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Sommario

Framing the 'delegated gaze'

Handbooks for travelers and the making of anthropological photography in Italy at the end of the 19th century

Agnese Ghezzi

Introduction

The technique of photography, the practice of observation, and the discipline of anthropology have always been tied together. When anthropology was first institutionalized as an academic field in the middle of the 19th century, the new scientific community had the need to define its scope, its boundaries, and its method. Observation and visualization emerged as crucial practices to address. However, in its first phase the discipline relied heavily upon documentation gathered by other people, as scholars very rarely carried out fieldwork and observations directly. In their place, there were travelers, meant broadly as people who could move to distant places: businesspeople, diplomats, navy and military officers, naturalists, explorers, and settlers, were just some of the categories that interacted with the new scientific category of the anthropologist. A separation of labour was in operation between the so-called 'armchair scholar' who analysed collections and produced theories in the metropolitan centres of knowledge and travelers who provided direct reports and gathered materials and photographs from the colonial periphery (see Kuklick, Kohler 1996; Edwards 2001). The very fact of 'being there' allowed travelers to testify to an external reality, inaccessible to others, that they should adequately observe and register. Precisely, the possibility to see was the key element around which the transfer of information originated, in an entangled relationship between traveling, seeing, and knowing. In the system of "epistolary ethnography" as George Stocking defined it (Stocking 1996, 16), the knowledge transfer had to be regulated in order to receive reliable and pertinent information: how could anthropologists trust the evidence provided by explorers and travelers? How could misrepresentation be avoided? How could reliable and standardized reports be obtained?

To gain control, guide and size the practical experience of the men on the spot, handbooks and instructions for travelers were published. As Paolo Mantegazza proposed

> In this way, […] without reading voluminous books, [the traveler] could discern, between the many things happening under his eyes, the important and new from the useless and ordinary and, without being himself an anthropologist, he could gather precious material for the science (Mantegazza 1875, 102)*.

This framing attempt will be at the core of the present article. In particular, I will consider the reference to observation and to photography in anthropological handbooks to detect if and how the gaze of travelers was directed toward portions of reality that were marked as relevant. The preeminent role of the sense of sight in the Western scientific tradition has been widely analyzed and this study seeks to address how the anthropological discipline was working within this eye-centered paradigm while dealing with the separation between direct observers and knowledge makers, leading to the creation of "delegated gaze" as Cosimo Chiarelli defined it (Chiarelli 2015, 15-18).

Travelers' guides had a long literary tradition and existed in many variations (see Urry 1972; Rubiés 1996, 2002; Blanckaert 1996). The main formats were three: the generic handbook for travelers, the discursive guide, and the questionnaire. The former contained an introduction to the topic and guidelines on how to conduct the research; guides often aimed to illustrate a specific territory; questionnaires contained a list of questions that highlighted features worth considering. In some cases, these three formats were combined; other times, instructions were explicitly written at the request of travelers who, before starting a trip, asked to scientific communities which aspects merited consideration. While acknowledging the connection with other European traditions, such as the renowned British Notes and Queries, I will use examples from the Italian case from the Unification to the beginning of the 20th century. This geographical and chronological choice allows me to illuminate new problems, looking specifically at the newly-founded scientific community within the newly-founded Italian state.

From the 1870s, many guides were published in Italy and used as models for other countries as well (see Puccini 1998; Collini, Vannoni 1997; Bossi, Greppi 2005). The author was rarely a single individual; scholars often designed these handbooks as team and they were frequently connected to a specific institution. Therefore, instructions can be considered direct emanations of the learned societies, providing an insight into the disciplinary agenda and demonstrating the attempt of building exclusive control over scientific authority. One of the first examples was the *Raccolta dei materiali per l'etnologia italiana*, published in 1871 by Paolo Mantegazza, Cesare Lombroso, Maurizio Arturo Zannetti. In 1873, Mantegazza, the Anglo-Italian Enrico Hillyer Giglioli, and the French Charles Letourneau published the *Istruzioni per lo studio della Psicologia comparata delle razze umane*. This work initiated a new approach in Italian anthropology, opening the disciplinary interest to the socio-psychological behavior of the civilization under analysis.

The first comprehensive text that includes anthropology among many other scientific disciplines can be considered the *Istruzioni scientifiche per viaggiatori*, curated by Arturo Issel, and published from 1874 to 1875 as articles in the *Rivista Marittima* and later, in 1881, in a single volume. For this collection, Giglioli and Zanetti wrote together a section dedicated to *Antropologia ed Etnologia*. In 1883 Mantegazza, Giglioli, Alexis Von Fricken, and Stephen Sommier made available the *Istruzioni Etnologiche per il viaggio dalla Lapponia al Caucaso dei soci Loria e Mochi*, an example of a guide written for a specific exploration campaign as an aid to the travelers Lamberto Loria and Aldobrandino Mochi. On the occasion of the General Exhibition held in Turin in 1884, Enrico Morselli developed a handbook for observations on Italian people. In 1887 an enquiry on superstition was launched by Mantegazza and Girolamo Donati. Moving explicitly to the African space, Mochi wrote *Alcune Istruzioni antropologiche per il Congo*, in 1903. The *Istruzioni per lo Studio della Colonia Eritrea*, in 1907, was a joint effort of the *Società di Studi Geografici e Coloniali* and the *Società di Antropologia ed Etnologia* and a clear example of the close connection between anthropology and colonialism. In the occasion of the 1911 Ethnographic Exhibition, Loria developed instructions for the so-called '*raccoglitori regionali*'.

In the article, I will use handbooks and methodological texts as sources to reflect upon the concept of cut and framing in different ways: what falls inside and outside of the disciplinary interest? Which strategies were put in place to direct the gaze of travelers? What was the role of photography in transferring visual knowledge? Can we see a call for standardization in the descriptive and representative forms? And what are the implications of this framing and cutting practice? With this analysis, I do not mean to prioritise the written sources over the visual one, but to provide a view on the theoretical background associated with the production of pictures. I do not conceive of these texts as the most relevant or diffused tools, but as the most explicit products of the specialists who were trying to promote standards and specific procedures over others, although travelers did not necessarily follow these standards successfully or intentionally.

Framing observation

"I am convinced that science enters through the eyes, and from there it becomes a mental vision; therefore it is easy to understand, through reading and figurative pictures, what did not pass through direct visual observation" (Sergi 1908, V). This quotation from the anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi puts forward two themes that will be at the core of the following paragraphs: the connection between seeing and science, and the role of pictures and texts as substitutes for direct observation. With the word "vision" Sergi refers here to three different actions: the act of seeing directly, the act of seeing through a picture, and the act of envisioning science mentally. In giving such importance to the visual domain, Sergi here spoke generically of science, but he is implicitly referring to anthropology. The statement further demonstrates how the discipline established observation as a critical epistemological practice. As Daston and Lunbeck analyzed, rather than being a naturalized act, "observation is a highly contrived and disciplined form of experience that requires training of the body and mind, material props, techniques of description and visualization, networks of communication and transmission, canons of evidence, and specialised forms of reasoning" (Daston, Lunbeck 2011, 3). An "army of amateur observers" (Daston, Lunbeck 2011, 4) was asked to provide the 'raw data' from which the theory could be built. The scientific community was drawing the line between professionals and amateurs, a line that fluctuated on the divide between collecting and ordering, gathering and interpreting, observing and structuring. Giglioli and Zanetti

insisted particularly on this point in their essay: "the traveler can only gather and preserve. Ordering a collection is like writing a book [...], and it requires a fixed dwelling, time, comfort, talent, and study" (Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 323). The hierarchical distinction of roles proposed here separated collecting – the amateurs' duty – and ordering – the anthropologist's task: observation as a passive exercise was distinguished from theory making as an active practice.

Although depicted as a preliminary step, less relevant in comparison to conceptualization, observation was a fundamental phase. In order to be reliable, theories should be built on "a large number of precise facts, well-observed and well verified" (Mantegazza, Giglioli, Letourneau 1873, 317). Mantegazza saw anthropology as "a science of observation and experiment, like the other sister sciences" (Mantegazza 1871, 26) claiming to follow the scientific standard: "[Anthropology] describes what it found; it does not presume anything, it does not invent anything; it does not desire to find facts that conform to the theory, but it looks for the theory after having observed and enumerated the facts" (Mantegazza 1871, 19). If well conducted, as Mantegazza, Giglioli, and Letourneau said, the knowledge gained through someone else's observation could substitute direct observation: "Through observation, methodical and precise observation, we aim to get to see first-hand the moral and intellectual value of the diverse human groups, which constitute that diverse group named humanity" (Mantegazza, Giglioli, Letourneau 1873, 320). In another passage by Giglioli and Zanetti, the authors put together the practice of collecting and observing: "[a] well-made, well-preserved collection is like the journal of observation, like the group of witnesses for the prosecution and the defence that from the court of reason will be sued, to understand merits and errors of our theories" (Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 318). Observation and collection both acted as 'witnesses' in favour or against anthropological theories. The legal metaphor is particularly interesting because it disclosed the connection between making knowledge and providing evidence. Moreover, the figure of the witness strongly related to the sense of sight. The witnesses were the men on the spot who should meticulously observe and register objects and details.

In the attempt to build a proper observational procedure, anthropology took inspiration from other sciences, but it was confronted with the field, a

space inherently characterized by ambiguities and unfixed rules, by presence and closeness: "[a]s an open space it is less easily defined, bounded, and policed than its intramural counterparts like the laboratory or the museum" (Livingstone 2003, 42). In Giglioli and Zanetti's text, in line with natural sciences, a proper distance between the observer and the observed (see Stocking 1983) was created by considering the latter as an animal, belonging to the natural world:

> The traveler who inspects the religion has to observe the savage as a naturalist who observes an animal and its customs. He must watch him when he lights a fire, or he gets close to it, when he does a vital action, when he is spectator of a great natural phenomenon, when he negotiates with the head of a tribe or with the physician, when he kills or breeds an animal, when he tries to foresee the future (Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 325-326).

Directing the gaze to exterior qualities was seen as a possible strategy, rooted in an evolutionary paradigm that places human civilisation at different stages of progress in a linear chain that goes from the natural condition to the modern and cultured Western society. However, the multifaceted nature of human subjects and societies makes them intricate objects to isolate and record:

> We cannot measure, or express in numbers, all the things we observe. So we need to take note immediately on the spot, and not to write it by memory and after some time, because many things become confused and vanish in our mind, without even noticing it. The skin, the hair, the physiognomic traits are the things that strike the most the gaze of the observer (Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 345).

Aware of the strong impressions left by physical elements on the observer, the authors suggested gaining control over these bodily characteristics through notes. Not surprisingly, the same features became the preferred target of the camera.

Indeed, a crucial characteristic that anthropology shared with medical and psychiatric sciences was that "the object of discourse may equally well be a subject, without the figures of objectivity being in any way altered" (Foucault [1963] 2003, XV). The complexity of human expressions and the

inaccessibility of the subject/object of study to the anthropologist's gaze required the creation of a new analytical system, to make sense of what Mantegazza called "[the] twist of animal and divine elements, that confuse at first glance the eye of the observer; but that then decrease to infinite variety of measure and form, that is all blended in only one unity, the human type" (Mantegazza 1871, 24). While grounding their approach on psychology, Mantegazza, Giglioli and Letourneau adapted it and proposed a method of external observation:

> Our Psychology is Anthropological Psychology, objective Psychology […] It is clear that […] we cannot use the internal and subjective observation, usually employed by most psychologists in Europe […]. The psychological method of the 'I' that looks inward, is hardly applicable to the redskin native, the negro of Africa, the Papua, the Australian etc. Here only one thing can be observed: the external and apparent act, actions and works (Mantegazza, Giglioli, Letourneau 1873, 316-317).

Here the authors differentiated between the treatment of Western people and those coming from the colonial space – labelled with racist terminologies – whose interiority was considered inaccessible. The authors devised the possibility of dealing with excess by limiting the attention to external acts that could be more easily translated into facts to be analyzed. Rather than a subjective approach, based on interpersonal dialogue and interior examination, the authors opted for an objectifying/ objective strategy. In such an effort to grasp objectively what was labelled as the 'physical' and the 'moral' character of 'human civilizations', anthropologist saw in photography a possible ally.

Framing photography

As Christopher Pinney and others have argued, photography and anthropology developed along parallel paths (see Pinney 1992, Edwards, Morton 2009). The Italian history of such parallel growth has to be shifted some twenty years from the British one, when institutions, such as museums and learned societies, developed from the central state – strengthening scientific communities, launching projects and publications, and proposing guidelines. The following paragraphs considers the rhetorical discourses produced around the use of photography in anthropology, as a way to show how the imagined possibilities offered by

the medium modified the language of the discipline, which was so profoundly rooted in visuality.

Photography served the anthropological discipline because it was believed to "close the space between the site of observation of the colonial periphery and the site of metropolitan interpretation" (Edwards 2010, 31-32), creating "immutable mobiles" (Latour 1986, 7) "through which information could be transferred in uncorrupted form to another interpretative space" (Edwards 2000, 31-32). The promise of a visual linear exchange, without any loss of information in the transfer, was combined with a discipline based upon indirect observation. Anthropological handbooks, therefore, boosted the positivist confidence in photography as a means of reproduction of the external reality. When the objects' materiality clashed with the anthropologist's aspiration to possess, photographs were perceived as useful substitutes that allowed the creation of another kind of collection, a visual one: "drawings, the art of shaping, and especially photography, will compensate the difficulty in collecting" (Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 358). The authors here mentioned photography and stressed its adoption as an essential element in the procedural standard, highlighting particularly its reproductive supremacy and its cataloguing function as a recorder of objects (see Edwards, Morton 2015).

However, pictures were not merely illustrations, but active objects in the making of scientific knowledge (see Bredekamp, Dünkel, Schneider 2015). In this regard, even before anthropology was formally established in Italy, Mantegazza perceived a problematic representational gap in comparison with other sciences:

> There are animal and botanical iconographies that can be considered works of art; but there is not yet a human iconography that could make the synthesis between the studies of men of letters who, unaware of anatomy, take the only path of linguistics and history and that of doctors who, worshippers of raw and nude material, struggle to make ethnography on skulls, skin and hair (Mantegazza 1853, 302).

The issue of a "synthesis" between the scientific and the humanistic domain was at stake. The form of the atlas was used as the model, capable

of being scientifically accurate, aesthetically fulfilling, and stimulating for the men of letters. As Daston and Galison have shown, atlases represented very specific objects of scientific dissemination, that

> have served to train the eye of the novice and calibrate that of the old hand. They teach how to see the essential and overlook the incidental, which objects are typical and which are anomalous, what the range and limits of variability in nature are. Without them, every student of nature would have to start from scratch to learn to see, select, and sort (Daston, Galison 2007, 26).

Pictures perfectly served as instructors of the eye, because they showed what the object of study was, using stylistic and technical methodologies to isolate it.

As already mentioned, the human element, physically revealed in men's and women's bodily presence, constituted the primary object of anthropology. Interestingly, the Italian anthropological community used the categories of "artistic" and "scientific" photography to indicate the two kind of visualization modes necessary to the discipline. Giglioli and Zanetti introduced this distinction in the chapter of the *Istruzioni* edited by Issel. By "scientific" they meant anthropometric portrait: "the man must be photographed in front and profile, in the position that we have recommended for measurements"(Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 350). Thirty-six bodily measurements were indicated by the authors and should be combined with personal as well as geographical information. Through standard postures, anthropometric photography should ideally produce a set of comparable visual data. This kind of representation enabled, in the positivistic conception, the possibility to assess the belonging of a specific race and to theorise related hierarchy, influences, and affiliation.

The opportunity to extrapolate numerical and comparable information from a series of pictures of human bodies was related to an iconographic protocol that produced not the representation of an individual body but a general image of a 'type', intended as an average representation of a given group.

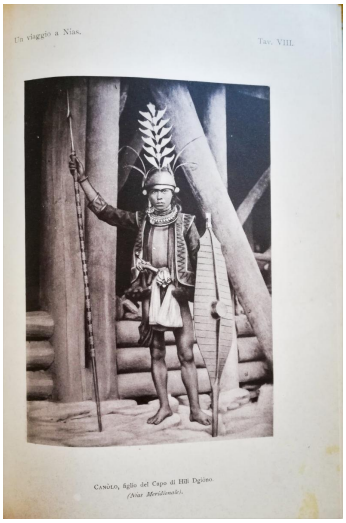
The qualities of typological representation objectified the subjects of the pictures and inserted them in a series with the aim of classification. Front and profile view, naked body, the adoption of specific postures, the use of neutral background were all devices introduced in the anthropological field to develop standardized and measurable pictures. One of the first to propose a protocol was the Englishman John Lamprey in 1864, based on the use of a black and white grid; another example was Huxley's proposal, based on the use of a white neutralising background and a measuring stick (see Ellenbogen 2012).

1 | Paolo Mantegazza and Stephen Sommier, *Lars Nilsen Hotti, età 58, da Karasuando – Lars Hendriksen Valkiapaa, età 25*, albumen prints, in *Studii antropologici sui lapponi*, Firenze: coi tipi dell'Arte della stampa, 1880, fig. XXXIV. Biblioteca dell'Orto Botanico dell'Università degli Studi di Padova.

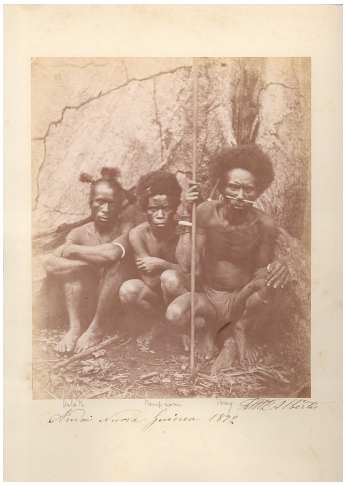
Enrico Morselli—curator of the anthropological section of the 1884 *Esposizione Generale Italiana* in Turin—gave further indications for the scientific representation of the human body, enlarging Giglioli and Zanetti's definition:

> We recall here the scientific utility of photography and we remember how to proceed to photograph a man scientifically. From the anthropological point of view, the man has to be portrayed in front and profile, in size big enough so that light can capture every detail of the physiognomy. The individual should be erect, with the arms tight to the body, one leaning to the hip and with the palm on the thigh, the other with the forearm bent and the hand on the chest with the fingers slightly open. Both in front and profile, you should try to put the head on the horizontal line of the gaze (Morselli 1884, 128).

The anthropometric representation was strongly connected to issue of measurability but, notwithstanding the widespread attempt in the creation of a



2 | Elio Modigliani, *Canolo, figlio del capo di Hili Dgiono (Nias Meridionale)*, engraving, in *Un viaggio a Nias*, Milano: Treves, 1890, fig. VIII.



3 | Luigi Maria D'Albertis, *Arfak – […] – Dorey – Andai Nuova Guinea, 1872 – LMD'Albertis*, albumen print, Collection Luigi Maria D'Albertis, Inv. F63, Castello D'Albertis Museo delle Culture del Mondo.

typological human iconography, the "pursuit of method" (Edwards 1990) was manifold and plural. Visual protocols crossed national boundaries, but they also encountered local traditions and practical variations. Therefore, despite the unifying presumption and the strong framing attempt that accompanied such photographic representation – only meaningful when it adopts the same structure providing comparable data – the archival research reveals a non-unified employment of several anthropometric techniques [Fig. 1]. The written sources give an insight into the active concern of anthropologists towards a systematic use of the photographic tool, a theoretical desire that was not paired with the practical results.

After having delineated the correct method for a scientific depiction of the human bodies, Giglioli and Zanetti called for another representational intention in their chapters: "To this kind of scientific photography it should be added an artistic one that gives the natural behaviour, the personality of the individuals and the race" (Giglioli, Zanetti [1874] 1881, 338). Interestingly, the authors here distinguished clearly between photographs made to measure the anatomical features of the body and photographs made to understand what they call the "natural behaviour" of both the single individual and the racial group. The subject should appear at the same time as an individual (therefore in its exceptional character) and

as racial type (therefore presenting, as an exemplary member, the features shared with the group).

Enrico Morselli also reframed this definition:

> To scientific pictures, it would be useful to add artistic ones, namely taken with the natural and free attitude of the portrayed subjects, possibly in their traditional costumes or surrounded by tools and utensils typical of their region and their social class (Morselli 1884, 125-126).

Quoting from Giglioli and Zanetti, Morselli removed the allusion to race (as he was referring just to one ethnic group, the Italian population), adding instead a reference to traditional costumes and objects as well as to class and regional belonging. The picture could therefore serve to condense the individual in his or her physical, cultural and social features. This tendency echoed the agenda presented by Mantegazza, Giglioli and Letourneau in 1873, according to whom "[a]nthropology without abandoning compass and scale, without neglecting [human] morphology, had to force itself in showing the acting, thinking and living man" (Mantegazza, Giglioli and Letourneau 1873, 320-321).

Anthropologists, unsatisfied with a purely scientific and anthropometric representation, sought in artistic photographs additional information on the context, the environment, the activities of human groups and individuals. The photographer's cut should focus on factors able to reveal what would be later called the 'material culture' of a given society, an interest that at the end of the 19th century began to concern all European and North American anthropologists. In the British debate for example, Everard im Thurn in 1893 criticised anthropometric photography, arguing that people should "be more accurately measured and photographed for such purposes dead than alive", calling for a depiction of subjects as "living beings" (im Thurn 1893, 184). In Italy, instead, the two representational modes existed in parallel. What is interesting to notice are the words selected and the different implications they opened. Im Thurn referred to "naturalistic photography", having in mind the possibility of direct access to the external reality. Instead, Italian anthropologists used the word "artistic", an adjective that explicitly pointed to a subjective dimension, opposite to a naturalistic and objective

view. Therefore, it could be interpreted as an awareness of personal intervention in the representational system. However, even the artistic depiction should follow "procedural correctness" to assure its validity (Edwards 2016, 94).

If the aspiration for a documentary style and an authentic representation gleamed from this definition, this framing exercise appears as artificial as anthropometry, inasmuch as it required a similar isolating performance. In anthropometry the human body was shown with a logic of excluding/removing disturbing influences (see Poole 2005), while in artistic photographs the person was immersed within the most typical objects and garments, in a logic of inclusion/addition.

The sitter should be surrounded by and dressed with all sorts of elements, implying strong intentionality on the photographer's side, that developed a condensed, powerfully staged and constructed depiction. The 'typicality' of the surrounding elements was often exaggerated, leading to the creation of stereotypical representation [Fig. 2 and Fig. 3]. In this sense, artistic photography can be seen as a reinterpretation of the anthropometric images in relation to cultural elements. As scientific pictures should make visible the racial type, and present a set of stylistic and technical elements that make it unequivocal, so artistic images should make visible the cultural type.

Conclusions. Framing anthropology

The distinction between scientific and artistic photography reveals the inherent duality of anthropology, summed up by Mantegazza in a fascinating quotation "[the] anthropologist [must] be at once naturalist and psychologist" (Mantegazza 1871, 25). The naturalist looked for measurable and objective data in the outer world, while the psychologist investigated personal and internal experiences. Mainly the discipline oscillated between two options: treating humans as specimens and ordering them in taxonomy or studying men as living beings in their complex social relationships. Throughout this closing section, I want to show how the anthropological discipline moved along this borderline, taking inspiration from both natural and human sciences, using them not as opposed and self-excluding areas but as two fields of knowledge in the making.

The capacity to register and put in relation measurable and unmeasurable features, to observe bringing together a naturalistic and psychological approach, was not only a matter of particular concern in the Instructions for travelers but a central methodological issue for the discipline's structure. In the struggle between what we would call today quantitative and qualitative data, a reflection by Carlo Ginzburg could be useful: "the inability to quantify stemmed from the impossibility of eliminating the qualitative, the individual; and the impossibility of eliminating the individual resulted from the fact that the human eye is more sensitive to even slight differences between human beings than it is to differences between rocks or leaves" (Ginzburg 1980, 21). Worried about the limitations of an anthropological science only concerned only with numerable records, Mantegazza made clear that in his view the scope of the discipline was not only naturalistic and anthropometric:

> If anthropology, in its first years of life, dealt more with the skull than with the thought, more with the races than with the comparative psychology of the human family, that is because it had to start from what is most comfortable to be studied, measured, weighed, following the same path of the sister sciences, and it had to move from the accessible and known to the complex and unknown (Mantegazza 1871, 19-20).

If to a certain extent a "botanical model" (Foucault [1963] 2003, 6) was hoped for, due to its rigid and unmistakable ordering structure, it was also rejected:

> [Anthropology] has to pass from the static to the dynamic period, since anthropologists would not indefinitely want to limit themselves to classify men, as botanist classify plants in his herbarium (Mantegazza, Giglioli, Leatourneau 1873, 320).

Firmly rooted in medical knowledge, anthropology was moving on the line between what Ginzburg called an anatomical/naturalist model and a conjectural/semiotic model. The former aimed at obtaining generalised and standard knowledge by looking at the shared and countable characteristics, while the latter concentrated on particular details and was based on the idea that "nothing differs more from a man than a man"

(Mantegazza 1871, 22). Such parallel paths, modes of observation and systems of knowledge also impacted on the definition of its visual tools.

The concepts of cut and framing provide useful lenses of analysis to study the origin of anthropology: from a discursive point of view, they allow to consider the definition of the disciplinary scope and the creation of boundaries between scholars and amateurs, theories and practices. These categories become particularly useful to analyse how direct observation was delegated to non-experts, and how their gaze was guided in the description of the field. In the regulation of this urgent matter, photography was promoted as the perfect medium. However, its indexical power had to be sized, to assure the correctness and pertinency of the resulting visual information. The request for artistic and scientific pictures reflect the double identity of anthropology, split between the scientific/ anthropometric/naturalistic method, and the artistic/cultural/ psychological approach. This article elaborates on this Janus-faced nature, showing how the discipline became a contested space for experimentation and visualization at the crossroad of natural and human sciences.

*All quotations from primary sources in the text have been translated from Italian by the author.

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English abstract

This article analyzes the role that observations had in anthropological practice at the end of the 19th century and considers how Italian anthropology at its origin framed it through textual discourses, handbooks and instructions produced at the end of the 19th century. In these sources we can detect the attempt to guide the gaze of travelers and observers on the spot, in order to ensure the reliability of the information received and, consequently, of the making of science. The investigation connects the practice of observation with photography, to see which form of representation were promoted and how the medium was associated with the anthropological discipline. In particular, the demand for "scientific" and "artistic" photographs is analysed as a distinction strongly connected to the way anthropology conceived itself.

keywords | anthropology; photography; objectivity; observation; travel

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