



ABSTRACT

The relationship of Portuguese visual culture with landscape was sparse, difficult and troubled, until the last quarter of the 19th century. However, in the first decades of the 20th century naturalism became established as the prevailing aesthetical movement in Portuguese painting, mostly in academic institutions and art salons, with wide public preference. Naturalism imposed itself so strongly into Portuguese art that it even shaded and delayed, to some extent, the rising of modernism, until the late 1920's. Since the beginning of the hegemony of naturalism coincide with the disclosure of Portuguese landscape photographic prints through illustrated magazines, postcards and photographic albums, did that contribute to the change, particularly Emílio Biel's photographic album *A Arte a a Natureza em Portugal?* In this article I seek to make a revision of this state of the art.

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ARTICLE¹

Although there are no systematic studies on the representation of landscape in painting and drawing in Portugal, the lack of attention that this genre received in Portuguese visual arts is the evidence and symptom of its incipency. Even within artistic movements that traditionally were closely related with nature, like the *Barbizon School*, the impact of the representation of landscape in Portuguese painting and drawing was "meager, difficult and tormented". Those are the terms Margarida Acciaiuoli employed to characterize the relationship between Portuguese artists and landscape, in her rereading (ACCIAIUOLI 2006: 21-22) of José-Augusto França's reference study on Portuguese 19th century art (FRANÇA 1966). Acciaiuoli suggests that an insuperable difficulty has always existed when Portuguese artists confronted nature².

Ultimately the perspective of Acciaiuoli has been somehow exaggerated since we cannot fail to notice the important and sensitive contribution of Henrique Pousão (1859-1884) to Portuguese landscape painting. Although his untimely death and the fact that he spent much of this short life abroad, diminished the intensity which no doubt was missing in the context of Portuguese landscape painting. On the other hand, as has been pointed out by França³, in opera staging, set designers such as Rambois and Cinatti⁴ established, in his words, a strong tradition of landscape representation on Portuguese stages, but they were both foreign artists, as remarks Acciaiuoli (ACCIAIUOLI 2006: 21-22). The detachment of the Portuguese visual tradition regarding landscape could be translated as the structural constraints of a country that secularly overlooked the sea relinquishing the mainland, isolated by the lack of roads

1 I must express a special acknowledgment to Ana Duarte Rodrigues for her support to this work.

2 ACCIAIUOLI 2006: 24-26: "An insuperable difficulty, an insurmountable immensity that seems to defeat painters and even novelists. It doesn't mind the fact that Romanticism and Naturalism had made landscape as the subject of their representations. What counts is this feeling of inappetence for the real, for transcendence, that Nature would represent. [...] And it is, therefore, evident that the worship of nature constituted in time, in most aspects, a pure fiction or even worse, being only a mere background for genre painting, masking the alienation of concrete places".

3 José-Augusto França cit. ACCIAIUOLI 2006: 21.

4 Italians Giuseppe Luigi Cinatti (1808-1879) and Achille Rambois (1810-1882).

and railways, construction of which only started in the second half of the nineteenth century. But seascapes were also belittled, so we can clearly state that there is a structural visual inability to represent the landscape. However those readings of Portuguese landscape drawback in Portuguese art forgot the contribution of photography

From the last quarter of the XIXth century, photography brought a substantial contribution to change the relationship between Portuguese visual culture and landscape, particularly through the intervention of Emílio Biel, Oporto's photographer and photographic editor devoted to publishing albums on heritage, with dramatic photographs of Portuguese landscapes, especially in *A Arte e a Natureza em Portugal* (1902-1905), a monumental album and therefore the widest Portuguese photographic survey.

*A Arte e a Natureza em Portugal*⁵ is an album printed in collotype, with the dimensions of 40 to 30 centimeters, with over 400 pages and 350 photographic reproductions of high quality, with the theoretical collaboration of some of the most important Portuguese scholars. Such a monumental edition surprises us since it is edited in a country where nature and landscape had so far played, as we mentioned, a secondary role in visual representation. Although the editor of this monumental album was a German born emigrant, Emílio Biel (1838-1915), established in Oporto, Portugal, a foreigner (as were Rambois and Cinatti), but who was capable of understanding and assuming Portuguese cultural values as his own. It was Biel who dared to embark on such an ambitious project, carefully prepared and planned with his collaborators for more than 15 years.



AANP, Portas de Rodão [Rodão Gates Tagus River].

Emílio Biel came to Portugal in 1857, probably one of the many fellow countrymen that followed King D. Fernando II (1816-1885), the German consort king who married the Portuguese Queen D. Maria II (1819-1853). King Ferdinand II was one of the more influential personalities in Portuguese society and culture. During the long period of his beneficial influence, several cultural circles with a particular interest on German culture flourished

⁵ Hereinafter referred to by the abbreviation AANP.

in Portugal. Emílio Biel became a member of those circles⁶. Although we ignore the details of Biel's German past and schooling, as we shall see, he mastered humanities and sciences and, as stated by the Portuguese writer Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho (1847-1921), he took to Portugal as his genuine homeland, putting together the poets Johann Goethe and Luís de Camões⁷. His attention to Camões made him publish the epic *Os Lusíadas* in the occasion of the tercentenary of his death in 1880⁸.

In 1880 Emílio Biel was already the most important figure in Portuguese photography, a role he would keep until his death in 1915, just before the entry of Portugal into World War I⁹. The important role he was able to play in Portuguese photography was largely due to the social and cultural constraints that activity underwent during the decades following the introduction in Portugal of established studios during 1860's.

Until very late¹⁰ the photographic activity in Portugal depended almost exclusively on the short stays of itinerant photographic portraitists who roamed the cities of the Iberian Peninsula or scaled Lisbon en route to South America. This intermittent activity did not favor the establishment of photographic studios and did not promote the curiosity of the fledgling Portuguese bourgeoisie for the expensive photographic portrait¹¹. Political constraints were largely responsible for the delay in the establishment of the first photographic studios in Portugal that only occurred just before 1860¹². In this context, Biel's studio or *Casa Biel* (Biel's house) as it was referred by his customers and the press, has become the most important Portuguese studio, reporting a total of 50,000 portraits made in 1893.

The remarkable success of the commercial photography allowed *Casa Biel* to explore other aspects of photographic activity, in particular photographic edition, an activity in which Biel became a pioneer in Portugal. Emílio Biel began the first attempts at photo editing before 1880 using collotype¹³. From then on Biel's studio became the most important Portuguese photographic editor until 1915. The technical mastery of the collotype process allowed him to carry out a wide range of photographic editions, having started in 1880 with the mentioned edition of "*Os Lusíadas*", an endeavor that granted him a notable reputation in the Oporto society as much as his marriage to the daughter of the Oporto German consul. Such events almost coincided.

The earliest attempts of *Casa Biel's* collotype printing were the reproductions of drawings for *Lusíadas* edition (1881) but soon they tried objects of religious art and views of monuments and shortly after also of landscapes. For a full understanding of the importance that Biel's ventures accounted for the photographic editions in Portugal we must briefly review the previous photographic editorial activity.

One of the first photographic edition in Portugal was the *Revista Pittoresca e Descritiva de Portugal* published between 1861 and 1863, under the direction of the Royal architect Joaquim Possidónio Narciso da Silva.

6 Biel became member of the German circle of Anton Hermann Röeder, principal of Roeder College's attended by the Portuguese princes, later the German School of Lisbon. Later Biel joined the German circle of Oporto, gathered around Edward Katzenstein, the German empire's consul in Oporto's. Biel came to marry Katzenstein's daughter.

7 Vd. *O Commercio Portuguez* [Portuguese journal], 5th year, N° 133, 13/6/1880, p.1.

8 It is possible to speculate that this gesture could have political meaning as these celebrations did represent a statement of freemasonry and republican ideals and values against the amorphousness of the Portuguese monarchic regime, but there are several facts that may discount such a gesture from Biel despite his proximity to the Portuguese Royal family.

9 In 6 March 1916.

10 Until the beginning of the 20th century, some photographers were still itinerate in the sparsely inhabited interior Portuguese regions.

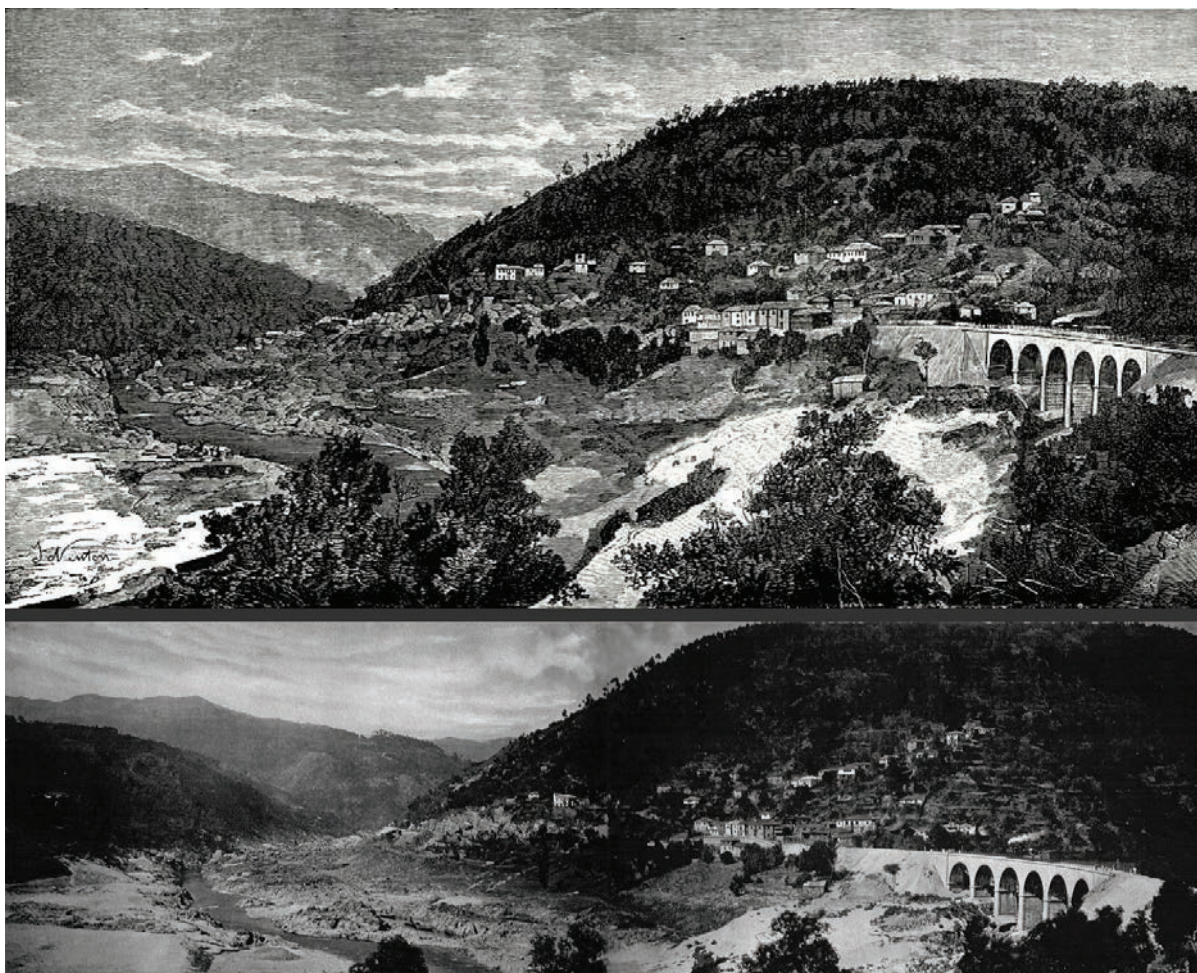
11 The situation lasted longer because the Portuguese political situation of civil war only stabilized definitely under the regime of *Regeneração* (Regeneration) after 1851, when a period of social appeasement and prosperity slowly began.

12 Only in the 1880's could a few studios emerge photographing in a truly industrial scale.

13 A photomechanical process that the Portuguese photographer Carlos Relvas acquired, bringing an Austrian technician from the photomechanical studio of C. H. Jacobi to Portugal to demonstrate the process to a group of photographers that included Biel.

That publication only included one set of 24 photographic plates of Portuguese monuments mounted on printed cardboard. The *Revista Pittoresca* [Picturesque Journal] was the first of a series of small publications with views published during the second half of the 1860s and the following decade, produced with the same technique¹⁴. The main drawback of those editions was the impossibility to produce large number of copies and the high cost of the editions. Unlike handmade photographic print collage editions, collotype printing allowed for the production of significant print runs of photomechanical proofs with high image quality and consistency, crucial aspects for photo editing and reasons for Biel to choose this process.

Coming back to the photographic activity of the *Casa Biel* it is important to mention that since the beginning of the 1880s we can see a broad and systematic process of photographic survey throughout Portugal, the first steps towards a large repertoire of Portuguese art and landscape. This survey can be followed through the woodcut engravings published in many issues of *O Occidente* [The West], an illustrated journal that began publication in 1882 and continued for over 22 years (BAPTISTA 2010: 130). *O Occidente* published a large number of pictures after *Casa Biel* photographs¹⁵, that allow us to pursue the photographic campaigns that Biel's photographic studio was making nationwide¹⁶.



Emílio Biel *O Occidente*, woodcut; bellow corresponding *Valle do Douro Viaducto do Laranjal* collotype.

14 *Monumentos Nacionais* [National Monuments] by Henrique Nunes (1868), *Panorama Fotografico de Portugal* [photographic panorama of Portugal] by various photographers including Carlos Relvas, *Álbum Lisbonense* [Lisbon Album] by Augusto Xavier Moreira and the album of Lisbon photographs by A. S. Fonseca.

15 Through the woodcuts by Caetano Alberto da Silva (1843-1924), one of the most relevant Portuguese engraver.

16 Subject partly addressed by MATOS 2013: 129-149, however the author doesn't make the connection between the woodcuts published in *O Occidente* and *AANP*, though a significant number of images were printed from the same photographs.

The importance of the Biel's landscape surveys and the quality of his photographs has to take into account that the technical constraints on landscape photography¹⁷ were largely due to the fact that, during the first decades after the advent of photography, the innovations sought to meet mainly the needs of portrait studios and commercial photography. Therefore the introduction of the dry plate, in 1880, was a definite step to ease outdoor photography. Then, the photographic practice relied to a large extent on the technicians' experience since most of the photographic knowledge was empirical. That is why the staff was so important in photography studio organization.

The questions concerning employees deserved particular attention by Emílio Biel and this was probably one of the reasons for the success of his studio. Through Biel's studio passed some of the most important Portuguese photographers¹⁸, but the true photographic cornerstones of *Casa Biel* and *AANP* were Ferdinand Nils Brütt¹⁹ and José Augusto da Cunha Moraes (1855-1933). Both became the partners of Emílio Biel for photographic publishing ventures. Ferdinand Brütt was a fellow German and an early partner in Biel's photographic studio. The Angolan photographer José Augusto da Cunha Moraes for whom Biel had printed the photographic album *África Occidental*²⁰ (Western Africa) in 1885, joined Biel's studio afterwards. With this staff, at the turn of the century, the *Casa Biel* published some of the most important Portuguese illustrated editions²¹. Part of those albums already included some of the pictures that later would integrate with *AANP* revealing a pragmatic way of managing his publishing house.

In the overall work of *Casa Biel* and for its size, *AANP* stands out; probably it doesn't have the same consistency of other works such as *O Douro* or the *Caminhos de Ferro do Douro* (Douro Railway) album, but it can be unequivocally considered the most important; insofar as it represents in itself a whole project, with early roots in and full awareness of both aesthetic and historiographical terms.



AANP, Ruins of Jesus Convent, Setúbal and Leiria Castle.

17 As mentions the art historian Françoise Heilbrun: *Photographing nature was no simple matter in the nineteenth century, because a different exposure time was needed for the sky, the sea, land or foliage. The "pioneers" came to terms with the technical constraints of their art and their photographs transformed our perception of the landscape [...] the emulsion was not fast enough to catch the blue of the sky, the skies seem empty* *vd.* HEILBRUN 2004: 7.

18 Reference should be made to Guilherme Boldt, Domingos Souto, José Carvalho, José Peres, Constantino Guedes or Domingos Alvão.

19 Birth and death dates still unknown.

20 José Augusto da Cunha Moraes, *África Occidental: Álbum Photográfico e Descritivo da Africa Occidental*, 1885

21 From 1896 to 1902 the Casa Biel published two works by Viscount Vilarinho S. Romão, *Vinicultura e Viticultura* (Viticulture and Winemaking) and *Minho e as suas Culturas* (Minho and its Cultures); and two albums from a series of photographic monographies on Portuguese regions, *Portugal-Gerez* (1887) and *Portugal-Espinho* (1898) and printed the collotypes of *Le Portugal Au Point de Vue Agricole*, 1900, an album published in the framework of Portuguese presence at the 1900 Paris universal exhibition.

A Arte e a Natureza em Portugal is the first project in Portugal that ambitiously assumes the need for the systematic recording and dissemination of heritage, translating an acute awareness of the necessity for an architectural, landscape and ethnographic heritage survey - ideas which continue to be extremely compelling today. This dimension was certainly enrolled during *AANP*'s conception by Joaquim de Vasconcelos (1849-1936), one of the most important Portuguese scholars of his time, a theorist and researcher of art and heritage who became the main scientific mentor of Casa Biel's editorial activity, collaborating intensively on its publications and especially in the preparation of the mentioned album.

As José-Augusto França remarked, Joaquim de Vasconcelos was one of the outstanding personalities of his time and the real first Portuguese art historian, in a scientific sense (FRANÇA 1966: 115-123). The notorious role that Vasconcelos played in Portuguese artistic culture owed much to the solid instruction he received in German high school. Moreover, much of his work benefited from the cultural complicity with the German scholar Carolina Michaëlis (1851-1925), whom he married and with whom he shared many of his cultural projects carried out in the course of their long career. França praises above all the important and pioneering role of Vasconcelos as an historian and theorist of Portuguese art²². The collaboration between Biel and Vasconcelos dated at least from 1882 when Biel supported Vasconcelos in the controversy on Portuguese art that brought him into opposition with Conde Almedina²³. Later Vasconcelos assumed the role of scientific mentor and supporter of *Casa Biel*'s publishing activity. It is possible to recognize in Biel's deeper interest towards heritage matters, especially when *Casa Biel* carried out the urgent photographic survey of the Convent of S. Bento da Avé Maria²⁴ under the influence of Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos' broader interpretation on the concept of heritage, as stated in his famous lecture on Romanesque art in northern and central Portugal (FRANÇA 1966: 115-123), highlighted the importance of the relationship between architecture, archeology, symbolic, folk art, the classification of ornamental subjects and the awareness of 'rurality' and 'archaic' values which naturally call attention to the environment and to landscape.

As mentioned before, *Casa Biel* had a long practice of landscape photography proved by the Railway albums as well as the numerous landscape engravings printed in *O Occidente*²⁵. We have to point out that Biel himself was a true lover of nature and practiced activities such as floriculture, gardening, farming, and he was a passionate lepidopterist. He bought an estate in the Gerês hills where he devoted himself to raising deer and he published a photographic album on Gerês landscapes, the aforementioned *Portugal-Gerez*, prepared in 1887 to be offered to the Portuguese royal family. Therefore Biel's taste for nature and landscape was more than an aesthetic attitude: it was almost a way of life.

22 One of more important of Joaquim de Vasconcelos findings (1895) were the first four boards of the painting today known as *Painéis de S. Vicente de Fora*, perhaps the most important work of Portuguese ancient art.

23 The controversy revolved around the *Exposição de Arte Ornamental* of 1881 (ornamental art exhibition) at Janelas Verdes Palace (today the Ancient Art National Museum) and the choice of the objects displayed. Biel published the catalog of the *Exposição Distrital de Aveiro*, an exhibition Vasconcelos organized in 1882, to demonstrate of its arguments in the afore mentioned controversy, therefore strengthening the relationship between them.

24 S. Benedict of Hail Mary convent in Oporto, on the verge of its collapse, in 1897.

25 Only a small part of Biel's photographic archive survived.



AANP, Braga Bom Jesus and Cava de Viriato, Viseu.

The profound changes that *Casa Biel* introduced in the practice of Portuguese landscape photography was particularly evident in the photographs of the album *Douro railways*. Most photographs from that album have a completely new photographic approach, either through their deep tonal richness, a remarkable testimony of the technical skill of *Casa Biel's* photographers and printmakers, or by the scenic and monumental panoramic framework that interpret the rude and rugged beauty of the Douro valley with its deep riverbed dug through abrupt slopes. The human presence in those landscapes is so insignificant it only serves as reference scale.



Emilio Biel, Douro railways collotypes.

In parallel with their important visual dimension, Biel's railways albums also have an important political significance. On one hand, they intend to document the paths of the new railways and the works carried out by the railway companies in their construction, especially the most complex such as viaducts and tunnels. On the other hand, politically and sociologically, we can place these albums, as one of the strongest Portuguese positivist claims of progress represented by Fontes Pereira de Melo (1819-1887) minister consulate, known as the *Fontismo* age in 1860 and 1870 decades. This situation is parallel to the French photographic campaigns of *Chemins de Fer du Nord* under Napoleon III and also to the photographic survey of the American Pennsylvania railroad (HEILBRUN 2004: 11-12).

Since we can date the images of the railways albums, thanks to the engravings published in *O Occidente*, we can rule out the fact that the works of Peter Henry Emerson (1856-1936) and Edward Peach Robinson (1830-1901)²⁶ could have influenced this phase in the landscape photography practice of Emilio Biel and his collaborators²⁷. However, regarding later works of Biel, namely some of the photographs of *AANP*, we can not exclude the possibility that some photographs benefited from the contact with the photographs of the Englishmen shown in Oporto.

Imbued with *Mission Heliographique's*²⁸ similar spirit but three decades later the *Casa Biel* made at least two attempts to publish a repertoire on Portuguese art and architecture, during the 1880s. The projects failed to succeed due to the high costs involved and Biel's failure to raise solid financial support.²⁹ However, Emílio Biel had all the preliminary works for the edition of *AANP* in 1902 and thus could start printing the booklets. The majority of the photographs had already been taken, as we can witness throughout the *O Occidente's* woodcuts illustrated journal. The edition had its funding ensured thanks to a model that several former Portuguese illustrated journals had already used, profiting from Portuguese immigrants in Brazil's subscriptions³⁰. This colony found in those publications a way to contact with their hometowns in mainland Portugal. Biel seized this process and to its favor divided the album geographically, covering all Portuguese regions. Probably it was this step that failed in previous projects he attempted unsuccessfully.

In the foreword of *AANP* Biel lucidly characterizes the constraints posed to this work by the Portuguese context³¹, in particular the awareness of the relatively little interest in the Portuguese cultural background for the natural [ie by the landscape] which was one of his main motivations to get to work since, as he stated before, nearly all cultured countries of Europe had already published their heritage repertoires.. He clearly emphasised in the foreword his Portuguese citizenship and the initiative to take action as Portuguese cultural institutions did not, such as the case of the aforementioned Camões homage.

26 Both had the importance to claim for photography a place among the arts.

27 Most photographs of Biel's railways albums had been published before the participation of those two notable British photographers in the International Oporto Photographic Exhibition in 1887.

28 The French mission that carried out the photographic survey of French architectural heritage in the 1850s under the supervision of the Commission des Monuments Historiques, the governmental agency for heritage.

29 The first project was ambitiously titled *Portugal Antigo e Moderno* (Old and Modern Portugal), pretending to publish a monumental edition of eight hundred collotypes *vd.* "Obra importante" [important work] in *O Primeiro de Janeiro* [Oporto], 15º Anno, Nº 20, 24/01/1883. The newspaper articles written about *Portugal Antigo e Moderno* mentioned that Emilio Biel went to Lisbon to find financial support; the text was to be written by Joaquim de Vasconcelos. The absence of further news about *Portugal Antigo e Moderno* allows us to guess that it was abandoned. But Biel didn't give up and as soon as 1884 started to publish a collection of collotypes under the title *Arquivo Fotografico* [Photographic Archive], with texts from writers Marques Gomes and Mello Freitas. Unfortunately this album, published in fascicles, did not go beyond the eighth issue.

30 Such as *Arquivo Pitoresco* (1857-1868).

31 BIEL: 1902-1905, preface: "We never delude ourselves about the real difficulties in which we would stumble. Small country, where only a limited elite is interested in art, and where the love of nature, which is a symptom of civilization and culture, has not yet reached the same intensity nor the extent that it has already assumed in other nations, it was logical that under the economic point of view, our attempt represented, if not a sacrifice, certainly an act of good will and faith, born of the enthusiasm, perhaps from self-love, and if they want to do us justice, some of that natural inclination we all have for what is our own; fortunately its a common Portuguese sentiment".



AANP, Monchique.

The *Aveiro* set of photographs from *AANP* is probably the best example on his search for pictorial qualities like those Peter Henry Emerson pursued, particularly in his series of East Anglia, mastering the ambience of lagoons under misty atmosphere that suited his taste for soft focus landscapes (JEFFREY 1981: 29). However the maritime haze and brightness of the Aveiro lagoons in Biel's album provide more contrasting images. In other examples from Biel's album the bright light in the stacks of salt create unprecedented values of contrast masterly rendered in the collotype print, with great technical expertise only possible due to a deep understanding of the landscape values. It is crucial to remember, as we mentioned before, the technical constraints that faced landscape photographers in the late XIX century, reinforcing the decisive role played by *Casa Biel* technicians to print flawless collotype proofs of such contrasting scenes.



AANP, Aveiro photographic series.

The Serra da Estrela Mountains series owes a lot to the dramatic *Douro railways album's* images. As in the *Aveiro* album, the prints have strong contrasts, for instance in the image of a ring of dark rocks framing and highlighting the white icy surface of the *Lagoa escura* [dark lagoon] or, in another case, of a waterfall falling from dark abrupt slopes.



AANP, Dark lagoon, Serra da Estrela Mountains.

In the *Surroundings of Coimbra* fascicle the aforementioned Carolina Michaëlis even proposes an illustrated guided tour in Coimbra's surroundings:

Today we invite you to ramble a simple and poetic reverie, amateurish, by the outskirts of the city. No scholarly concerns, let us enjoy strolling the justly celebrated beauties of this land of enchantment, clod able for the love harvests willed and sung by all patriots that a fortunate fate distinguished with the gift of the lira. So, on every step verses of the most distinguished bards who tried to set characteristic features of Coimbra's landscapes, and verses that breathe deep love, tender emotion and deep longing, such as those of Silva Gaio and Alberto Correia de Oliveira [two Portuguese poets] occur inadvertently to our memory, exteriorizing the gentle impressions we harvest.³²



AANP, Surrounding of Coimbra series.

It is important to notice that, from an aesthetic point of view, the proposed tour is already distant from the romantic landscape that Garrett devised or from the Dinisian³³ bucolic appeal for the return to rurality that still dominated visual [and literary] culture of the Portuguese 1800's *fin de siècle*. The informed proposal of Carolina Michaëlis suggests a resemblance between the Coimbra photographs and the dense landscapes of Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901)³⁴ and also points out places of interest like the *fountain of love*, named after the romantic drama of Pedro and Inês³⁵, in an unprecedented symbolist dimension.

³² BIEL: 1902-1905, *Arredores de Coimbra* [Coimbra surroundings] fascicle.

³³ Almeida Garrett (1799-1854) and Júlio Dinis (1839-1871) are two of the most important XIX century Portuguese writers.

³⁴ Swiss painter.

³⁵ The love of Portuguese King D. Pedro I (1320-1367) and Inês de Castro (d. 1355), a poignant drama that inspired romantic and

The sets of *Sintra* and *Douro* area also worth mentioning since the *Sintra* fascicles give great importance to the Pena castle of Ferdinand II, a special homage of Emílio Biel to his king, countryman and patron but also one the first significant photographic testimonies of Ferdinand's Romantic aesthetical gesture³⁶. On the other hand in the *Douro* fascicles, although assigning some importance to images which evoke Oporto Wine business, it does include impressive examples of Douro landscapes.



AANP, Pena castle.

This partial approach leaves out of our scope many of the geographical areas enrolled in *AANP*. It worth mentioning views from small predominantly rural towns³⁷ and from small cities³⁸. Although in an urban context, many of those views reveal complementary aspects that confirm the reading of landscape in the context of Biel's work. On the other hand throughout the album there is a significant number of "loose" images geographically inserted in the alignment³⁹ that indelibly reinforce the overall presence of landscape even in urban and monumental fascicles. These landscape images seem to justify the option for the inscription of the term *nature* in *AANP*. Besides the mentioned series of Mondego, we must highlight some views of *Minho*⁴⁰ but especially the photographs *Margins of Nabão*, *Liz River*, *Mortágua*, *Gates of Rodão*, *Fornos de Algodres Bridge* or *Juncais Bridge over Mondego River* and some landscape photographs such as *Cava de Viriato*⁴¹, *Bussaco* and *Monchique* (Algarve). Another set of images to remark on are the ruins of monuments in landscape context, such as *Leiria castle* or *Setubal Jesus couvent*⁴².

symbolist writers.

36 Built from 1842 to 1854 after Baron Wilhelm Ludwig von Eschwege's project. The surrounding park was planted at the same time.

37 Such as *Mafra*, *Monção*, *Vila Viçosa*, *Lagos*, *Amarante*, *Caminha*, *Montalegre*, *Chaves*.

38 Such as *Valença*, *Barcelos*, *Barroso*, *Bragança* and *Amarante*.

39 As it was sold in fascicles, without page numbers, we are unsure of the correct sequence.

40 Minho landscape was important in national imaginary for being the ever green part of the country.

41 Near Viseu, traditionally supposed to be the land of the Lusitanian mythical resistant leader against the roman occupation.

42 That can be regarded for the romantic interest in ruins but also as an appeal for its preservation.



AANP, Gates of Rodão, Fornos de Algodres Bridge, Margins of Nabão, Mortágua, Watermill, Minho and Liz River.

Finally to accompany the edition of the album, subscribers received special gifts, large format collotypes some printed from images that already appeared on the fascicles but other from unpublished photographs. These photographs have a special meaning since they were not linked to the defined program; therefore they represented a free choice by the editor identifying his own intimate taste to highlight landscapes such as *Choupal-Minho* and *Serradella-Minho*.



AANP, Choupal-Minho e Serradella-Minho.

In an article about the Landscape representation as discursive space (KRAUSS 1982: 313) the American art historian Rosalind Krauss proposes an approach to nineteenth century landscape photography as an aesthetic discourse that organized itself around the space of exhibition. Krauss evaluates the changes that came upon pictorial representation of landscape after 1860, transforming it into a “flattened and compressed experience of space spreading laterally”, “sharp value contrast which had the effect of converting the orthogonal penetration of depth into a diagonal ordering of the surface”, “serial landscapes, hung in extension, mimed the horizontal extension of the wall”. All these changes overcame the “constitution of the work of art as a representation of its own space of

exhibition [...] changes that became the history of modernism”. Through this perspective Krauss led us to understand 19th century landscape photography discursive space as an aesthetical discourse. Krauss identifies in those photographs a number of features which constitute a representation of aesthetic values such as “flatness, graphic design, ambiguity and intention towards aesthetic significations: sublimity, transcendence”. This discourse, defined after Peter Galassi’s⁴³ classical account on the origins of photography (GALLASSI 1982: 11-29), as Krauss remarks, “legitimises” them. Quoting Galassi, Krauss clarifies the argument that in the aesthetic discourse photography “was not a bastard left by science on the doorsteps of art, but a legitimate child of the Western pictorial tradition” and that legitimation comes from an analytic perspective “that tends to flatten, to fragment, to generate ambiguous overlap”. Krauss finds in the photographs of the American Timothy O’Sullivan proofs of that aesthetic discourse but doubts that complete achievement might be possible since the O’Sullivan photographs were not published in the 19th century. But this same argument can also be applied to Biel’s work with the great advantage that it was expressly held for subsequent edition, as in *AANP*. Most of aesthetical values pointed by Krauss were described ahead, on the account of Biel photography. Ironically, the display in Portuguese railway carriages of Biel’s collotypes of the *Railways* albums until late 1960’s is a proof of their modernity.

Actually *A Arte e a Natureza em Portugal* as well as the whole work of Emílio Biel can be regarded as a landmark in Portuguese photography, in the historiography of Portuguese art and in photographic illustration but it assumes a special dimension as the first photographic Portuguese landscape survey.



AANP, Saline-Aveiro.

43 Former MoMA curator for the photographic collections.

Portuguese landscape photography, and particularly Biel's album AANP, gave a major contribution to Portuguese visual culture in the beginning of the 20th century. The importance of this contribution had a significant aesthetical dimension on the one hand because such a relevant number of striking photographs was published and on the other hand because it was one of the first Portuguese photographic editions or photobooks, as we would call it today, with a large edition that enlarged its impact.

An interesting coincidence is the simultaneous publication of Biel's landscape repertoire with the beginning of the late Portuguese landscape painting movement. The study of the close relationships between Portuguese photography and fine arts has not yet been done but most likely Biel's landscape survey can be granted some responsibility in the development of that artistic movement. Ultimately Biel's work contributed to clarify in some extent the ambiguous relations of the Portuguese visual culture with nature overcoming that significant barrier to-revealing nature.

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