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The collection of photographs from Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar of Francis Frith & Co.

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Introduction

The Iberian collection of Frith & Co. is one of the most interesting from the nineteenth century peninsular photographic scene. This is so because it dates back to the 1860s, its numerical and geographical extent, and its technical and artistic quality.

In 2007, this collection was the subject of an extensive study and an excellent exhibition in Barcelona, at the Museo Nacional d'Art de Catalunya in collaboration with the Photographic Museum of the University of Navarra.¹ In this study, only Robert Peters Napper was mentioned as the author of the photographs, but over the last fifteen years we have had the opportunity to access new data and documents and also a large number of vintage photographs. The study of these has yielded interesting conclusions to clarify, if not entirely, then at least in part, some of the unknowns in the collection which needed to be resolved.

In 2016 I published a paper that, in addition to offering new biographical data about Robert Peters Napper, dealt mainly with the stereoscopic work in Spain by Frank Mason Good.² There I expressed my suspicion that Good was also one of the authors of the Frith collection. In this paper we present new and interesting contributions to this subject.

Robert Peters Napper (1818-1867)

Robert Peters Napper was born in Newport, Monmouthshire, South Wales on 23 December 1818. At that time his parents, Peter Napper (1782-1835) and Mary Bradshaw (1782-1858) were 36 years old. According to his Quaker biographers,³ the young Robert Peters was active and restless-minded, fond of reading scientific and literary texts. In 1841 he travelled to Australia, specifically to Sydney, and c.1842 he went north to the state of Queensland and, as he was interested in natural history, he entered the aboriginal communities to collect specimens.⁴

In Brisbane Napper came into contact with a

colony of German missionaries who introduced him to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). They affirm that it was there that he was converted for the first time,⁵ although his name and those of his siblings already appear in the Quaker birth, marriage and death registers of the United Kingdom, before his departure to Australia, specifically in a document that covers the period between 1578 and 1837. In this list are his siblings Robert, Sophia, Arthur and Edwin, residents and all born in Newport between 1818 and 1826, whose parents were Robert, a confectioner, and Mary, also stating that the father was not a member of the Church.⁶

Regarding his stay in Brisbane and specifically in Moreton Bay, we have found a letter signed by Napper and published in *The Sidney Morning Herald* in 1842, in which he tells of his meeting with the German missionaries, who were a combination of Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Pietists.⁷

The Quaker account of his obituary continues by reporting that Napper then travelled to the Philippines, where he engaged in business in the Spanish colony of Manila,⁸ and where he remained for twelve years, during which time it is reasonable to assume that he learnt the Spanish language.

The Quakers say that in 1856 he returned to his country via America, and that is when he began to practise photography. However, we have more specific data because, in the *Journal of the Photographic Society* dated August 1856, there is a note stating that Napper recommends the use of certain chemical compounds: '...and states that pictures taken by him in America, six months ago, still remain uninjured'.⁹ This note tells us that Napper was in America at the beginning of 1856 and that he was already in England by August at least. But an important question arises, which country in America was Napper referring to? We should not take it for granted that he was referring to the United States, since the use of the word 'America' to name this country did not become general until the twentieth

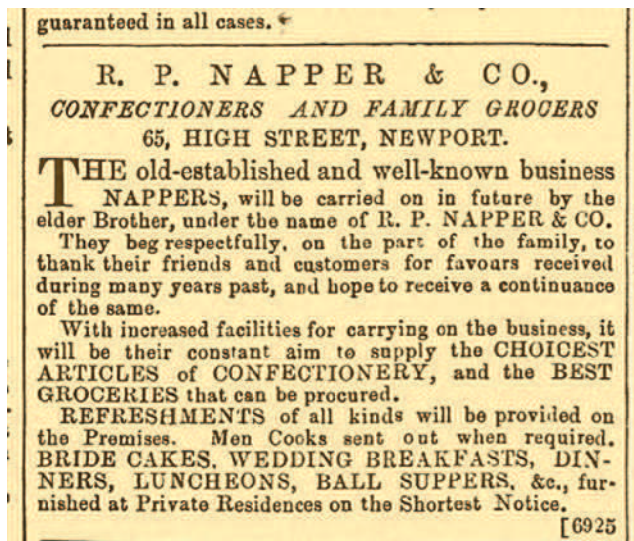


Figure 1. Advertisement from the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 11 February 1865.

century. Moreover, crossing the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century was a hard and risky undertaking (the first railway line to connect both coasts did not open until the late 1860s). If we consider that the starting point was the Spanish colony in the Philippines, the logical thing to do was to travel to Central America and from there to the Caribbean to later move on to Europe. Photography was already sufficiently developed in many places in the former Spanish colonies such as Lima, Havana or even Manila, whose photographic history begins in the 1840s,¹⁰ so it seems likely that he learned photography in one of these cities.

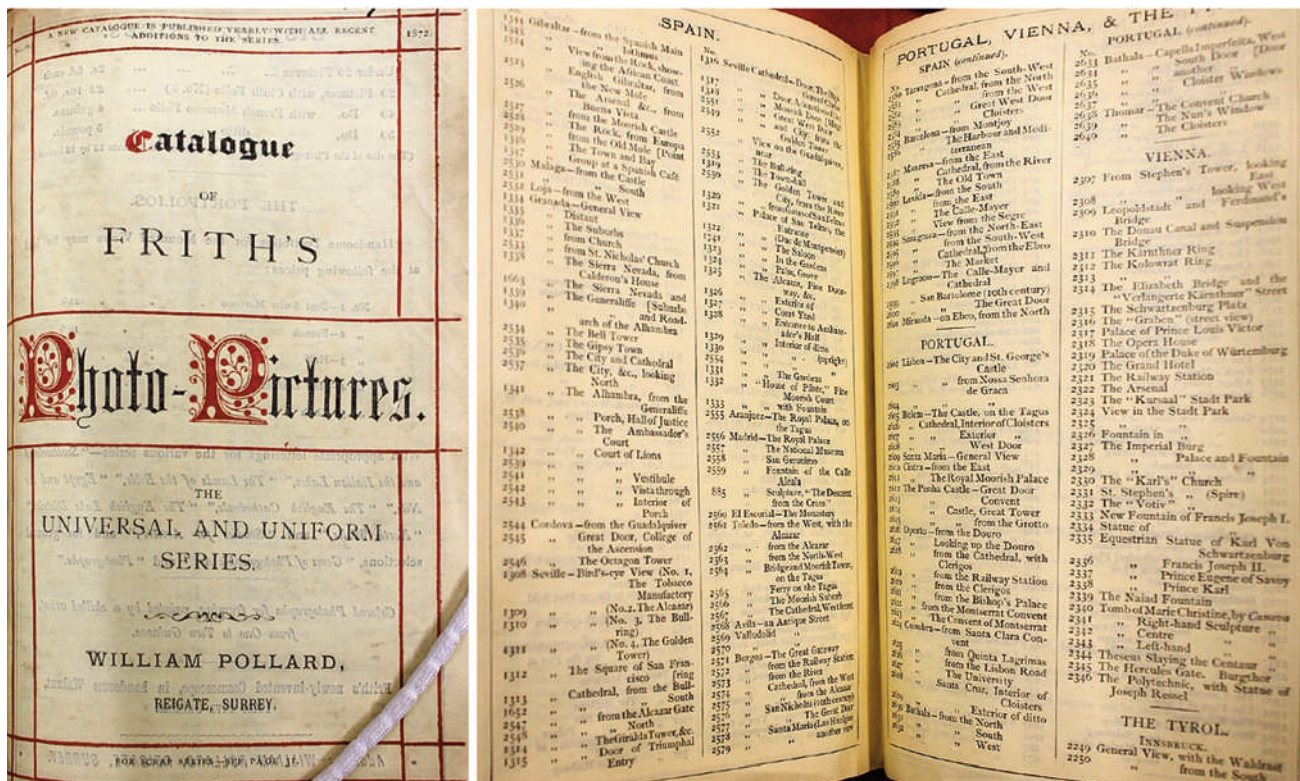
At the end of 1859 and in April 1860 we have new

information: an advertisement appears in the *Photographic Journal* for the firm Melhuish and Napper, Bowater place, Blackheath, and also with an office in Holborn, in the centre of London, offering their services as photographers and photographic printers.¹¹

Arthur James Melhuish (1829-1895) had proposed Napper as a member of the Blackheath Photographic Society during the nineteenth ordinary meeting of the society, held on 21 November 1859 and, at the twenty-fourth meeting, on 21 May 1860, Melhuish presented stereoscopic photographs of Rome and Napper of Sicily.¹² Melhuish and Napper may have made a trip to Italy, perhaps dividing up the areas to be photographed, around 1859/60. A few months later, starting in July, we find Thomas Miller McLean added to his company, changing its name to: McLean, Melhuish, Napper & Co., at 26 Haymarket, London.¹³ Treadwell and Darrah mention the existence of cardboard stereoscopic views of Italy and Sicily published by the three partners.¹⁴ In September 1861 Napper left the partnership which continued with the other two members.¹⁵

In 1860 and 1864 Napper participated in the exhibition of the Photographic Society of London, in the former with a photograph of Raglan Castle, in Wales, and the latter with photographs of Seville and the Vale of Neath, also in Wales.¹⁶ With the photographs of Neath a book was published at the end of 1863¹⁷ with attached original albumen prints, of which several copies are known.¹⁸ Napper lived at this time in Neath.¹⁹ In the census records of 1861 he appears to be living in Aldershot, Hampshire, 60 kilometres from London, where he claims to be 42

Figure 2. Frith & Co., *Catalogue for Spain and Portugal*, 1872.



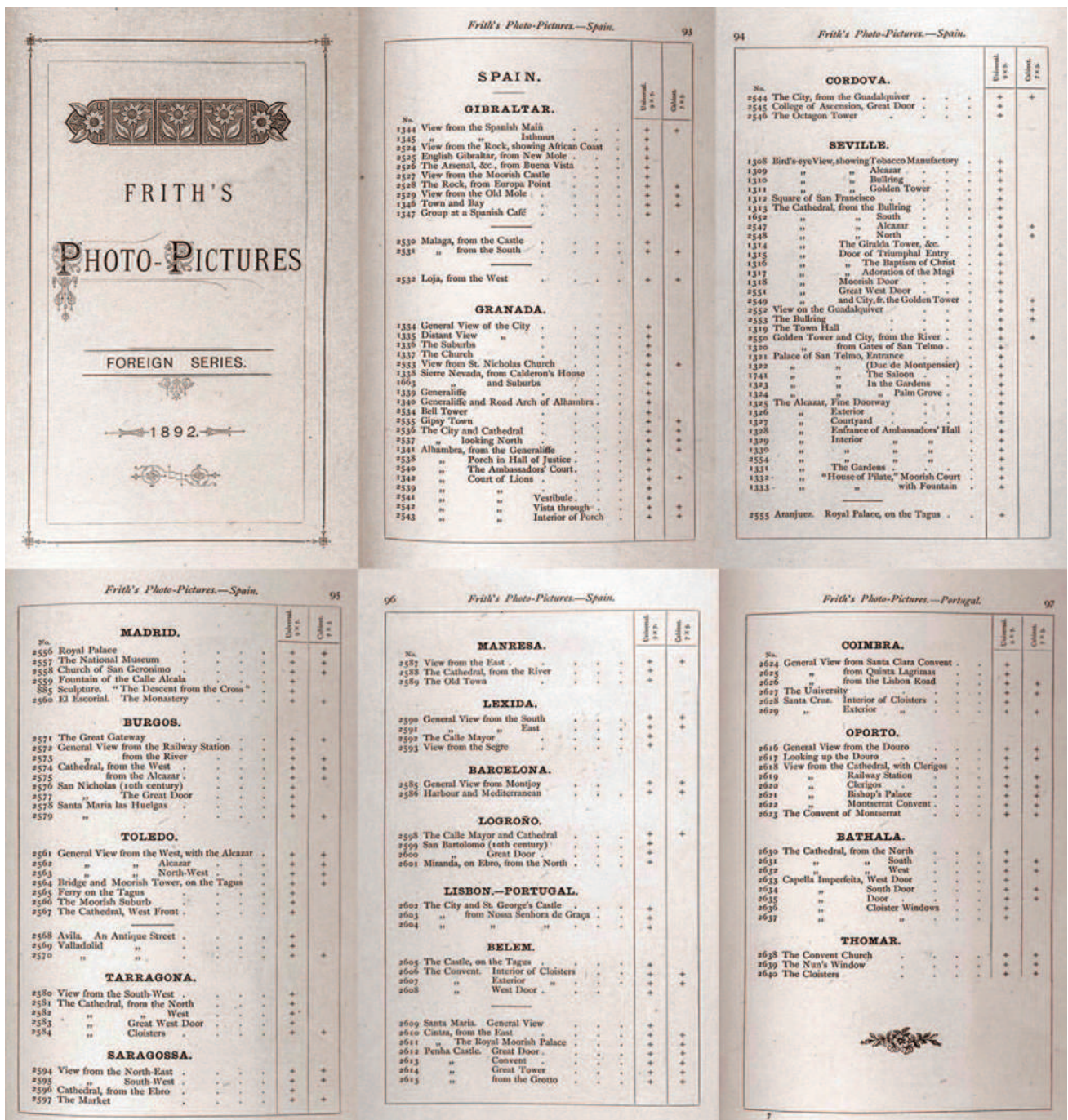


Figure 3. Frith & Co., *Catalogue for Spain and Portugal, 1892.*

years old, to have been born in Newport, Monmouthshire, a photographer by profession, and is a tenant of John Swaffield at 32 Union Square.²⁰ In no record have we found references to a wife or children.²¹

On the other hand, at the beginning of the 1860s, Francis Frith was already preparing his great project for the 'Frith's Series', a large set of photographs from numerous countries. Sometime between 1862 and 1863 Napper was hired by Frith, who was also a Quaker, to carry out a photographic visit in Spain. Possibly this decision was also influenced by Napper's knowledge of the Spanish language. It is even possible that he abandoned his companions McLean and Melhuish, in September 1861, as we have seen, to embark on this new project. But by May 1864 he

was back in Newport, his family home, from where he sends a letter to the Duke of Montpensier in Seville.²² In November of that same year we find him in Neath, near Newport, where he is involved in the bankruptcy of his brother Edwin's bakery and grocery store business (probably inherited from his father), with Robert himself among the creditors. The press reports describe him as 'gentleman (trustee)'.²³ In February of the following year (figure 1) he appears as the new owner of the establishment, which is renamed: 'R. P. Napper & Co.'²⁴

It seems clear that from this moment he withdraws from photography. Although he is only 46 years old, it is possible that he was not in very good health. In the Quaker obituary it is stated that the time spent in tropical climates affected his health,

and that in 1866 his condition worsened, suffering recurrent bleeding for several days and, although he had episodes of improvement, he never fully recovered. This same text indicates that from his return to England and his dedication to photography, he turned away from faith in Christ, but that in his last days, surrounded by his sisters, he returned to the Church of Friends, refusing the assistance of a pastor of the Church of England and dying, finally, on 31 October 1867, at the age of 49.²⁵

Frith's photographs of Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar

In order to carry out this work, it has been essential to examine practically all of the images in Frith's Iberian collection, as well as many of their variants. For this we have accessed the V&A collection,²⁶ which offers online the legacy of Frith & Co. itself, an archive which is almost complete, but we also have our own collection, compiled over several decades, the photographs offered on its website by Museo de la Universidad de Navarra, as well as other pieces from various sources.

On the cover of the 1872 catalogue of Frith & Co.²⁷ we can read the following: 'A new catalogue is published yearly with all recent additions to the series' (figure 2). That was the policy of the firm, to add successive additions of new photographs to its annual catalogue. Unfortunately, these catalogues are not easy to find. In fact, for this work we have only had access to those corresponding to the years 1872 and 1892.²⁸ Previous catalogues would have helped a lot in dating and studying the full set. In both catalogues, the content of the Iberian photographs is identical, although there is some slight variation in the order of the cities referenced.

In the first, under the heading 'Spain', the cities are detailed in an order that is possibly a real itinerary

that would begin in Gibraltar, continue through Malaga, which was accessed by sea, and then venture into the interior towards Granada, with a photograph of Loja, a very common route at the time. After Granada we can find a list of photographs of Cordova and Seville, followed by Madrid and its most visited surroundings at the time (Aranjuez, El Escorial and Toledo), and moving on towards the Castilian cities of Ávila, Valladolid (here is an error that we will clarify later) and Burgos. The itinerary continues through Catalonia, visiting Tarragona, Barcelona, Manresa and Lleida, and then goes on to Saragossa, Logrono and Miranda de Ebro.

The Portuguese part seems to follow its own itinerary, which would begin in Lisbon, with its neighbourhood of Belem, and continue through Cintra, to then include the cities of Porto, Coimbra and the monuments of the Batalha and Thomas Monasteries, the latter listed somewhat haphazardly and differently in each catalogue (figure 3).

This list, in geographical order, includes the corresponding numbering of Frith's Series next to each title, but since the firm numbered the photographs as they were incorporated over time, and in some cases new photographs of pre-existing places were added, such as Seville, Granada and Gibraltar, the geographical order does not follow the same numerical order. For our study, we are more interested in following the numerical, and therefore chronological order. The complete catalogue includes 160 titles, which we will study in two well-differentiated blocks. The first one begins with the number 885 and then continues from 1308 to 1347, to which the individual numbers 1652, 1663 and 1741 must be added, making a total of 43 photographs,²⁹ (we will see plate duplicates and other variants later).

Of these 43 photographs, thirty-one are also

Figure 4. List, in numerical order, of the first block of photographs from the Iberian collection of Frith & Co.

885	Madrid	Sculpture. "The Descent from the Cross"	1329	Seville	The Alcazar, Interior of Ambassadors' Hall
1308	Seville	Bird's-eye View, showing Tobacco Manufactory	1330	Seville	The Alcazar, Interior of Ambassadors' Hall
1309	Seville	Bird's-eye View, showing Alcazar	1331	Seville	The Alcazar, The Gardens
1310	Seville	Bird's-eye View, showing Bullring	1332	Seville	The Alcazar, "House of Pilate", Moorish Court
1311	Seville	Bird's-eye View, showing Golden Tower	1333	Seville	The Alcazar, "House of Pilate", with Fountain
1312	Seville	Square of San Francisco	1334	Granada	General View of the City
1313	Seville	The Cathedral, from the Bullring	1335	Granada	Distant View of the City
1314	Seville	The Cathedral, The Giralda Tower, &c.	1336	Granada	The Suburbs
1315	Seville	The Cathedral, Door of Triumphal Entry	1337	Granada	The Church
1316	Seville	The Cathedral, Door The Baptism of Christ	1338	Granada	Sierre Nevada, from Calderon's House
1317	Seville	The Cathedral, Door Adoration of the Magi	1339	Granada	Generaliffe
1318	Seville	The Cathedral, Moorish Door	1340	Granada	Generaliffe and Road Arch of Alhambra
1319	Seville	The Town Hall	1341	Granada	Alhambra, from the Generaliffe
1320	Seville	Golden Tower from Gates of San Telmo	1342	Granada	Alhambra Court of Lions
1321	Seville	Palace of San Telmo, Entrance	1343	Granada	Alhambra Court of Lions
1322	Seville	Palace of San Telmo, (Duc de Montpensier)	1344	Gibraltar	View from the Spanish Main
1323	Seville	Palace of San Telmo, In the Gardens	1345	Gibraltar	View from the Spanish Isthmus
1324	Seville	Palace of San Telmo, In the Gardens Palm Grove	1346	Gibraltar	Town and Bay
1325	Seville	The Alcazar, Fine Doorway	1347	Gibraltar	Group at a Spanish Café
1326	Seville	The Alcazar, Exterior	1652	Seville	The Cathedral, from South
1327	Seville	The Alcazar, Courtyard	1663	Granada	Sierre Nevada and Suburbs
1328	Seville	The Alcazar, Entrance of Ambassadors' Hall	1741	Seville	Palace of San Telmo, The Saloon

present in Napper's known albums,³⁰ and therefore we are clear about their authorship. The remaining twelve do not contain, in our opinion, images that are particularly differentiated from the rest of the catalogue, focusing on variations of the interiors of the great monuments of Seville or on urban panoramic views of Granada, of which there are many examples in both sets (Frith collection and Napper albums). After the first continuous series (from 1308 to 1347), number 1652 appears, titled: 'Seville. The Cathedral from South'. It is a photograph of which we have not found any duly identified specimen, as we have not found it in the V&A collection or in any other collection, although we have possible specimens with no title or numbering to document them. Next, we have number 1663, a panoramic view of Granada with the Sierra Nevada in the background, and then number 1741, a view of the Hall of Columns in the Palace of San Telmo in Seville. For some reason these three photographs were added later and that is why their numbers are not correlative to the previous ones. However, 1741 is a photograph of Napper that appears in his recognised albums. For these reasons, our opinion is that this entire block is made up of photographs taken by Napper.³¹ In fact, only photographs of Seville, Granada and Gibraltar are included here, which are exactly the same places that appear in Napper's albums. Obviously, Frith did not include in his catalogue all the photographs that Napper could take in Andalusia, he surely discarded some of those offered, and Napper probably also reserved others for himself, as is the case of the portraits of peasants and farmers that appear in his albums, but not in the Frith collection (figure 5).

Regarding the content of the images in this first block, the first photograph No. 885, entitled: 'Sculpture. The Descent from the Cross', included among those of Madrid, is an unknown image of which we have not found any trace, neither in the V&A nor in any other collection, so it would seem to be a strange circumstantial addition. Next come the repeated photographs of Seville, Granada and Gibraltar. The fact that Cordova is not included may reveal that Napper travelled by boat from Gibraltar to Seville and then to Malaga, where he apparently did not take any photographs, to go from there to Granada. We have a wide range of images of Seville, from panoramic views taken from the Giralda tower to views and details of the Cathedral, Plaza de San Francisco, Palacio de San Telmo, Alcázar, Casa de Pilatos and other places. From Granada, on the other hand, we have a good number of panoramic views of the city, one shot of the Generalife patio and only two of the Patio de los Leones. Surprisingly enough, he did not abound in more details of the interior of the Alhambra as was customary in other photographers. Finally, we have four interesting views of Gibraltar, two of the Rock from the west and the north, one of the city, oriented from south to north, and the last of these is one of the most interesting of the whole set,

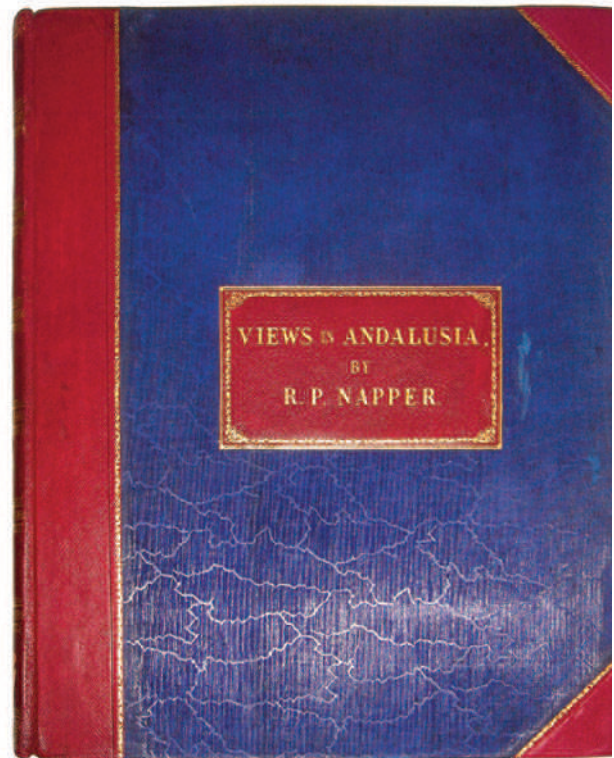


Figure 5. Album cover: 'Views in Andalusia', by R. P. Napper. Carlos Sanchez Collection.

which is the titled: 'Group at a Spanish café', in which we see a diverse group of ten men around a table with drinks.

In our opinion, the range of dates in which these Spanish photographs could have been taken goes from October 1861 (after Napper broke up with his partners McLean and Melhuish) to April or May 1864 (since on 29 May he wrote the letter to Montpensier from Newport mentioned previously), perhaps the years 1862 and 1863 being the most probable for dating these photographs. However, we have found in this first block at least three cases of images that have been substituted by more modern ones, and as a consequence, today we can find two different versions of the same scene with the same numbering, numbers 1312 and 1333, from Seville and 1339, from Granada. We will deal with these cases at the end of the study of the second block of images in the collection.

The fact is that when Frith launched his 'Universal series' or 'Frith's series' collection for the first time, in 1864, it was made up of some 4,000 images from different countries³². However, the Spanish part did not even represent a supposed Andalusian collection, since, as we have already seen, apart from Gibraltar, only photographs of Seville and Granada were included in it (it is a pity that we do not know of Frith's catalogues prior to that of 1872). At this time, he had already ended his relationship with Napper, according to what we learn from the letter sent to the Duke of Montpensier on 29 May, 1864,³³ where he affirms that he has nothing to do with Frith although he does not clarify the reason. On the other hand, as we have already seen, on those same dates



Figure 6. Comparative size of the positives marketed by Napper and Frith, respectively. Seville: San Telmo Gardens, and Hall of Mirrors of the San Telmo Palace, Fernández Rivero Collection.

Napper had to return home to take over the family business, which perhaps, together with his recurring illness, could be the main cause of the end of his Spanish tour. However, Napper managed to market some of his Andalusian albums, many of whose photographs coincided with Frith's catalogue, although his positives were somewhat larger because he made better use of the plate, which was larger than Frith's classic 'universal' format, 7 x 9 inches (figure 6).

One way or another it seems that the break was a somewhat unforeseen event and Frith thus saw his idea of obtaining a minimum catalogue of Spanish views frustrated before the launch, in 1864, of his 'Frith's Series'. Given these circumstances, Frith decided to hire another photographer to complete the work and thus be able to incorporate the novelties into successive editions of his catalogue, which he did. In our opinion the chosen photographer was Frank Mason Good.

As with Napper and other professionals, Good is

Figure 8. Detail of photograph no. 2530 (Málaga from the Castle), in which it can be read, written on a wall: 'Año de 1869', Fernández Rivero Collection.



one of the photographers whose work for Frith is documented, but until our paper on British stereoscopists was published,³⁴ he had never been associated with his Spanish photographs. In that paper we already outlined a hypothesis that we will now try to develop. We not only affirm that Napper is not the author of all the Iberian photographs in the Frith catalogue, but that he is not even the author of all the Andalusian photographs in it. It is not possible because, as we will show, the second block of the catalogue was made when Napper had been dead for several years.

The second block (figure 7) we are talking about begins at number 2524 and ends at 2640, that is, 117 titles. The first photograph is a view of Gibraltar, and from here on, the geographical itinerary of the catalogue follows, with some slight alteration, the numerical order. This shows that this entire block was added at the same moment. Six new views of Gibraltar are included, which together with the four from the previous block make the Rock one of the places with the most photographs in the catalogue. Next, we have two panoramic views of the city of Malaga, and after an interesting view of Loja, halfway to Granada, we find eleven views of the latter city, which try to make up for the deficiencies of Napper's previous set, including, in addition to some general views, six new scenes from the interior of the Alhambra. The series continues with three views of Cordova, a city that had not been included in the first part, and then again Seville, of which six new views are incorporated. The rest, in the north of Andalusia, are all new additions to the catalogue.

The challenge now is to find out the dating of these photographs and their authorship. Regarding the first, and in the absence of other documentation, we must focus on examining the photographs themselves. Fortunately, we have had the collaboration of several historians who have helped us date some images that will give us the keys to finding out when the set was made (figure 8).

For example, regarding the photographs of Granada, our friend and historian Carlos Sánchez Gómez has studied in detail the chronology of the photographs of the Alhambra based on its multiple

2524	Gibraltar	View from the Rock, showing African Coast	2583	Tarragona	The Cathedral, Great West Door
2525	Gibraltar	English Gibraltar, from New Mole	2584	Tarragona	The Cathedral, Cloisters
2526	Gibraltar	The Arsenal	2585	Barcelona	General View from Montjoy
2527	Gibraltar	View from the Moorish Castle	2586	Barcelona	Harbour and Mediterranean
2528	Gibraltar	The Rock, from Europa Point	2587	Manresa	View from the East
2529	Gibraltar	View from the Old Mole	2588	Manresa	The Cathedral, from the River
2530	Malaga	Malaga from the Castle	2589	Manresa	The Old Town
2531	Malaga	Malaga from the South	2590	Lexida	General View from the South
2532	Loja	Loja, from the West	2591	Lexida	General View from the East
2533	Granada	View from St. Nicholas Church	2592	Lexida	The Calle Mayor
2534	Granada	Bell Tower	2593	Lexida	View from the Segre
2535	Granada	Gipsy Town	2594	Saragossa	View from the North-East
2536	Granada	The City and Cathedral	2595	Saragossa	View from the South-West
2537	Granada	The City looking North	2596	Saragossa	Cathedral, from the Ebro
2538	Granada	Alhambra Porch in Hall of Justice	2597	Saragossa	The Market
2539	Granada	Alhambra Court of Lions	2598	Logroño	The Calle Mayor and Cathedral
2540	Granada	Alhambra The Ambassadors' Court	2599	Logroño	San Bartolomo (10 th century)
2541	Granada	Alhambra Court of Lions Vestubule	2600	Logroño	San Bartolomo Great Door
2542	Granada	Alhambra Court of Lions Vista through	2601	Logroño	Miranda, on Ebro, from the North
2543	Granada	Alhambra Court of Lions Interior of Porch	2602	Lisbon	The City and St. George's Castle
2544	Cordova	The City, from the Guadalquivere	2603	Lisbon	The City from Nossa Senhora de Graça
2545	Cordova	College of Ascension, Great Door	2604	Lisbon	The City from Nossa Senhora de Graça
2546	Cordova	The Octagon Tower	2605	Belem	The Castle, on the Tagus
2547	Seville	The Cathedral, from the Alcazar	2606	Belem	The Convent. Interior of Cloisters
2548	Seville	The Cathedral, from North	2607	Belem	The Convent. Exterior
2549	Seville	The Cathedral and City, fr. the Golden Tower	2608	Belem	The Convent. West Door
2550	Seville	Golden Tower and City, from the River	2609	Cintra	Santa Maria. General View
2551	Seville	The Cathedral, Great West Door	2610	Cintra	Cintra, from the East
2552	Seville	View on the Gualdalquivier	2611	Cintra	Cintra, The Royal Moorish Palace
2553	Seville	The Bullring	2612	Penha	Penha Castle. Great Door
2554	Seville	The Alcazar, Interior of Ambassadors' Hall	2613	Penha	Penha Castle. Convent
2555	Aranjuez	Royal Palace, on the Tagus	2614	Penha	Penha Castle. Great Tower
2556	Madrid	Royal Palace	2615	Penha	Penha Castle from the Grotto
2557	Madrid	The National Museum	2616	Oporto	General View from the Douro
2558	Madrid	Church of San Geronimo	2617	Oporto	Looking up the Douro
2559	Madrid	Fountain of the Calle Alcalá	2618	Oporto	View from the Cathedral, with Clerigos
2560	Madrid	El Escorial. The Monastery	2619	Oporto	View from the Railway Station
2561	Toledo	General View from the West, with the Alcazar	2620	Oporto	View from the Clerigos
2562	Toledo	General View from the Alcazar	2621	Oporto	View from the Bishop's Palace
2563	Toledo	General View from North-West	2622	Oporto	View from the Montserrat Convent
2564	Toledo	Bridge and Moorish Tower, on the Tagus	2623	Oporto	The Convent of Montserrat
2565	Toledo	Ferry on the Tagus	2624	Coimbra	General View from Santa Clara Convent
2566	Toledo	The Moorish Suburb	2625	Coimbra	General View from Quinta Lagrimas
2567	Toledo	The Cathedral, West Front	2626	Coimbra	General View from the Lisbon Road
2568	Avila	Avila, An Antique Street	2627	Coimbra	The University
2569	Valladolid	Valladolid. An Antique Street	2628	Coimbra	Santa Cruz. Interior of Cloisters
2570	Valladolid	Valladolid. An Antique Street	2629	Coimbra	Santa Cruz. Exterior of Cloisters
2571	Burgos	The Great Gateway	2630	Bathala	The Cathedral, from the North
2572	Burgos	General View from the Railway Station	2631	Bathala	The Cathedral, from the South
2573	Burgos	General View from the River	2632	Bathala	The Cathedral, from the West
2574	Burgos	Cathedral, from the West	2633	Bathala	Capella Imperfeita, West Door
2575	Burgos	Cathedral, from the Alcazar	2634	Bathala	Capella Imperfeita, South Door
2576	Burgos	San Nicholas (10 th century)	2635	Bathala	Capella Imperfeita, Door
2577	Burgos	San Nicholas The Great Door	2636	Bathala	Capella Imperfeita, Cloister Windows
2578	Burgos	Santa Maria las Huelgas	2637	Bathala	Capella Imperfeita, Cloister Windows
2579	Burgos	Santa Maria las Huelgas	2638	Thomar	The Convent Church
2580	Tarragona	View from the South-West	2639	Thomar	The Nun's Window
2581	Tarragona	The Cathedral, from the North	2640	Thomar	The Cloisters
2582	Tarragona	The Cathedral, from the West			

Figure 7. List, in numerical order, of the second block of photographs from the Iberian collection of Frith & Co.

construction details and reforms. In a personal communication with us he affirms that these

photographs date from the end of the 1860s. In Malaga, photograph 2530 shows the north tower of

the cathedral with the new clock whose installation began in April 1868 and 2531 does not show the Cervantes theatre, which was built in 1870. Among other details found, our friend and geographer Antonio Ozomek Fernández also points out a very curious detail in the first of the photographs consisting of a circle painted on a wall that seems to read: 'Año 1869'. Another determining photograph for the dating of the set of photographs is 2596, which shows the Basilica del Pilar in Zaragoza. In it we can see the main dome still with some scaffolding but already completely finished and we know from historians that its construction ended in 1869.³⁵

Portugal series

Continuing with our research we will now go on to examine the Portuguese photographs, a series whose numbering continues after the photographs of Logrono and Miranda de Ebro, places geographically distant from Portugal, which probably means that the work could not have been carried out during the same itinerant trip around the peninsula. We will first mention photograph number 2627, with a view of the University of Coimbra, of which our friend Alexandre Ramires, professor of Physics at the same university and photohistorian, delimits the date of the photograph between April 1867 and the spring of 1869. This is because of the new clock on the tower of the university in the photograph and in 1868 a garden was planted in the courtyard of the university that was beginning to grow when Laurent photographed the same place in May 1869. In addition, the nearby house that appears in the same photograph is the Quinta of the university that burned down in 1879 and was later rebuilt. Ramires also tells us that photograph 2625, in which we see the city of Coimbra from the other side of the Mondego River, must be from before 1873, which is when the bridge that appears there was changed to another made of iron. Finally, we will refer to the tower of the lead factory that appears in photographs

Figure 9. Photograph 2618 (Oporto, view from the Cathedral). Circled in red is the tower of the lead factory, which disappeared at the end of the 1860s. (José Manuel Martins Ferreira Collection).



Figure 10. Details of photographs no. 249, from the Frank M. Good Spanish stereoscopic collection, and no. 2596, from the Frith & Co. collection. We have dated them both at 1869, but we can see some temporal difference between them if we observe the different progress of the works in the dome of the Basilica del Pilar in Zaragoza.

numbers 2616 and 2618, from Porto, and which our friend José Manuel Martin Ferreira, from the University of Porto, informs us was demolished at the end of the 1860s. We thank all of them for their comments and the transfer of images.

There is a lot of data, some of which is precise and definitive, that allows us to date the reporting of this second block of photographs from the Frith catalogue in the spring of 1869, exactly the same period that we already determined in our 2016 article for Frank Mason Good's trip around Spain. This leads us to believe that, with a high degree of probability, Good was the author of these photographs. Even so, this hypothesis is not without some difficulties. For example, photograph 2596 (Basilica del Pilar), which we have commented on, with the completely finished dome, is different from Good's stereoscopic photograph (nº 249), in which we see the same half-finished dome. Therefore, the photograph was taken at least a few months before. Unfortunately, we do not have the specific date of completion of the dome, only the year of completion, 1869, which we have already mentioned. We have detected another problem in photograph no. 2627, in which you can see the square of the University of Coimbra with a

Figure 11. Photographs No. 2627 (Coimbra. The University), from the Frith Collection, and No. 858 (Universit  de Coimbra), by photographer Jean Laurent. Both photographs are dated 1869, but some time difference can be appreciated if we observe the different leafiness of the trees in the square. (Alexandre Ramires Collection and Photo Library of the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Spain).



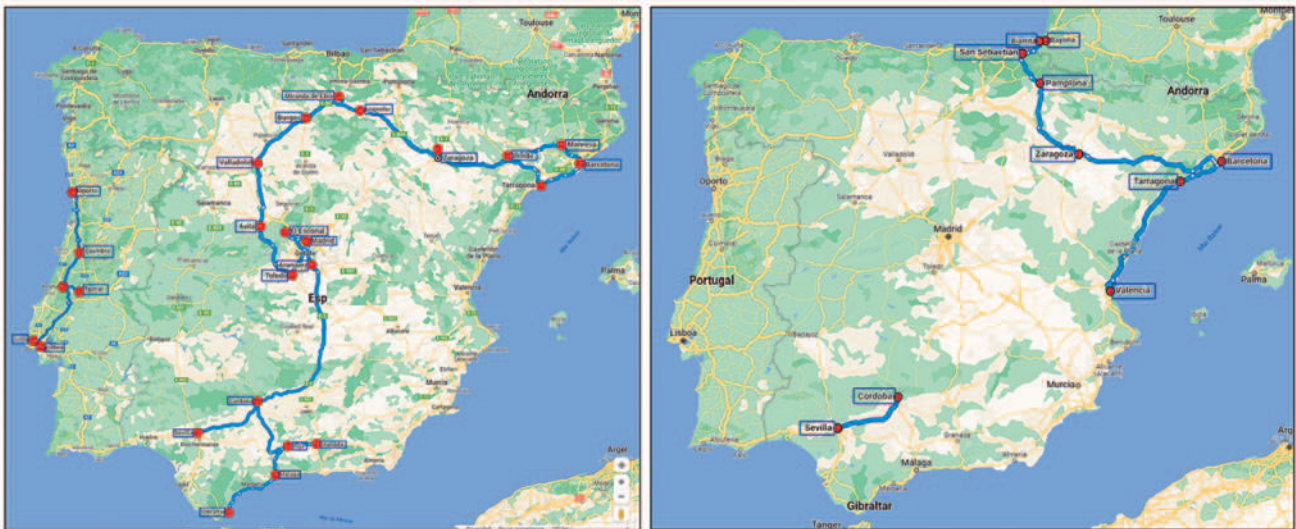


Figure 12. On the left, a map showing the places photographed in the Frith & Co collection and their possible itinerary. On the right, places and possible itinerary of the places present in the Spanish stereoscopic collection of Frank M. Good.

few small trees without leaves. There is a photograph of the same place by Jean Laurent (n^o 858 of his series) that has been dated by Ramires at the end of the spring or summer of 1869,³⁶ but here the trees are slightly larger and with leafy foliage. Therefore 2627 was probably taken a few months earlier, perhaps in the winter of 1868-69.

In the case of the photograph of the Basilica del Pilar, (figure 10) and if we start from the fact that the dating of Good's stereoscopic work in Spain has been very limited between April and June 1869, the work for the Frith collection, or at least that of Zaragoza, must have been done several months later. On the contrary, the case of Coimbra points us to a time in winter for the photographs of the Frith collection. This leads us to conclude that there were two moments, separated by a few months, in the making of the photographs that make up the second block of Frith's Iberian collection. The coincidences of dates and the certainty that Good had already worked for Frith leave little room for doubt about the former's authorship of a part of Frith's Iberian collection, but the differences mentioned in the photographs of Zaragoza and Coimbra lead us to believe that Good made two trips to Spain within a few months of each other.

Summarizing, we have some photographs taken in winter (such as the one in Coimbra, figure 11), at the end of 1868 or beginning of 1869, substantial evidence of photographs taken in the spring of 1869 and others (such as those of Zaragoza) taken at two different moments in 1869. Two dates that coincide exactly with Good's departure for his second trip to the Middle East and the return to his country.³⁷ Therefore it is very possible that Good used these two trips, to the East and back, to take the photographs in Spain and Portugal.

In the attached maps (figure 12) we have compared the places photographed in Frith's catalogue with those in Good's stereoscopic set, and

we have even ventured a possible itinerary for each of them. Thus, we can see that they only coincide in a few cities: Seville, Cordova, Barcelona, Tarragona and Zaragoza. From this examination we find it strange that photographs of the cities of Valencia, Pamplona and San Sebastián do not appear in Frith's collection, yet do appear in Good's stereoscopic collection.

The apparent lack of order in Good's collection, with no photographs of the centre of the peninsula: Madrid, Toledo, Burgos, nor Granada, could be explained if we understand it as a compilation of different trips made at different times. Good affirmed that he always made his photographic trips commissioned by a publishing house,³⁸ like Frith & Co., but this did not prevent him from going to exhibitions or marketing his own photographs. For example, in the publication: "A catalogue of works of natural history, science, art, general literature, medicine, surgery, &c." published in London in August 1877 by Hardwicke & Bogue, there is an advertisement for W. A. Mansell & Co.'s, Good's publisher, stating that its collection contains over a million photographs, and then giving an extensive classified catalogue in which several of Good's photographic collections appear, such as those of the Holy Land, Egypt, the Nile, and Nubia, and the Spanish catalogue that we already made known in our 2016 work, with a set of 125 Spanish photographs, indicating their prices and sizes. However, this is not the stereoscopic collection, which was made up of only a hundred images, although many of them were naturally taken at the same time. Therefore, the existence of these two different collections also leads us to believe that Good travelled to Spain on two occasions, as we have already indicated.

We will now point out some other incidents observed in the collection. For example, in the photographs that appear in the catalogue as being



Figure 13. Different plates of the same title. No. 2589 (Manresa, the Old Town), No. 2593 (Lexida, view from the Segre), No. 2622 (Porto, view from the Montserrat Convent). Victoria & Albert Museum.

from Valladolid, and whose true nature has been revealed by technicians from the Museum of Valladolid and their Facebook group,³⁹ and discovering that they are actually photographs of the

Figure 14. Plates renewed a few years later. No. 1312 (Seville, Square of San Francisco), No. 1333 (Seville, House of Pilate, Moorish Court), No. 1339 (Granada, Generaliffe). Victoria & Albert Museum. Fernandez Rivero Collection. Photo library of the Museum of the University of Navarra.

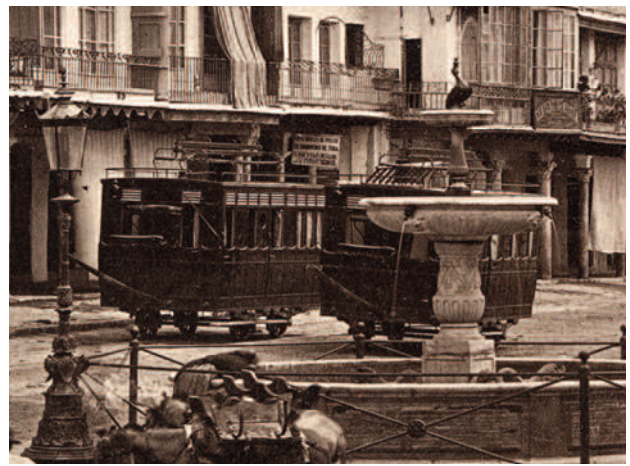


Figure 15. No. 1312 (Seville, Square of San Francisco). Detail in which the image of a tram can be seen. Fernandez Rivero Collection.

city of Manresa, further affirming that they are prior to 1870, we are facing a clear error in the manipulation of the plates and their corresponding attribution to the places photographed. We can be sure that the photographer was in Valladolid but we have not found these images. Another mistake in the catalogue, that our friend from Burgos, Carlos Sainz Varona, has pointed out to us, is the title of number 2576: 'Burgos. San Nicholas', when in fact it is the church of San Esteban.

Sometimes some plates deteriorated due to use (remember that the positives were made by contact) and then they were replaced by another of the existing reserves taken in the same session (figure 13), as was the norm at the time. These reserve plates could be practically the same as the first ones or contain appreciable differences. We have observed different plates to a greater or lesser extent in the following photographs:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Gibraltar – 2528 | Sevilla – 2550 |
| Burgos – 2571 y 2574 | Manresa – 2589 |
| Lérida – 2593 | Penha – 2615 |
| Oporto – 2616, 2620, 2622 | |

It is quite another thing when a plate is replaced by another taken at a different time (figure 14), perhaps even by a different photographer. This may be due to the non-existence, loss or destruction of the reserve plate, which made it necessary to commission a new take on the site, which in many cases took place at a different time. This is the case of the ones listed below:

No. 1312. Seville, Plaza de San Francisco. In the first version, the one taken by Napper, the Pila del Pato can be seen at the bottom of the image, in the southern part of the square. This fountain was installed there in 1833, but in 1865 it was moved to the centre of the square,⁴⁰ which is precisely where we can see it in the second version of this photograph, in which we also see, behind the fountain, two tram cars.⁴¹

No. 1333. Seville, courtyard (figure 15) in the Casa de Pilatos. We know of two different versions of the



Figure 16. No. 2603 (Lisbon, the City from Nossa Senhora de Graça). Two images taken at different times. Note the building on the bottom left, under construction in the first image, but not in the second. Victoria & Albert Museum.

plate, in one of them a man can be seen sitting on the fountain's basin, with his back to the camera. This man does not appear in the second version. In this case it is impossible to appreciate if there is any time difference between the two shots.

No. 1339. Granada, courtyard of the Generalife. We know of two versions, in one of which the trees are considerably larger than in the other.

These three cases, belonging to what we have called the 'first block', made by Napper, could be explained by considering the possibility that the second versions were provided by Good during his 1869 trip.

In the 'second block', whose completion we have dated in 1869, we have the case of photograph no. 2603 (general view of Lisbon), of which there are two versions at the V&A, one of them with the number written in ink on the obverse and the other without any markings. Although the scenes are taken from the same position, in the first there is a large building covered in scaffolding at the bottom of the photograph that does not appear in the second photograph.

Although Good signed some of his Middle Eastern plates and many of his stereoscopic ones as well, the fact remains that much of his work has been misattributed as a result of publication by other photographers and publishers, and also for having suffered the piracy of his work. In the words of Daniel Foliard: "But, surprisingly, Good did not partially record his photographs until 1894 [1895], perhaps tired of the struggle."⁴² In the National Archives at Kew, we have found three references to his Spanish photographs, with the following information:⁴³

- N^o 4445. Barcelona panorama showing cathedral
- N^o 4472. Cordova panorama showing bridge and cathedral
- N^o 4423. Saragossa view of the market

In our collection (Fernández Rivero Collection, cfrivero.blog) we keep numerous copies made by Good that have on the back, in handwritten text in pencil, numberings consistent with those in Kew and belonging to views of the same cities through which the photographer travelled on his Spanish tour of 1869, and in which he took the well-known stereoscopic photographs and the lesser-known ones in 'universal' size. However, none of these



Figure 17. One of the photographs registered by Frank M. Good at the National Archives, Kew. We can see the obverse of the image and the text written in pencil on the back of it: 'Cordova. Le Pont & la Cathedrale - 4472'. Fernández Rivero Collection.

photographs coincide with those that appear in Frith's catalogue. This is the big difference between Good's collaboration with Frith and Napper's, that he never marketed under his own name, or on his behalf, photographs that would have been used in the Frith collection, as Napper did.

Acknowledgements

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Authors

The authors, residents of Malaga, Spain, have been collectors and historians of photography for more than 30 years. During this time, they have managed to gather an important collection of Spanish historical photography while publishing numerous books and papers about the history of photography (correo@cfrivero.com).

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- ¹ Napper i Frith. *Un viatge fotogràfic per la Ibèria del segle XIX*. (Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, 2007)
- ² J. A. Fernández-Rivero, 'British Stereo Photographers in Spain: Frank M. Good', *International of Film Journal and Media Arts*. Lisbon, vol. 1, no. 2, (2016), pp. 76-88.
- ³ *The Annual Monitor for the year 1869, or, Obituary of the Members of the Society of Friends in Great Britain and Ireland, for the year 1868*, (London, 1868), pp. 101-108, mentioned in Fernández-Rivero (2016).
- ⁴ In 'The Royal College of Surgeon of England' some marine

- shells collected by Napper are preserved, see in: *Catalogue of The contents of the Museum of The Royal College of Surgeons of England* (London: 1860), pp. 333,334,338.
- ⁵ 'Their simple-hearted devotion in leaving home and country to preach the Gospel to the natives, touched his heart: and his friends have reason to think, he at this time first became convinced of sin, and of a Saviour's love.'
- ⁶ Public Record Office, England & Wales, Quaker Birth, Marriage, and Death Registers, 1578-1837, ref. RG 6/238.
- ⁷ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1842, p.3.
- ⁸ In the Register of Members of the 'Zetland Lodge in the East No. 748' in Singapore, there appears a 'Robert Peters Napper' who at the age of 25, on November 28, 1846, is initiated into Freemasonry. As a profession it is indicated: 'Capt. do'. The age does not agree much with that of our photographer, because if he was 25 years old in 1846 he should have been born around 1821, but it is well known that small differences in age are usually found in this type of records. On the other hand, his full name fully coincides and it does not seem strange that a character like Napper, who toured Australia and landed in Manila, at some point visited the very British colony of Singapore.
- ⁹ *Journal of the Photographic Society*, 21 August 1856, p. 111.
- ¹⁰ Juan Guardiola, 'Photography in the Philippines', in the Sociedad Española de Acción Cultural en el Exteior, catalogue of the exhibition: *El imaginario colonial. Fotografía en Filipinas durante el período español 1860-1900*. (Madrid: Ministry of Culture, 2006), pp: 17-25.
- ¹¹ *The Photographic Journal*, 16 April 1860, p. 258.
- ¹² *The Photographic Journal*, 15 June 1860, p. 259, describing the annual meeting of the Blackheath Photographic Society. In the biography of the Quakers it is expressly stated that Napper photographed in Sicily, Spain and places around him.
- ¹³ In the National Portrait Gallery there are *cartes de visite* taken by this firm and dated between 1859 and 1861. In different London newspapers there are advertisements for the firm offering its work, for example, *Sun*, 23 July 1860; *Daily News*, 1 September 1860, and the *Morning Post*, 4 September 1860.
- ¹⁴ 'Photographers of the World (Non-USA)', compiled by T. K. Treadwell & William C. Darrah, update by Wolfgang Sell, curator OWHSRL, National Stereoscopic Association, 1994, updated 2003.
- ¹⁵ Michael Pritchard, 'Melhuish, Arthur James (1829-1895)', in John Hannavy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 919-920. In September 1861, many newspapers reported the dissolution of the society. See *The London Gazette*, 6 September 1861, p. 3626.
- ¹⁶ Roger Taylor. *Photographs Exhibited in Britain 1839-1865*, Online: <https://peib.dmu.ac.uk/index.php>
- ¹⁷ See *Cambria Daily Leader*, Glamorgan, Wales, 26 November 1863 and 16 and 19 December 1863.
- ¹⁸ *Views in Wales. The Vale of Neath*. ([London?]: British and Foreign Portrait Company, [1864]). Photos by R. P. Napper, texts by Charles Henry Waring. A copy is available online at the National Library of Wales: <https://bit.ly/3A8SbQd>. In the press we have found advertisements for this publication, as a Christmas gift, in *Cambria Daily Leader*, 16 November 1863.
- ¹⁹ *The London Gazette*, 23 December 1864, p. 6726.
- ²⁰ Public Record Office. England Census for 1861. Ref. RG 9/430.
- ²¹ In the 1861 England Census (Public Record Office, Ref. RG 9/1628), we found a Robert Napper of the same age, in the parish of Compton Dundon, married with children. It is probably the 'Robert P. Napper' who died at the age of 81 in Compton Dundon (*Western Gazette*, 24 February 1899). In the course of our investigation we have met other 'Robert P. Napper' so it is essential to study each piece of information carefully.
- ²² See letter sent from Newport on 29 May 1864 to the Duke of Montpensier in Seville, in Napper i Frith. ... 2007, *op. cit.* p. 38.
- ²³ *The London Gazette*, 23 December 1864.
- ²⁴ *Monmouthshire Merlin* (11 February 1865).
- ²⁵ 'The Annual Monitor for 1869, or Obituary', *op. cit.*
- ²⁶ Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- ²⁷ *Catalogue of Frith's Photo-Pictures. The Universal and uniform series*, London, William Pollard, Reigate, Surrey, 1872.
- ²⁸ *Frith's photographs. Catalogue of the English and foreign series*. Reigate, Surrey, London, 1892.
- ²⁹ The number 1343 (an image very similar to 1342), is not listed in the catalogue, although a copy with that number exists at the V&A.
- ³⁰ We know of at least three Napper albums with these Andalusian views: collections from the University of Navarra, Duque de Segorbe (Seville), and Carlos Sánchez (Granada). Thanks to Ignacio Miguéliz, of the Navarra photo library, for his collaboration in displaying these collections.
- ³¹ With the exception of the aforementioned number 885 which is discussed later.
- ³² Martín Barnes, *Aquesta terra romàntica: Robert Napper/Francisc Frith & Company i el Victoria and Albert Museum*, at Napper i Frith. ... 2007, *op. cit.* p. 196.
- ³³ Letter sent from Newport... *op. cit.* p. 38.
- ³⁴ Fernández-Rivero, 2016, *op. cit.*
- ³⁵ Laura Aldama Fernández, Teodoro Ríos Balaguer: restorer architect of the Basilica del Pilar. (Zaragoza: Instituto Fernando el Católico, 2009) p: 357.
- ³⁶ Quoted by Nuno Borges de Araújo, *A viagem do fotógrafo Jean Laurent a Portugal, en 1869, in La España de Laurent (1856-1886), Un paseo fotográfico por la historia*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, 2018, p. 90.
- ³⁷ Paula Fleming, 'Of Gin and Gardens: The life of Frank Mason Good', *Stereo World*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2012).
- ³⁸ Fleming, *op. cit.*
- ³⁹ It can also be seen at Centre d'Estudis del Bages: <https://bit.ly/3pm8FCo>
- ⁴⁰ Alquiensa blog, 'Ayuntamiento de Sevilla: evolución histórica del edificio', 2018. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3M37YGX>
- ⁴¹ The oldest news of trams in Seville date from 1869 and 1873. See: José A. Tartajo. *Los primeros tranvías (urbanos) de España: Jerez y Sevilla*. 2015. Available at: <https://bit.ly/44CzOkx>
- ⁴² D. Foliard, 'La photographie de la Palestine au temps du collodion: une spécificité britannique?', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, vol. 45, (2012), p. 161-183
- ⁴³ Respectively references: The National Archives, Kew, COPY 1/420/329, COPY 1/420/330 and COPY 1/420/331, registered on 27 April 1895.