

# Portraits of Distant Worlds

## Frobenius' Pictorial Archive and its Legacy<sup>1</sup>

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### THE ETHNOGRAPHER

Germany's most famous anthropologist in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was an ambiguous figure.<sup>2</sup> An academic outsider who would get a professorship only at the very end of his career, Leo Frobenius was extremely prolific, publishing over 50 books, many for the general public and best sellers. Having started his career in ethnographic museums, he became convinced about the necessity for field research and so between 1904 and 1935 he undertook 12 expeditions to Africa. He was thus among the first trained anthropologists to leave his armchair to do field research in Africa. Some of these expeditions took up to two years, such as the ones to the Congo in 1904–1906, to French West Africa in 1907–1909 and to Nigeria and the Cameroons in 1910–1912. Impulsive, passionate, often improvising and not always open about his sources, he drew together what is likely a unique documentation of objects and customs, folk tales and myths, as well as images of everyday scenes, portraits, material culture, crafts and architecture.

As an “entrepreneur-anthropologist” (Barkan 1994:185) he created the “Institute for Cultural Morphology” which, in spite of its highly devoted staff,

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1 I'm grateful to Beatrix Heintze and Peter Steigerwald for their comments.

2 Only a few English texts have been published on Frobenius. Among the best are Jahn 1974 and Marchand 1997. The biography published by Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs in German has only been translated into French (Heinrichs 1999), the 2014 published biography by Bernhard Streck is in German as well.

was constantly on the brink of bankruptcy. An exceptionally gifted PR talent, he had good connections to the highest social circles and even befriended the exiled German Kaiser (Franzen/Kohl/Recker 2012).

His attitude towards Africa was ambiguous, paternalistic and at the same time valorizing. As a true romantic, he was looking for ancient origins and the “old original African warm-blooded culture” (Frobenius 1933: 15) and felt that African cultures were doomed to extinction by, above all, the onslaught of modernity and colonialism. He saw himself as perhaps the last outsider to see the remains of “old Africa” with his own eyes. And he regarded it as his duty – as a ‘rescue archaeologist’ – to document as much as possible of this cultural legacy on the eve of its ultimate extinction. In Frobenius’ eyes, the cultural expressions of non-literate peoples were no less part of an archive of humanity than those of the classical antique civilisations. His ambition was thus to record African cultural expressions on a continental scale and to preserve them in museums, archives and monographs.

The valorizing of African cultures was quite unusual at a time when any significant cultural achievement in Africa was at best ascribed to the civilizing influence of Islam or other foreign influences. Frobenius’ appreciation of Africa’s past nevertheless tended to blind him to the condition of the people he actually met in Africa. Apprehending them against the background of the continent’s magnificent cultural history, as he had imagined it, he saw only ruins left from the noble and ancient civilisations that he enthusiastically linked to those of Atlantis and Byzantium. As a product of his age, his early writings contain a number of shocking stereotypes about the “flattening, corruptive, and ‘negrofying’ tendency of African civilizations” (Frobenius 1913: 321). However these go along with a glorification of Africans especially in his later writings. For example, his appraisal of Africans as being “civilized to the marrow of their bones”<sup>3</sup>, was an expression which the poet Léopold Sédar Senghor, one of the founders of the Négritude movement and later on first president of independent Senegal, found especially inspiring (Senghor 1980).

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3 “Civilisés jusqu’à la moelle des os” (Frobenius 1933b: 14). The German original actually talks about culture instead of civilization: “Kultur bis auf die Knochen” (Frobenius 1933a: 13).

## INTO THE FIELD

Leo Frobenius was comparatively well qualified for his expeditions, considering he had unparalleled knowledge of the great span of literature on Africa of his time and of the masses of ethnographic objects that had already been accumulated in ethnographic museums over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the field, his major shortcoming was probably his lack of language skills. He could speak French quite well, but his English remained rudimentary all his life. While he collected vocabularies of about 900 African languages, he spoke none of them beyond a few words.<sup>4</sup> This meant that he was usually dependant on translators and often on whole interpreter chains, translating, for example, from Jukun to Hausa, then from Hausa into English and finally into German.

Another problem in assessing the documentation produced during the expeditions concerns Frobenius' travel style. Unlike later generations of anthropologists, Frobenius never stayed very long in one place, but was constantly on the move trying to "cover" and document as many societies and regions as possible. Furthermore, several German ethnographic museums were the main sponsors of the early expeditions prior to WW I (Zwernemann 1987). Thus he and his German staff travelled with a caravan of carriers, always on the lookout to buy or barter for spectacular objects.

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4 His claim to have learned the Luba language within a few month during his Kongo expedition 1904–06 (Frobenius 1907: 225) appears rather doubtful.

*Fig. 1: Frobenius' expedition camp in Bamako, Mali, 1908*



Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

*Fig. 2: Caravan crossing the Oti river in northern Togo, 1909*



Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

Like other travellers before him, Frobenius could not avoid the problems inherent in this form of travel (Spittler 1987, Heintze 2007: 52–60, Fabian 2000: 23–33). Counting all the porters, servants, boys, cooks, washer men, guides and interpreters, such a caravan could number several dozen or even hundreds of individuals and was mostly busy with its own organisation. This impeded the travellers' view on the surrounding world: staff had to be recruited, paid and dismissed; sufficient supplies, shelter and food had to be organised. When further away from larger settlements, such a caravan had to be permanently on the move in order to ensure an adequate food and water supply. When longer stops were taken, it was necessary to open the bundles and boxes to air out the valuable contents. The packages were repeatedly subject to rain or getting wet during river crossings. There was a constant threat that the collected objects would rot if they were not dried and repacked properly. Apart the fact that much time was spent with such organisational tasks, there was the intimidating effect that the unheralded arrival of such a caravan would have on a local population (Kuba 2010). Particularly during Frobenius' early travel to the Congo (1904–06), the violent aspects characterizing many African travel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were still manifest (Fabian 2000: 149–150, Ackermann 1984: 19–20, cf. Heintze 2007: 72–75).

Surprisingly enough, Frobenius was still able to obtain an amazingly rich collection of historical and ethnographic information as well as oral traditions – also testifying to the strength of his financial resources – even if, due to the translation issue and a rather sketchy documentation, their quality can often be questioned. On the other hand, he hardly ever stayed long enough to establish real relationships with the local population and, especially during his first expeditions, we have some evidence that the collection of ethnographic material and the production of images was done against their consent (Frobenius 1907: 100, 169, cf. Kuba 2010: 52).

Frobenius was very much of the view that only the thorough visual documentation of African cultural expressions could counter the effects of time and transience. On his expeditions he always took some professionally trained draughtspersons and sometimes even renowned artists, such as the painters Hans Martin Lemme, Carl Arriens or Alf Bayrle.

*Fig. 3: Carl Arriens painting in a Tiv village, Nigeria 1911*



Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

An expedition thus could yield several thousand images, photographs as well as drawings, covering vast regions and showing a large variety of motifs, from landscape and everyday scenes, cultural displays such as mask dances or wrestling scenes, to portraits, architecture and ethnographic objects. However, linking these images to a precise place and date is not always an easy task, as the available metadata are often sketchy and frequently consist of a few brief bits of information amongst some 50 voluminous photo-catalogues or – for the drawings – in handwritten registers.

## DRAWINGS VS. PHOTOGRAPHS

As the Frobenius' expeditions yielded drawings as well photographs, we should look into the relationship between the two means of visual documentation in ethnographic contexts. Up until the late 1920s, when the compact camera came into wider use, photography in the tropics was a complex and time-consuming business: exposure times were relatively long, the equipment was heavy, awkward to manoeuvre and technically unreliable. The transportation of the fragile emulsion-coated glass plates used in this process posed an additional challenge during the often extremely arduous journey to the traveller's destination. And it was only when the hoped-for treasure trove of images was being developed after the traveller's return that he might discover that all his efforts had been in vain (Frobenius 1907: 450). Thus, for all that technology had to offer, for a long time hand-done documentation remained the most reliable way of making records, with the result that in the second half of the nineteenth century and even into the early twentieth century, European painters still played a key part in the visual documentation and imaging of distant lands. However, the question of which was a better means of documenting those distant worlds, photography or drawings, was not decided based on technological arguments alone but also on the question of authenticity. Two quite diverging attitudes towards photography as a seemingly authentic means of documentation were expressed by Leo Frobenius and another German traveller, Paul Güssfeldt.

In his report on the Loango expedition he led in 1873–76, Güssfeldt deliberated on the two main methods of documentation – drawing and photography – and came to a conclusion quite typical for his positivistic age: “Drawing rarely manages to keep itself entirely free of idealisation, and if it does indeed do so, the beholder can never quite suppress his doubts as to whether this illustration is faithful to the original; he is reluctant to be persuaded that all which appears strange to him in the drawing, is a faithful likeness. Not so photography, which – unconstrained by the rules of beauty and aesthetics – objectively reproduces merits and blemishes and thus seems most suited to advance the lucid contemplation of foreign realms.” (Güssfeldt 1879: 53 – my translation)

A very different view was taken by Frobenius some 60 years later. For him “a drawing that comes to life little by little, in many cases captures more of the ‘essence’ than a mechanical photograph”, which is in reality “endlessly

deceptive” (Frobenius 1936: 12 – my translation). Frobenius was seeking to discover the intrinsic nature of the cultural practices of foreign peoples and believed in the power of human intuition. He thus was keen to take advantage of the complementary functions of drawing and photography (Stappert 1996: 15).

*Fig. 4: Photograph of a trumpeter in Bida, Nigeria, 1911*



Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.



Fig. 5: watercolour by Carl Arriens, 1911



Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

As the more abstract form, he mainly used drawing for studies of ornamentation and architectural forms and for objects. At the same time, hand-done illustrations were regarded as one of the special strengths of anthropological reporting when it came to conveying colours and decorative minutiae or documenting dark interiors. Particularly in the case of architectural structures, but also with regard to local artefacts and their uses, Frobenius also used photographs as the basis for later drawings. Compared to a photograph, the drawn image could be more detailed, more sharply defined and especially, it could be made in color.

Most of the photographs seem to have been taken by Frobenius himself, who was an able photographer. However, the professional draughts men and women who joined his expeditions also used the photographic equipment.<sup>5</sup> This equipment was usually state of the art, as Frobenius had a great talent for involving numerous sponsors in financing his expeditions. Among them were companies such as Goerz, Anschütz, Zeiss, Leitz and Agfa. The photographic archive thus reflects the advancement of photographic technology in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It contains, among vintage prints, different kinds of negatives, from silver gelatine glass plates to nitrate or acetate base sheet films in different formats such as 9x12 and 13x18 cm, to 35 mm and 60 mm roll films, which came into use in the late 1920s and 1930s. On his first expedition into the Kongo 1904–1906 he even carried a stereo camera (Steigerwald 2005), which he actually wanted to use for commercial purposes (Zwernemann 1987: 112).

## THE ARCHIVE

While the images produced in the field during expeditions form the bulk of the visual material, there are also some smaller collections not produced by Frobenius and his staff which found their way into the archive. In 1894, ten years before he went to the field, Frobenius had already founded his “Afrika-Archiv”, where he collected all kinds of Africa related material such as excerpts, publications, maps and images as “an illustrative complement to the collection of excerpts” (Frobenius 1925: 4 – my translation; cf. Zerries 1950: 363). Among the oldest photographic material in his archive number some

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5 Unfortunately the authorship of a photograph wasn't recorded in most cases.

300 postcards from West Africa, mostly from the “Collection Générale Fortier” (David 1980). Later, as the archive grew more prestigious, Frobenius was offered several smaller collections by colonial officials (Stappert 1996: 18–19) or other travellers, such as the paintings of Hyacinthe Hecquard (Mark 1990) or the sketches of Georg Schweinfurth (Beck 1940). Upon his death in 1938, Frobenius left a huge visual legacy that was expanded, with the addition of pictorial material from the ethnographic research carried out in the 1950s and 1960s by the Institute bearing his name, to about 65,000 photographs and negatives and some 40,000 drawings and paintings. In the 1970s and 1980s some 4,500 diapositives, mainly from Ethiopia, were added and in the past years some further collections of historical photographs were donated to the Frobenius Institute, such as a collection of about 1,000 b/w prints and negatives by the German engineer Walther Kühme, who in the early twentieth century had spent several years in the Cameroons and in China. The entire collection of photographic material is taken care of by a professional photographer specialized in dealing with historical negatives and who has an adequate lab at his disposal (Steigerwald 1995).

In the past decade the Frobenius Institute’s image collection has been accessed with the help of a database and has been digitized to a great extent. Starting in 2010, the image data base has been available online.<sup>6</sup> Since then, the image archive records some 60000 clicks every month by 800–1000 different visitors, resulting in a much higher visibility than ever before. I will talk about the way this proved to be a watershed event in the use of the collection after a few comments on the images’ content.

## IMAGES AND MESSAGES

What is almost entirely missing in Frobenius’ corpus of images is any hint to modernity.<sup>7</sup> In this aspect the image corpus left by Frobenius stands out from contemporary photographs produced in Africa by colonial officials, which abound with railways, plantations, bridges and western architecture. In many ways it also differs from official photographs taken by missionaries (Geary

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6 <http://bildarchiv.frobenius-katalog.de/>

7 Streck (2001:121) speaks of „kulturmorphologische Ruinenromantik“, the romantic inclination for ruins.

1991: 49–50) and thus forms an image cosmos of its own. Although the constricted focus on “traditional” life was not uncommon in ethnographic photographs (Heintze 1999: 5), the anthropometric images of physical anthropology frequently found in contemporary collections of ethnographic photographs (Theye 1989: 92–94) are missing entirely in Frobenius’ photographs. This is certainly related to the fact that race wasn’t a concept compatible with his cultural theories and his idea of culture being somewhat independent from the individuals. He thus could claim that the “Paideuma”, the “cultural soul” of West African peasants (Äthiopen) is similar to the one of Germans, whereas the one of the African pastoralists (Hamiten) could be equated with the “Paideuma” of the British and the French (Frobenius 1932: 110).

Putting aside the fact that any hint to modernity has been excluded in the pictures so as to show only “traditional” culture, the degree in which the images seem to have been posed seems much less than in comparable collections.<sup>8</sup> This might be related to the fact that Frobenius went to the field as an anthropologist who wanted to document local cultures “in situ” rather than to stage indigenous people with traditional wear together with “typical” objects in ways it could have been done in a diorama or in a studio situation.<sup>9</sup> However, the contemporary scientific context with its predilection for “*Typen- und Trachtenbilder*” (images of types and traditional costumes) or “*Rasseköpfe*” (race heads) (Schindelbeck 1989: 17–18) could be sensed in the way the images were ordered and registered as they were integrated into the Institute’s pictorial archive. Some of them were tagged as “types” – by whom is unclear – which meant that the photographed persons were not depicted as individuals but as specimens standing in for an entire ethnic group (Theye 1989: 61–62, 92–97, Heintze 1999: 4, 9 and 2016). Who introduced this category and when it was introduced is not clear but it was certainly pre WW II.

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8 For example the photographs of Henri Labouret in today’s southern Burkina Faso (Kambou-Ferrand 1993: 79–80) those of Egon von Eichstett in India (Müller 2013: 6) or of Paul Ehrenreich in Peru (Kraus 2013: 14), cf. also Pinney 2011: 81–85.

9 See for example Carl Passavant’s photographs from the West African coast (Schneider/Röschenthaler/Gardi 2005).

From a post-colonial perspective inspired by Foucault and Derrida, an archive such as the one left by Leo Frobenius could well be seen as an instrument of hegemony (Zeitlyn 2012: 462). The way the material is ordered, indexed, described and presented can in itself perpetuate powerful Eurocentric narratives about the “Other”. We therefore tried to index the images with more appropriate terms, changing particularly the historical hierarchical thesaurus of keywords: What used to be indexed as “types” became mostly “portrait” and degrading terms such as “dwelling” (Behausung) became “building” (Gebäude). Also the former geographical order according to cultural areas (Kulturprovinzen) based on Ankermann's and Frobenius' cultural circles (Kulturkreise) and elaborated later by Hermann Baumann (1975) was dropped in favour of more neutral terms such as countries and geographical regions. While the old indexing system only retained the names of expedition members under the category “depicted persons”, we also integrated the names of the depicted “natives” whenever such a name was passed down in the records, thus connecting the photographs to the lives of their subjects (Zeitlyn 2012: 465). Along with the new indexing system we kept the records of the historical indexing system in order to document an older scientific approach to the images, as we believe that such layers of scientific contextualization can be crucial in understanding the origin of the images as well as their historical uses.

## **AFTER GOING ONLINE**

The image database going online in early 2010 had a number of effects: Frobenius' image cosmos, which hitherto had been known only to a handful of specialists, suddenly became visible worldwide, wherever internet is available and thus connected the collection with numerous and multi-disciplinary research and exhibition activities. Although we had hoped that digitization would reduce the negative conservatory effects of handling the originals, this was only partly true, as the demands to see the originals and display them in exhibitions also grew.

While the collection became increasingly relevant for academic research, it also became relevant for private individuals researching their family history. An example of this was the late Afro-Danish free jazz saxophonist and composer John Tchicai (1936–2012). A young Loango man named Tschikaja

was Frobenius' boy during his Congo trip 1904–1906 and was subsequently taken to Berlin by the German ethnographer (Frobenius 1924: 169–108). He later married a Danish lady and their son John, born in 1936 in Copenhagen, thus found the earliest images of his father.<sup>10</sup>

Other uses of the digital image archive are less innocent and suggest that a certain amount of control over the pictures would be useful. Shortly after going online, a selection of images was taken without written consent from the online database by the biggest German tabloid, the *Bild-Zeitung*. As might be expected, the choice of images presented under the header “This is how Africa looked 100 years ago” was a compilation of common Africa stereotypes and certainly not the kind of use we would have wished. Furthermore the copyright watermark on the images was skilfully photo-shopped away.

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10 See the interview with John Tchicai at <http://christophwagnermusic.blogspot.de/2012/09/john-tchicai-ein-interview-mit-dem.html> (last accessed 21 March 2017).

Fig. 6: "That's how Africa looked 100 years ago"

Seite 6 BILD FRANKFURT \* 3. MÄRZ 2010

**Frankfurter Forscher retteten 75.000 unvergleichliche Bilder**





Angehörige der Nguni, 1904 im Kongo Zeichnung der Intim-Tätowierung einer 25-jährigen Lulua-Frau Ein Lulua in ritueller Kleidung

# So sah Afrika vor 100 Jahren aus

Von MARCO SCHWARZ

Frankfurt – Es sind wahre Fotoschätze, die unsere Uni da gerettet hat! Bilder von ergreifender Ursprünglichkeit. Sie zeigen Afrika, wie es nie wieder sein wird.

Vor etwa 100 Jahren bereiste der deutsche Ethnologe Leo Frobenius (1873-1938) Afrika, um dessen Schönheit zu bewahren. Zumindest auf Fotos und Zeichnungen. Einflüsse der europäischen Kolonialmächte wurden immer größer und drohten, die alten Kulturen hinwegzujagen. 12 Expeditionen leitete der spätere Chef des Frankfurter Völkerkundemuseums auf dem schwarzen Kontinent. Teilweise über Jahre. 75.000 Bilder einer uns fremden Welt entstanden auf seinen Reisen.

Bereits 1925 kam die Sammlung nach Frankfurt. Doch nach dem Krieg geriet sie in Vergessenheit und drohte zu verrotten. Nach drei Jahren Restauration sind die Bilder jetzt gerettet und wurden vom Frobenius-Institut ins Internet gestellt.  
<http://bildarchiv.frobenius-katalog.de>



Afrikaforscher Leo Frobenius (1873-1938)



Ein Kanyok (Kongo) an seiner Hütte



Eine ausgelassene Dortszene bei den Kuba im Kongo



Ein Yaka (Kongo) mit Pfeil und Bogen

Fuglich, schmeicheln	gegen	
wider-der-Aussicht	beides	Lieder
ungleich		
Sing-vogel	Hintergr-fisch	Sinnlos
Fisch	unter	Kopf
(wie Hand)		Mey

Bild-Zeitung, Frankfurt, 3 march 2010, p. 6.

While this kind of misuse can hardly be prevented once a digital image is out on the web, the question remains how could pictures produced in colonial contexts ideally be used without reproducing obsolete hegemonic structures and stereotypes? One answer could be to involve the people whose forbearers are depicted on the pictures and give them a voice.

Great examples for this are “visual interpreters”, such as the ones contextualizing a selection of photographs from the Basel Mission Image Archive. Two renowned Harvard based scholars engaged in this initiative, the Ghana born historian Emmanuel Acheampong and the India born urban designer Rahul Mehrotra, helped by the late Sharada Dwivedi, a Mumbai based conservator.<sup>11</sup> Taking this approach further beyond the ivory tower, the London based charity Autograph ABP works internationally in photography, cultural identity, race, representation and human rights by advocating the “inclusion of historically marginalised photographic practices”.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Frobenius’ image archive, we tried to bring the pictures back to the countries where they were produced. In 2008 we were invited to Ouagadougou by a local NGO to organize the exhibition “Leo Frobenius à Ouagadougou: Les images du Faso il y a cent ans” at the Musée National. During this event, printouts and digital copies of over 600 images produced in 1908 by Frobenius’ second expedition on the territory of today’s Burkina Faso were handed over to the Museum as well as to the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique et Technique.

Two years later a similar project was conceived and carried out together with the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Five exhibitions took place in Abuja, Ife, Makurdi, Minna and Yola, each of them displaying regionally relevant images under the general title “Nigeria 100 years ago through the eyes of Leo Frobenius and his expedition team” (Kuba/Hambolu 2010, Müller 2011).

In 2011 parts of the huge photographic material taken during the 1950–51 expedition to southern Ethiopia headed by Frobenius’ successor Adolf Ellegard Jensen were displayed in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, as well as in the South Omo Research Center in Jinka (Zühlke 2011) and finally we organized a conference and an exhibition in Dakar, Senegal, in collaboration with the University Cheikh Anta Diop and

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11 <http://basel.bmpix.org/visips.htm> (last accessed 21 March 2017).

12 <http://autograph-abp.co.uk/> (last accessed 21 March 2017).



the Musée Théodore Monod de l'IFAN/Ch. A. Diop (Kuba/Ivanoff/Kassé 2017).

*Fig 7: Invitation by the Nigerian Commission for Museums and Monuments, October 2010*



The overview of the image corpus and the choice of images selected for display would have hardly been possible without a database containing the digital images that was accessible to our partners in Africa. For them, the photographs, aquarelles and pencil, pen and ink drawings were of considerable historical value as rare visual representations of their countries' past, casting a bright light onto an epoch from which only very few pictures have survived to date (Hambolu 2010).

However, not everybody is happy to see historical pictures produced in colonial contexts on display, as can be exemplified in the case of Australian Aboriginal people and images they would classify as “secret-sacred” (Peterson 2003). Being aware of the sensitive issue of publicly displaying photographs of certain ceremonies intended only for the eyes of initiated men etc., we decided not to publish them online; instead a dummy appears with the message “restricted material, not to be published”. The determination of sensitivity was made by Britta Duelke, an anthropologist who had worked for

many years in north-western Australia and had been involved as a consultant in Aboriginal land rights cases. Taking such precautions was, however, not a perfect answer to this kind of question, as we recently received a delegation from the Ngarinyin Aboriginal Cooperation (NAC) requesting further images be taken off the web. Among these images was rock art, which was copied on canvass by German artists during an expedition to the Kimberly in 1938–39 and depicts motifs for which certain Ngarinyin groups claim copyright. In the memorandum of understanding concluded after negotiations with the NAC, we tried to find a balance between legitimate indigenous rights<sup>13</sup> and our *raison d'être* as a research institution to provide historical sources and promote knowledge. We finally agreed on the principle of the Ngarinyin elders having the final say on how the Ngarinyin cultural material found within the Frobenius archive should be used. It was agreed that the final decision on how to handle this material will be determined through consultations and face-to-face meetings with the elders, to be held in the Kimberly. Taking into account the considerable financial and logistical constraints going along with such an approach, this probably means that this specific corpus of about 400 images will be more or less effectively removed from the public as well scientific sphere.

This case illustrates some of the complexities which can be involved in running an archive containing images produced in colonial contexts. The attitudes which different societies may have towards these images may widely vary. Having such an image archive online thus requires seeking a balance that allows for responsible use of the images while minimizing occurrences that some may find offensive. Once an image archive is in this sense understood as a visual heritage shared between the country of deposit and the countries the images once were produced, a number of most rewarding cooperation possibilities may come up and there are good chances to find uses and interpretations much better adapted to a postcolonial world.

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13 Taking into account especially article 12 and 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)) as well as the ICOM Code of Ethics (<http://icom.museum/the-vision/code-of-ethics>) and the Australian Government's Policy on indigenous repatriation (<https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1761/f/australian-government-policy-on-indigenous-repatriation-august2011.pdf>) (all last accessed on 30 March 2017).

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