

War Photography: Díaz & Spencer's coverage of the War of the Pacific (1879-1883)

La fotografía bélica: la cobertura de la guerra del Pacífico (1879 – 1883) de Díaz & Spencer

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Abstract:

In the study of 19th-century Latin American photography, the photographic capture of war and military operations has implicitly been equated with the eye of national states, understanding that photographers would want to show a positive portrayal of the military forces. However, war photography as a language of state power was not the point of departure. In most of the earlier examples of war photography, it was private photographers who first ventured into military conflicts almost as soon as the new visual technology was made available. They saw war as both an important historical event and a commercial opportunity. Experiencing with a technology that forced them to produce images of war stripped of battle action while trying to capitalize on the diverse interests in these conflicts, most photographers offered a rendering of war of ambiguous political meanings. In this essay, I argue that the photographs of the War of the Pacific taken by the studio Díaz & Spencer are one of the first examples of the successful use of war photography for nation-building purposes, that is, as national propaganda. Photographers had the challenge to create impressive, apologetic and heroic captures of the military forces, and Díaz & Spencer succeeded in creating a visual narrative congruent with Chilean official discourses, consolidating, rather than challenging, the Chilean state view of the war. Equally important, this alignment of political views was accomplished on account of Díaz and Spencer's initiative—not that of Chilean state officials.

Resumen:

En el estudio de la fotografía decimonónica latinoamericana, la fotografía de guerra ha sido predominantemente estudiada desde la perspectiva de los estados-nacionales, asumiendo una alianza inmediata entre fotógrafos y estado. Tal punto de partida ha tendido a borrar las dificultades en el desarrollo de una cobertura celebradora de la acción militar, así como la labor de los fotógrafos en tanto agentes privados con iniciativas creativas dependientes de intereses comerciales. Estas empresas fotográficas debieron enfrentar los peligros propios de la guerra con una tecnología de capacidades limitadas (con largos tiempos de exposición, laboratorios improvisados, y materiales y equipos delicados). Esto dio como resultado imágenes bélicas que evitan el momento de batalla, centrándose en cambio en espacios y tiempos hasta entonces más marginales, como la vida en los campamentos y los campos de batalla ya pasada la acción (con ruinas y cadáveres como protagonistas). Por otro lado, en la gran mayoría de los casos, son los estudios fotográficos los que toman la iniciativa de documentar estos conflictos, sea por un interés documental, comercial o una combinación de ambos. La relación con los

respectivos gobiernos varía, así como el uso de un lenguaje nacionalista para definir la misión de la empresa fotográfica. En los primeros casos de abierto apoyo a la causa nacional, se advierte que no están desarrolladas aún las estrategias visuales para transmitir este apoyo. De ahí la existencia de álbumes fotográficos de mensaje ambiguo, como el de Antonio Pozzo durante la mal llamada Conquista del Desierto. Si los practicantes de esta nueva tecnología están creando nuevas imágenes para imaginar la guerra (imágenes que muchas veces llegan al público mientras los conflictos continúan), deben también aprender a crear un lenguaje enaltecedor: ¿cómo celebrar visualmente la guerra cuando el momento de mayor acción militar no puede ser captado?

En este ensayo, propongo pensar la cobertura de la Guerra del Pacífico ofrecida por los fotógrafos Carlos Díaz y Eduardo Spencer como uno de los primeros casos donde la alianza entre gobierno y estudio fotográfico se manifiesta consciente y exitosamente. En otras palabras, Díaz y Spencer ofrecen fotografías que, lejos de horrorizar o crear mera curiosidad, logran estimular un mensaje patriótico acorde a los discursos oficiales y de la prensa periódica. Es notable que esta alianza se debe mayormente a la labor e iniciativa de Díaz y Spencer –más que del gobierno chileno–. Díaz y Spencer comienzan a trabajar juntos poco antes del estallido de la guerra, contando ya con experiencia previa en el mercado fotográfico. Poco después de comenzada la guerra, piden permiso para unirse a las fuerzas chilenas y fotografiar su avance. Sus retratos y vistas son promocionados en diarios de Santiago y Valparaíso, y durante los festejos de enero de 1881, después de las batallas de Chorillos y Miraflores, sus fotografías son incluidas en las celebraciones oficiales en un espectáculo con linterna mágica. Finalizada la guerra, Spencer recibirá una medalla del gobierno chileno y devendrá fotógrafo oficial de la presidencia. El éxito de las fotografías de Díaz y Spencer no es casual. La insistente captura de espacios y regimientos desde una perspectiva elevada, el retrato de las fuerzas chilenas siempre activas y formadas (rara vez en posición de descanso o en sus campamentos) y la preferencia de escenas de orden y control por encima de las de ruinas y cadáveres son algunas de las características que garantizan un tono celebratorio de la guerra y, por derivación, de la nación chilena.

Keywords: War Photography; Pacific War, 1879- 1883; Chile; Díaz & Spencer.

Palabras clave: Fotografía bélica; Guerra del Pacífico, 1879–1883; Chile; Díaz & Spencer.

1. Introduction

In 1865 and 1866, the studio Bate & Cia. sent a group of photographers to the battlefields of the Paraguayan War (1864-1870). The expectation created around this new visual access to war was certainly great, as one chronicler from the Uruguayan newspaper *El Siglo* put it: “The great upcoming events will soon be offered to the nation's eyes in all their natural splendor” (September 13, 1866).¹ War here was understood as an opportunity for the display of the nation's greatness, and photography promised to capture its full glory for the public. Intervening in a visual tradition marked by painting, prints, and panoramas, war

1. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

photographs were expected to confirm the “natural splendor” of war as represented in canvases and the increasing number of spectacular and popular images. But Bate & Cía. instead released a photographic album of the war composed of static views stripped of any splendor. Given the long exposure times and the heavy equipment, photographers were unable to capture battle scenes and were thus forced to focus on the marginal spaces and themes of war, such as campsites and views of empty battlefields. Today they are a potent testimony of the disasters of the Paraguayan War, but at the time these photographs were of little use as propaganda in support of war efforts.

Subsequent attempts in the region proved equally discouraging. In 1879, photographer Antonio Pozzo joined the Argentine military forces in what was deemed an epic move to invade the Indigenous territories south of Buenos Aires—the so-called Conquest of the Desert. The resulting photographic album, however, showed a series of monotonous, uneventful views that denied the spectacular and heroic character advertised by the promoters of the enterprise. As a result, Pozzo's photographs were not popular; paintings and drawings were the preferred images to celebrate the “conquest of the desert,” leaving his photographs as anecdotal decoration of textbooks and articles.

That same year, however, the Chilean studio Díaz & Spencer started their coverage of the War of the Pacific (1879-1883), garnering national popularity and success. As I will show in this essay, their photographs were enthusiastically included as part of the nationalistic paraphernalia that dressed up Chilean cities and filled up the pages of local newspapers. Their photographs were reproduced in national and international journals, their studio became a gallery for the patriotic admiration of the latest heroes, and a spectacular exhibition of their war views, with the use of magic lantern, was part of the official agenda of festivities celebrating the victories of Chorrillos and Miraflores and the capture of the city of Lima in 1881.

The photographic rendering of war was a steep adventure. Unlike the market of portraits or urban views, with the recording of military action photographers had less room for trial and error. They were also dealing with a high-stakes subject. Photography's development and popularization coincided with the earliest

nation-building efforts of the newly independent states across the Americas, and the above-mentioned wars had profound geopolitical consequences for the countries involved. In these crucial decades of the construction of nation-states, the portrayal of state action was no minor matter, as state officials actively sought to install an image of their imagined nations, both locally and internationally.

Yet, in most cases, it was private photographers who first ventured into military conflicts almost as soon as the new visual technology was made available. They saw war as both an important historical event and a commercial opportunity. The equipment was overly sensitive and still not fitted for capturing moving subjects, but these difficulties did not stop them from trying. Only a few years after the public announcement of the invention of the daguerreotype (Paris, 1839), new practitioners took daguerreotypes of the Mexican-US American War (1839) and of the siege of Rome by French forces (1849). In the 1850s, the development of the wet-collodion process allowed for a more copious and flexible recording of events, as photographers became more creative in the use of the technology. Many images of, for instance, the Crimean War (1853-1856), the US-American Civil War (1861-1865), and the Paraguayan War have reached iconic status in the memory of these conflicts. However, initially, these early endeavors provoked mixed reactions in the urban centers awaiting news from the front. Unable to capture the drama of the battlefields, photographers rendered a disorderly image of war marked by stillness and silence: battlefields sowed by death, campsites of mundane activities and tired soldiers in unheroic poses. Stunning as many of them were, photographs were of limited use in the propaganda efforts to raise the moral and support for the military conflicts they were covering. It was a visual language that government officials needed to learn to use in their advantage.

With a few exceptions, little is known of those behind these historical cameras, with many simply remaining anonymous. In the cases where more documentation exists, a repeated scenario is that of photographers taking the initiative to capture these events with their cameras. They request and are granted permission and protection to follow the military forces, but photographers are still the ones covering the costs of these onerous and risky enterprises. Bankruptcy and change of business are thus not unusual. This

scenario contrasts with the reading of these photographs—particularly in the Latin American context. The photographic capture of war and military operations has implicitly been equated with the eye of national states, understanding that photographers would want to show a positive portrayal of the military forces. However, war photography as a language of state power was not the point of departure. In this essay, I argue that the photographs of the War of the Pacific taken by the studio Díaz & Spencer are one of the first examples of the successful use of war photography for nation-building purposes, that is, as national propaganda. Photographers had the challenge to create impressive, apologetic and heroic captures of the military forces, and Díaz & Spencer succeeded in creating a visual narrative congruent with Chilean official discourses, consolidating, rather than challenging, the Chilean state view of the war.

2. Nation-Building and Photography

The War of the Pacific is one of Chile's most cherished historical episodes. The war defined a new balance of power in the region with the incorporation of once diffuse borderlands redesigned in favor of a suddenly enlarged Chile.² On the defeated side, the war left a heavy legacy. Bolivia became a land-locked state and to this day claims legal right to the sea. Peru saw its capital invaded and administered by Chilean forces for more than two years. The conflict lasted a little more than four years, with an estimate of fourteen thousand casualties.

At stake were nitrate and other minerals deposits in the Atacama Desert, making the region an extraordinarily valuable territory. The international recession of the early 1870s was another added pressure to Chile's territorial expansion. Also known as the “Saltpeter War” and the “Ten Cents War,” the immediate cause of the conflict was Bolivia's 1878 tax increase on foreign companies extracting nitrate from its territories. The Chilean-British Antofagasta Nitrate and Railway Company, which dominated saltpeter exploitation, refused to pay this increase, alleging that the Bolivian government was violating the boundary treaty signed

2. With the concurrent military invasions to the north (War of the Pacific) and to the south (Pacification of Araucania, 1861-1883), Chile conquered two thirds of its present national territory (Consuelo Figueroa, 2011, pp. 134-135).

in 1874. The Bolivian government expropriated the company's facilities and put them up for auction. At the set auction day, February 14, 1879, Chilean forces invaded Antofagasta. Soon afterward, Bolivia declared war on Chile. Peru, for its part, had an alliance treaty with Bolivia. On April 5, 1879, Chile officially declared war on both Bolivia and Peru.

Though the economic motives were fairly obvious, Chile quickly developed a nationalist discourse to justify the war, with palpable success. Chilean politicians and journalists presented the war as a redemptive campaign to bring Bolivia and Peru into the paradise of civilization and progress. Initially, then, the defamatory speeches were directed primarily at their governing groups, at their lack of vision and planning. But soon notions of backwardness and laziness were applied to the Peruvian and Bolivian societies at large. Not surprisingly, in this dichotomous understanding of reality, the Chilean press repeatedly espoused a national identity built on the pillars of civilization, masculinity, and racial superiority: “Civilization-Barbarism, Virtue-Vice, Regeneration-Corruption, Work-Leisure, Merit-Privilege, Progress-Backwardness, just to name a few, constituted the fundamental vocabulary in the rallies, speeches, and journalistic articles that started to circulate in Chile after the declaration of war to Bolivia and Peru” (McEvoy, 2012, p. 78). From gender and religion to positivism and medicine, this language easily bled into state and public discourse. Chile represented the best example of hard-working, productive citizens. The increasingly rich republic was also advertised as a superior exception that contrasted with the prevailing anarchy in the rest of the region. Peru, on the other hand, was an example of how the vices of the ancien régime could destroy even the wealthiest of societies. Its leaders behaved like lazy aristocrats who had no sense of discipline nor vision, squandering the “easy money” of the country's resources and setting an example of sluggishness for their people.

The War of the Pacific was also distinct in that it accentuated the patriotic potential of the arts and popular iconography. As Gabriel Cid has pointed out, “the [Pacific] war was an endless pool that nourished, for instance, urban toponymy, public statuary, or the cover of the newspapers like *El Nuevo Ferrocarril*, which made enormous efforts to portray this new generation of

heroes that would swell the national pantheon.” Cid names this process the “war nationalization of public space” [nacionalización bélica del espacio público] which would be consolidated in the 20th century (2011, p. 80). This was possible because of an expanding public sphere and information technologies, which explains, for instance, illustrator Luis Fernando Rojas's astonishing sale of more than 40,000 lithographic copies of his portrait of Arturo Pratt after the naval battle of Iquique. Additionally, new illustrated journals appeared during the war, for example *El Curioso Ilustrado*, *La Mañana*, *El Eco Militar*, *El Hijo de La Patria*, *El Ferrocarril Ilustrado*, *El Barbero*, *El Ferrocarrilito*, *El Padre Cobos*, and *El Nuevo Ferrocarril*. Though with slightly different priorities, all these journals helped circulate what could be considered images of the Chilean nation. These would take the form of portraits of admired figures, views of the cities and their main buildings, streets, and plazas, and even reproductions of the photographs of the war. In full expression of Benedict Anderson's print capitalism, the campaign in favor of the war found one of its strongest pillars in the press. The sensational front covers, editorials, and various articles that the journals published left little room for any questioning and criticism. Patriotism even became a commercial strategy, as seen in the many products advertised with the opening line “Viva Chile,” meant to attract the reader's eye and sell photographs, books, or tickets to the theater (see, for instance, the advertising section of *El Ferrocarril*, January 21, 1881).

In the process of construction of nationhood, photographers were welcomed as promoters of the “unequivocal signs of progress” as photographer Christiano Junior put it in the foreword to his album *Vistas y Costumbres de la República Argentina* (1876). Those signs of progress and civilization were first and foremost those of the expanding urban space. Albums celebrating city plazas, monuments, train stations, and modern architecture proliferated encouraged by private and public initiative. But the most flourishing business was that of portraits, of course, and photographic studios would not miss the chance to sell images of popular and relevant public figures according to occasion. By the 1880s, the photographic market in Chile was strong and expanding. Their main clientele was the rising bourgeoisie of Valparaíso and Santiago, where most of the photographic studios were established. The urban middle class would create a

strong and persistent demand, allowing the photographic market to flourish between these two cities. It was within this rich and growing market that the photographs of the War of the Pacific were collected in photographic albums, reproduced as prints, individually exhibited, and sold in photographic studios.

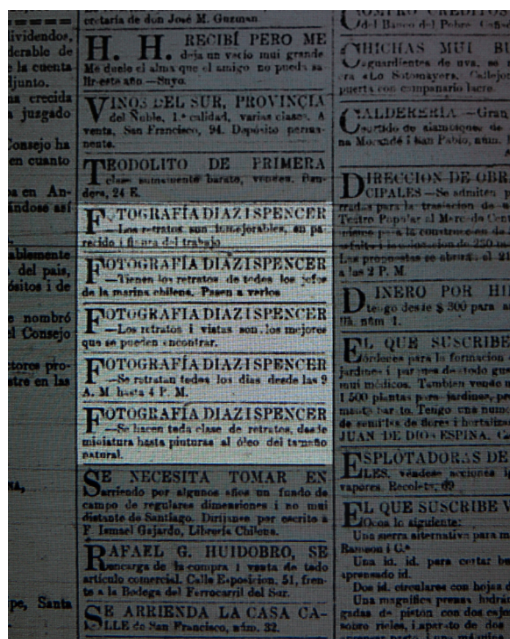
Díaz and Spencer's own work prior to the war was unsurprisingly dedicated to portraits of the political elite and rising bourgeoisie of Santiago as well as views of the city's main plazas, buildings, and monuments. In their chronicling of the war, Díaz and Spencer fed from this tradition of majestic, promotional views. Cities were to welcome visitors with a set of prescribed symbols expressing their level of progress and refinement: streetlights, railways, plazas, and monuments. Rural areas were to impress with their postcard-worthy landscapes or the richness of their industries at work. The photographs of the War of the Pacific preyed on these “images of progress” in order to incorporate the conflict as another stage of the same civilized path towards prosperity. This is particularly apparent in an 1885 album entitled *Views of Chile and of the War of the Pacific*, which brings together views of Santiago, Valparaíso, and the O'Higgins region with views of the war of the Pacific, combining them all as part of the same narrative. It is worth noting that the album opens with a portrait of Isidoro Huneeus Zegers, most probably its commissioner, followed by a double portrait of Díaz and Spencer—evidencing the prominent place the photographers now occupied.

3. The Photographers: Carlos Díaz Escudero and Eduardo Clifford Spencer

Since around 1860, Carlos Díaz Escudero had been a painter and photographer in Santiago. Although he privileged his painting career, starting a collaboration with none other than Antonio Smith in 1873, he is mostly known for his photographic work with Eduardo Clifford Spencer, a U.S. citizen (their professional stamp shows the Chilean and US-American flag crossing in the sky, between calm clouds and a rising sun). Spencer came to Chile sometime between 1865 and 1870. After his arrival, he ran photographic studios in Santiago and Valparaíso, alternating between the cities. Up to 1878 he ran a successful

partnership with Carlos Bischoff, winning several awards in local exhibits (Rodríguez Villegas, 2001, p. 242). By the time the war broke out, both Díaz and Spencer had a well-established reputation as photographers. Díaz and Spencer started partnership in 1879 and soon after they asked for permission to join the military forces and photograph the advance. They were protected as “special agents” (Babilonia, 2005, p. 43), and their photographs received public acclaim. After the war, they continued working together, with branch studios in several cities of the country. In 1885, Díaz left the partnership and Spencer continued operating the studios in Santiago, Valparaíso and Concepción (Rodríguez Villegas, 2001, p. 242). From 1883 onward Spencer started working as the presidency's official photographer, serving José Manuel Balmaceda, Jorge Montt, and Errázuriz Echaurren, taking their portraits and covering their trips around the country. His coverage of the war opened him the way to Chile's highest political circles.

By January 1881, Díaz & Spencer had created a rich repertoire of the war. It is not clear how many photographers were involved, and how their operations were run. According to Rodríguez Villegas, only Spencer went to the battlefields-which explains why he received a medal from the Chilean government. The speed with which their photographs traveled and were commercialized suggests that they successfully established a network of photographers and press agents that allowed for effective advertising and commercialization of their images while the photographic expedition was still capturing new views. For the same reason, their itinerary is unclear. Their coverage starts with the photographs of the Chilean ship *Covalonga* in Valparaíso (May 21, 1879), and the arrival of the captured *Huáscar* (October 20, 1879) at the same port. They then move to the campsites in Antofagasta, and their documentation of the advancement to the north begins: Iquique, Pisagua, Arica, Tacna, and finally the port of Callao and the occupation of Lima. Díaz & Spencer suspended their chronicling after 1881, given that after the capture of the Peruvian capital Chilean public opinion considered the war won. In addition, the guerrilla war in northern Peru offered fewer guarantees for safe-conduct.



F1. *El Ferrocarril*, July 13, 1879.

Studying their commercial presence, it becomes apparent that Díaz & Spencer took a very active role in promoting their photographs and understanding their audience. At the beginning of their partnership, Díaz & Spencer's advertising presence in Santiago's main newspaper, *El Ferrocarril*, was somewhat understated. As their business flourished and their coverage of the war grew more impressive and audacious, their ads too became more invasive, with their services and photographs announced many times in the same issue (F1). Given the cost of newspaper ads, their frequent and multiple advertisements evidence the prosperous development of their enterprise, with the result that they had the luxury to reduce their operating hours from 9 to 7 hours. They also show their command of advertising strategies, invading the advertising column to ensure they caught the reader's eye: sometimes one announcement after the other, other times with other ads in between (depending on whether they changed the initial wording). The accompanying text constantly changes, guaranteeing coverage of various readerly interests:

Díaz & Spencer Photography...

...Unmatchable portraits, both in similarity and technical finesse

...has the portraits of all the Chilean marine officers. Come and see them.

...Our portraits and views are the best you will find.

...We take portraits every day from 9AM to 4PM

...We offer all kind of portraits, from miniatures to natural-size oil paintings.

(*El Ferrocarril*, July 13, 1879)

Private portraits alongside public figures. The photographic studio becomes a space where Chileans can have their portrait taken while admiring the profile of a growing pantheon of heroes: “come and see... the portraits of all the Chilean marine officers.” Díaz & Spencer sell their professional services, but they also adapt their commercial facet to the reigning patriotic atmosphere. The studio thus serves as a gallery, a place where city dwellers, regardless of their buying power, can come and admire public views and portraits that they might otherwise not see. The photographic gallery echoes the mission endowed to the fine arts: that of celebrating the country's history and current splendors. As the war develops, the press makes repetitive calls for a more intense involvement of artists in the celebration of the nation's prowess, and in 1880 the government announces a painting contest to commemorate the battles of the War of the Pacific—as the war was still going on. Díaz & Spencer's views and the space they open to the public eye fill this artistic void. And they were well received. After the battles of Chorrillos and Miraflores, the government organized multiple events over the following days to celebrate the occupation of Lima, and a photographic exhibition of Díaz & Spencer's views was included as part of the official program:

In celebration of the Chilean army's splendid victories and of the triumphal entry to the city of Lima, the government... has decreed the following festivities. (...) On Saturday at 8PM, there will be an exhibit of *Díaz & Spencer's photographs*, which offer varied and important views *representing the most glorious actions of the current campaign and its most distinguished leaders* (Ahumada Moreno, 1887, p. 414. Emphasis added).

The photographs of Díaz & Spencer reached a status none of the previous war photographs had enjoyed.³ “Representing the glorious actions of the current

3. In terms of government-sponsored display. Photographers during the US-American Civil War organized private exhibitions, but none were directly organized and supported by the government. Roger Fenton's photographs of the Crimean War were meant for private purposes, and the exhibits of his photographs charged a shilling for admission.

campaign”, the photographs had their own space among the music bands, Te Deums, parades, fireworks, flags, and banners. The late hour of the exhibition points to its party atmosphere; the portraits of the heroic officers were to be admired and the views of war were to show a spectacle of power and glory. And a spectacle of war indeed it was. The following day *El Nuevo Ferrocarril* reported that Díaz & Spencer had offered a magic lantern show:

Last night, in Díaz & Spencer's photographic studio, a magic lantern show exhibited views of the battles and portraits of our zealous sea and land fighters. The crowd had the opportunity to applaud very thunderously. (*El Nuevo Ferrocarril*, January 23, 1881)

The admiration of the military deeds was now further encouraged by the illusionary power of light effects and the exhilarating influence of a collective experience. Judging from the crowds that participated in the parades (see F2, third row on the far right), the audience enjoying the magic lantern show was probably quite diverse. After a whole day of revelries, the crowd had the opportunity to visually participate in the war, seeing the battles and the faces of the heroes they had been celebrating, and “applaud[ing] very thunderously.” One can only imagine the effect that spectacle of war must have had.

Díaz & Spencer's photographs play particularly well with this celebration of war. Thanks to the increased circulation of images, war was now a phenomenon with multiple *viewers*, who were able to follow the conflict visually as it unfolded. Díaz & Spencer exploited this fact not only in their commercial strategies, but in the formal construction of their photographs. They mastered this niche by reinforcing the power of the gaze, empowering the viewer. Indeed, their views do not merely attempt to capture scenes of war, they also offer the viewer a certain pleasure at the sight gained by the power of technology—and by extension, by the power of the advancing Chilean forces. The high-angle position from which the camera captured many of its scenes accentuates the presence of this technological eye, rather than hiding at the ground level viewing experience of daily life.



F2. Selection of Díaz & Spencer photographs, Copyright© Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.

Their photographs leave little room for the accidental or circumstantial. The camera possesses a powerful and confident presence; its eye is not that of a bystander, but that of an overseer (the camera rarely comes close to the rough terrain and its war life scenes). These elevated shots reaffirm the power of the state conquering those lands. The constant high-angled perspective that marks Díaz & Spencer's approach stresses the act of seeing over what is actually seen. After a rapid glance at their collection of photographs (F2 and F3), the most salient characteristic informing the viewers is that they can rest assured that whatever it is that the photograph is showing (a street of an occupied Lima, regiments ready to attack, or the disembarkment of troops in Curayacu), there is nothing that can be considered a threat. Under the view of their camera, the war scenes are under control.⁴

4. This perspective also corresponds to the changes in warfare. As Olle Cederlöf details, “The Sovereign Supreme Commander was no longer depicted as the central figure on the battlefield since the methods of waging war had changed character. Now that artillery had begun seriously to dominate the field and fighting at close quarters had given way to operations conducted at a

4. Soldiers, Workers, Citizens

The photographs of Díaz & Spencer install a vision of order and efficiency in the exhibition of war. Throughout the 19th century, paintings, illustrations, and photographs had slowly divorced themselves from the glorifying depictions that had predominantly defined the language of war up until then. Though violent acts were not invisible to the public eye, in previous epochs violence in the context of war had not been considerably questioned, inscribed in a context of authorized, necessary cruelty. What painters like Francisco de Goya denounced, however, was the idea that enlightened, modern society had developed an irrational culture of violence that was not an anomaly, but part of its modern “reason” (Bertrand Dorléac, 2014, p. 17). The photographs of the US American Civil War and the Paraguayan War had furthered this reconfiguration by offering a raw view of the death toll of these conflicts. The changes in warfare had additionally robbed war of the heroic glamour of baroque battle paintings. With batteries and trenches redefining the methods of waging war, the head of the army needed now to stay at a commanding distance, rather than in the front leading the troops to combat. The eye of the general focused on the map, visualizing time and space beyond the battlefield. Commanders were now celebrated as strategists rather than warriors (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 125). How was this to be celebrated visually?

Studying Roger Fenton's photographs of the Crimean War, Ulrich Keller suggests that the planning of an event takes over the event itself, a perception that explains a staged photograph that shows the commanders of the allied forces supposedly planning the details of a battle that has in fact already taken place. In Díaz & Spencer's chronicling, I have not found an equivalent interest in exhibiting the masterminds at work. Instead, one finds an insisting viewing of the war from elevated, privileged positions. The camera occupies the viewpoint of the general, offering an “unopposed visualized dominion” (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 123) to the viewers and buyers in Chile's main cities. The views tend to avoid images without

respectful distance, the Supreme Commander's place was well behind the front” (1967, p. 125). Cederlöf concludes that these changes mark the end of the glorifying picture and the beginning of a predominantly narrative mode in military art. Yet, this is only the case if we understand the glorifying approach as limited to the enthroning and celebration of a heroic figure. As we see with Díaz & Spencer's photographs, there can be glorification without an individual hero, and the distance actually plays a key role in the construction of these laudatory martial views.

human presence or signs. In fact, when not directly photographing the war (e.g. columns of marching soldiers, the debris of the battlefields, artillery, and warships), the camera focuses on the spaces marked by human transformation and its organization: views of cities, bridges, ports, custom buildings and railways. The elevated eye of the camera is an invitation to envision the future, imagining the wealth, projecting the progress that is to come to these conquered lands.



F3. Selection of Díaz & Spencer photographs, Copyright© Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.

The glorification of strategic power is further stressed by the insistent portrayal of carefully lined up regiments (F3). Indeed, if the machine-like mercilessness of the firing squad in Goya's *The Third of May, 1808* (1814) is reproduced in Díaz & Spencer's photographs, here the precision of their deadly force is to be cherished. Far from a denunciation of the horrors of war, the War of the Pacific appears as an elegant parade of state power. Through their lenses, the Chilean military

forces offered a civilized, sanitized spectacle of war. In spite of the thousands of lives lost, only five of all known photographs by Díaz & Spencer include some of the fallen or wounded. The camera prefers the splendor of the marching columns, as a proud example of order and efficiency. Their force is further emphasized by the fact that the camera captures them as unending columns, extending beyond what the camera can see (hence the regiments are usually cut by the photograph's frame, suggesting that their number continues far beyond). The masculine and civilized values that the Chilean forces were meant to represent were further reinforced by the contrasting adjectives with which the press described the guerrilla tactics of the Peruvian resistance in the last stage of the war: cowardly, chaotic, traitorous, and Lima as a sort of *femme fatale*.

With their focus on these carefully aligned troops, the photographers celebrate the military, particularly in its corporate form. Their photographs enthrone the soldiers in their multiplicity and equal anonymity, echoing the efforts at the home-front, where the government is organizing artistic competitions to raise a monument to the Chilean *roto*. This once pariah is now exalted as a national type and role model, a collective hero. In the photographs, they do not stand out alone, but together, in their disciplined and obedient mettle, they constitute the driving force that will bring the nation victory and secure its path to progress. Their machine-like precision is impressive, but at the same time, the elevated perspective of the camera reassures the viewers that these highly-trained forces are under their control, that they are advancing in their name, that they are protecting and defending the honor of the Chilean nation.

Military and social hierarchies did not disappear though. Many photographic albums balanced the weight of the regiments by including studio portraits of high-ranking officers (this is particularly noticeable in the *Vistas de la Guerra entre Chile, Perú I Bolivia, 1879-80-81*, commissioned by E.v.K. de Harnecker, MHN). The reproduction of military heroes' portraits was also the main form of visual reportage in illustrated journals such as *El Nuevo Ferrocarril*. But a more striking contrast to the regiments' images is established with those focusing on groups of high rank officers. In the latter, the rigidity of the marching troops is

abandoned, and instead subjects are portrayed in more casual and relaxed postures, not to mention their faces are easily recognizable.

A photograph taken after the victorious capture of Cape Arica (June 1880) exhibits this rank distinction where some can only pose as part of a corporate body, while others are offered the privilege of a photographic individual persona (F4). In this image we encounter a group of officers posing next to a destroyed cannon at the top of the Arica hill and fortress. The destroyed cannon is the only trace of a battle that gave the Chilean forces a vital port and advantage. Indeed, there are almost no signs of the chaos and weariness of battle; the photograph is a balanced integration of elements of order and breezy elegance. Impeccably dressed in military attire and using their sabers as decorative canes, the models pose in a carefully orchestrated nonchalant attitude that presents them like gentlemen rather than military officers. On the background, the situation is different. Three soldiers stand upright forming a slight triangle. At the end of a second cannon stands a fourth soldier. All their faces are hidden in the shadow, but they are clearly arranged facing the group of officers. The faces of the latter are clearly distinguishable, and we see them looking in different, apparently whimsical directions: this is not the gaze of the general analyzing the strategy of a battle, but the gazes of those whose horizon appears clear all around, with a confident, bright prospect. Perhaps for this reason, none of them is looking at the forming soldiers.

However, although the photograph seems to focus on the group of officers (the mass of dark colors at the center of the image easily catches the viewers' attention), the background figures play an important part in its composition. The timbers, the utility box and the echoed mountain of cannonballs, all elements in the foreground of the photograph, create two strong diagonals that offer another entry point to the picture. Starting in the lower left corner with the shadowy pile of cannonballs, the lines direct the eye towards the opposite margin, where the three soldiers stand in formation. Their tidy arrangement echoes that of the cannonballs. Carefully arranged, the latter also refuse to give any evidence of the fought battle.



F4. Group of Chilean Officers, Regiment N. 2, *Album Vistas de la Guerra entre Chile, Perú y Bolivia*, Copyright© Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.

The photograph offers several instances of comparison and contrast. The same diagonal that takes us to the soldiers serves as support for the most prominent figure among the officers. Sitting in the middle ground of the image, he is the closest one to the viewers. Yet he is sideways to the camera, turning just enough so as not to completely turn his back on us. The photographic shot is for him something ordinary, not a special occasion. This sitting officer is the starting point for a second diagonal that follows the group of officers up to the standing officer. This second diagonal (further accentuated by the second cannon in the back that direct us from the soldiers to the officers) cuts the lower one, creating a cross. While the lower line is heavy and terrestrial (from the cannonballs to the soldiers), the one constructed by the officers rises above the destroyed cannon and opens up to the sky. Contrasting and complementary, the different military ranks stage the ideal social balance of agency and power.

Taking into account the concurrent celebratory campaign of the Chilean *roto*, the camera's lack of interest in approaching the regular soldier is remarkable. When not portrayed marching, aiming their guns, or surveying the environment, soldiers are still shown next to the enemy's weaponry or dead bodies. In other words, they are seldom portrayed off-duty, they are never anything other than soldiers. No signs of slothfulness are allowed. Indeed, in addition to the discourse of racial superiority and civilization (vs. anarchy), a third dichotomy was key in justifying the Chilean presence in foreign territories: that of work vs. idleness (Cid, 2012, p. 275). Bolivians and Peruvians were preventing those regions from progressing, wasting their potential. A new history of the region was all the while presented in journals and speeches, whereby any sign of wealth or productivity was owed to the Chilean work ethic. By the logic of work and property, Chileans could rightfully claim ownership of those lands, advancing the same kind of arguments that had justified the invasion of the indigenous territories in the south (Cid, 2012, p. 275). The ideal of industriousness that supposedly defined Chilean identity was, in point of fact, a powerful image firing in two directions. It not only discharged the Peruvian and Bolivian claims on the land, it also assisted in the transformation and training of Chile's ideal subjects not just as soldiers, but, more importantly, as a permanent working force. Today's exemplary soldiers were to be tomorrow's exemplary workers; a double role that did not require the war's end to unfold: "The need to discipline the *roto*-soldier reached its fullest expression in the state's newly conquered nitrate territories. Immediately after the Chilean army took control of the Tarapacá region, an order was passed by General Patricio Lynch which mandated 'constant and uninterrupted work' for all miners, and restricted their movement to the immediate environs of the mine" (Beckman, 2009, p. 86). In the "mutual enhancement of state power and of capitalism" (Andermann, 2007, p. 1) that defined the 19th-century consolidation of the state apparatus, subjects were workers and soldiers, but barely citizens (Figuerola Garavagno, 2011, p. 140). Disciplined and controlled from above, the marching soldiers of the photographs of the War of the Pacific, rather than an expression of the Republican "armed-citizen," announce and cherish the imperial soldier-worker. Defined by their obedience to hierarchy, they are not to use their tools against the state. With this kind of capture, Díaz & Spencer's photographs

echo the discourses proclaiming the virtues of the military indoctrination of the “masses” (McEvoy, 2011, p. 105). Alternating with impressive views of warships, the studio included several views of industrial and port facilities as part of their chronicling of the war, making the communion between war and industry even stronger (F5 and F6).



F5. Díaz & Spencer, Selection of Port and Industrial Views. Copyright© Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.



F6. Díaz & Spencer, Selection of Views of Battleships. Copyright© Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.

5. Lima

The occupation of the city of Lima is among the most controversial acts of the War of the Pacific. Just two days after the brutal battle of Chorrillos (January 13, 1881), forces collided again in the battle of Miraflores (January 15, 1881), while truce and peace negotiations were still ongoing. For each battle, the death toll rose to the thousands on both sides; and both Chorrillos and Miraflores, adjacent to Lima, were plundered and burned to the ground. On January 17, 1881, the Chilean forces, led by the already named national hero General Manuel Baquedano, occupied Lima. Chilean control of the city lasted more than two years (until October 23, 1883). Many names held control of the city: Baquedano, Cornelio Saavedra (before returning to the southern frontier), Pedro Lagos, and finally Patricio Lynch. The city's main buildings were looted; books, paintings, and other valuable goods were sent to Chile (some of which were returned only recently). Journalists' accounts painted a different picture, however. Take, for instance, the memories of journalist and writer Justo Abel Rosales, who witnessed the battles of Chorrillo and Miraflores and the entrance of the Chilean forces to the city of Lima:

On Monday 17th, the city of Lima opened its doors to the Chilean army. The defeated of Miraflores arrived in Lima on the night of the 15th provoking all kind of disorders, stealing and killing—mostly Chinese people. The following day it was the same story. Foreign colonies were forced to ask General Baquedano to occupy the city immediately and to end the plundering by the exalted Cholos. In addition, [Nicolás de] Piérola had fled to the inlands, and it was certain that there were no armed enemies beside the communists. A part of the army entered Lima on that day and took possession of the Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal forts. We were extremely happy. The proud city had fallen! (Rosales, 97).

Once again, the source of chaos and disorder was to be found on the enemy's side. The defeated were the ones “stealing and killing,” forcing the few sensible souls left in the city—the foreigners—to seek the arrival of the Chilean forces. The city opened its gates to Chile because its own inhabitants were destroying it.

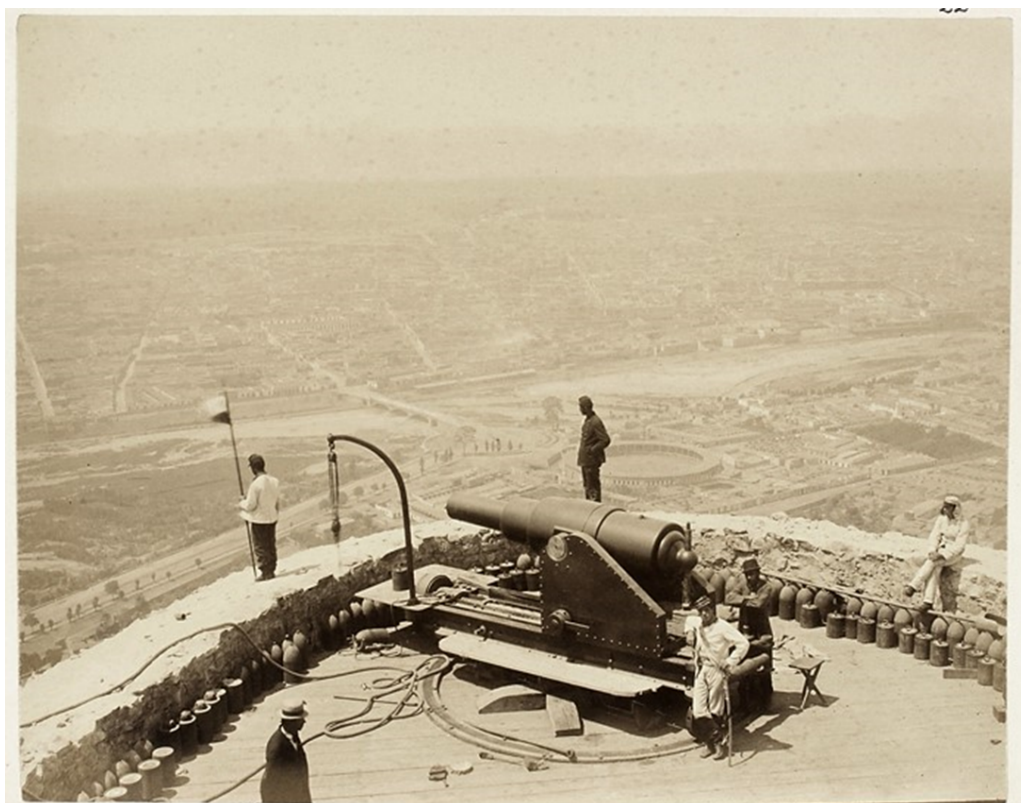
A photograph by Díaz & Spencer presents a relatable scenario. It shows the Chilean cavalry elegantly making its entrance into the city. The riders are grouped

in almost perfect lines, and empty space opens at their feet. Behind them, we see the park that harbors the Palacio de la Exposición [Palace of the Exhibition], which was constructed to house the International Exhibition of 1872 (celebrating the 50th anniversary of Peruvian independence). During the war, however, it was turned into a hospital and then served as the Chilean forces' military base. Most of the other photographs of Díaz & Spencer portraying Lima observe the city in the same way they had captured the advance from the port in Valparaíso up to this “proud capital” (see, for instance, F2, fourth row, on the far right). Were it not for the Chilean flag waving from the top of Peruvian government buildings, these urban views could have been easily included in a panoramic album of Peru. Order and control are the defining traits of what these Chilean eyes can see. No sign of chaos, confusion, and pillage. Neither do the victorious soldiers rest here either. They are captured upright, marching, and vigilant.

No image, however, is as striking as that of the captured Vavasour cannon on top of the San Cristóbal Hill. “Panoramic View of Lima from San Cristobal Hill” (F7) is an impressive shot of the Chilean forces in control of the Peruvian capital. Under a high noon light, the photograph plays with a number of shocking contrasts. Watching from the San Cristobal hill, a group of Chilean soldiers has a full view of Lima. The Rimac river and the bullring Plaza de Acho give the city away. As with many other photographs, Chilean military power is expressed by the capture of the enemy's weaponry. The cannon of the Piérola Fortress (bearing the name of the Peruvian dictator in power) was left unused, since the city it was supposed to protect was attacked by the south instead of the north. The photograph serves as evidence of the Peruvian miscalculation, highlighting another common belief repeated in the press of the southern country: that Chilean victories were also due to their superior strategic thinking. Under this light, no advanced war technology could save the enemy. Only when handled by the Chileans could this potent weaponry reach its full potential.

The photographic capture of this capture is carefully composed. Through a play of strong contrasts, the massive weight of the cannon attracts the eye. The cannon is not only the viewer's main anchor in the space of the photograph, it is also the main tool of perception of the space it controls. Indeed, the cannon's firing line

creates a sound diagonal that connects and defines the relationship between the photograph's two main parts: the rounded top of the hill on the foreground, and the flat city that expands onto the fading mountains in the horizon. The cables surrounding the cannon, the encircling line of balls, the distribution of the human figures and the double edges of the fortress and the hill conform an echo of circles that gives stability to the commanding force that sits on top of this base. The city of Lima spreads underneath with nothing obstructing the soldiers' view. The cannon's line, reinforced by flag and soldier, traverses a defenseless space. The reproduction of forms creates a strong echo of power (a repetition also appreciable in the circle and line formed by the bullring and the bridge, the latter extending the gaze of one of the soldiers and his dark silhouette). The Vavasseur cannon, the flag, the arrangement of cannon balls decorating the edges of the fortress, and the soldiers looking down; they all add up to inform the viewer where and how to observe the occupied city.



F7. Díaz & Spencer, *Lima*. Copyright© Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.

The cannon guides the eye inside the photographic space, but the main technology of perception is the photographic camera. The victory is marked by

the conquest not just of the cannon, but of the city's menacing view. The photographers' decision to present the war scenario from an elevated point of view consistently expresses the idea that winning is gaining sight. As in other photographs, this image also includes a number of figures admiring the view. In this case, however, the camera is placed considerably above the observing soldiers. Furthermore, two of the figures are looking upwards, to the photographer. By acknowledging the higher observer, the identification effect with the viewer is here lost. In this image, the observer is being observed. Cannon and soldiers are looking at the city of Lima, but there is another power behind that vigilant force. The insistence of the presence of a controlling eye dominating the space betrays a certain insecurity—who is actually the ultimate observer?⁵

6. Conclusion

The photographs of the War of the Pacific represent the mastering of a visual language of dominion. The views by Díaz & Spencer achieve what none of the previous war photographers had been able to offer state officials and the general public before: a celebratory photographic account of the war. Though there are a few inclusions of views of battlefields and fallen soldiers, what the viewer is mainly offered is a return to an ordered, controlled, mastered vision of war via a consistent overhead view of the conquered space. The attention to the attractiveness of the views and promises they could encourage did not really respond to a desire to document the war, but to present a certain image of the power that was claiming those lands and resources. Díaz and Spencer aligned their rendering of the war with the predominant narrative encouraged by Chilean politicians, intellectuals, and journalists. At the same time, these photographs

5. This combination of uncertainty and power in the eye that dominates both cannon and city is at the origin of a small controversy regarding this photograph: some contend that the photograph was taken by Eugene Courret and that the soldiers are in fact Peruvian. This is a circulating opinion in blogs and small publications, but no official publication or institution has made this claim. In private correspondence with Renzo Babilonia, the researcher confirmed that the soldiers in the photograph are Chilean. The catalog of the National Historic Museum in Santiago also affirms that the forces are Chilean. Additionally, the photograph was already included in the first photographic albums by Díaz & Spencer (like *Vistas de la Guerra entre Chile, Perú y Bolivia*, c. 1881 AF-54), which makes their authorship more than likely. Finally, the photograph was reproduced in international journals such as the *Harper's Weekly* (April 1881), where Díaz & Spencer are recognized as the authors of the source photograph.

were part of a process of extraordinary increase in the production and circulation of images, and were in turn also part of the visual education of local viewers and the allure to foreign eyes. In achieving official support, wide circulation (being reproduced in local and international illustrated journals), and even public exhibitions, Díaz & Spencer's photographs helped define the ways of seeing the War of the Pacific and the winning side, Chile. The photographs portray a confident advance, one where the troops march disciplined and organized. The military forces are celebrated as an example of order and hard work that is to be appreciated in their organization as a corporate body, representative of the Chilean nation. Ultimately, however, it is the advancing power—personified by the camera—that is placed in the dominant position that others will admire. The overhead position of the camera echoes the position of the conquering power: the Chilean state.

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