implied astonishment and participation, it did not fit the tastes and expectations of tourists.

Through photography, no matter how magnificent and divine a landscape, part

²¹ Rosenblum, N. 2007. *A world history of Photography*. p. 107.

of its sublimity and aura disappeared when it was turned into an icon. Landscapes were transformed into imaginary places, digestible, accessible and affordable. As photographs multiplied, the world was becoming an object, "visible, aesthetic and desirable"²² and the experience of life, an image. As objects and images, places and events were converted into commodities that could be possessed and archived.

Taking photos helped people to own and control spaces in which they were insecure.²³ By collecting imaginative geographies of tourist landscapes they transformed memories into spectacular narratives and enjoyed ideal visits to illusory places.²⁴ The price was an excision from reality. Around the middle of the 18th century another trend merged with travel, tourism and photography. Mountaineering and alpinism were new ways to experience nature and to confront the physical and symbolic frontiers of the earth's massifs.

2.4 Mountains and Mountaineering

Humans have always interacted with mountains. They have built houses and towns on the mountains in addition to cultivating on their slopes. Indeed, human interactions with mountains have always marked an attempt at scaling back the effect of the sublime in order to make them more describable and representable, to bring them within the ambit of ordinary human existence.²⁵

The frozen body of Ötzi²⁶ and other human traces found in high altitude Andes caves are evidence of human presence since prehistory. Just like the pilgrims, shepherds, hunters and the exiled that had no choice but to cross a mountain in order to reach their destination, the story of Ötzi's ascent will remain unknown.

²² Larsen, J. 2006, 'Geographies of Tourism Photography:: Choreographies and Performances'. in Falkheimer & Jansson (eds), *Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*. p.242.

²³ Sontag, S. 1977. *On Photography*, London: Penguin, p. 9.

²⁴ Larsen, J. 'Geographies of Tourism Photography:: Choreographies and Performances'. 2006. p. 242.

²⁵ Banerjee, S. "'Not altogether unpicturesque": Samuel Bourne and the Landscaping of the Victorian Himalaya'. *Victorian Literature and Culture* 42. 2014. p. 352

²⁶ The oldest European natural human mummy found in Alps at an elevation of 3,210m



fig. 11. Philip J. De Loutherbourg, *An Avalanche in the Alps*. 1803

The cases of people who kept records of their mountain climbs start after 1000 AD. In 1336 the poet Petrarch gives one of the most well known early narrations of a climb, noting that his “only motive was the wish to see what so great an elevation had to offer”²⁷. His description, “distractedly between terrestrial and celestial things”²⁸, reflects the perception of mountains by the people of his period. Elevations were places demanding higher physical and psychic powers to approach, and places to encounter unworldly beings and situations, facts that prevented people from getting close to them. During the Renaissance their character started to become more appealing. Their landscapes, full of majesty and awe, were not anymore just places of evil and terror, but also a testament to God's genius that offered material for physical observation and introspection.

The birth of mountaineering is marked in 1492, when King Charles VIII of France ordered Mount Aiguille to be climbed. Antoine de Ville, a servant with a small team, ascended the mountain with the use of ropes, ladders and hammers, executing the mandate and marking another beginning – the use of mountain

²⁷ Quoted in Schama, *S. Landscape and Memory*, New York: Knopf. 1995. p. 422

²⁸ *Ibid.*

peaks as points of sovereignty and power. Yet, it took more than one hundred years for the word mountaineer – meaning someone who climbs mountains for sport – to enter into language, probably because until then the majority of mountain climbers were pilgrims and soldiers. By that time, the mystical face of mountains began to be supplanted by a new perception. The new view was a mix of human ambition for domination – inaugurated by King Charles VIII –, a hunt for knowledge through the observation of nature and a search for freedom that, during the 18th century, was linked to the sublime landscape.²⁹

At the beginning of the 19th century, large parts of the Higher Alps had already been conquered, the Lake District in England was a famous holiday destination for British gentlemen and the popularity of mountain walks was slowly growing in the United States. Along with travel and tourism, visiting mountains was becoming a fashionable activity among middle and upper-middle class men and women, and by mid-century the interest in mountaineering stretched from the Scandinavian Mountains, to Caucasus, the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada.

In the same period, mountains, that had until then attracted travelers, artists, aristocrats and independent spirits, began to tempt scientific communities. The chaos and incomprehensibility of their formations – previously aspects of mountains' "ugliness"³⁰ – appealed to geologists, topographers, cartographers and other earth scientists who spent months of research in their hostile environments. As mountain landscapes hosted more and more tourists, mountaineers and scientists they began to lose the character of a vast and hostile desert. Within a century and a half, mountain ranges were transformed from the dwellings and sanctuaries of celestial beings into sites for worldly pursuits and scientific analysis.

²⁹ Shaw, P. Landscape and the Sublime. *Discovering Literature: Romantics and Victorians*. British Library. <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/landscape-and-the-sublime> (Accessed 2016.02.16).

³⁰ Von Brevern, J. 'Counting on the Unexpected: Aime Civiale's Mountain Photography'. *Science in Context* 22 (3). 2009.p. 410.

3. Primal applications of landscape photography

3.1 Portrait and landscape frames

Landscape is a physiognomy, a face that all at once, at a particular spot, gazes out at us. A face that is directed towards human beings.⁴⁸

Since the early 19th century, studies of physiognomy had been revived and were gaining popularity. In the 1850s, technical improvements that reduced the time of exposure made portrait photography more accessible, and psychiatry and criminology began to adopt it as a survey tool. Cases of doctors photographing patients exist from 1852 and the first use of photography in court occurs in 1851¹, marking the beginning of forensic photography. During the next decade the state mobilized the power of photos to document “reality” as a tool of surveillance and control. The human face was classified based on whether it provoked love or calmness, pain or danger. By categorizing people as healthy and unhealthy, criminal and non-criminal, beautiful and repulsive, the nation-state judged them as helpful or unhelpful to its prosperity.

This practice was consistent with “a new technology” of power that the state started to use during this period, a “constellation of institutions – including the hospital, the asylum, the school, the prison, the police force”². These institutions functioned as a safety valve against the unknown masses gathering in the cities and as mechanisms for social welfare. As the old regimes of Europe were consolidated into nation-states, authority needed to redefine itself. For the nation-state the recording and classification of people was a way to control

¹ National Forensic Science Technology Center. *A Simplified Guide to Crime Scene Photography*. Largo: NFSTC <http://www.forensicsciencesimplified.org/photo/Photography.pdf> (Accessed 2016.02.23)

² Tagg, J. *The burden of representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1993. pp 62-63



fig. 12. Anthropometry in Inishbofin Island, 1893¹

through the performance of its power. Portraits were the visual tools of the new regime⁴ by delimiting “the terrain of the *other*”⁵, flattening facial surfaces on identification documents and testifying to its “history: its trades, occupations, calamities”⁶. Along with documenting its citizens, the nation-state did the same with its natural environment. An association of landscape with physiognomy had already started half a century before with the studies of cartographer, naturalist and explorer Alexander Von Humboldt. Von Humboldt wrote about the physiognomy of plants and vegetation, an approach that slowly expanded to studies of other natural formations and to landscape itself. The state began to survey and record its inner and outer “body” in order to identify and protect itself. In this process, earth sciences like topography and cartography were the counterparts of the social sciences. Altogether they secured the integrity and survival of the nation-state.

Landscape – both as a medium and as an art genre – had cultural and social

³ Source: eBook :The Irish Headhunter The Photograph Albums of Charles R. Browne. http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Education/The_Irish_Headhunter_catalogue.pdf (Accessed 2016.03.20)

⁴ Bharath, S. R. 'The Sachés: a family of photographers working in India during the 19th century' *PhotoResearcher* 13. 2010. pp. 4-14.

⁵ Sekula, A. 'Body and Archive'. *October* 39. 1986. p. 7

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 33

qualities that complemented the technical and scientific character of the earth sciences. It already worked as an agent in the "process of institutional and political legitimization"⁷ and could be easily turned to the process of national legitimization. Landscape photography was adopted as an indicator of the nation-state's pursuit of identity, providing the earth sciences with what portraiture had given to the social sciences. With its appealing appearance, it could discreetly delimit landscape, record earth's physical history and testify to nature's functions. Photography became a tool for framing the social and physical space in which modern man was allowed to reside. Outside of this space, unidentified and hostile situations could occur. In order for the nation-state to guard its being, the unknown had to be captured and domesticated.

3.2 The American West landscape

During the 1850s and 60s, for the imperialistic European nations and the enterprising United States possible threats lay in the unknown lands of their newly acquired territories and colonies. These lands were unknown to civilians and had no attributed "reality", so authorities recognized the potential of using them as symbols for reinforcing personal and public national identity. Landscape photography could provide the necessary visual stimuli for the formation of each nation's imaginary. Landscape photographers, in search of original subjects, were motivated to visit unidentified terrain and challenge themselves and their talent – often by following land surveys. Their photos, with or without their intention, played an important role in the domestication of unknown territories and in the nationalization of nature, especially in the United States.⁸

In 1853-54, Solomon N. Carvalho took some of the earliest photographs of the

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 3

⁸ Kaufmann, Eric P. and Zimmer, O. 'In search of the authentic nation: landscape and national identity in Canada and Switzerland'. *Nations and Nationalism* 4 (4). 1998. p. 487



fig. 13. Solomon N. Carvalho, View of a village in Cheyenne Big Timber (Colorado). 1853

West (fig.13) while accompanying Colonel J.C. Fremont on a five-month expedition, and in 1859 Charles L. Weed took probably the first photos of what is today Yosemite National Park (fig.14). Eugene Carleton Watkins, the man who is praised for making Yosemite Valley a known and protected area, went to Yosemite for the first time in 1861. He took about a hundred negatives with an 18x22" camera, then returned in 1864-5 for the California State Geological Survey to document the landscapes. His photos formed the public and governmental opinion about the preservation of the Valley and other sites of American wilderness. It is said that they were presented to Congressmen,⁹ and that they influenced Abraham Lincoln to sign the Yosemite Grant Act, a declaration protecting the Yosemite area. He photographed Mammoth Hot Springs – later also a National Park – and effected the whole National Park system, but was posthumously criticized for commercializing nature. In 1867

⁹ DeLuca, Demo. 'Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17 (3). 2000. p. 241

Watkins went to Yosemite with the photographer Edward Muybridge. Muybridge later returned to Yosemite on his own, became known for the work he completed at this time and was assigned to photograph the newly purchased territory of Alaska for the US government in 1868 and the lighthouses of the West coast for the Lighthouse Board in 1871.

Timothy O'Sullivan was a photographer during the Civil War before he became involved with landscape. When the war ended, "faced with the dullness of the photographic studio"¹⁰, he decided to accompany land surveys organized by the government. He photographed for the Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel, the Survey West of the 100th Meridian, a survey for a canal route through the isthmus in Panama and worked as the official photographer of the Geological Survey until his death. In his photos he managed to depict the emptiness and emotional resonance of the American West and at the same time to provide accurate records of the undocumented terrain. In 1872, William Henry Bell, a veteran of the Mexican war and a soldier with the Union Army during the Civil War, joined the United States Geological Survey in Arizona (*fig.16*) replacing O'Sullivan.¹¹ He later photographed for the railroad in Pennsylvania, the Transit of Venus Expedition to Patagonia and for the Kentucky State Geological Survey.¹²

¹⁰ Rosenblum, N. *A world history of Photography*. 2007. p. 143

¹¹ United States Geological Survey in Arizona was part of the Survey West of 100th Meridian.

¹² Stapp, W. John Hannavy (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*. Routledge. 2009. pp. 142-143.



fig. 14. Charles L. Weed, Yosemite Falls. 1959
[halftone from Yosemite Bulletin XXXVIII (6)]



fig 15. Edward Muybridge, Photo of Vernal Falls
at Yosemite. 1872



fig. 16. William H. Bell. Perched Rock, Arizona,
Wheeler Survey. 1872



fig 17. Timothy O'Sullivan, Crab's Claw Peak, Western Nevada US
Geological Survey. 1867

3.3 Early photography in high altitudes

From the beginning, photography accompanied mountaineering. As with tourism, people who went to mountains were eager to preserve the memories of their ascent. The Alps were the first to attract a great number of photographers and researchers, with the Pyrenees and Himalayas following soon after. In the mid-1840s, Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey made some of the first photos of Alpine glaciers and rock formations (*fig.18*), while in 1849 John Ruskin and Jean Gustave Dardel made some of the first photographs of Matterhorn (*fig.19*) and Mont Blanc (*fig.20*) respectively. As mountaineering spread, mountain views became a commonplace photographic subject.

Probably the most notorious images of the Chamonix Valley, although not the earliest, were taken in 1860 by the Bisson brothers, when Napoleon III invited them to accompany him and empress Eugénie on their visit to Savoy and Chamonix. The Bisson brothers began their cooperation in 1852 and quickly became known for the quality of their large format (30x50cm) photographs. Daniel Dollfus-Ausset, rich and passionate about mountains, had invited the younger Bisson brother, Auguste-Rosalie, to the Bernese Alps in 1855 to photograph the glaciers, where Bisson managed to take an impressive, almost two-meter long panorama. Auguste-Rosalie returned to the Alps in 1858 to visit Chamonix and again in 1859 for an unsuccessful attempt to summit Mont Blanc. The Bissons' photos managed to not only capture the majestic alpine landscape, but also the efforts of men to conquer nature and their photos played a key role in attracting people to mountains. In 1861 they returned to Chamonix with 25 porters who carried their photographic equipment and Auguste-Rosalie finally summited Mont Blanc, being the first to photograph from its peak – but there is no evidence left of these said-to-be three photos.

The French engineer Aime Civiale conducted the largest photographic project of the period with a clear scientific purpose. Civiale aimed to provide data for geological research and held a photographic survey with the support of the *Academie des Sciences*. Starting in the Pyrenees in 1858, he continued his work in the Alps from 1859 to 1868. He took over 40 large panoramas and more than 600 photos of details (*fig.22*), recording "the circumstances of the photographic process as completely as possible, so that everything would be as reproducible as possible"¹³. Although his photos finally had no use for geological research, his work is counted as the "most systematic attempt to introduce photography as a medium for studying the earth sciences".¹⁴

Another photographer, Victor Muzet, was also in Chamonix Valley in 1860. He produced images for which he received an honor from Napoleon III in September of the same year.¹⁵ Later, in collaboration with Gabriel Joguet, he published the commercial album *Vues de Lyon et du Dauphine*, containing 37 albumen prints from collodion negatives, with views of mountains and rivers at lower altitudes. Some of the most profitable images of the lower Alps were made after 1863 by William England from the UK. England traveled extensively in Switzerland, Savoy, Italy and the Tyrol and Rhine areas, making hundreds of stereoscopic mountain photos and achieving a great number of sales.¹⁶

Gustav Jägermayer first photographed the Austrian High Alps in 1863 during the Grossglockner Expedition. During a period of almost two months he made more than 90 large format (34x43cm) wet plates, producing high quality photos of peaks and glaciers (*fig.23*). Jägermayer had the support of the Austrian Alpine Association – founded the previous year – and this expedition was said to be an

¹³ Von Brevorn, J. 'Counting on the Unexpected: Aime Civiale's Mountain Photography'. *Science in Context* 22 (3). 2009.p. 424.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 409

¹⁵ Lisino, V. *Fragments of an immense landscape: Mountains in photography 1850-1870*. Torino: Museo Nazionale della Montagna. 2015. p. 237, caption n. 53

¹⁶ Lorch, G. A. 2012. *William England: Much Esteemed, Mostly Forgotten*. The London Stereoscopic Company. <http://www.londonstereo.com/william-england1.html> (Accessed 2016-02-17).

effort to promote the Austrian part of the Alpine range, a response to the growing popularity of the French Alps, a product of the photographs of the Bisson brothers.¹⁷ After some point the Association withdrew their funding and the project failed, but Jägermayer became known as one of the pioneers in glacier photography.

Luigi Montabone, Agostino Bertelli, Alberto Luigi Vialardi, Giacomo Brogi and Giovanni Battista Maggi made early photos from the Italian Alps and other mountains. Montabone, the official photographer of the first Italian mission to Persia in 1862, took some of the first photos of the Aosta Valley and of the Royal Hunt of King Emanuele II (*fig.24*),¹⁸ but it is not known if the King himself invited him.¹⁹ Together with Bertelli they made an album called *Royal hunts in Val d'Aosta* in 1871. Vialardi, the former secretary of the Ministry of Finance and a member of the Italian Alpine Club, took the first known photo of Mount Viso in 1863 and photos of the Valley of Forciolline, between the 21th and 24th of August, 1863.²⁰ In 1866, he documented the opening of Cavour Channel by making an album that he dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele II. Brogi and Maggi photographed the construction of railroad tracks. Fascinated by the train as "a symbol of man's dominion over nature"²¹ they provide a great record of the alteration of the Italian mountain landscape during the 1860s and 70s.

The Himalayas, unlike the Alps that were visible and approachable from different countries, were out of reach for the vast majority of travelers, scientists and photographers. Thus the majority of early photography of the Himalayan

¹⁷ Gröning, M. 'Aus der frühzeit von fotografie und alpinismus in Österreich'. *Camera Austria International* 79. 2002. p. 35

¹⁸ This area later came part of the Gran Paradiso National Park

¹⁹ Personal Communication. Veronica Lisino, conservator of Photography Archive of Museo Nazionale della Montagna "Duca degli Abruzzi" and curator of exhibition '*Fragments of an immense landscape: Mountains in photography 1850-1870*'. 22.05.2015-15.11.2015. Museo Nazionale della Montagna.' e-mail. 2016.02.24.

²⁰ Cavanna, P. *Montagne in fotografia*, in Audisio Aldo, Pastore Alessandro (a cura di) *CAI 150. 1863-2013. Il libro*. Torino: Museo Nazionale della Montagna - CAI-Torino / Editore per Club Alpino Italiano. 2013. p. 327

²¹ Lisino, V. *Fragments of an immense landscape: Mountains in photography 1850-1870*. 2015. p. 13



fig. 18. Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey. Roches calcaires.
Paysage du Jura bernois. 1845-1850



fig. 19. Joseph Philibert Girault de Prangey. La Mer de Glace dans
le massif du Mont Blanc. 1845-1850



fig. 20. John Ruskin. Matterhorn and reflection in Alpine lake. 1849



fig. 21. Bisson Frères, Glacier des Bossons, Savoie. circa 1860

range came from British gentlemen who worked in British India. The first to depart for an expedition to the higher Himalayas was the Deputy-Commissioner of Kangra district, Philip Henry Egerton. In June of 1863, Egerton left Dharmsala for an exploration that lasted 70 days.²² One month later, commercial photographer Samuel Bourne left Simla for his first Himalayan expedition, lasting 74 days. The following year Egerton published the *Journal of a Tour through Spiti, to the Frontier of Chinese Thibet* with 37 albumen prints and Bourne left on his second expedition, this time to Kashmir. In 1866 Egerton was transferred away from the mountains, while Bourne set out for his final and largest expedition to Gangotri Glacier, the source of Ganges. With the support of 40 porters, he made astonishing photographs of glaciers, high passes, valleys and mountain peaks. In his writings Bourne didn't hesitate to confirm that, for the sake of the success of the expeditions, he behaved inhumanly towards his porters and the local people.

In the winter of 1869 Prussian/British commercial photographer John Edward Saché followed the example of Egerton and Bourne by going on an expedition to the Pindari Range of the Indian Himalayas, where he made photos of Pindari glacier, rivers and rock formations. He continued to photograph North India and returned to the Himalayas four years later, producing his last topographic images in Kashmir and at the early "hill station" of Srinagar.²³ Other early Himalayan photos appeared with the stamp *F. Frith and Co.* Frith, one of the most successful commercial photographers of the period, employed many photographers so it is not certain who exactly took these photos. There is evidence of Frith being in India, but no confirmation that he ever joined a mountain expedition.

John Claude White, an engineer, photographer, author and civil servant in

²² The British Library. 'Philip Henry Egerton, *Journal of a Tour through Spiti, to the Frontier of Chinese Thibet* (London, 1864)'. India Office Select Materials. <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/indiaofficeselect/PhotoShowDesc.s.asp?CollID=1779> (Accessed 2016.02.22)

²³ Bharath, S. R. 'The Sachés: a family of photographers working in India during the 19th century'. 2010. p. 7



fig. 22. Gustav Jägermayer. Großglockner from Southeast, Photographic Expedition. 1863

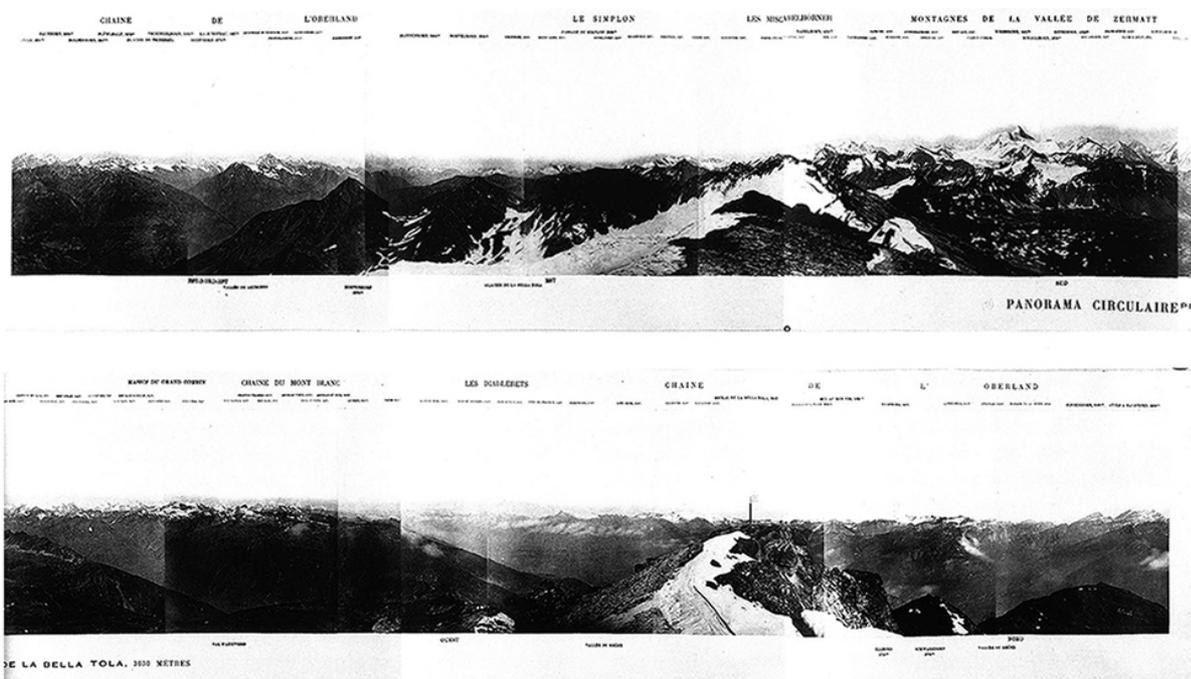


fig. 23. Aime Civiale, Panorama circulaire pris de la Bella Tola. 1866–1882²¹

²⁴ Source: 'Counting on the Unexpected: Aime Civiale's Mountain Photography. http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/khi/mitarbeiter-gaeste/wissenschaftliche_Mitarb/brevern/PDF/Counting_Brevern.pdf

British India, photographed Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal from 1883 to 1908. White was exceptional in his forming close relationships with local people, referring to them as "his best friends" and helped the British to govern the Sikkim region together with a "council composed of the chief Dewans, Lamas and Kazis".²⁵ He is reported to have been the only member of the controversial 1903-04 British expedition to Tibet who was permitted to photograph Lhasa's monasteries.²⁶

The Pyrenees, situated close to the main tourist routes of Europe and easier to climb than the Alps, were popular destinations for mountain photographers. Interesting work was produced by Farnham Maxwell-Lyte, a chemist and researcher, and Joseph Vigier, a commercial photographer. Maxwell-Lyte was also co-founder of Société Ramond, an association working in the Pyrenees on ethnographic and scientific studies. He also made observations of the region using large telescopes and meteorological readings.

All these photographers and many more, either for money, science, politics or pleasure, spent their time and energy working in arduous conditions and sometimes risking their lives in order to make mountain photographs. Their inner experience and the ways they dealt with their surroundings – natural and human – during the expeditions differ in every case and can only be traced through their personal writings. Their photographs document the interaction of humans with high altitude during the second part of the 19th century and the growing presence of mountains in the popular imagination. Man was no longer a trivial element of Earth, subordinate in his powers, but a robust presence able to transcend rock, weather and elevation. The conquest of mountains signaled the vertical ascent of man at the center of the Universe – only the Creator was higher.

²⁵ King's College London. 'John Claude White -politics'. Online Exhibitions '*A Daughter of the Empire*': Beryl White in India 1901- 1903. <http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/archives/a-daughter-of-the-empire/family/jcw-politics>. (Accessed 2016-02-21).

²⁶ Hannavy, J (ed). *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, New York : Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 2009. p. 1496.



g. 24. Luigi Montabone, Vittorio Emanuele II with his entourage before the hunting tent camp of Orvieille. circa 1871

With the rise of mountaineering and the advent of photography, the symbolism of mountains in Western culture changed irreversibly. Photography flattened the physical volume of the mountain and brought views of the previously unworldly lands and spiritual places of mountain peaks to city centers and exhibition halls. The mountain peak was no longer a barrier or a holy place, but “a staircase for human ambition”²⁷ that could be fit on a postcard.

3.4 Land surveys and the birth of National Parks

How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents?²⁸

Two of the largest 19th century land surveys, launched by governmental bodies, were the Great Trigonometry Survey and the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories. The first, initiating from the British

²⁷ Schama, S. *Landscape and Memory*, New York: Knopf. 1995. p. 422.

²⁸ Leferve, Henri. *The production of space/ Henri Leferve; translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith*, 1991. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1974. p. 85

East India Company in 1802, aimed to map Britain's territories in India and the geomorphology of central Asia. The second, starting in 1867 by the Department of the Interior of the United States, was initially a survey on geology and topography in the recently admitted State of Nebraska. It later expanded to other states in the West, reporting also on the ethnology and philology of the areas. Socially and culturally, both were intended to assimilate otherness.

The Great Trigonometry Survey took more than 60 years and during its last period it was run under the command of Captain T. G. Montgomerie who had filled in "the blanks on the map of Tibet and Central Asia".²⁹ Britain was facing the issue of the inaccessible kingdoms of the Himalayas and of the North-East Frontier Agency. The Himalayas were the ultimate vertical frontier that man could encounter on Earth, and thus had to be mapped and conquered. Because the inhabitants of these areas were hostile to foreigners and unlikely to become subjects of a government survey, Montgomerie invented the "*pundits*"³⁰ who also gave reports for culture and politics.³¹ Due to technical reasons, photography was not a part of the Survey, yet it opened the way to future photographic expeditions in the 1860s. In 1865 the Royal Geographic Society decided to name the highest mountain of the world after the first leader of the Survey, despite his objection. The given name, as George Everest complained, could not be pronounced by "natives of India" and could not "be written in Hindi".³²

In the United States, two years after the end of the Civil war, the Union was still in search of its identity. Many areas in the West remained unmapped. Unable to be exploited or inhabited in this state, the Department of the Interior decided to fund the exploration of the new territory of Nebraska, an action that evolved

²⁹ Ward, Michael. 'The Survey of India and the Pundits. The Secret Exploration of the Himalaya and Central Asia' *The Alpine Journal*. 1998. p. 60

³⁰ Local men trained in survey, in disguise of traders or pilgrims that used covert measurement instruments.

³¹ Ward, M. 'The Survey of India and the Pundits. The Secret Exploration of the Himalaya and Central Asia'. 1998. p. 60

³² 'Naming Mount Everest'. *Mount Everest the British Story*. <http://www.everest1953.co.uk/naming-mount-everest> (Accessed 2016.02.28)

into a twenty-year survey that mapped hundreds of thousands of square miles. In 1870, the rising publicity of an unofficial exploration in the area of Yellowstone in northwestern Wyoming caught the attention of the press and eventually reached Congress. One year later, the Department of the Interior assigned the physician, geologist, naturalist and then Head of the U.S. Geological Survey of Territories, Ferdinand Heyden, to lead the first official exploration in Yellowstone.

Heyden had participated in another attempt to approach Yellowstone in 1860 that failed because of bad planning and early snow,³³ so he was eager to investigate the territory. The Heyden Survey lasted almost two months and was complemented by a survey of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Among its members, apart from scientists, guides and technical staff, were the photographer William Henry Jackson, the artist Henry Elliot and the guest artist Thomas Moran. Their work was to document the Survey and the visited lands and to provide the "visual proof of Yellowstone's unique curiosities".³⁴ Heyden, with the help of members of the 1870 expedition and other influential individuals, advocated to Congress an act for the protection of the area and, in 1st March, 1872 the world's first national park was born.

3.5 Yellowstone and other National Parks

"It is a scene of transcendent beauty which has been viewed by few white men, and we felt glad to have looked upon it before its primeval solitude should be broken by the crowds of pleasure seekers which at no distant day will throng its shores."

David E. Folsom, organizer of the 1869 expedition, recalling Yellowstone Lake

From the 1600s until 1871, Native American tribes of Bannocks, Sheepeaters, Crows, Blackfeet and Shoshones were moving and hunting along the lands of the

³³ Clary, D. A. *"The place where hell bubbled up" A History of the First National Park*. Washington: Office Publications National Park Service. U.S. Department of the Interior. 1972. p. 11

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 22

Yellowstone River. They were familiar with the natural wonders of their area and their presence "left no mark on the land".³⁵ The history of white men in Yellowstone begins in 1806 with beaver hunters, who made the animal extinct around 1840, and continues through the 1860s, when gold hunters unsuccessfully searched the river for a decade. In this period the tales of the wonders of the area attracted entrepreneurs and officials who wanted to explore the area themselves and three separate expeditions occurred in 1869, 1870 and 1871. Their members stated their intention to protect Yellowstone from private exploitation and preserve it for public use.

The "excellent photographs of W. H. Jackson and the artistry of H. W. Elliot and T. Moran" were used as documents to convince Congress of the aesthetic value of the surveyed lands. In 1872 the Yellowstone Park Act declared the area "reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale" and set it apart "as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people",³⁶ while "any source connected with the park" would be spent for the park's management.³⁷ The Act was based on the Yosemite Grant Act of 1864 that had declared Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Groove a protected area for public use, under the care of the State of California. Aside from what the US Code asserted, national parks were "a totally new invention"³⁸ so no one actually knew what a National Park was or how to administer it. In the coming decades the wildlife and natural sites of both Yellowstone and Yosemite suffered from poachers and vandals and from bad or absent administration. But insufficient legislation and mistaken jurisdiction were just expressions of the general inability of modern, Western man to interact with nature. This inability was also visible in other incidents. In 1870, in Yosemite Mariposa Groove, three Californians cut

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 10

³⁶ United States Code > Title 16 > Chapter 1 > Subchapter V > § 21 R.S. § 2474 derived from act Mar. 1, 1872, ch. 24, § 1, 17 Stat. 32.

³⁷ *Ibid.* § 22 R.S. § 2474 derived from act Mar. 1, 1872, ch. 24, § 1, 17 Stat. 32.

³⁸ Clary, D. A. "The place where hell bubbled up" *A History of the First National Park*. 1972. p. 37



fig. 25. William H. Jackson, Camp by small lake between East Fork & Yellowstone Lake. 1871



fig. 26. William H. Jackson, Upper Firehole, from Old Faithful crater. 1871

the trunk of a Red Sequoia Giant, large enough for a car to pass through. They were never punished, and managed to turn the cut tree into a tourist attraction that people were enthusiastic to photograph. Carleton Watkins was among those who photographed the wounded Giant (*fig.27*) known as "Tunnel Tree", which eventually starved and died.³⁹ In 1874 a Montana newspaper complained of the incompetence of the Government in taking care of Yellowstone, referring to it as a "national elephant" that government adopted "as one of the nation's pets" and did nothing to make it "approachable and attractive"⁴⁰. The government's intention to create demarcated parks out of living, borderless ecosystems failed because both sides, the legal and the illegal, approached nature as a source of gain. Whether it was turning it into a tourist attraction that would uplift the national image or into lands for hunt and for raw material, these approaches diminished and neglected the inherent significance of landscape.

In the next years, the administration of Yellowstone was passed to the jurisdiction of the US Army until 1916, when a different body, the National Park Service, took over. In this time the idea of National Parks, having originated in Canada and Australia, spread around the globe. Weaker, newly formed nations that, suffered from national anxiety, were the first to create National Parks, while more powerful ones, like Britain and France, began with designating parks in their colonies.⁴¹

Each nation applied their own characteristics to National Parks, so their forms varied. Whether tourist resorts, urban gardens, conservation areas or lands of scientific research, the majority of National Parks shared an administrative structure in which local authorities distinguished a piece of landscape from its surroundings and defined it as an area protected from hunting, construction and

³⁹ It is estimated that it was over 2400 years old.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Clary, D. A. 1972. pp 36

⁴¹ Frost, Hall. *Tourism and National Parks. International perspectives on development, histories and change.* 2009. New York: Routledge.



fig. 27. Carleton E. Watkins. Dead Giant. 1870-1880

exploitation of its natural resources. The way each nation exploited the symbolic, iconic and spiritual resources of the landscapes of their National Parks followed two main directions – either turning them into tourist attractions and lands for recreation, or guarding them from human presence by applying “an exceptionally strict protection regime”⁴². The first direction followed the American Yellowstone example, while the second became known as the Swiss model, the second nation to form a National Park in Europe. Both models – transformation or conservation of wilderness – dealt with the same demand: modernization.⁴³

Aside from their modern character, Kupper suggests another common point among National Parks. They are all related to the notion of “wilderness” and were based on three movements. They “expressed an idea of social progress”, they “led to measurement and mapping of the entire earth’s surface”, and they implemented “a dual-category system” that conceived the National Park “as a

⁴² Kupper, P. *Creating Wilderness: A Transnational History of the Swiss National Park*; translated by Giselle Weiss. New York: Berghahn Books. 2012. p. 3

⁴³ Von Hardenberg, W. G. 'Beyond Human Limits, The Culture of Nature Conservation in Interwar Italy'. *Aether: The Journal of Media Geography*. 2013. p. 64

natural space or wilderness separate from social space".⁴⁴ The cleavage of the Park area from social space transformed its landscape into a "looking-glass version of normal social space", a distant imaginary and a heterotopia, constituting "civilization's 'other'".⁴⁵ The establishment of National Parks distinguished a beautiful and noteworthy landscape from the whole, defining its limits and controlling it in the name of, although public, still human ownership. The idea of ownership of landscape was based on the ideology that the natural environment was a commodity at human disposal and as Frost, Hall and Runte agree, in a game of economics, "ecology was the pawn".⁴⁶

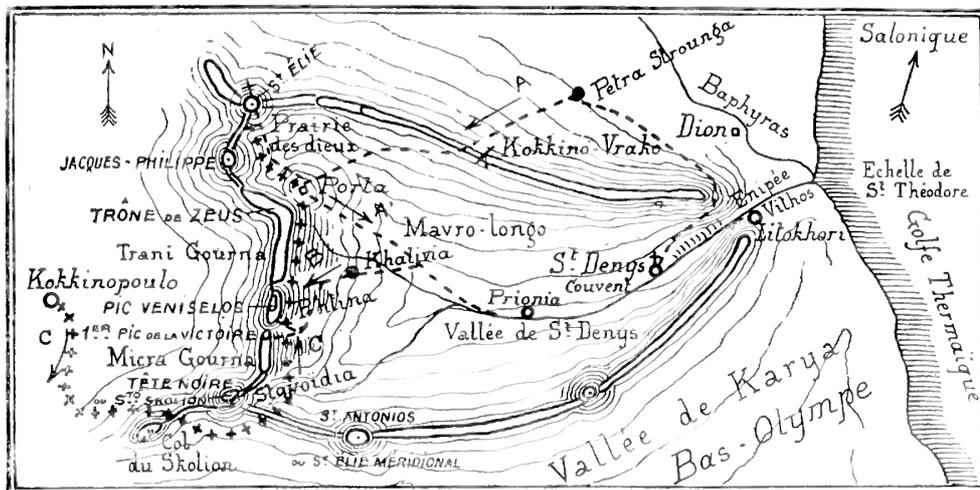
Landscape photos, as visual evidence of the beautiful and the noteworthy, functioned as proof for the importance of the Parks' areas. The invention of the National Park institution isolated a piece of land and defined it as an area of exceptional beauty and importance that should be protected. This act, like the act of landscape photography, in one way protected the natural environment. In another way it increased the division of landscape to valuable and unworthy areas. In National Parks, by isolating a landscape from its surroundings by turning it into a natural reserve, or by modifying it with roads and hotels to satisfy its visitors, humans delimited and altered landscape in order to fit it within each Park's purpose. Landscape photography fitted with both models for National Parks, offering appealing tourist views or scientific documentation on demand.

⁴⁴ Kupper, P. *Creating Wilderness: A Transnational History of the Swiss National Park*; translated by Giselle Weiss. 2012. pp. 5-6

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 6

⁴⁶ Quoted in Frost, Hall. *Tourism and National Parks. International perspectives on development, histories and change.* 2009. p. 49.

Carte schématique du Haut-Olympe



- A. - Notre chemin p^r le S^t Elie par S^t Denys. - Petra Strounga, - le Kokkino Vrako et la Porta.
 A'. - Retour. - S^t Elie, - Porta, - Mavro-longo, - Scierie de Frionia.
 B. - Ascension des Grands Pies - par Frionia - le Mavro-longo - la Khalivia - 1^{er} Pic de la Victoire ou Roche Tarpéienne - Pic Veniseles.
 C. - Chemin de Barth - par Kokkinopoulo - le col du Skolion - la prairie de Stavoidia - la crête de Phtina - au pied des grands pics, la Porta, le S^t Elie. + + + + +

fig 28: Map of Olympus Drawn by Fred Boissonnas of Daviel Baud Bovy, included in *Le Grece Immortell*, published in 1919. Achive of F.Boissonnas Museum Photography of Thessaloniki. Accessed 21.11.2015

4. Case Study – Frederic Boissonnas and Mount Olympus

4.1 Mount Olympus before 1913

The landscape of Mount Olympus, physical and cultural, is what one would call as old as the stones. Similar to the orogenic processes that uplifted the limestone of the mountain and created the geological mystery of the Pelagonian tectonic window of Mount Olympus, mortal imagination, fascinated by the force of nature, gave birth to Ancient Greek mythology, incarnating natural phenomena into the existence of Olympian Gods.¹ The origin of its name is lost somewhere 4000 years ago. The theories relating to its origin vary, but from the writings of Homer in the 9th century BC until the early dictionaries of the 1st centuries AD, Olympus was related to the sky, elevation and light.²

Just like all the mountains of Ancient Greece, it was a source of raw materials, a place for hunting and military action and a sanctuary of the divine.³ It was identified with the 12 most important gods of the Greek polytheist religion, making it a source of awe and inspiration since antiquity. In the highest position was Zeus, god of thunder and rain, who observed the world from the summit of the mountain. Because of its central role in the religion of Ancient Greece, Olympus was described throughout poetry, theatrical plays and narrative writings, acting as a symbolic place of power and ideals. The Romans also considered Mount Olympus as a dwelling of the Gods, but it was not the central mountain of their Cosmos and thus did not dominate their invocations.

During the Byzantine era the references to the mountain vanish for many centuries as Orthodox Christianity tried to erase all associations of the divine

¹ I thank Mike Stylos, PhD Geologist, researcher of Mount Olympus, for the correction of this sentence.

² Nezis, N. *Olympos*. 2003. p. 80

³ Buxton, R. 'Imaginary Greek Mountains'. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 112. 1992. p. 1-15

with the old Olympian gods. They reappeared to the west during the Renaissance when the mountain was used as an imaginary landscape in compositions on Classical themes. In 1517-18 Raphael's painting of the ceiling of the main entrance to the Villa Farnesina in Rome was inspired by the myth of Psyche who went to Mount Olympus in search of Eros (*fig.29*). In this painting, as well as in others on similar themes during the period, gods and goddesses appear above or within the clouds and Zeus is sitting on his throne, but there is no depiction of any mountain. In 1595, *Mount Olympus the Home of Gods* (*fig.30*) appeared on a copper plate by geographer Abraham Ortelius without any gods or goddesses, but with an abstract form to represent the mountain, far from its real one. Until the 18th century, Mount Olympus was depicted in painting in a symbolic, lyrical way, like in *The Apotheosis of Hercules* (*fig.32*) that King Louis XV of France ordered as decoration for his palace at Versailles. Around the end of the century exploratory travel and cartography spread and the mountain started to appear on maps and engravings (*fig.33-35*) with its physical form and in its actual location. At the same time the peace that the mountain enjoyed during the Roman and Byzantine eras had been interrupted. Armed guerrilla groups called *kleftes*⁴ that had withdrawn to mountainous areas to keep away from Ottoman rule had found sanctuary in the rough landscape of Mount Olympus. Throughout these centuries, the desire for liberation strengthened among the oppressed local populations and the hostile caves and gorges of their lands were praised as sources of freedom in local folksongs. Once again in Greek poetry Mount Olympus had become a land of power and vision.

⁴ Literary = thieves. It was usual to steal or to kidnap in order to survive. Towards 1821 and the Greek Revolution they were attributed with the romantic character of robust warriors who would overthrow the Ottoman domination. Their role in the Struggle of Independence was indeed crucial since they were a serious militant force for the Greek side.

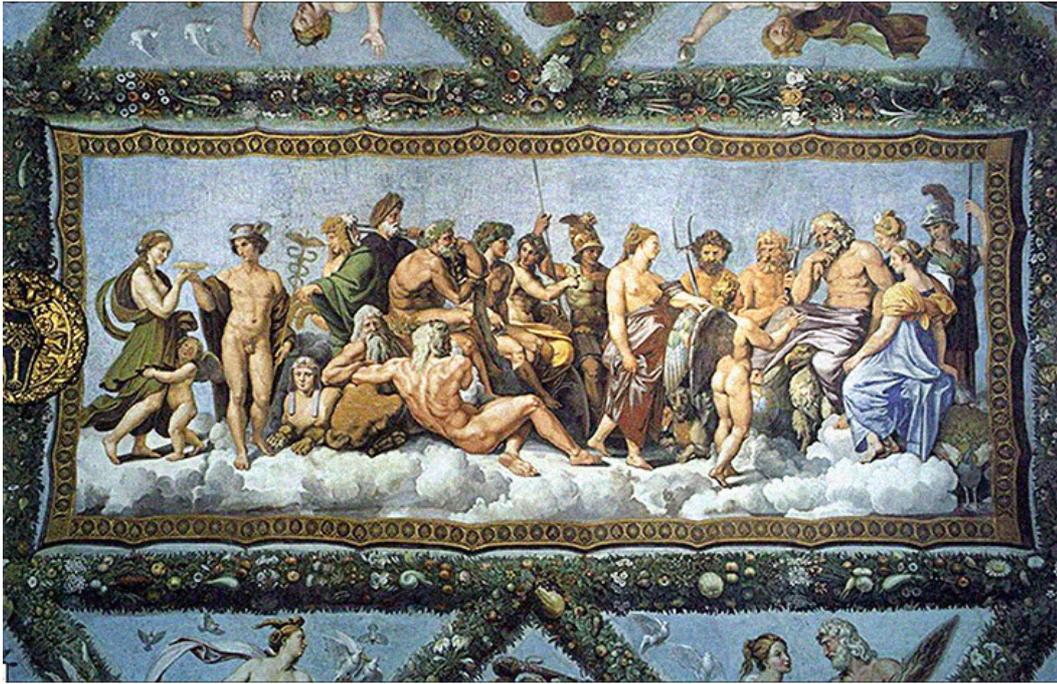


fig. 29. Raphael, Psyche Received on Olympus Villa Farnesina, Rome. 1517-18



fig. 30. Abraham Ortelius, Mount Olympus the Home of the Gods.1595



fig 31. The Gods on Mount Olympus, Antonio Verrio. 1690-1694



fig 32. The Apotheosis of Hercules, François Lemoyne. 1731-1736

4.2 The mountain and the map of Greece

Despite Mount Olympus' moderate elevation of 2918 meters, its proximity to the Aegean Sea makes it one of the steepest peaks of southern Europe and the ancient use of the name "Olympus" in art, sciences and mythology has made it one of the most famous mountains of the world. Its fame, big enough to make its conquest desirable, did not make its ascent any easier. Due to the large number of *kleftes* dwelling in its terrain, it was expected to be a base of operations for the 1821 Revolution, but the insurrections that began there in 1822, 1833 and 1854 were unsuccessful. When in 1881 Thessaly was annexed to the modern Greek State, Mount Olympus stood on the borders of the newborn nation. For the next decades it could only be seen from the northern areas of modern Greece and, while mountaineering and cartography were thriving in Europe, the presence of *kleftes* kept Olympus unreachable until the beginning of the 20th century.

The modern history of its explorations began in the mid-16th century when Saint Dionysios explored the mountain to find a site for his retreat and for a monastery. In 1669 Sultan Mehmet IV led a huge hunting party with horses and camels and in 1780 a French naval officer and a partner attempted to ascent, but snow and fog prevent them from continuing.⁵ During the 19th century geographers, geologists, botanists and other explorers studied Olympus, but none managed to ascend to its summit or to map its territory.

From the beginning of the Greek Struggle for Macedonia in 1904 until the end of Second Balkan War in 1912, the mountain lay in the crossfire of military struggles, yet attempts to reach the summit became more frequent during this

⁵ Nezis, N. *Olympos*, Athens: Anavasi. 2003. pp 122



fig 33: W. Purser and E. Finden, Olympus, engraving. 1833.JPG



fig 34: J.C. Bentley, Turkey, Mount Olympus and Brusa, engraving.
1838



fig 35: T. Taylor, Le Mont Olympe, engraving. 1879

period. In 1911, the third attempt of the German engineer and alpinist Edward Richter resulted in his kidnapping, causing a diplomatic crisis between the Ottoman Empire and Germany and in 1912 no organized expedition approached the mountain. In 1913, with the Treaty of Bucharest, the coastal part of Macedonia was incorporated into Greek borders and Mount Olympus was annexed to Greece. A new chapter in the mountain's history was about to begin.

4.3 The photographer Frederic Boissonnas

Frederic-Francois Boissonnas was born in 1858 in Geneva, a city from which one can gaze at the Alps and even see the peak of Mont Blanc when the weather is good. His father, Henri-Antoine Boissonnas, was a good friend of the French banker Jean-Gabriel Eygene, an important leader of the philhellenic movement that had been growing in Geneva since the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the Greek Struggle of Independence. Coming from great-grandparents that had emigrated from the South of France to Switzerland in the mid-18th century, Frederic considered himself a descendant of Ancient Greeks that had settled in the estuary of Rhone during the 3rd century BC.⁶

The photographic business his father had started in 1864 was growing and Boissonnas received a classical education, travelled in Europe and studied with renowned photographers, mastering his photographic skills.⁷ He was deeply influenced by the Hungarian Karoly Koller and the German, Friedrich Brandseph, and in 1887 took over the family atelier together with his older brother Edmond-Victor. There, Edmond-Victor, a chemist specializing in photochemistry, explored

⁶ Borel, G. Images of Greece, F. Boissonnas. Athens: Rizarios Foundation. 2001. p. 18

⁷ The dynasty of Boissonnas photographers lasted more than 100 years. Henri-Antoine (1833-1889) ran the atelier until 1886. His sons Francois-Frederic (1858-1946) and Edmond-Victor (1862-1890) succeed him in 1887 but Edmond-Victor died of typhus and Fred ran it on his own until 1920. His eldest son, Edward-Edmond (1891-1924) succeeded him from 1920-1924 when he died. His brother Henri-Paul (1894-1966), third son of Fred, took over until 1927 when he devoted himself to restoring artwork. In 1927 Paul (1902-1983), the seventh son of Fred, took over until 1969 that passed it to his son Gad-Borel (1942) who kept it until 1980.

new technologies in photography and Fred experimented in aesthetics. In 1889 Edmond used isolated eosin on orthochromatic plates, managing to render color tones properly, an innovation that he presented to the Annual International Exhibition of Brussels the same year.

After Edmond's premature death in the United States, Frederic began to photograph around Geneva with the plates his brother had prepared for the atelier. With the use of a telescopic lens from England he made a photograph of Mont Blanc that circulated around the world and was awarded a medal by the Royal Photographic Society in 1892.⁸ In that photo, apart from the visual effect of the lens, the tones of white (snow) and blue (sky) were clearly distinct for the first time in mountain photography, giving an impressive image of the mountain. His career advanced rapidly and he became the official photographer of the Exposition Nationale in Geneva in 1896, won the first prize in the International Exhibition of Paris in 1900 and bought studios in five more cities,⁹ becoming famous around central Europe.

In 1902, impressed by his work, the Scottish Lord George Napier sent him a telegram asking him to accomplish for Parnassus what he had for Mont-Blanc. Travelling to Greece was Frederic's dream but he turned down the opportunity due to his heavy workload. He returned the money the Lord had sent him for expenses and replied: "If in one year you still have the will...". One year later he received the same telegram and so, in 1903, he went to Greece with his friend Daniel Baud-Bovy, a writer and Dean of the Geneva Fine Arts School, accompanied by their wives.

That year, King George I was ruling the Greek state as a constitutional monarchy whose borders were continuously changing. Crete was fighting for its

⁸ Chest of books. Telephotographic Lens. Preface and Historical notes. <http://chestofbooks.com/arts/photography/Telephotographic-Lens/Preface-And-Historical-Notes.html#.Vltue2SrRGE> (Accessed 2016.17.03)

⁹ He bought the studio of Nadar in Marseille, the studio of Pasetti in St. Petersburg with Egger, the studio of Bellingrard in Lyon with Madnin, and opened a studio with Taponier in Paris and with Neumayer in Reims. Sohler, Crispini. *Usages Du Monde Et De Le Photographie*, Fred Boissonas. Geneva: Georg Editeur. 2013.

independence from the Turks and the provinces of Greek Macedonia, Epirus, Thrace and Minor Asia were still parts of the Ottoman Empire.. Borderline instability, influences from foreign powers and personal interests resulted in uprisings, coups and constant changes of government. The Swiss group arrived in Corfu, spent two months around Parnassos trying to make a satisfying photo of the mountain and then went on to other places, collecting material for an exhibition in Geneva.

Boissonnas, an ingenious entrepreneur and known philhellene, immediately formed a strong vision for Greece and his work there. This motivated him to approach the Greek government in 1905 to ask for funding for photographing Greece and the districts that were about to be annexed to the Greek nation-state – "an innovative policy, which would use the immediacy, the 'objectivity' and also the poetry of photography image in service of national interests"¹⁰. In 1907, King George I agreed to grant him a small amount of money that Boissonnas did not receive until 1919. He returned to Greece in 1907 and in 1908 made photos with his own means for a publication prepared with Baud-Bovy. Although extremely expensive, the book *En Grèce par monts et parvaux* that came out in 1910, got excellent reviews and rapidly sold out. One year later Boissonnas returned with Baud-Bovy to visit many Greek islands, making photos that he exhibited in the Rath Museum of Geneva in 1912.

In 1913 the Prime minister of the Greek state was the Cretan Eleftherios Venizelos of the Liberal Party. Venizelos had undertaken reforms in the economy, education and labor, had accepted the unification of Crete and his diplomacy played a key role in annexing the "New Lands"¹¹ and forwarding the "Great Idea"¹².

¹⁰ Mpountouri, E. 'Photography and Foreign Policy (1905 – 22) : The contribution of Boissonnas family'. Papaioannou, I. (ed). Greek Photography and Photography in Greece. Athens: Nefeli. 2013. p. 35

¹¹ Areas annexed to Greece after the Balkan Wars and World War I

¹² Literary = Big Idea. Nationalist concept to liberate parts of previous Byzantine Empire from Turks to form a Greek state from Ionian Sea to Black Sea and Asia Minor, and, from Trace, Macedonia and Epirus, to Cyprus.

The same year Boissonnas finally received the outstanding money, together with supplementary financial aid from the Greek Ambassador in Paris, to photograph the “New Lands” of Epirus and Macedonia. At the end of the second Balkan War, Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy arrived in Greece with the support of the Greek government, this time intending to go north.

4.4 The first recorded ascent¹³

Fred Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy began their 1913 journey from Epirus and Pindus, following the Greek army and photographing the *New Lands*. They arrived in Thessaloniki in mid-summer and they had to undergo a double vaccination procedure due to the cholera epidemic that was effecting the city. Frustrated by the unbearable heat, they decided to take advantage of the weeklong interval between inoculations to visit Mount Olympus. At that time Mount Olympus was a land of myth and danger. Locals had to deal with life and the Ottoman occupation and were not interested in mountaineering. The previous attempts to explore the mountain by national and international, military and scientific bodies were fruitless, so, apart from the guerrilla groups, the only people familiar with the landscape of Olympus were local hunters and loggers. The traveling company arrived at the port of Gritsa and headed to Litochoro (~300m), the last village before the main mountain itself. On the way Boissonnas took photos from the port,¹⁴ distant views of the mountain and of people they met on the way (*fig.36-39*). The known date of their arrival is July 28, 1913,¹⁵ yet Kyritsis notes

¹³ This chapter is based on descriptions of the first ascent of Daniel Baud-Bovy, found in chapter *L' Olympe of Le Greece Immortelle* published in 1919, pages 41-87, and, in chapter *Explorations of mountains. Mountaineering on Olympus of Olympus and Boissonnas* published in 2003, pp. 17-20.

¹⁴ Archive of Fred Boissonnas. Museum of Photography Thessaloniki. Many photographs are not dated, thus the number is estimated related to other photos. Accessed 2016.03.24

¹⁵ Kyritsis, I. *Olympus and Boissonas*. 2003. p. 18

I realized that there is a mistake with these dates. Because they come from the diaries of Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy, they are based on the Western Europe calendar. In Greece until 1923 the old (Julian) Calendar was in use, which dated thirteen days back. 28.7.1913 for Europe was for Greece 15.7.1913. If we want to be accurate with the rules of local history, the known dates are invalid. This means that for Greek history the first ascent on Mount Olympus was on 20.7.1913 and not on the 2nd of August.¹⁶

In search of a guide, they were introduced to the chamois hunter Christos Kakkalos.

Kakkalos was a great musician, a master of the lute. Because of his skill, he joined the village for weddings, escaping from the isolation of the mountain and earning additional money. Probably the locals suggested Kakkalos as a man who went up and down the mountain frequently. Kakkalos was confident in escorting the Swiss gentlemen because, apart from his knowledge of the terrain of the mountain, there was a kind of respect among the *kleftes* and the local loggers and hunters. Because they had deals with the guerilla groups of the area, and provided them with food and wood, the *kleftes* didn't want to start quarrels with them because they might face troubles later on.¹⁷

The next day they started the ascent with some companions of Kakkalos and reached 1940m where they slept overnight with loggers (*fig.42*). It seems that up to this point Boissonnas took about 10 photos, depicting their guides within the landscape (*fig.40-41*) and some landscape views (*fig.43*). They continued the next morning, reaching the lower peaks *Prophet Ilias* (2803m) and *Toumba* (2801m), from where they saw the whole expanse of the central peaks and the abyss below it. Amazed by the geometry of the summit that lay before them, they baptized it; "the majestic sitting and framing by two equal peaks determined us to name it: the Throne of Zeus"¹⁸. After the companions of Kakkalos killed two chamois, Boissonnas, possibly attracted by the wildness of

¹⁶ Kyritsis, Ioannis. 2015. Personal communication. Author of the book *Olympus and Boissonnas*, 2003, Thessaloniki. Associate professor in Department of Economics of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, PhD on 'Development of stochastic models analyzing natural areas' parameters: The case of Mount Olympus'. Kyritsis lives and grew up in Litochoro and knew Kakkalos personally. Interview 21.12.2015, 13:30pm

¹⁷ Kyritsis, I. Personal communication. Interview 21.12.2015, 13:30pm, Thessaloniki

¹⁸ Baud-Bovy, D. 'L' Olympe'. *Le Greece Immortel*. Geneva: Edition's D'art Boissonas. 1919. p. 63

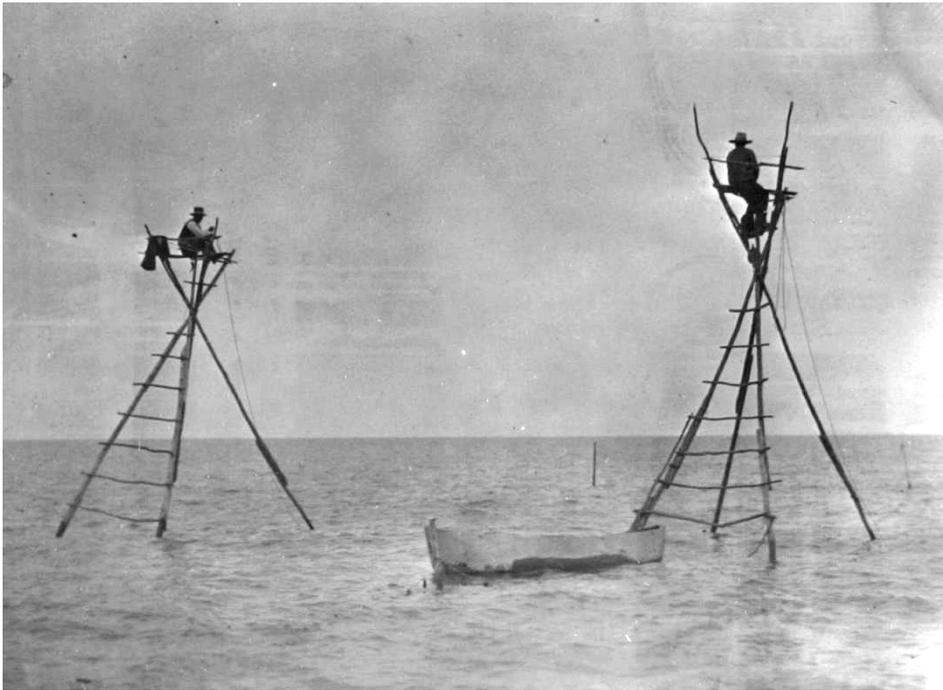


fig. 36. Fred Boissonnas. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 37. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Litochoro. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



Fig. 38. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Litochoro. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive /
Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki
Photography Museum



fig. 39. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Litochoro. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive /
Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki
Photography Museum

the scene, took eight photos of the hunters treating the dead animals (*fig.44-45*). While Boissonnas took some additional photos of the central mountain scape (*fig.46*), Baud-Bovy questioned Kakkalos on the peaks:

- Did men go up there? Or klephtes, hunters?
 - No, he said laughing, amazed by my question, no, no, no! The eagle alone goes!
 - If I gave you 50 drachmas, would you take me up there?
 - 50 drachmas, he says. 50 drachmas is an amount, but life is worth more. [...]
- "Gorphi, gorphi!" repeated Christo and shook his head: "But no one went there before, and probably no one ever will."¹⁹

The Swiss were intrigued by the fact that no one had ascended the mountain, since other famous European summits had already been conquered.²⁰ Back then no one knew which was the higher peak, nor how to get there, so the two gentlemen looked at the peaks "*with skepticism*"²¹. Kyritsis comments that they "were afraid". "Imagine being up there without knowing anything. They looked at Mytikas²² and concluded that it was impossible to climb"²³, so, unsatisfied, they begin to descend. On the way down, they changed their mind.

Kakkalos had in mind that there could be some passage to the main peak from another side and before reaching the monastery of Agios Dionisios (~900m), told them "You want to go up there? I will take you!" Boissonnas notes that they heard the bells of the monastery ringing and were enthused, as if the gongs were telling them "Forward!", encouraging them to ascend.²⁴

Their dragonman did not want to leave them alone due to the peril of *kleftes*, but Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy decide to reorganize and try to ascend the next day with Kakkalos. With them came another hunter and two muleteers with mules to carry the camera equipment. On the way up the weather became bad and they

¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp 63-64

²⁰ This comment is from Nikos Georgoulis, chairman of Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering & Climbing. Personal Communication 2016.03.04, 12:30pm, Athens

²¹ Kyritsis, I. 2003. *Olympus and Boissonnas*. p. 19

²² The highest peak of Mount Olympus massif. 2918m

²³ Kyritsis, I. Personal communication. Interview 21.12.2015, 13:30pm, Thessaloniki

²⁴ *Ibid.*

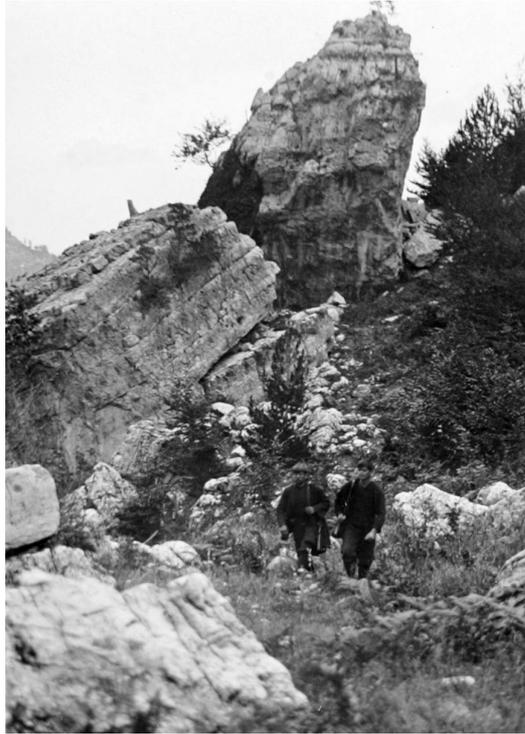


fig. 40. Fred Boissonnas, Defile of Kleftes.
1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki
Museum of Photography

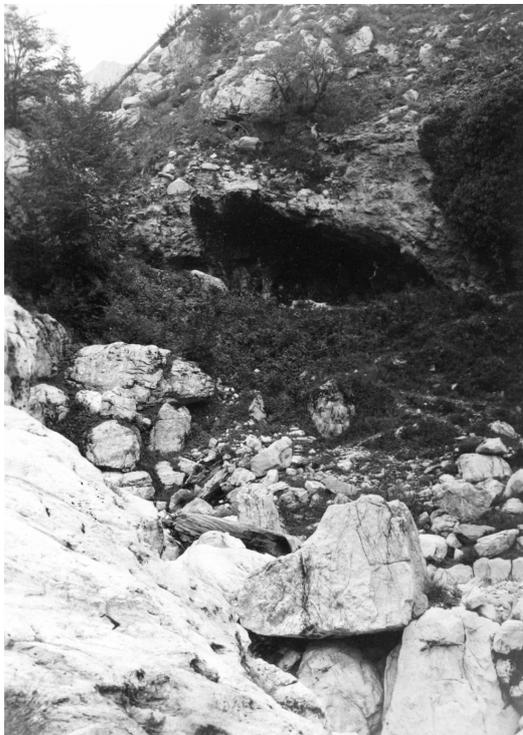


fig. 41. Fred Boissonnas, Defile of Kleftes.
1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki
Museum of Photography



fig. 42. Fred Boissonnas, *Bivouac*. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 43. Fred Boissonnas, *Sunrise*. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 44. Fred Boissonnas, Hunter. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 45. Fred Boissonnas, Hunters. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

found shelter in a timber's hut. "We feel alone, lost and alone in the middle of this unknown mountain, among the men we barely understand, on the eve of a difficult attempt, and which has so many chances of failure".²⁵ The next day one of the shepherds stayed with the mules and the others, along with the hunter, decided to wait at ~2600m, with most of the equipment. It is not known what they left, but they took a Kodak with them.

They left back part of "the things that take photos", as Kakkalos called it, because he said that "the weight was too much". In that first attempt, they were going while searching so they left the glass plates that were heavy and took mostly light equipment. With the cloudy weather, it is the main reason why we have such few and poor quality photos from that first ascent.²⁶

Through bad weather and fog they continued to ascend and below the high peaks Kakkalos removed his shoes as "they were slippery". The wild hunter walked without shoes and led the way by leaving blood marks on the stones,²⁷ while Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy "probably had rubber soles that were more stable on the rock surface"²⁸. Tied together with a rope, they followed his marks to continue the climb behind him. Boissonnas, with the support of the rope, managed to make a photo as Kakkalos reached a peak that he thought was the summit of the mountain. The Swiss completed the ascent behind him and, full of enthusiasm, took photos of themselves (*fig.47-48*) with the Swiss flag. They baptized this summit the *Peak of Victory*, to honor the victory of the Greek army in Sarandaporo, but soon the clouds parted and a higher peak was revealed above them. They left everything behind as "even the Kodak bothers our guide"²⁹ and climbed behind Kakkalos to the highest peak. This time, certain of their success, they enjoyed the triumph and, "in honor of the great citizen

²⁵ Baud-Bovy, D. 'L' Olympe'. *Le Greece Immortel*. 1919. p. 74

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 84

²⁷ Baud-Bovy, D. 'L' Olympe'. *Le Greece Immortel*. 1919. p. 78

²⁸ Kyritsis, I. Personal communication. Interview 21.12.2015, 13:30pm, Thessaloniki

²⁹ Baud-Bovy, D. 'L' Olympe'. *Le Greece Immortel*. 1919. p. 84



fig. 46. Fred Boissonnas, Throne of Zeus seen from the summit Jacques Philippe. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

that the future will place at the right hand of the gods of Greece and among his heroes", they baptized the "supreme peak, Veniselos".³⁰ The engraved piece of aluminum they left behind marked the time as 10:25' of 02.08.1913 (20.7.1913 for Julian Calendar) and was the first recorded ascent of the peak of Olympus.

When Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy came to Olympus in 1913, the mountain was autonomously governed by the *kleftes*. Its terrain was unfamiliar and hostile, and its image was practically unknown. It was the mythical mountain of the 12 gods, known everywhere as a symbolic landscape, but one that no one had experienced firsthand. Along with the Acropolis, Mount Olympus was one of the earth massifs integral to Ancient Greek civilization and an important imaginary landscape since Classical antiquity. The Acropolis, a symbol of wisdom and culture, was part of the modern Greek state since 1828 and was one of the first monuments in Europe to be photographed in 1839. Olympus, a symbol of power and light, had just been returned to Greece and had never been approached.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 87



fig. 47. Fred Boissonnas, Baud-Bovy, Olympus. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 48. Daniel Baud-Bovy, Boissonnas, Olympus. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

The images of Boissonnas were the first documentation of the mountain and represented the end of mythology.

In this first visit, most of Boissonnas' images were of landscapes at low altitudes and of people, but not of the main ascent or the central peaks. The absence of photos from the main climb reveals its difficulty.³¹ The photos Boissonnas did not take illustrate his exposure to events and the immediacy of their experience climbing the mountain. Together with his friend, they entered an unfamiliar situation that caused them to fear for their own lives, a situation beyond the sublime. There, they had no time for photos and their guide, far from a serene shepherd of the classical landscape, was not willing to carry any photographic equipment, nor did he hold back from entering the unknown. Kakkalos and the other men that accompanied them were actually quite close to the original Arcadians. They were harsh, brutal and archetypal, carrying dead animals to the foot of the Throne of Zeus. Kakkalos, their guide to the peak and a master of the lute, led the way through bad weather by blood marks on stones, as if part of a sacrificial ritual. The Swiss gentlemen interrupted the pagan scene by taking out their national flag and making photos of themselves. While "Boissonnas makes another Kodak", "the poor Ghristo's teeth are chattering. His feet are purple"³². But on the second attempt to the peak, Kakkalos wanted to lead the way without carrying anything. In 1913, the first ascent of Mount Olympus was not captured by the photographic lens.

4.5 The expeditions of 1919 and 1927

The first known photos of the peaks of Olympus were published in 1915, but they were not taken by Fred Boissonnas. Two university teachers, the Greek

³¹ I thank Mike Styllas for this remark. October 2016. Mount Olympus.

³² Baud-Bovy, D. 'L' Olympe'. *Le Greece Immortel*. 1919. p. 82

Aristedes Phoutrides and the American Francis Farquhar – later President of the Sierra Club – made a failed summit attempt just before the outbreak of the First World War and took 14 photographs of the "Snowy Olympus"³³ which they published in US magazines (*fig.49*). Due to the war, the plans of Boissonnas and Baud-Bovy to revisit Mount Olympus were postponed until 1919. The war also delayed their publication of the album *Le Grece Immortelle* and the formal announcement of their first ascent.³⁴ The 295-page book intended to present an image of the new Greek state and the Greek cultural and natural landscape to the rest of Europe. Baud-Bovy used his literary skills to write a 47-page chapter on Olympus and the 1913 ascent that Boissonnas accompanied with a photo of the high peaks complex.

The previous year, following the desire of Prime Minister Venizelos for a "dynamic propaganda"³⁵, Fred Boissonnas signed a preliminary contract with the Greek government to "photographically represent and make known worldwide the beauties of Greek lands". *Le Grece Immortelle* was not part of the official agreement signed in March 1919, but the laudatory references to the Prime Minister, as well as mythological references and Greek vocabulary are frequent. These references praise the Greek character of the mountain that was the target of the propaganda the contract referred to. Their choice to name the highest summit *Pic Venizelos*, implied "who is in charge"³⁶ and "testified to the admiration and also the obligation of the authors to Venizelos"³⁷. Again in this case, the

³³ Baud-Bovy, D. 'The mountain group of Olympus: an essay in nomenclature'. *The Geographic Journal* Vol 57 (3). 1921. pp 204-213

³⁴ Sohler, Estelle. Personal Communication. Co-author of the book '*Usages du monde et de la photographie. Fred Boissonnas*', 2013, Geneva. Senior lecturer in Department of Geography and Environment of University of Geneva. PhD thesis "The political uses of images during the reigns of Menelik II and Haile Selassie (1880-1936)". Skype conversation 16.12.2015, 17:50pm

³⁵ Quoted in Mpountouri, E. 'Photography and Foreign Policy (1905 – 22) : The contribution of Boissonnas family'. 2013. p. 41

³⁶ Frost, Hall.. *Tourism and National Parks. International perspectives on development, histories and change*. 2009. p. 74

³⁷ Mpountouri, E. 'Photography and Foreign Policy (1905 – 22) : The contribution of Boissonnas family'. 2013. p. 41



fig. 49. Francis Farquhar, Olympus. 1914

summit of a mountain was treated as a symbol of sovereignty. Venizelos never climbed but people who worked on his command carved his name into rocks to honor him (*fig.50*), as if the mythic mountain of ancient Greece was given as a prize to the governor of modern Greece.

Later this year, Fred Boissonnas returned to Mount Olympus with Baud-Bovy and his son Henry-Paul (*fig.51*). This time, being familiar with the mountain, they organized their expedition with animals to carry equipment and enough supplies to last for eight days. Kakkalos declined to accompany them, but they found other guides, some of who belonged to the group that kidnapped Richter in 1911.³⁸ They ventured to different peaks everyday to photograph the area and repeated the ascent of Mytikas where they built their first landmark. "All the good quality photos were taken in 1919. Then Boissonnas knew where he was going and, aware of what to do, could prepare properly".³⁹ Boissonnas with the help of his son made around 130 negatives on dry plates.⁴⁰ About half of them depict details, facades and panoramas of the high peaks (*fig.52-53*), revealing a cartographic approach to landscape that Boissonnas extended by making

³⁸ Boissonnas, F. "The baptism of EOS the top of the Pantheon'. EOS : *The Mountain* 1, 1934.

³⁹ Personal Communication. Ioannis Kyritsis. Interview 21.12.2015

⁴⁰ Baud-Bovy also made 10



fig 50. Daniel Baud-Bovy, Henry-Paul Boissonnas. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography



fig. 51. Daniel Baud-Bovy, Fred & Henry-Paul Boissonnas. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography

notes on the printed photos. About 25 of the other half are of trees (*fig.54-55*) and eight are of distant views of the mountain (*fig.56*). The photographer also made images of trees in other parts of Greece and used them symbolically, to imply a Greek character that reminded the viewer of "the prophetic forest that echoed the breath of Zeus"⁴¹. There is also a photo of antique stones (*fig.57*), clearly singing the bonds with Ancient Greek civilization. The rest depict buildings and local people of the villages and the monasteries of the area (*fig.58*), presenting the Orthodox Christian face of Greece.

On the 1919 expedition Boissonnas made his photograph of the Pantheon (*fig.59*), a view of the mountain that even today is one the most famous images of Mount Olympus. In this picture the imaginary landscape of the home of the 12 Olympians is revived. Vertical, dark rocks with acute angles emerge from their low position towards the sky. White clouds spread abstractly at the upper parts of the composition, covering parts of the summits as if hiding the gods and goddesses who sit on top. Contrary to other photos of this expedition that are descriptive documents of the mountain's terrain, this one is a decorative, sublime landscape. Its extensive use by Boissonnas and its vertical composition made it for many years *the* portrait of Mount Olympus, often accompanied by the image of Kakkalos and the dead chamois (*fig.60*) to complement the mountain's portrait. No matter how much he was indebted to his patron Venizelos, the image of Kakkalos signified for him the wilderness, thus in a way Boissonnas glorified the local hunter. With the fine quality photos of the central peak complex that he made during this visit, the Swiss artist could begin to acquaint Europe with the image of the mountain.

In March of 1921, Baud-Bovy published an article in *The Geographical Journal* with an illustrated map and a photograph of Boissonnas, introducing the image of

⁴¹ Quoted in Mpountouri, E. 'Photography and Foreign Policy (1905 – 22) : The contribution of Boissonnas family'. 2013. p. 41

the mountain in a European geographic magazine for the first time. In November, on a train from Skopje to Thessaloniki, Boissonnas met with the engineer Spilios Agapitos and discussed the future of Olympus. The Swiss gentleman intuitively decided to get off the train to visit Low Olympus, but he did not manage to get far as his guide got lost in the snow.⁴² He took about 15 photos and managed to reach a monastery to spend the night. The same year, the Swiss alpinist and engineer Michael Kurz received a permit from the Greek government and came to Mount Olympus together with two other Swiss engineers. They conducted 15 days of research and Kurz, with the guiding of Kakkalos, climbed the last unreachable summit of Olympus⁴³. Two years later Kurz published the book *Le Monte Olympe* with material he had collected. Within ten years of the first ascent, the mountain had been transformed from a mythical, hostile territory of gods and guerrilla groups "into the best-mapped mountain in the world – or very near it"⁴⁴.

Still the amount of visitors to the mountain remained low until 1927, when Boissonnas realized his plan for a large expedition of international tourists. The Swiss photographer had invested a lot in Greece and suffered a great loss in 1923 when the contract between him and the Greek government collapsed.⁴⁵ But his inherent philhellenism kept his interest focused on Greek subject matter and especially on the case of Mount Olympus, of which he wrote

No nation has an area that can be compared with the area of Olympus, so rich in myths, historical memories, all sorts of beauties and possibilities for exploitation. And precisely, against the risk of a foolish and destructive exploitation, we must guard.⁴⁶

It is not known exactly when he got the idea of a team excursion to the peak

⁴² Boissonnas, F. 'Olympus: National Park of Greece'. L'Atlantique, after 1928. Archive of Fred Boissonnas. Museum of Photography Thessaloniki. Accessed 2015.11.21

⁴³ Stefani or Throne of Zeus, 2912m

⁴⁴ A. R. H. Mount Olympus: Review. *The Geographical Journal*. Vol. 63 (4). 1924. p. 343

⁴⁵ The outcome of a Greco-Turkish war 1918-1923 resulted in the collapse of Greek finance.

⁴⁶ Boissonnas, F. Quoted in *Olympus and Boissonnas*. 2003. pp 154

of Mount Olympus, but it was directly connected with another idea he had prior to 1921 – to make Mount Olympus the first National Park of Greece. Boissonnas, active alpinist and famous artist around Europe, could easily approach members of Alpine Clubs, influential civilians and businessmen. By the contact he kept with the Greek entrepreneur Hercule Joannidès, Director of National Steamboats of Greece in Paris, and Spilios Agapitos, the engineer who had just created "at the foot of Pentelicus"⁴⁷, the marvelous forest-city of Ecali"⁴⁸, the Swiss artist managed to return to the summits of Olympus in 1927.⁴⁹ The organizers arranged for the support of the Ministry of Transport, who provided train travel from Athens to the members of the expedition, and the Greek army that provided tents, camping material and an escort for the ascent.

The mixed group of Greek, Swiss, English and French members included 105 people with 56 animals to carry the supplies (*fig.61-62*). The organizer of the team was Spilios Agapitos, the team leader was Fred Boissonnas and the guide was Christos Kakkalos. They begin to ascend on 10 September, 1927 and after two days, thirteen men and ten women of the party – nine of them Greeks – ascended Scolio and 23 went on to climb Mytikas. There, with the encouragement of the foreign alpinists, the creation of a Greek mountaineering association was decided. Boissonnas "at the request of the Greeks renamed the point Pantheon instead of its previous inadequate appellation Mitka and in the name of C.A.F., S.A.C. and the Alpine Club formally baptized the newly-formed Greek Alpine Club (E.O.S)"⁵⁰.

The third visit of Boissonnas to Olympus was a touristic approach that aimed at the promotion of the National Park of Olympus; thus his images illustrate the

⁴⁷ A mountain of elevation 1109m near Athens.

⁴⁸ Boissonnas, F. 'Olympus: National Park of Greece'. L' Atlantique, after 1928. Archive of Fred Boissonnas. Museum of Photography Thessaloniki. Accessed 2015.11.21

⁴⁹ Sohler, E. 'From the Invention of an Imaginary to the Promotion of Tourism: Greece through the Lens of the Photographer F. Boissonnas (1903-1930)'. *Tourism Imaginaries at the Disciplinary Crossroads. Places, Practices, Media*. Gravari-Barbas, Graburn (dir.) London & New-York: Routledge. (in print)

⁵⁰ Ellison, W.J. 'Olympus : An International Expedition'. *The Alpine Journal* 40 (236-237). 1928. p. 107

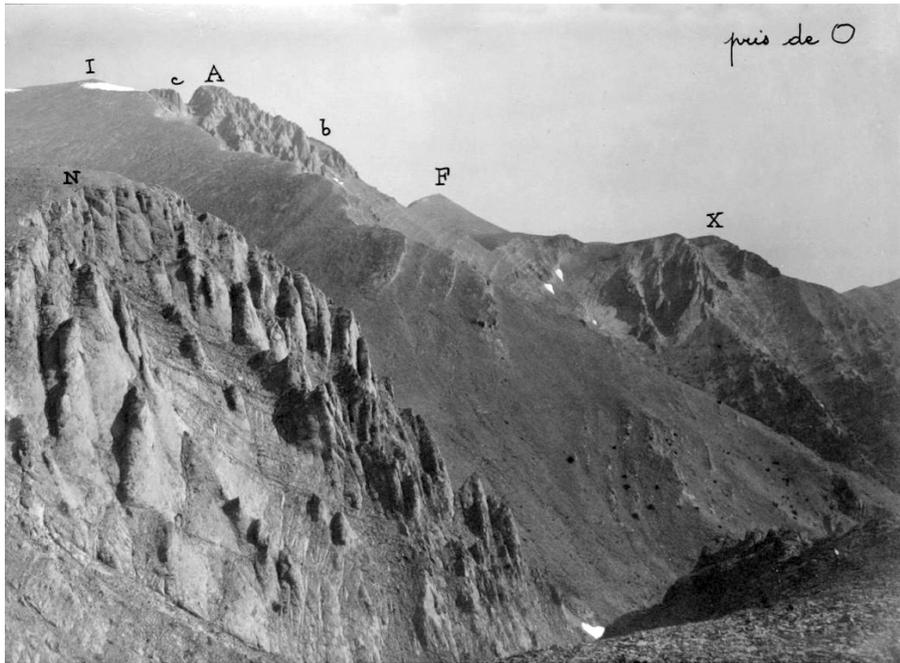


fig. 52. Fred Boissonnas, The High Peaks from Sarai. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 53. Fred Boissonnas, The ridge of High Peaks in the morning. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 54. Fred Boissonnas, Forest of Kallipefki.
1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki
Museum of Photography



fig. 55. Fred Boissonnas, Forest of Kallipefki.
1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki
Museum of Photography



fig. 56. Fred Boissonnas, North Face. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive /
Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki
Photography Museum



fig. 57. Fred Boissonnas, Dion. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive /
Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki
Photography Museum



fig. 58. Fred Boissonnas, Agia Trias. 1919 ©
Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of
Photography

group ascent and have the aesthetics of souvenirs for holidaymakers. Out of the about 40 photographs he took during this expedition only three are of landscape, while the rest depict the mountaineers during their ascent and on the peaks of the mountain (*fig.63-64*). Five of them portray human figures that are barely visible within the huge rock formations. While having an interesting visual approach they are still no more than a documentation of the climb. The majority of the images of 1927 capture the carefree moments that the mountaineers spent on the mountain (*fig.65-68*), presenting it as a tourist attraction and implying that on Mount Olympus, Greeks could join force with Europeans for the “development” of Greece. Once again, photography was used to create a touristic imaginary and to mutate landscape into a commodity for consumption.



fig. 59. Fred Boissonnas, *The Pantheon*. 1919 ©
Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of
Photography

4.6 Framing Mount Olympus

Mount Olympus and the region thereabout is a wild and a largely uninhabited area comparable with such regions in America as the Great Smoky Mountains. (...) The region has often been infested with bandits who defied all authority. Opportunity is thus offered in this ancient world for laying down the American wilderness idea that is applied in certain national parks here.⁵¹

The 1913 expedition landed on an unmapped, hostile mountain that had just been annexed to the modern Greek state. Christos Kakkalos, who lead the way to the summit, declined to carry photographic equipment and only the absence of a photograph forms an image of the ascent. The majority of the photographs

⁵¹ Immediate Release of US Department of Interior, the National Park Service. March 30, 1929. Archive of Fred Boissonnas. Museum of Photography Thessaloniki. Accessed 2015.11.21



fig. 60. Fred Boissonnas, The hunter Christos Kakkalos. 1919 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography

that Boissonnas made present his interest in the locals and their wild aura. Without his principal camera and with bad weather, Fred Boissonnas "reaped but an incomplete harvest from this expedition"⁵² and had to revisit the mountain. The 1919 expedition was intended to photograph the higher elevations of the mountain so Boissonnas organized a longer stay. The mountain was still unmapped, yet the fact that some of the people who accompanied Boissonnas were part of the guerrilla group that had kidnapped Richter eight years before testifies to the changes that had occurred in the cultural landscape of Olympus. The *harvest* of this expedition was exceptional so the photographer began to use his images in publications and articles.

⁵² Baud-Bovy, D. 'The mountain group of Olympus: an essay in nomenclature'. 1921. p. 209



fig. 61. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Expedition, on Partis II. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

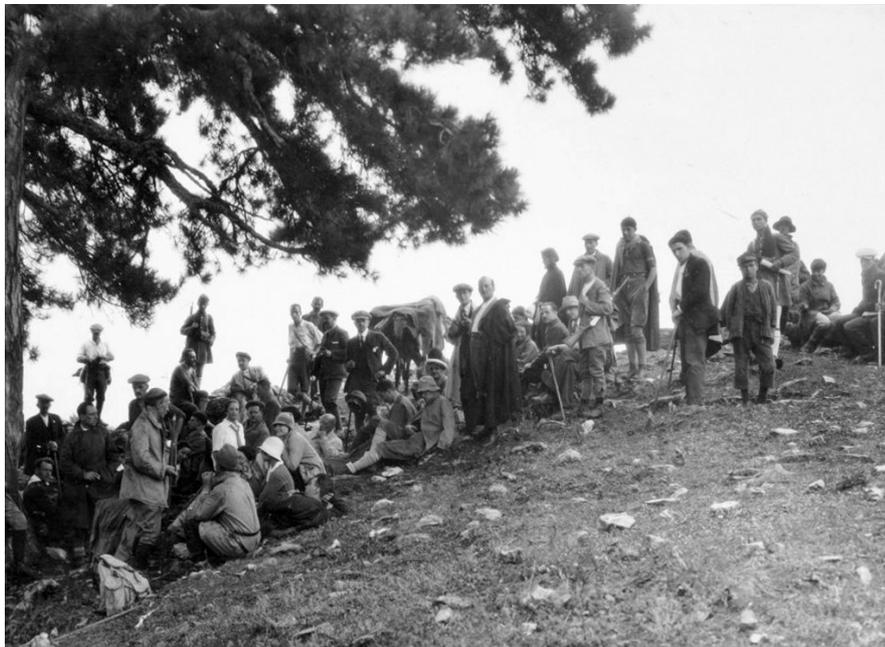


fig. 62. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus, Stavros Stop. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

In 1927 Boissonnas returned to his familiar mountain leading an international expedition, aiming to introduce and promote Mount Olympus to European alpinists. His last visit was directly connected to his intention to make Olympus a National symbol and so the mountain is presented as a tourist attraction. The success of this expedition triggered a multitude of articles in the Greek and international press and Boissonnas began a campaign with letters, publications and projections of his photographs promoting the mountain and advocating for the creation of an Olympus National Park. As he stated in an article in the French newspaper *L'Atlantique* as well as in the album *L'Olympe Parc National De La Grece*, published in 1928 in Paris,⁵³ he imagined a national park based on the American tourist Yellowstone model with automobile access, hotel sites, telephone lines and facilities for summer and winter sports and not on the Swiss conservation model that was a "strictly limited concept of an inaccessible nature reserve, prohibited to public"⁵⁴. Agapitos, who was the first President of the Greek Alpine Club, agreed with him. The same year, three of Boissonnas' photos with views of *Throne of Zeus* and one of *Skolio* accompanied an article about Olympus in the magazine *French Alpine Club* and one of his photos from the group ascent of 1927 accompanied an article by W.J Ellison in the *Alpine Journal*, the monthly issue of British Alpine Club.⁵⁵

In 1929, with the prospect of the establishment of the National Park, Boissonnas extended his efforts to the US, writing to the National Park Service. Today in the part of the archive of Boissonnas that is in the Museum of Photography in Thessaloniki there are eight of these letters, revealing that the Swiss photographer tried to publish photos of Mount Olympus in *National*

⁵³ Boissonnas, F. 'Olympus: National Park of Greece'. *L'Atlantique*, after 1928. Archive of Fred Boissonnas. Museum of Photography Thessaloniki. Accessed 2015.11.21

⁵⁴ Boissonnas, F. Quoted in *Olympus and Boissonnas*. 2003. pp 150

⁵⁵ W.T. Ellison was a member of the group ascent of 1927. Ellison, W.J. 'Olympus : An International Expedition'. *The Alpine Journal* 40 (236-237). 1928. p. 107



fig. 63. Unknown author, Olympus Expedition. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 64. Unknown author, Olympus Expedition. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 65. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus, Stavros Stop. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 66. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Expedition, on Partis II. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 67. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Expedition. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum



fig. 68. Fred Boissonnas, Olympus Expedition. 1927 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

Geographic (fig.69), the monthly magazine of the US-based National Geographic Society, but it is not known how many and which ones he sent. From three letters in the same archive, it appears that the link to these contacts was Francis Farquhar, who, as an active member of the Sierra Club⁵⁶ and editor of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* since 1924, could influence these organizations. At the same time Boissonnas kept promoting his ideas to Greek entrepreneurs and politicians, underlining the importance of tourism to the Greek economy and prosperity. As Nikos Nezis noted, Boissonnas had not done any exhibition of his photos from Olympus. Yet the people who were interested in mountaineering knew his photographs from his publications and from five prints of photographs from Olympus he had given as a present to the newly established Greek Alpine Club in 1927 (fig.71).⁵⁷

Le Tourisme En Grece, an album published in 1930 in four languages, included 30 pages related to Mount Olympus. In this book Boissonnas “enacted again some of the stranger ideas he had developed in the 1919 contract” like the “juxtaposition of ancient Greece and Modern Greece”⁵⁸. The ideas of tourism and of a National Park in Olympus were connected to the image of a modern Greek country in continuity with Ancient Greek civilization that Boissonnas and the Greek state intended to present in the world. In the text, he repeated his ideas about Mount Olympus National Park, with the intention to promote tourism in the area and used 15 photographs of the mountain. Most of them were picturesque views of trees, waterfalls and people (fig.70) with just one image from the 1927 expedition. In this album he again included the photo of Pantheon and a picture of Kakkalos, while throughout the text pictures of beaches and mountains in

⁵⁶ An environmental organization operating in United States, founded in 1892.

⁵⁷ Author of the book *Olympos*. 2003. Anavasi and current Secretary General of Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering & Climbing. Personal communication. 2016.03.04. Athens

⁵⁸ Sohler, E. 'From the Invention of an Imaginary to the Promotion of Tourism: Greece through the Lens of the Photographer F. Boissonnas (1903-1930)'. (in print)

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October 14, 1929

M. Fred Boissomas
12 Rue Boissy-D'Anglas
Paris, France

Dear M. Boissomas:

I have been away most of the summer, part of the time in the mountains, and have just returned from a trip to Washington and New York, so that my correspondence has been badly delayed.

I did what I could last spring to get started some publicity in this country on the project of a Mount Olympus National Park. I do not know whether or not any of this publicity has reached you, but am sending you a sample clipping. This resulted from a circular letter sent to a large list of newspapers by the U. S. National Park Service.

At my suggestion Mr. Albright, the Director, wrote to the National Geographic Society, but their reply was not encouraging. It seems that the material for the National Geographic Magazine is scheduled a long time in advance and there is very little prospect of getting an article into that magazine in the immediate future. I will endeavor to see what I can do in some other direction.

I received the set of photographs of Mount Olympus sent from your Geneva studio to be used in connection with the magazine article. There has also come a bill for these amounting to fr.60.80. Inasmuch as the purpose of these pictures was to illustrate an article designed for advancing the cause of the National Park I am wondering whether you intended that I should pay for them personally. I am holding these pictures here for the original purpose which I hope we can carry out in some way if you still think it will do some good.

I received a fine letter from Mr. Elmslie telling of his trip to Mount Olympus this summer. Evidently the mountain is becoming very popular.

Sincerely yours,

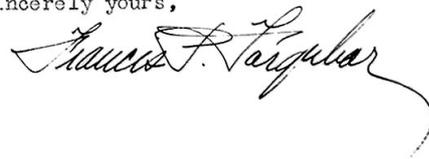


fig.69. Letter from Francis Farquhar to Fred Boissonnas. 1929 Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

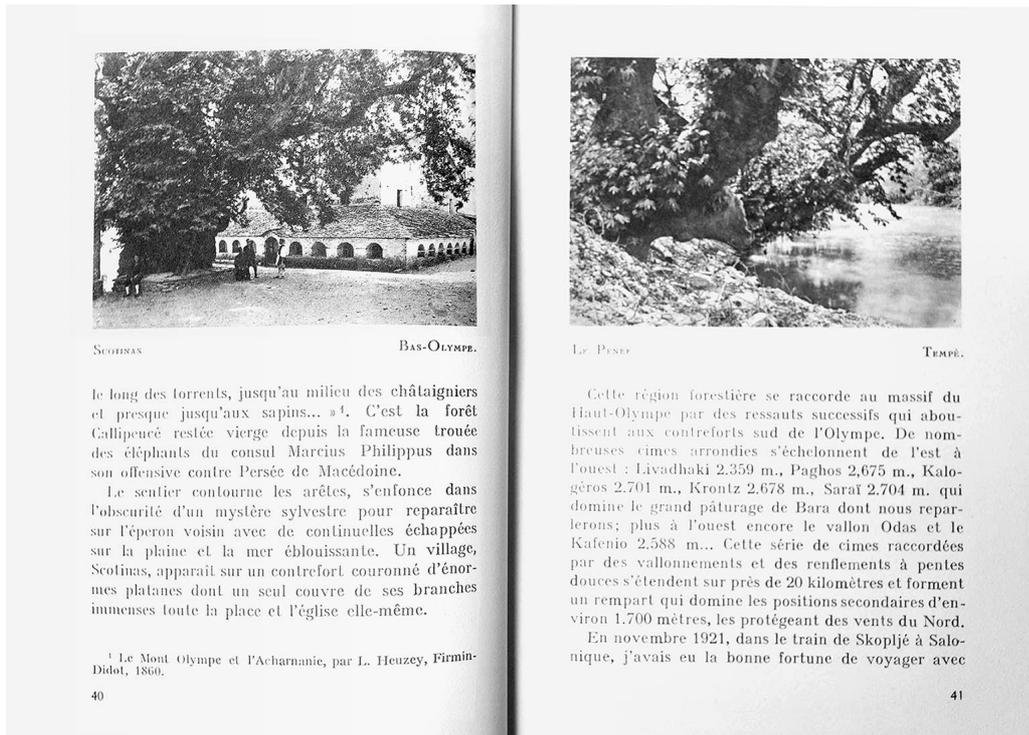


fig. 70. Le Grece Immortele pp.40-41. Archive of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

other parts of Greece were included, presenting Greece as an ideal tourist destination. One year later, a Greek journalist translated and published an extract of the text Boissonnas wrote about Olympus in a Greek magazine about tourism, but without any of the photos by the Swiss photographer. In January 1934, a four pages article from Boissonnas discussing Greek Alpinism was translated and published in the first issue of the Greek Alpine Club. Two photos of Mount Olympus' landscape were included and towards the end of the article Boissonnas stated "I will not finish this article without talking once again about the National Park of Greece". Concluding with a comment about his disappointment over a tree that he had been previously photographed and found withered in 1929, the article finishes with the question "What do you expect, oh Greeks friends, to protect of your national heritage?"⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Boissonnas, F. 'The baptism of E.O.S. on top of the Pantheon'. *To Vouno 1*. Greek Mountaineering Association. Athens. 1934. pp. 15 - 19

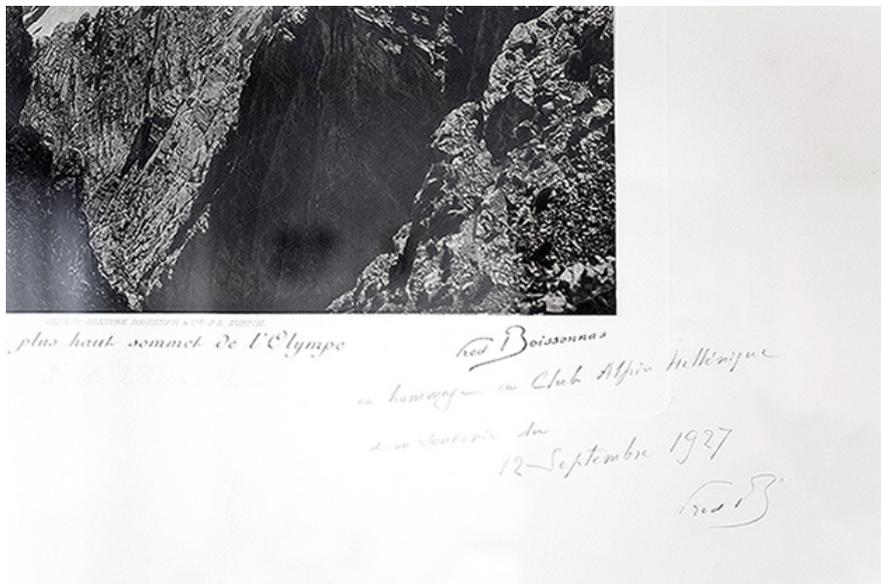


fig. 71. Print of The Pantheon and detail from 1927. Office of the Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering and Climbing

Around Greece, the mountaineering clubs multiplied, and in July 1936 the First National General Assembly of E.O.S. took place in the monastery of St. Dionysius on Olympus. The historical, cultural and ecological importance of the mountain was highlighted, along with the need for the country to follow the wave of National Park formation that was spreading from North America to Eastern Europe and Africa. The records of the assembly were published a year later in the "First Urgent Issue" of the monthly bulletin of E.O.S. *To Vouno* and the importance of the ascents of Boissonnas of Mount Olympus were remarked on.⁶⁰ In 1937, although the establishment of the first National Park was underway, the photographer kept promoting the mountain and published an article about the first ascent in a geographic magazine of Argentina using ten of his photos, this time none of Kakkalos.

The legislative procedures continued under the totalitarian Greek state⁶¹ and in 1938 King George II signed a royal decree, recognizing Mount Olympus as a protected area. The royal act defined the borders of the preserved area and founded a body responsible for its protection. The area of the National Forest was drawn as a core of 4000 hectares, within which no exploitation was allowed. The wider surrounding area was designated as a peripheral zone where controlled exploitation was allowed as long as it did not effect the strictly preserved interior.

For more than thirty years Frederic Boissonnas was working with Greek subjects and for more than twenty years his work included the theme of Mount Olympus. Although the photos he made during his four visits to the area of the mountain had clearly different approaches, throughout the years he mixed these photos in order to compose an image of the mountain that, as Sohier comments, "demonstrated all at once the beauty of this geographic site, its accessibility, and

⁶⁰Agapitos, S. 'First National Mountaineering Convention'. *To Vouno* 1st Urgent Issue. Greek Mountaineering Association, Olympus. 1936. p. 19

⁶¹ In August 1936, a military coup halted the Greek Republic and reinstated the Kingdom of Greece.



fig. 63. Post stamp vignette for the 100 years from the 1st recorded ascent on Mount Olympus. Office of the Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering and Climbing



fig. 72. Photo of the author, Post stamp vignette for the 100 years from the 1st recorded ascent on Mount Olympus. Office of the Hellenic Federation of Mountaineering and Climbing

its touristic possibilities, all while retaining its mythological aura"⁶². This mixture of picturesque landscape photos with images that carry ethnological elements of Orthodox Greece and the repeated use of the photos of Pantheon and Kakkalos, formed a new, complex imaginary for Mount Olympus. Its new face was appealing and modern and resembled the US National Parks, inviting tourists from around the world to its landscape.

The Greek state used the symbolism of the mountain to create a National Park that would reinforce its national identity, an identity closely linked with the concept of heritage that was constructed with the important contribution of tourism.⁶³ The significance of Mount Olympus for the Greek state was quite similar to that of the Alpine mountains of the Grand Paradiso National Park and Stelvio National Park for the Italian state, as Von Hardenberg explains in his work.⁶⁴ The photographs of Boissonnas functioned as the visual language for the propaganda that the Greek state used to defend its actions and jurisdiction. As Sohier explains, Boissonnas, made the place of Olympus known, "showed its beauty and accessibility", and "changed its meaning"⁶⁵.

With the establishment of the First National Park of Greece in the area of Olympus, the efforts of the network of people that worked for the preservation of the mountain – including Boissonnas – achieved a result and the mythical landscape came under human *protection*. Today, more than 150,000 people are estimated to visit the National Park annually. In 2013, 100 years after the first recorded ascent, the postage stamps that were published to celebrate the anniversary were printed with the photographs of Frederic Boissonnas (*fig.72*). The common name of the summit of Mount Olympus is still Mytikas.

⁶² Sohier, E. 'From the Invention of an Imaginary to the Promotion of Tourism: Greece through the Lens of the Photographer F. Boissonnas (1903-1930)'. (in print)

⁶³ Frost, Hall. *Tourism and National Parks. International perspectives on development, histories and change*. 2009. pp. 64-65

⁶⁴ Von Hardenberg, W.G. 'Beyond Human Limits, The Culture of Nature Conservation in Interwar Italy'. 2013. pp. 42-69

⁶⁵ Sohier, E. 'From the Invention of an Imaginary to the Promotion of Tourism: Greece through the Lens of the Photographer F. Boissonnas (1903-1930)'. (in print)

5. Discussion – Results

The creation of national parks – anywhere in the world – can only be understood in the context of the time and place in which this occurred.

Dr. Jane Carruthers

Landscape is a concept that for many years was perceived as being an image and not as a system of elements. This phenomenon appeared around the 18th century, when Western man started to be dissociated from his natural environment, and was strengthened during and after the Industrial Revolution. People sought after landscape depictions in order to keep ties with nature and, to protect it from deterioration, but gradually the use of optical instruments for perceiving landscape expanded and the multidimensional medium of landscape turned into a two-dimensional icon. As man strayed from the physical experience of landscape, the landscape art genre flourished in painting, mainly with the patronage of land owners that desired to depict their property, as Mitchell argues.

With the advent of photography, the mediation between the natural environment and humans widened. The photographic image was able to replicate elements and forms of landscape with striking accuracy and this power, strengthened the misconception of landscape as a mere image. At the same time tourism started to spread among the gentlemen and women of Europe and the United States who traveled for holidays and visited famous locations. Landscape photography often merged with tourist photography as it presented landscapes as picturesque sceneries and idyllic destinations. By converting places into icons, it converted the world and its experience into objects that someone could possess.

Mountaineering also gained popularity in the circles of the middle and upper

classes who began to approach mountains for pleasure and recreation around the mid-1800s. Whereas in previous times elevations were considered homes of celestial beings and lands of worship and retreat, they slowly attracted human ambition and their conquest became a sign of sovereignty. Mountain expeditions used photography from its beginning, as a memento of ascents, as a scientific document and as a medium to capture the beauty and sublimity of their landscapes. Various examples of early mountain photographers indicate how this photographic genre altered the previously existing imaginary of mountain ranges, and often presented them as landmarks of national possession or as proofs of human domination over nature.

In many early cases, mountain photography was also used to understand and map the unknown terrain of higher elevations. The process of mapping and documenting mountains and other landscapes connected with the general desire of nation-states to identify themselves and their constituent elements in order to communicate their authority. Like Rosenblum explains, when the Bisson Brothers photographed Savoy and Chamonix, they served "the Imperial desire to celebrate the territorial acquisition"¹. Likewise, Muzet received an honor from the Emperor not just for his quality photos of the Valley, but because he depicted the newly-acquired, national and natural *heritage* of the French nation.

Banerjee and Bharat explain how Samuel Bourne and Edward Saché did the same in the Himalayas working on their own account. With their photos they managed to westernize and sometimes even to "*britishize*" Indian and Himalayan landscapes. Bourne, chose to exclude the presence of locals from his images almost entirely, and to photograph mountains in the picturesque mode that was used in the Alps and the British countryside². Saché accomplished something

¹ Rosenblum, N. *A world history of Photography*. 2007. p. 108

² Banerjee, S. 'Not altogether unpicturesque': Samuel Bourne and the Landscaping of the Victorian Himalaya'. 2014. p. 356

similar by extensively photographing Srinagar, that, "with its canal (...) and water reflections, recalled England"³. Their British and European identity was sufficient to transform "Indian space into a Victorian landscape"⁴ and to present these distant, unknown lands as known and familiar.

In the American West, government bodies had similar objectives; they joined forces with investors searching for lands to host their businesses, funded land surveys and regularly assigned landscape photographers to accompany expeditions and provide visual documentation of their explorations. The government of the United States, knowing the photographic skills of Timothy O'Sullivan, assigned him to photograph the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Nevada and the Grand Canyon. The former Civil War photographer was skilled at adding precise portions of grief and majesty to his scenic views, necessary elements in shaping the path of the nation towards the future. O'Sullivan's skills were used, not only to nationalize landscapes, but to create and cultivate a visual ideology that would strengthen national identity. In all these cases, and many more, landscape photography documented unknown terrains, presenting them as national symbols and lands of promise.

National Parks were a place where national symbolism, economic benefits and unmapped landscape coexisted. Photography served as visual proof of real wilderness, the concept on which nation-states formed park institutions. The illustrations of wilderness had to invite people to the National Park experience; an experience that was first of all national and controlled. Most of these photographs were picturesque or spectacular depictions of landscape that installed ideas of a monumentalized nature as natural and admirable. Clary presents how photographic evidence was a key factor in the land survey that

³ Bharath, S. R.. 'The Sachés: a family of photographers working in India during the 19th century'. 2010 p. 8

⁴ Banerjee, S. "'Not altogether unpicturesque": Samuel Bourne and the Landscaping of the Victorian Himalaya'. 2014. p. 356

gave birth to the first National Park in Yellowstone, as DeLuca and Demo do in their text for Yosemite. Even where photographs were not used as documents for governmental committees, they had an affect on amplifying the popularity and prosperity of certain landscapes by attracting tourists or researchers. In the Swiss National Park about a 1000 photos of landscape, flora and fauna were made during the first decade of the Park, and promoted the Park's existence.⁵

Landscape photography fitted the imaging of National Parks for three main reasons. First, as Rosenblum comments, it was connected to the preservation and protection of nature from the first decade of the medium's existence. Second, as Tagg and Sekula explain, it was a recognized propaganda tool, used in the process of national legitimization that nation-states adopted during the second half of the 19th century. By funding photographers to take landscape images of areas that were, or meant to be National Parks, governmental bodies reinforced what Zimmer, Hall, Frost and Von Hardenberg call the "nationalization of landscapes". Third, just like landscape painting, it amplified the aestheticisation and mediation of nature, that became an element in the experience of National Parks.

When the first National Park was established, modern, western man had been experiencing landscape for nearly a century through the mediation of optical instruments, art, science, vocabulary and national signification. As photographic technology progressed, the camera image gradually acquired a liberal character and the connection between photography and the experience of Parks deepened. More and more people could experience the illusion of meeting the natural environment through landscape photographs, a feeling that matched the illusion of experiencing real wilderness that the National Parks claimed to provide. In addition, photography flattened the dynamic landscape into a two-dimensional

⁵ Lozza Hans, Head of Communications and Public Relations of Swiss National Park. Personal Communication, e-mail 2016.2.26

illustration, removing the effects that weather, light and the other natural elements had on it. This modification matched Von Hardenberg's description of National Parks as picturesque scenery or scientific laboratories, but not as living organisms.⁶

Both National Parks and landscape photography mediated between humans and the natural environment, by framing the natural environment. A controlled landscape was more appealing to humans as they could interact with the flora, fauna and other earth formations without the dangers of exposure to the unknown. The National Park institution marked the boundaries of the landscape to be preserved. Photography presented this landscape in exhibitions, publications and postcards, marking it as a safe destination for the public. The National Park served the need for some preservation of nature that the disastrous effects of industrialization had created. Photography created a copy of nature in an archive, in case that preservation movement failed.

Mountains, due to their inaccessibility, remained lands of wilderness far longer than plains and forests. Their remoteness, in combination with their majesty and volume, was the main reason they became central figures in many National Parks. That mountain peaks and ranges are natural physical borders often made them landmarks in the formation of national borders, amplifying their need to be identified as national landscapes. Photography accompanied mountaineering ascents and expeditions, and played an important role in taming the wild countenance of mountains as photographers participated in the process of exploration, mapping and domestication of the terrain. Their rich morphology and biodiversity, complicated climate and challenging isolation, offered ideal subject matter for photography. These same aspects were attractive to cartographers, geographers, biologists and other scientists, as well as for

⁶ Von Hardenberg, W.G. 'Beyond Human Limits, The Culture of Nature Conservation in Interwar Italy'. 2013. p. 63

travelers and tourists. Photography presented mountain landscapes to the public and praised their aesthetic and environmental uniqueness, advancing the creation of National Parks in high altitudes.

The Alps, the mountains where mountaineering and mountain photography began, were some of the first protected areas of Europe. The Swiss and Italian Alps were the areas of the second and fourth National Parks in Europe. In between them, was the National Park of Spain, in the Spanish Pyrenees, also extensively photographed since the 1850s. The regions of the Himalayas which had been captured in the early period of mountain photography – Assam, Sikkim and Kashmir – had the same fate, at first due to British Rule, and then under the custody of the Indian government.

Mount Olympus of Thessaly, became one of these nationalized mountains. Frederic Boissonnas, the successful Swiss photographer, businessman and philhellene, played an important role in the protection of Olympus. The photographer was part of the first recorded ascent of the summit of Olympus in 1913, and through his ties with influential Greeks and Europeans, returned to the mountain three more times in 1919, 1921 and 1927. He had a different photographic approach in each of his visits and managed to compose a collection of images that depict the mountain's landscape as wild, picturesque and mythical, with cultural elements from Ancient Greece until modern times. He promoted an international campaign for making Mount Olympus the first Greek National Park, an idea that was realized in 1938 by the totalitarian Greek government of the time. From his writings and from the use of his photographs, it appears that he wished for a park that would follow the touristic Yellowstone model. The complete plan that Boissonnas had for the area of Mount Olympus never materialized – to the benefit of the mountain since he suggested an irrational touristic exploitation of its environment. The myth of Mount Olympus as

the home of 12 Gods that accompanied the photographer from his youth is still alive in one of his two most famous photos of the mountain. The other is of a local chamois hunter, the man that first climbed the summit of the mythical mountain, a photo that praises the wild spirit of a free human.

6. Conclusion

Whether mountain or plain, people were taking photos of landscape and of themselves within it, photos that in different ways promoted the establishment of National Parks. Nationalism gave to parks a symbolic value, tourism gave a material value and science gave a cognitive value. Landscape photography established their iconic value. The camera image mediated between humans and landscape, strengthening the institution of the National Park. Modern, massive and spectacular, the photograph separated the piece from the whole, placing it into a shell for protection.

Frederic Boissonnas, jealous to protect the mountain he loved so much, used his photographs to lead a campaign that included the possibility of causing harm to Olympus' landscape, as had occurred in other places that were turned into National Parks. But a Nancy Micklewright notes, "reading photographs taken in another era, purchased and assembled into albums by people who lived in another and other culture, is problematic".¹ The research and commentary about the role of landscape photography in the establishment of National Parks or the role of Fred Boissonnas' in the formation of the Mount Olympus protected area is not intended as criticism or judgement of National Parks or landscape photographers. The effort is to understand how landscape has been mediated during the past centuries in order to deal with the legacy we have today.

During the last 150 years, earth's landscape has suffered likely irreversible damage from uncontrolled human exploitation. By the study of photographic archives we can trace the ways in which people have intervened in the natural

¹ Micklewright, N. *A Victorian Traveler in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey*. Hampshire: Ashgate. 2003. p. 11

environment since the 1800s, and view images of landscapes we can no longer personally encounter. National Parks, despite the nationalistic, commercial and scientific significance that were attributed to them, are entities that, in the period they were created, could not take any other form. To find an approach to landscape that will restore a human connection to the natural environment is a challenge for today. In order to respond to this, we need to use various tools, one of which is the photographic archive of the previous two centuries. Maybe then the wild horses will return to the landscape of Mount Olympus.

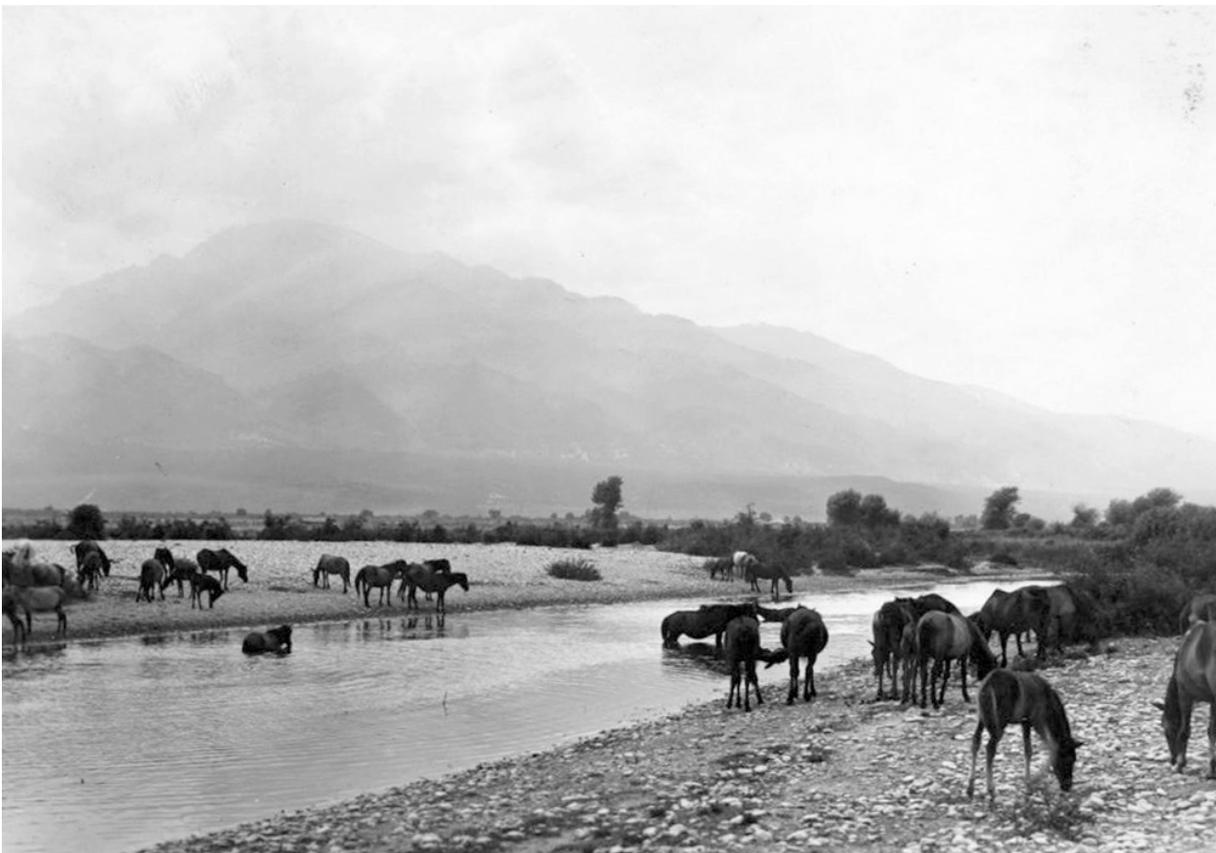


fig 64: Fred Boissonnas, Olympus. 1913 © Boissonnas Archive / Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Concession of Thessaloniki Photography Museum

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