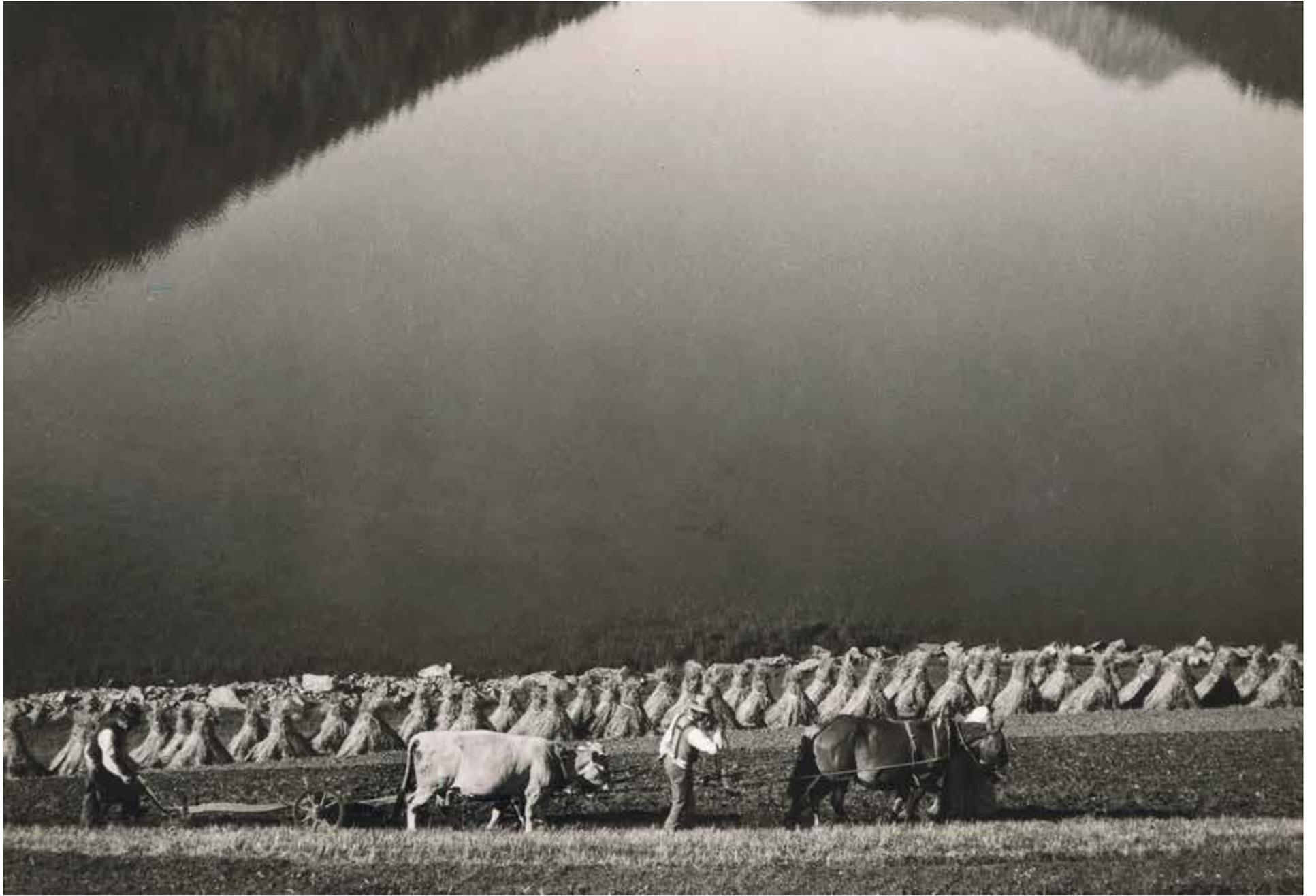


Contributions to  
A History of Photography in Austria

Edited by Monika Faber  
for Photoinstitut Bonartes · Vienna  
and Walter Moser  
for the Photographic Collection of the Albertina · Vienna

Volume 10



Elizabeth Cronin

Heimat Photography in Austria  
A Politicized Vision of Peasants and Skiers



Photoinstitut Bonartes · Vienna  
Albertina · Vienna  
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## Preface

This book series is dedicated to those friends whose unending trust and generous engagement have accompanied and supported the Photographic Collection of the Albertina and Photoinstitut Bonartes from the beginning.

Alpine landscapes and rural forms of life signified more than just a geographic peculiarity in interwar Austria. The identification model of the Ständestaat's anti-modernism could also be capitalized on as an idyll with tourist potential. Folklore and winter sports entered into a continuing bond here. It was no big step from the apotheosis of hard work and the admiration of traditional handicraft to the glorification of a patriarchal society of preindustrial character. Whether in the modernist Austrian pavilion at the World's Exposition in Paris in 1937, in lavish photographic volumes, or in the up-to-date medium of the illustrated magazine: Heimat photography brought forth and deepened visual leitmotifs for this view of Austria far into the postwar reconstruction era.

We thank Elizabeth Cronin for developing her dissertation into this publication, which places essential holdings of the photographic collections of the Albertina and the Photoinstitut Bonartes in a wider context for the first time. The project would not have come about without Michael Ponstingl's enthusiastic as well as efficient commitment.

Monika Faber, Photoinstitut Bonartes  
Walter Moser, Albertina

Pages 2–3 · Peter Paul Atzwanger, *Ploughing by the Lakeside*, c. 1930,  
silver gelatin print, 13 × 18 cm

Page 4 · Rudolf Koppitz, *Passeier Valley, South Tyrol*, c. 1930,  
silver gelatin print, 28.6 × 25.9 cm

## Contents

11	Introduction	
14	1. The Birth of Heimat Photography in Germany and Austria	
	17 Gustav Kuhfahl and Heimat Photography in 1920s Germany	
	21 Austria and Artistic Heimat Photography	
34	2. The Ständestaat and Its Ideal Heimat Austria	
	40 Origins and Development of the Austrian Heimat as Alpine	
	43 Politics, Exhibitions, and Competitions	
52	3. Modern Alpine Culture and Tourism in the Austrian Heimat	
	53 Alpinists and <i>Der Bergsteiger</i>	
	59 Ski Photography in the Heimat	
	67 Alpine Culture	
	69 Tourism in the Alpine Heimat	
	78 Promoting Austria Abroad	
88	4. Photobooks of the Austrian Heimat	
	90 The Pre-Ständestaat Heimat: Regional Landscapes	
	97 Peasants in the Heimat	
	113 The Austrian Heimat Par Excellence	
133	5. The <i>Anschluss</i> and the War Years: From “God and Soil” to “Blood and Soil”	
	136 Travel, Tourism, and Heimat Education	
	150 Heimat Photography and Race	
	157 Tyrol and the Mountains of the Ostmark	
	163 Heimat Photography during the War	
171	6. A Lasting and a New Heimat: Postwar Austrian Heimat Photography	
	171 Postwar Identity Formation	
	175 Lively Tyrol	
	189 The Austrian Peasant	
	192 Recycled Beauty	
	197 Beautiful Tyrol and Beautiful Austria	
205	Selected Photographers’ Biographies	
212	Bibliography	
231	Index of Names	
236	Picture Credits	
236	Acknowledgments	

## Introduction

“Heimat—a word that nobody who has put down his first roots in the mother’s womb will be able to define exhaustively!”<sup>1</sup>

Heimat is the German word for home, homeland, or home country, yet like most translations these English words are not necessarily used in the same manner and thus do not give an accurate portrayal of all that Heimat can connote. As Heimat is the subject of this book, it is of course pertinent to briefly explain its meaning. The German concept of Heimat is linked to a certain geographic sphere defined according to any individual’s perception. Whether it be the environment of a small town or an entire country or both, it is where one feels at home. But Heimat is more than just a physical place or geographical space. Heimat is also something embellished and imagined. It carries with it inextricable and deeply personal feelings and associations. Conceived of as a traditional home, Heimat provides security and shelter from the outside world and, because of this, can have rejuvenating and redemptive qualities. The intimate relationship each individual has with the Heimat varies, but because it is often linked to a larger geographical space such as a nation, it can also be a concept that is generalized and shared. Heimat is home to many people. They idealize it as a place that is familiar, communal, and warm.

Heimat photography is photography that depicts the reality of Heimat. It has as its subject matter typicalities that connote a particular

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<sup>1</sup> “Heimat, ein Wort, das niemand erschöpfend definieren kann, dessen erste Wurzeln auf der Mutter Schoß Boden gefaßt haben!” Hans Seidlmayer, “Lichtbildner und Heimatkunde,” *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 8, no. 19 (1928): 359.

Heimat, such as rolling hills, a regional trade, or a traditional style of architecture. Like the concept of Heimat, Heimat photography is also idealized and very much an imagined idea of what Heimat should look like. Its subject matter is always positive and never shows social hardships in a negative light.

This volume focuses on Austrian Heimat photography for several reasons. Heimat photographs were part of a diverse conglomeration of visual imagery in the 1930s. Yet, these unassuming photographs have hitherto found only little attention in histories for the views are quaint, often hackneyed, and therefore of little interest to scholars. Heimat photography has a sentimental appeal and uses familiar tropes of bucolic landscapes, humble peasants, and pre-industrial ways of life. Heimat photography, though, was a crucial part of 1930s visual culture. It could be seen in abundance in books, magazines, and journals. Many photographers known for their avant-garde experimental work participated in the creation of photography of and for the Heimat. The ordinary subjects found in the Heimat photographs veiled their contribution to the development of an ideal culture, propagated and supported by right-wing nationalism.

Mostly, historians and literary scholars have undertaken the study of Heimat but very few have considered the implications of static Heimat imagery, even though this imagery and photography especially were powerful tools that spread the ideas of and popularized Heimat.<sup>2</sup> Heimat is a concept of home that one truly believes in but that is always seen through rose-colored glasses. Photography of the Heimat is so important because it lends credibility to an otherwise imagined idea. It thus provides a point of access to Heimat as it is pictured. It appears not as an idealized and imaginative idea, but as a place which is linked to a real space. In other words, through photography Heimat's idealism becomes at least in part believable because photography is a document of real time moments. Though Heimat photography is compliant to one's memory and

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2 This is in large part because in the past Heimat has appeared to be antithetical to modernism and its imagery was associated with conservatism and National Socialist art. Rolf Sachsse notes the lack of research on photography during National Socialism as he writes its extensive history, which includes a brief discussion of Heimat photography, in Rolf Sachsse, *Die Erziehung zum Wegsehen: Fotografie im NS-Staat* ([Dresden]: Philo Fine Arts, 2003).

desires, it nevertheless serves as a powerful visual tool for triggering associations of Heimat and validating the idyll.

Only a handful of articles exist on Heimat photography, either in Germany or Austria, and most are specific case studies that do not consider the history of the genre as a whole.<sup>3</sup> I have chosen to examine Heimat photography in Austria because it provides a particularly convincing example of how Heimat photography contributed to shaping the idea and image of a nation. There were similar Heimat preservation movements in other European countries that have yet to be examined, and it is my hope that this study will inspire and lead to analyses of them.

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3 Rolf Sachsse has also considered Heimat photography in Germany and its relation to tourism, see Rolf Sachsse, "Heimat als Reiseland," in *Ansichten der Ferne: Reisephotographie 1850–heute*, ed. Klaus Pohl (Gießen: Anabas, 1983), 129–150; Sabine Allweier has written briefly on Heimat photography in Baden-Württemberg, see Sabine Allweier, "Fotografie und Heimat," in *Gut Licht! Fotografie in Baden 1840–1930*, ed. Elisabeth Haug (Karlsruhe: Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe, 2003), 23–25. Regarding Austria, see Elizabeth Cronin, "Lost Somewhere in the Mountains: Wilhelm Angerer and Austrian Heimat Photography," *History of Photography* 32, no. 3 (2008): 248–259; Elizabeth Cronin, "Rudolf Koppitz und die österreichische Heimat," in *Rudolf Koppitz—Photogenie*, ed. Monika Faber (Vienna: Brandstätter, 2013), 45–53; Elizabeth Cronin, "The Problem of German Identity in 1930s Austria and the Influence of Austrian Heimat Photography," in *Representations of German Identity*, German Visual Culture 1, eds. Deborah Ascher Barnstone and Thomas O. Haakenson (Oxford a.o.: Lang, 2013), 153–175; Otto Hochreiter, "Ländliches Leben: Zur Darstellung des Bauern und der alpinen Landschaft," in *Geschichte der Fotografie in Österreich*, 2 vols., ed. Verein zur Erarbeitung der Geschichte der Fotografie in Österreich (vol. 1), and Otto Hochreiter and Timm Starl (vol. 2) (Bad Ischl: Verein zur Erarbeitung der Geschichte der Fotografie in Österreich, 1983), vol. 1, 413–423, 438–455; Otto Hochreiter, "Bäuerliches Leben in fotografischen Bildern," *Fotogeschichte: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie* 2, no. 5 (1982): 45–54; Anton Holzer, "Bilder der Heimat," *Wiener Zeitung*, 14. August 2010, <http://www.wienerzeitung.at/Desktopdefault.aspx?tabID=3946&alias=wzo&lexikon=Foto&letter=F&cob=512129> (accessed October 1, 2014); Ulrike Matzer, "Zwischen Heimatfotografie und Medienkunst: Fotografie in Österreich 1939 bis 1970," *Fotogeschichte: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie* 30, no. 117 (2010): 27–40; Anton Holzer, *Fotografie in Österreich: Geschichte, Entwicklungen, Protagonisten 1890–1955* (Vienna: Metroverlag, 2013), especially the chapter "Landschaft, Berge, Brauchtum. Die Heimatfotografie der 1930er-Jahre," 135–152; Matthew Witkovsky, *Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2007), 172–176.

## 1. The Birth of Heimat Photography in Germany and Austria

“Promoting the preservation movement with the help of photography”<sup>4</sup>

Heimat photography during the 1930s grew out of a concern for the Heimat that began with the preservation movement in nineteenth-century Germany. The Romantics’ interest in and their close relationship with nature strengthened ideas about the preservation of the Heimat. Preserving the Heimat meant protecting one’s personal attachment to place and fighting against the displacements of modern society, namely mass migration, transnational commerce, and fluid class boundaries.<sup>5</sup> Romantic nature was regarded as authentic since it provided a source of fulfillment and in this way functioned as the antidote to urban life.<sup>6</sup> The preservation of this kind of nature, furthermore, was in and of itself a modern means of managing nature in tandem with modern life, which somewhat paradoxically led to its eventual commercialization and mass consumption.<sup>7</sup>

Heimat preservation was an ecological concern but was also a largely middle-class effort to prevent the destruction of nature’s aesthetic; this

4 “Förderung der Heimatschutzbewegung durch die Mithilfe der Photographie” in [Gustav] A[dolf]. Kuhfahl, *Heimatphotographie: Die Photographie im Dienste von Heimatschutz und Heimatforschung*, Bücherei des Liebhaberphotographen 1 (Halle an der Saale: Knapp, 1921), 2.

5 Thomas M. Lekan, “The Nature of Home: Landscape Preservation and Local Identities,” in *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe, 1860–1930*, German and European Studies 7, eds. David Blackbourn and James Retallack (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 166.

6 *Ibid.*, 170.

7 *Ibid.*, 170–173.

destruction, it was believed, would also injure Germany’s national character and cause moral decline in the population.<sup>8</sup> The concern of early Heimat activists was the aesthetic image of the Heimat which the demands of modern industrial life threatened. Their aesthetic goal did not mean that they were totally against modernity. As Thomas Rohkrämer argues, the ideal nature was one which included more natural, humane ways of existing in the midst of modernity, but not about getting out of industrialization.<sup>9</sup> After all, modernity benefitted the very class that was promoting Heimat. The activists’ ultimate goal was reconciliation of social ideals with technology, in order to create a better environment.<sup>10</sup>

The conceptual foundations for the national organization supporting the protection of the Heimat, the *Bund Heimatschutz* (League for Heimat Protection), were put into writing much earlier than its official founding in 1904. Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl was instrumental in influencing the concept of Heimat. A social science professor concerned with folklore, Riehl emphasized the value and superiority of a familial and pre-industrial way of life. His view of social organization was Christian and conservative and it advocated natural inequality, corporative self-help, and loyalty to patriarchy.<sup>11</sup> He believed the particulars of natural communities and local folk customs, unlike urban cosmopolitan uniformity, were absolutely necessary to preserving social harmony. Riehl’s multi-volume work *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen*

8 Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4; Matthew Jefferies, “Heimatschutz: Environmental Activism in Wilhelmine Germany,” in *Green Thought in German Culture: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Colin Riordan (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 43. See also William H. Rollins, “Heimat, Modernity, and Nation: The Early Heimatschutz Movement,” in *Heimat, Nation, Fatherland: The German Sense of Belonging*, German Life and Civilization 22, eds. Jost Hermand and James D. Steakley (New York a.o.: Lang, 1996), 87–112.

9 Thomas Rohkrämer, *Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland 1880–1933* (Paderborn a.o.: Schöningh, 1999), 32.

10 *Ibid.*

11 David J. Diephouse, introduction to *The Natural History of the German People*, by Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, trans. and ed. David J. Diephouse (Lewiston, NY, Queenston and Lampeter: Mellen Press, 1990), 4. Diephouse provides an informative and concise biography of Riehl and analysis of his beliefs. See also Jasper von Altenbockum, *Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl 1823–1897: Sozialwissenschaft zwischen Kulturgeschichte und Ethnographie* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 1994).

*Social-Politik* saw numerous reeditions after its publication from 1851 to 1869, and his social philosophy helped pave the way for the 1930s concept of an Austrian Heimat.

In addition to Riehl, Ernst Friedrich Karl Rudorff also saw the Germanic people as having a special connection to nature. In the wake of industrial advancement, this connection was especially important to preserve. In 1897 Rudorff coined the term *Heimatschutz* (Heimat protection) in a thirty-one page essay on the subject.<sup>12</sup> Rudorff's and others ideas spawned a wave of Heimat-related movements, such as the *Gartenstadtbewegung* (Garden City Movement), the literary *Heimatkunst* (Heimat Art) movement, and, of course, the *Bund Heimatschutz*.

By the turn of the century, the interest in Heimat preservation had spread to the Austrian lands. In 1906, the Viennese *Verein für Heimatkunde, Heimatschutz und deutsches Kulturleben in Österreich* (Association for Heimat Studies, Heimat Protection and German Cultural Life in Austria) began publishing their magazine *Deutsche Heimat* (German Heimat).<sup>13</sup> In 1908, the *Verein für Heimatschutz in Tirol* (Association for Heimat Protection in Tyrol) was founded to protect the landscape and noteworthy buildings but also to encourage building programs that would be harmonious with the landscape.<sup>14</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1912, the Austrian *Heimatschutzverband* (Organization for Heimat Protection) was founded. These Austrian organizations followed the German model, and it is important to emphasize one of the many connections between them. Both believed they were protecting a German Heimat. The German-speaking Austrians thought of themselves as German, and the Germans considered them to be German. Although they operated in different political spheres, their mission to protect the landscape and German culture was the same. In the early stages of the Heimat preservation movement, nationalism was neither a defining issue

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12 Ernst Rudorff's *Heimatschutz* appeared in 1897 as a special edition of the magazine *Grenzboten*. Expanded book editions followed in 1901, 1904 and 1926. For more on Rudorff and the publication, see Andreas Knaut, "Ernst Rudorff und die Anfänge der deutschen Heimatbewegung," in *Antimodernismus und Reform: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Heimatbewegung*, ed. Edeltraud Klueting (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), 39–40.

13 *Deutsche Heimat: Blatt für Heimatkunde, Heimatschutz und deutsches Kulturleben in Österreich* was published in Vienna from 1906 to 1938.

14 Verein für Heimatschutz in Tirol, *Gründungsurkunde* (Innsbruck: 1908), see <http://www.heimatschutzverein.at/downloads/Gruendungsurkunde.pdf> (accessed October 1, 2014).

nor was it fanatical. The literature of this movement did include conservative and nationalist arguments, but these were rare and seen as ancillary to the aesthetic goal.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, these tendencies existed and did assist in gaining additional support for the movement.

### Gustav Kuhfahl and Heimat Photography in 1920s Germany

In 1921, the German amateur photographer Gustav Adolf Kuhfahl published the first known primer on Heimat photography.<sup>16</sup> His book *Heimatphotographie: Die Photographie im Dienste von Heimatschutz und Heimatsforschung* (Heimat Photography: Photography in the Service of Homeland Preservation and Research) is seminal in that it defined and established guidelines for Heimat photography. In the book, Kuhfahl points to specific local landmarks in Saxony and elsewhere that should be treasured for their historical and cultural value. The point of Kuhfahl's example was to show how important Heimat photography is in preserving German culture and especially in case it is "lost." He believes Heimat can be better preserved in photographs than in words.<sup>17</sup> The need to reclaim and prevent any further disappearance of local character is of utmost importance to Kuhfahl, and he explains that local character can be found in many places, including the wilderness, cultural and civic monuments, and folk costumes.<sup>18</sup> While Kuhfahl emphasizes the local in the preservation of homeland through photographic documentation, he also speaks specifically of a common German past and emphasizes German national resources. In this way Heimat photography functions to highlight various regional components while bringing them together under the common bond of Germanism, which then contributes to the larger idea of a German homeland.<sup>19</sup> With small bits of local Heimat, the communal

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15 Rohkrämer, *Eine andere Moderne?*, 138–139.

16 Kuhfahl also published books on the preservation of *Steinkreuze* (wayside stone crosses), *Postmeilensäulen* (postal mile markers), and mountain photography.

17 Kuhfahl, *Heimatphotographie*, 2.

18 Sections of the forty-nine-page book are devoted to folk costumes, folk culture, significant trees, animals of the Heimat, wild game and its cultivation, mile markers, town histories, and museums. Ibid.

19 This is exactly the kind of Heimat that historian Celia Applegate explains brought the modern nation of Germany together. Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990); and

feeling of life was cherished and preserved amidst the wake of modernity, war, and civilization.

Photography provided Heimat activists like Kuhfahl with a perfect means for coming to terms with modernity's inevitable consequences because photographs mediated between the past and the present. Photographs of Heimat kept a visual record of an intact Heimat that was more accurate and powerful than any drawn or written description. The photographs of Heimat allowed society to move forward because it could always look back. Photography halted the speed of modernity for an instant, and it put time into material form. The physicality of the photograph allowed for preservation and in this way soothed the fear of loss. Whether or not activists were cognizant of photography's deeper implications is irrelevant. What matters more is their continued use of photography to preserve Heimat in a tangible form and that these photographs were considered to be a suitable substitute for that which could not be preserved in actuality.

Kuhfahl's *Heimatphotographie* mostly offers practical advice. By schooling amateurs on the importance and technique of photographing one's homeland, Kuhfahl hopes that at the very least the most characteristic aspects of regions would be documented and made available to the public in collections or exhibitions.<sup>20</sup> Kuhfahl promotes a regional photography that is matter-of-fact, documentary, and preservationist, but throughout the text Kuhfahl also points out that Heimat photographs can be artful. Kuhfahl believes they should possess a certain *Stimmung* (sentimental feeling). He does not give any guidelines on this advice nor does he attempt to place Heimat photography in the realm of fine arts.<sup>21</sup> He simply acknowledges the aesthetic capabilities of good photography, which, as he explains, are advantageous when seeking to document local character and traditions.<sup>22</sup>

Kuhfahl's book is instructive because it stresses the preservationist function of Heimat photography that characterized the early Heimat preservation movement. It also demonstrates how closely tied Heimat was to local and Germanic pride. Within a few years German photography

journals began publishing articles on Heimat photography in the same vein. They likewise emphasized its pedagogic and preservationist function to serve the needs of a larger community. Heimat photographs could be employed for sports, tourism, weather, industry, and trade.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Heimat photography was thought to provide useful material for the travel industry, historic preservation, and foreign tourism.<sup>24</sup> Some photographers, such as the Berliner Curt Boenisch, addressed Heimat photography's critical relationship to nationalism. He complained of foreign influence in photography and sought to remedy this by calling for more photography lectures about German-speaking and German-feeling countries and specifically by supporting Heimat photography, even if it first meant producing postcard-like images.<sup>25</sup>

The broad understanding of Heimat photography and its application led to several problems. Although all could agree on Heimat photography's practical preservationist function, the difficulty inherent within the photography of Heimat became apparent right away. Heimat is not just an extant physical place, but also an embellished idea of that place. Heimat photography represents Heimat through the depiction of something physical, whether a place, object, or person, but it must also somehow convey the idea of Heimat. Yet, the idea of Heimat varies and it must solicit emotional associations that are often more personal than typical. In depicting typicalities that were not too general but specific enough to pertain to a specific locale, Heimat photographers had to achieve a delicate balance between the larger Germanic Heimat and local Heimat. This was not an easy task.

Throughout the late 1920s, articles intermittently published in the German photography journals *Photofreund* (Friend of Photography) and *Photographische Rundschau und Mitteilungen* (Photographic Review and News) chronicled the extended debate on what exactly should and should

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Celia Applegate, "The Question of Heimat in the Weimar Republic," *New Formations*, no. 17 (1992): 64–68.

20 Kuhfahl, *Heimatphotographie*, 47–48.

21 Kuhfahl even speaks of creating images that leave room for the imagination, see *ibid.*, 17.

22 *Ibid.*

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23 W. Trautmann, "Heimat—Photographie," *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 7, no. 4 (1928): 60–62.

24 Kurt Raphael, "Bildmäßige Photographie—Heimatphotographie," *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 7, no. 23 (1927): 434; Fritz Limmer, "Die Photographie im Dienste der Heimatkunde, Heimatwerbung und Heimatforschung," *ibid.* 7, no. 13 (1927): 233–236.

25 "Demgegenüber sollte man zunächst die Heimatphotographie pflegen, selbst auf die Gefahr hin, zunächst 'Ansichtskartenbilder' zu machen." Curt Boenisch, "Mehr Heimatkunst in unserer Lichtbildnerie," *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 6, no. 12 (1926): 218–219.

not be considered Heimat photography.<sup>26</sup> For some photographers the subject matter of a Heimat photograph was of secondary importance; instead, the most important consideration was that the photograph reflects the “spirit” and “soul” of the Heimat.<sup>27</sup> The point of view, however, was in direct conflict with the photograph’s objective and preservationist function. While the different understandings of Heimat photography do not seem to diverge that much—all agreed on its preservative function—they did cause much uneasiness. In 1928, the *Verband Deutscher Amateurphotographervereine* (Organization of German Amateur Photographer Clubs) emphasized Heimat photography’s preservationist function and defined it as “a typical true-to-nature, matter-of-fact photographic representation of scenic, architectural, folkloric, and other cultural monuments.”<sup>28</sup> Their definition does not take an emotional understanding into consideration. It only makes Heimat photography an objective thing. The term remained vague, and what exactly belonged to this category continued to be disputed in the coming years. By 1929, one author was lamenting this abasement of Heimat photography, which he explained had been used to categorize the leftovers of what was not artistically successful.<sup>29</sup> Indeed it seems that the understanding of what could be called Heimat had no boundaries, as long as its primary purpose was to document the Heimat—whatever that may be—and its artistry was only cursory. Due to its all-encompassing character, most any landscape, town view, or portrait could be called a Heimat photograph.

26 Alfred Peltz, for example, also warned amateurs to stay away from “postcard clichés,” see Alfred Peltz, “Wege zur Heimatphotographie,” *Photographische Rundschau und Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 68, no. 4 (1931): 72; see Artur Ranft, “Einiges über die Heimatphotographie,” *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 4, no. 7 (1924): 137.

27 Heinrich Ditmar, “Stimmung und Charakter in der Heimat-Photographie,” *Der Satrap: Blätter für Freunde der Lichtbildkunst* 4, no. 6 (1928): 125–128; Elisabeth Banski, “Was heißt Heimatphotographie?” *Photographische Rundschau und Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 70, no. 15 (1933): 287–288.

28 Kurt Raphael, “Das Thema: Heimatphotographie,” *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 8, no. 15 (1928): 279–280 (“eine typische naturgetreue, sachliche Lichtbild-Wiedergabe von landschaftlichen, architektonischen, volkskundlichen oder sonstigen Kulturdenkmälern”).

29 Hans Kammerer, “Der Begriff ‘Heimatphotographie,’” *Photofreund: Halbmonatsschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 9, no. 9 (1929): 170–171.

## Austria and Artistic Heimat Photography

In Austria, the development of Heimat photography was a little different. Although Austrians read the German journals and were more than aware of Heimat photography, they did not actively participate in its discussion. Overall, little interest in it existed during the 1920s. One reason for this may have been the lack of a feeling for an Austrian Heimat. The grim climate after the First World War did nothing to unite the states that were labeled Austria. Only loosely tied to each other, they were focused inward toward their own regions. A general consensus as to what the larger Austrian Heimat was and a willingness to participate in photographing it were not at all present. In the 1920s, Austrian states were largely provincial and even more disparate than in Germany. The country as a whole, furthermore, was far less industrial, and this factor reduced the urgency of large-scale Heimat preservation. Although some Austrians were indeed interested in Heimat preservation—there were Heimat clubs—they focused on regional customs and tended to remain isolated.

In 1925, Austrian Heimat supporter Wilhelm Gärtner recognized that all too often the literal meaning of the word Heimat is confused with its abstract and meaningful sense.<sup>30</sup> As he wrote about the lack of clarity in the Austrian Heimat preservation movement, he complained that it is assigned too many tasks.<sup>31</sup> Agreeing with the position of Karl Giannoni, another prominent Heimat preservation activist, Gärtner believed that the issue should not only be about the conservation or preservation of Heimat but also about actually *creating* Heimat in Austria.<sup>32</sup> Both Gärtner and Giannoni thought of Heimat as a larger concept, one that incorporated connections among aesthetic, social, and economic life. However, their call to create Heimat was an idea that would not take hold until the mid-1930s, when the government recognized the need for it and actively promoted and built an Austrian Heimat.

The development of a recognized Heimat photography movement in Austria may have also been slowed by a preference for Pictorialist, or

30 Wilhelm Gärtner, “Problematik und Zukunftswege der Volksbildungsarbeit,” *Volksbildung: Zeitschrift für die Förderung des Volksbildungswesens in Österreich* 5, no. 1 (1925): 37.

31 Ibid.

32 “. . . daß es sich nicht nur darum handelt, Heimat zu bewahren und zu erhalten, sondern darum Heimat zu *schaffen*” (emphasis in the original). Ibid., 38.

secessionist, photographs, which most amateur Austrian photographers in the 1920s tended to produce. Rudolf Junk, director of the Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt in Vienna (the only state school in Austria where photography was taught) favored and encouraged Pictorialist photography.<sup>33</sup> As Pictorialist photographers altered their prints to make them look more painterly and thus “more artistic,” as it were, these were not at all compatible with the objective approach and preservationist goal of Heimat photography as it was practiced and defined in Germany. Artistically changed photographs were simply not the reliable records of culture that Heimat photography espoused.

Rudolf Koppitz, one of the most successful Austrian Heimat photographers, began as a prominent Pictorialist. Despite his skill and success with Pictorialist photography or perhaps because of the attainment of such expertise, Koppitz decided to change his style and technique. Around 1930 he began making introspective portraits of villagers as he documented their way of life—from their family-shared meals (fig. 1) to their traditional religious processions. Throughout coming years, Koppitz turned more and more to the countryside to photograph, and his work became almost exclusively focused on the land and its people. He also lost interest in making Pictorialist prints and began using brome-silver gelatin paper.<sup>34</sup>

Koppitz’s photographs of the land and its people are rightly considered Heimat photographs but Koppitz may not have originally thought of them in this way.<sup>35</sup> After all, the Heimat as presented in his photographs differs from the early German matter-of-fact and straight-forward portrayals that Kuhfahl and German photography journals advocated during the 1920s. Their documentary style professed a preservationist function and eschewed an artistic sensibility. Rudolf Koppitz’s photographs of Heimat subjects do not put aside his artistic sense. His photograph’s *Schwesterl* (Little Sister) is an excellent example of a



1 · Rudolf Koppitz, *Prayer at Lunch*, c. 1930, silver gelatin print, 27.8 × 25.8 cm

Pictorialist-influenced photograph of the Heimat. The subject matter clearly represents the Heimat as it stirs up feelings of innocence, family, and home. Two sisters gaze down at their newborn sibling in a wooden cradle painted with a folk pattern, while a brother sits farther back. The affectionate and sweet faces of the children elicit compassion in the viewer. A positive and sentimental image association with home is how Heimat photographs function ideally as emotional triggers.

Koppitz’s eye for composition and light made his Heimat photographs stand out. They were modern. In *Passeiertal, Südtirol* (Passeier Valley, South Tyrol; fig. page 4) the formal play of light and shadow, the bright white sleeves, the gray wooden beams, and the dark background help to balance the composition. In addition, the poses of an elderly couple play off each other. Sitting next to the hearth, the man looks up at the viewer, while the woman, sitting perfectly straight, looks down as she reads her small book. In the only article he ever published, Koppitz describes the elevation of artistic photography, stating that the goal should be to reproduce unforced naturalism, liveliness of expression, what is characteristic in

33 When the Graphic Institute was founded in 1888, it was named the *k. k. Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Photographie und Reproduktionsverfahren*. Even after the name was changed in 1897, photography retained its principle role at the institute.

34 Monika Faber, “‘Land und Leute’ (1930–1936),” in *Rudolf Koppitz 1884–1936*, ed. Monika Faber (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1995), 111.

35 Monika Faber, Otto Hochreiter, and Peter Weiermair all consider Koppitz’s photography as Austrian Heimat photography. There is at present no known evidence as to how Koppitz classified his Heimat photographs.

appearance and being, and to lend an overall artfulness to the depiction.<sup>36</sup> While the Passeier Valley couple may have posed for Koppitz, they do not appear awkwardly positioned and their gestures seem ordinary. Furthermore, they are in their home and the setting adds to the photograph's naturalism. Koppitz was able to produce the kind of expressive and natural artistic photography which he professed.

Koppitz's belief as to what art photography should be has notable parallels with the concept of *Heimat*, which emphasizes a typical ideal based on reality. For Koppitz, a photograph should bring out the ideal and the characteristics of the portrayed subject and convey naturalness and truth to the subject. Containing personality and expression, the photograph also produces emotions when viewed.<sup>37</sup> In much the same way, *Heimat* photographs also aim to represent what is distinguishing and ideal, speaking to each individual with feeling. Although it is unlikely that Koppitz thought of this at the time, it is important to understand that the idea of *Heimat* went hand in hand with Koppitz's view of artistic photography. In the 1930s *Heimat* photography began to change, and Koppitz helped it along with his newfound preference for *Heimat* themes.

Koppitz was not the only professor at Vienna's Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt who photographed the Alpine lands.<sup>38</sup> His colleague Peter Paul Atzwanger also portrayed the Alpine peasant populations and their way of life. Atzwanger most likely rekindled Koppitz's interest in the subject, since he had been photographing his *Heimat*, the landscape of South, East and North Tyrol, from an early stage in his photographic career.<sup>39</sup> Atzwanger began as a student of sculpture but found that with photography he could better capture the impressions that the mountain world made on him.<sup>40</sup> His earliest works were also Pictorialist. He went

to art school and trained at Heinrich Kühn's school in Innsbruck, where he first became a teacher and then director of the school. After fighting on the Tyrolean front during the First World War he was invited to study with the well-known Pictorialist art and portrait photographer Nicola Perscheid in Berlin. Atzwanger quickly became successful, exhibiting his soft-focus bromoil prints at the Tyrolean State Museum and publishing them in photography journals such as *Das Deutsche Lichtbild* (The German Photograph), *Photographische Rundschau und Mitteilungen*, and in *Der Bergsteiger* (The Mountain Climber), the magazine issued by the *Deutsche und Österreichische Alpenverein* (German and Austrian Alpine Club) (and by the *Deutsche Alpenverein* [German Alpine Club] from 1938 on).<sup>41</sup> In 1928 Junk asked him to join the faculty at the Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt.

*Die Schnitter (Inntal)* (The Mowers [Inn Valley]) from 1921 demonstrates Atzwanger's knowledge of art and his use of the Pictorialist style.<sup>42</sup> A soft light haze is present and the scene is naturalist, showing laborers fore-grounded by a rugged mountain silhouette (fig. 2). The mowers and their movements, together with the wind-blown wheat, create a harmonious rhythm. The aesthetic and subject matter are reminiscent of Peter Henry Emerson's nineteenth-century photographs of rural life in East Anglia and on the Norfolk Broads. Emerson pioneered the Pictorialist aesthetic, and Atzwanger and others at the Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt would have known of his photographic work. Atzwanger would have also undoubtedly been familiar with Emerson's opinion on art photography, which in essence argued for a visual equivalent to Impressionism in photography, what he termed naturalism.<sup>43</sup> He

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36 "Nicht die gefällige, im landläufigen Sinne schöne Photographie . . . ist das angestrebte Ziel, sondern die ungezwungene Natürlichkeit, das Charakteristische in Erscheinung und Wesen, die Lebhaftigkeit des Ausdruckes und nicht zuletzt die Bildmäßigkeit der Darstellung." Rudolf Koppitz, "Ein Beitrag zur Bildmäßigkeit in der Photographie," *Photographische Korrespondenz* 64, no. 3 (1928): 78.

37 Koppitz does not write about viewing photographs but continually discusses the emotion and the expression from within that should appear in artistic photography, see *ibid.*, 78–79.

38 Faber makes this connection but does not explore it in depth, see Faber, "'Land und Leute' (1930–1936)," 111.

39 Otto Hochreiter and Peter Weiermair, eds., *Peter Paul Atzwanger [1888–1974, Photographien]* (Innsbruck: Allerheiligenpresse, 1981).

40 Peter Paul Atzwanger, "Die Lichtbilderei als Kunst," *Der Bergsteiger: Bergwandern*,

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*Klettersteige, Alpinismus* (May 1929): 354–356. Issues of *Der Bergsteiger* before 1930 are difficult to locate. This article has been reproduced in its entirety in Hochreiter and Weiermair, *Peter Paul Atzwanger*, 166–167.

41 For the exact issues, see Hochreiter and Weiermair, eds., *Peter Paul Atzwanger*, 174; Timm Starl, *Fotobibl: Biobibliografie zur Fotografie in Österreich*, [sammlungenonline.albertina.at](http://sammlungenonline.albertina.at) (accessed October 1, 2014). Note that Atzwanger's work in *Der Bergsteiger* is not fully indexed in Starl's database.

42 For the early date of this photograph, see Faber, "'Land und Leute' (1930–1936)," 107.

43 The library of the *Graphische* owned a copy of Emerson's book *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art*, first published in London in 1889. Emerson later changed his opinions on art photography. For more on Emerson, see Ellen Handy, *Pictorial Effect, Naturalistic Vision: The Photographs and Theories of Henry Peach Robinson and Peter Henry Emerson* (Norfolk, VA: Chrysler Museum, 1994).



2 · Peter Paul Atzwanger/printed by Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt, Vienna, *The Mowers (Inn Valley)*, 1921, rotogravure, 12.4 × 16.6 cm  
From: *Photographische Korrespondenz* 65, no. 1 (1929), unpag. ill. supplement



3 · Peter Paul Atzwanger/printed by Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt, Vienna, *Horse Fair (Hall in Tirol, Inn Valley)*, rotogravure, 11.6 × 12.9 cm  
From: *Photographische Korrespondenz* 65, no. 1 (1929), unpag. ill. supplement

advocated using differential and selective focus in photographing everyday life, but he had a particular affinity for depicting the disappearing and pastoral rural life. His photographically illustrated volumes have parallels with later Austrian Heimat photobooks which similarly portrayed peasant life, finding beauty in its simplicity. Like Emerson, Atzwanger was attracted to the rural landscape and believed firmly in the aesthetic potential of photography to capture its impressions.<sup>44</sup>

Around 1929, Atzwanger, like Koppitz, also started using silver bromide for his prints and, in addition, he put away his box camera and began using a Leica.<sup>45</sup> The practical small camera made his trips through the mountain landscape easier, and he could also take more photographs. His other photographs included in the *Bergsteiger* in 1929 demonstrate that Atzwanger was keen on experimenting and moving away from

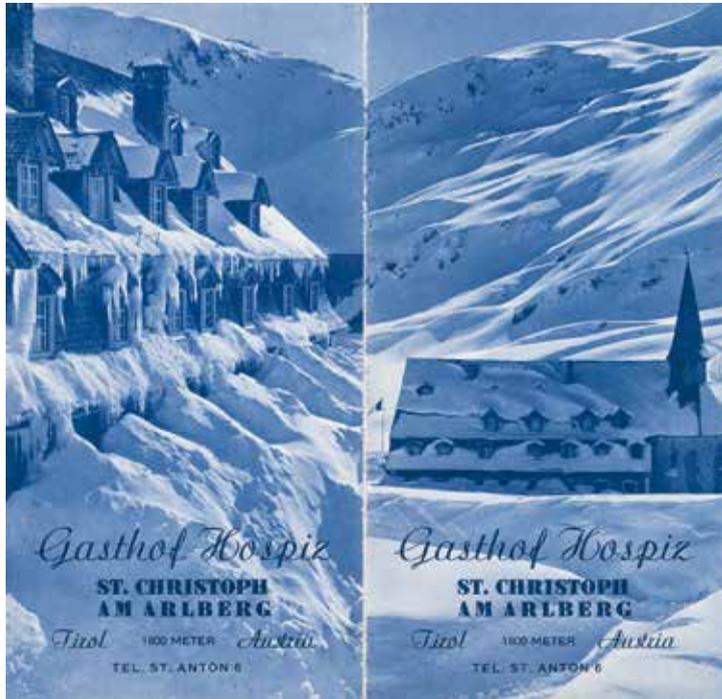
44 Atzwanger, "Die Lichtbildnerie als Kunst," 354–356.

45 Hochreiter and Weiermair cite this change to the Leica as occurring in 1929. *Peter Paul Atzwanger*, 161.

traditional aestheticism. His photograph *Der Rossmarkt (Hall in Tirol, Inntal)* (Horse Fair [Hall in Tirol, Inn Valley]) exhibits interest in a harsher modernist composition (fig. 3). In the photograph, a pile of manure figures prominently, and only the rears of the horses can be seen, which move back into space and give the photograph depth. With this photograph, Atzwanger too moves away from the Pictorialist aesthetic toward a more straightforward approach.

Koppitz's and Atzwanger's transformation of their work, as well as the emergence of other Austrian Heimat photographers around the same time, suggests that in the 1930s the conception and appearance of Heimat photography changed from what it was in Germany. In Austria, a new kind of more consciously aesthetic but modern Heimat photography was being developed. Amateur photographers whose aesthetic sensibilities were in the Pictorialist tradition became interested in photographing their Heimat. As the amount of Heimat photography being produced increased, the quality of those photographs increased. Serious amateurs and professionals were constantly competing against each other in publications and exhibitions, and the more interesting and appealing





9 · Stefan Kruckenhauser (design and photograph)/printed by Tiroler Graphik, *Gasthof Hospiz, St. Christoph am Arlberg* (tourist leaflet, eight-page folder, front [right] and back [left]), 1930s, rotogravure, 21.5 × 11 cm (page of leaflet)

the importance of skiing in Alpine culture as the development of ski clubs corresponded with the popularity of Alpine associations and their Alpine excursions during the winter months. Both brought the Alpine environment to an urban public and modernized the Alps. The ski clubs, especially, were helpful in developing and sustaining a profitable winter tourist industry. One of the earliest ski clubs was founded on the Arlberg in 1901. Like the *Deutsche und Österreichische Alpenverein*, the Austrian Ski Club and the German Ski Club depended on each other and joined in 1905 to form the Middle European Ski Club, which collectively had over 26,000 members.

The clubs helped skiing and winter Alpine culture become widespread by the mid-1930s but the *Bergfilme* (mountain films) were even more influential, because they whetted the popular appetite for adventure and sensational action. Films in this genre catered to a popular audience

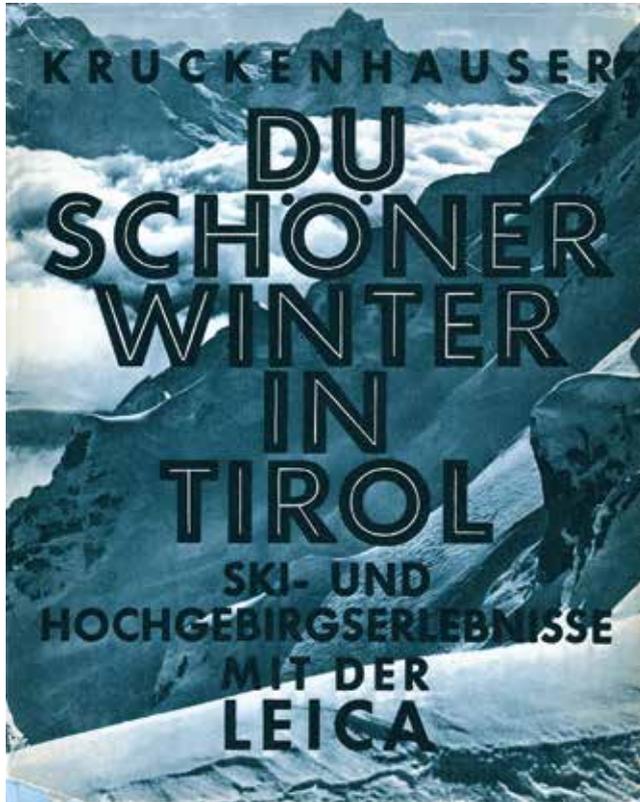
with impressive cinematography and most often with melodramatic narratives that revolved around perilous Alpine adventures. Arnold Fanck, the pioneering director in this genre, together with cinematographer Sepp Allgeier, took advantage of the stark whiteness and constantly varying weather to exploit the Alpine light and produce enticing scenes with strong contrasts and rapid changes of effect. This dramatic approach elevated the filmic experience as well as highlighted the landscape's magnificence, both of which increased the desire for a personal adventure in the Alps.

The captivating cinematography of the films more than made up for their lack of narrative sophistication. The films brought out the best of the Alps—the beauty of the snow-covered mountains and the sensational thrill of skiing. Highly entertaining, the films attracted young men and women to the Alps. Fanck's film *Eine Fuchsjagd auf Skiern durchs Engadin* (Foxhunting on Skis in the Engadine) from 1922, which despite the title was mostly filmed on the Arlberg, enamored amateur photographer Stefan Kruckenhauser to become an avid skier, and he subsequently took a position as the director at the *Bundesskiheim* (Federal Ski Lodge) in St. Christoph am Arlberg in 1934. Kruckenhauser propelled Heimat photography's infiltration into the Alpine ski industry. He created brochures and calendars advertising the Arlberg region (fig. 9) as well as provided Hannes Schneider with photographs for an advertising tour.<sup>142</sup> Schneider was instrumental in developing ski instruction and increasing the sport's popularity. Several articles in *Die Bühne* profile the ski master and praise the Arlberg region for attracting French, English, Italian, and American tourists and for providing unending good health and physical happiness in the fresh snow and delightful sun.<sup>143</sup> Kruckenhauser also published his photographs of skiers and Alpine ski culture during the latter half of the 1930s in the photography journals *Photo- und Kinosport*, *Photofreund*, and *Der Lichtbildner*.

More influential than his magazine contributions were Kruckenhauser's photobooks. In 1937, he published a lighthearted photobook titled *Du schöner Winter in Tirol: Ski- und Hochgebirgs-Erlebnisse mit der Leica* (You Beautiful Winter in Tyrol: Ski and Mountain

142 Maria Emberger, "Zum Leben Stefan Kruckenhausers," in *Stefan Kruckenhauser: In weiten Linien . . . Das fotografische Lebenswerk*, ed. Kurt Kaindl (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 2003), 10.

143 "Im Reich Hannes Schneiders," *Die Bühne: Zeitschrift für Theater und Gesellschaft*, no. 370 (February 1934): 34–35.



10 · Dust jacket of Stefan Kruckenhauser's *Du schöner Winter in Tirol: Ski- und Hochgebirgs-Erlebnisse mit der Leica*, ed. Kurt Peter Karfeld (Berlin: Photokino-Verlag, 1937), rotogravure, 26.4 cm (height)

Adventures with the Leica, fig. 10).<sup>144</sup> Aware of the large number of British Alpine enthusiasts, Kruckenhauser published the book in an English edition as well.<sup>145</sup> The photobook was in part a textual primer focused on relaying techniques for taking Alpine and ski photographs, but it was also a photobook that presented the sport of skiing and ski culture as enjoyable. Kruckenhauser's eye-catching photographs resemble moments

144 Stefan Kruckenhauser, *Du schöner Winter in Tirol: Ski- und Hochgebirgs-Erlebnisse mit der Leica*, ed. Kurt Peter Karfeld (Berlin: Photokino-Verlag, 1937).

145 Stefan Kruckenhauser, *Snow Canvas: Ski, Men and Mountains with the Leica*, ed. Kurt Peter Karfeld (Berlin: Photokino-Verlag, 1937).

in Fanck's films. Kruckenhauser exploits the bright mountain sun and stark white snow to create brilliant contrasts with the sky and skiers. The glistening landscape and grand views appear magnificent and seductive in the photographs. The energetic depictions of skiers enjoying themselves and having fun are completely bewitching. Spread on a double page, for example, Kruckenhauser's photographs demonstrate the important downhill technique of *Schuß und—Schwung!* (Schuss and—Swing!, fig. 11). The skier is dramatically backlit, so that the snow trail behind him emphasizes the glamorous speed of his skiing. The two photographs appear dynamically opposite each other on the pages so that the mountain slope lines up. The skier moves down the left page and onto the next at which point he sharply turns before the page ends. As a whole, the book portrays a mountain world in which the scenery is beautiful, the physical activity is fun, the company is enjoyable, and the weather is never too cold. It is always perfectly sunny in Tyrol.

Kruckenhauser continued to offer technical advice to aspiring amateur photographers and in 1938 finished a book that was begun in 1934 by Max Zühlcke. *Das Bergbild mit der Leica* (Mountain Photography with the Leica) was primarily an illustrated didactic text on how to photograph the Alpine landscape with the small-format camera.<sup>146</sup> Articles in the illustrated press were also encouraging amateurs to pick up a camera and photograph their travels and time in the Alpine Heimat.

The illustrated press printed images of hikers and skiers almost as frequently as those of Alpine peasants and small mountain villages, and cultural magazines avidly propagated this mixture.<sup>147</sup> Skiing and Alpine sports were not an ostensible counter culture to the peasants; rather, they were seen together, as part of the Alpine world that made up the Heimat. The Heimat was constructed as an idyllic place which could embody both the fun leisure of skiing and the values of a traditional conservative peasant lifestyle without conflict.

146 [Max] Zühlcke and [Stefan] Kruckenhauser, *Das Bergbild mit der Leica* (Munich: Rother, 1938). Max Zühlcke died and as a result Kruckenhauser took over the production. The successful book went through four editions in 1938.

147 See, for example, H. Pfeifer, "Hinaus in der Berge Winterpracht!" *Der Satrap: Blätter für Freunde der Lichtbildkunst* 3, no. 12 (1927): 270–274 and Hanns Geißler, "Ski und Kamera," *Photographische Rundschau und Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift für Freunde der Photographie* 69, no. 1 (1932): 10–12.



Schuß und —

40



Schwung!

41

11 · Stefan Kruckenhauser, *Schuss and—Swing!*, rotogravure, 15.8 × 20.6 cm (book page)  
From: Stefan Kruckenhauser, *Du schöner Winter in Tirol: Ski- und Hochgebirgs-Erlebnisse mit der Leica*, ed. Kurt Peter Karfeld (Berlin: Photokino-Verlag, 1937), 40–41



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## Index of Names

The index comprises names from the main text and the section *Selected Photographers' Biographies*. Names in the footnotes and captions were only occasionally included. While the index lists all names of persons, it only contains selected institutions, associations, publishers, exhibitions, and titles of books.

- Adam, Walter 70  
Allgeier, Josef (called Sepp) 61  
Angerer, Hans 58, 159, 162, 205  
Angerer, Wilhelm 86, 136, 145, 163, 166, 168, 175, 176, 177, 182, 189, 205, 206  
Applegate, Celia 150  
Atzwanger, Hugo 97, 136, 157, 206  
Atzwanger, Peter Paul 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 47, 55, 58, 59, 75, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 110, 125, 127, 136, 145, 157, 199, 207  
Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (Vienna) 43, 209  
Austrian Ski Club 60  
  
Bartsch, Rudolf Hans 69  
Baszel, Günther 82  
Baumann, Ernst 58  
Becher, Bernd und Hilla 144  
Bein, Oskar 141  
Benda, Arthur 44  
Bisson, Auguste Rosalie und Louis Auguste 41  
Blaschek, Karl 47  
Boenisch, Curt 19  
Books  
    *Altdeutsche Bildschnitzer der Ostmark* (Oettinger) 149  
    *Austria* (Defner et al.) 171  
    *Bauern in den Bergen* (Peter Paul Atzwanger) 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 110, 207  
    *Beautiful Tyrol* (Defner et al.) 197  
    *Bergmenschen* (Lendvai-Dircksen) 111  
    *Bilder aus Österreich* (Junk) 34  
  
*Das Bergbild mit der Leica* (Kruckenhauser) 63, 210  
*Das Land in den Bergen* (Moser) 167, 211  
*Das Meisterwerk von Kefermarkt* (Kruckenhauser) 150  
*Das schöne Tirol* (Defner) 90, 95, 97, 157, 208  
*Der österreichische Bauer* 189, 190, 191  
*Deutsche Bergbauern* (Moser) 152, 154, 186, 211  
*Deutsche Ostmark* (Perkonig) 67, 208, 209  
*Die Bauernschule* (Peter Paul Atzwanger) 207  
*Die Einheit Tirols* (Wilhelm Angerer) 175, 182, 206  
*Du schöner Winter in Tirol* (Kruckenhauser) 61, 138, 210  
*Ein Lied rauscht von den Bergen* (Wilhelm Angerer) 163, 206  
*Heritage of Beauty* (Kruckenhauser) 195  
*Hitler, wie ihn keiner kennt* (Hoffmann) 159  
*Innsbruck* (Sickert) 170  
*Krieg in Karelien* (Wilhelm Angerer) 206  
*Lebendiges Tirol* (Moser) 182, 185, 186, 188, 211  
*Meine Erfahrungen mit der Leica* (Wolff) 138  
*Menschen der Berge* (Leifhelm) 107, 110, 111, 113, 191, 209  
*Österreich* (Defner et al.) 197, 198  
*Österreich* (Hannau) 209  
*Österreichs Bergwelt und Bergvolk* (Moser) 117, 123, 125, 126, 185, 186, 211

- Schönes Tirol* (Defner et al.) 197, 208  
*Skikamerad Toni* (Wolff) 138  
*Snow Canvas* (Kruckenhauser) 62  
*Stille schöne Welt* (Defner) 208  
*Südtirol* (Hugo Atzwanger) 207  
*Tirol* (Folkerts) 162  
*Tirol und Vorarlberg* (Leitgeb) 157, 207, 208  
*Tirol, wie es ist* (Hans Angerer) 159, 205  
*Um Eisack und Etsch* (Hugo Atzwanger) 97, 206  
*Unser Österreich* 67, 69  
*Verborgene Schönheit* (Kruckenhauser) 114, 143, 192, 210
- Braumann, Franz 126, 127  
Bruckmann, Hugo 105  
Bruckmann (Kunstverlag Friedrich Bruckmann, publishing company) 54, 105, 111  
Bruder-Willram-Bund (Catholic organization) 116, 126, 135, 173, 182, 210  
Bundeskommissariat für Heimatdienst 38, 70, 78  
Bundesskiheim (St. Christoph am Arlberg) 61, 192, 210  
Bund Heimatschutz 15, 16
- Compton, Edward Theodore 55
- Defner, Adalbert 45, 69, 86, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 127, 136, 145, 157, 197, 208  
Deutscher Alpenverein 25, 54  
Deutscher Alpenverlag (publishing company) 135  
Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein 25, 53, 54, 59, 60, 96  
Dobrowsky, Josef 79  
Dollfuß, Engelbert 42, 105, 131  
d'Ora (photo studio) 44
- Eggarter, Willi 76  
Egger-Lienz, Albin 55, 79, 184  
Emberger, Maria 148, 195  
Emerson, Peter Henry 25, 26  
Ender, Thomas 40
- Europäisches Forum Alpbach 189
- Exhibitions
- I. Internationale Kunstphotographische Ausstellung* (Vienna 1929) 205  
*III. Internationale Photo-Ausstellung* (Vienna 1934) 49, 50, 208  
*IV. Internationale Photo-Ausstellung* (Vienna 1936) 51  
*5. Photoausstellung des Verbandes österreichischer Amateurphotographen-Vereine* (Vienna 1933) 29  
*VI. Österreichische Lichtbilderausstellung* (Vienna 1935) 50, 51  
*Altdeutsche Bildschnitzer der Ostmark* (Vienna 1939) 148  
*Austria in London* (London 1934) 79  
*Berge, Menschen und Wirtschaft der Ostmark* (Berlin 1939) 141  
*Bilder aus Österreich* (Vienna 1936) 78  
*Das schöne Österreich* (Vienna 1936) 75  
*Die Kamera—Ausstellung für Fotografie, Druck und Reproduktion* (Berlin 1933) 151  
*Hannau retrospective* (New York 1940) 209  
*Heimat Österreich* (Vienna 1936) 75  
*International Exhibition 1935* (Brüssel) 80  
*International Exhibition 1937* (Paris) 81, 82  
*Lebendiges Tirol* (Innsbruck 1937) 182, 184  
*Österreichs Bundesländer im Lichtbilde* (Vienna 1933) 43, 45, 208  
*Rudolf Koppitz—Land und Leute* (Vienna 1936) 209  
*Unser Österreich* (Vienna 1945) 175
- Fachverband der Photographen-Genossenschaften Österreichs 43, 206  
Fanck, Arnold 61, 63  
Farkas (photographer) 108  
Feierabendgestaltung (political organization) 134  
Felber, Ulrike 80  
Fleischmann, Trude 45  
Folkerts, Enno 162, 164  
Franckenstein, Georg (Baron) 79
- Friedrich, Caspar David 67  
Fürst, Fritz 200
- Gartenstadtbewegung 16  
Gärtner, Wilhelm 21  
Genossenschaft der Photographen für Nord- und Osttirol 206  
Geramb, Viktor 48, 189  
German Ski Club 60  
Giannoni, Karl 21  
Göhlert, Felix 48  
Gombrich, Ernst H. 195  
Görlich (Photo Görlich) 76  
Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt (Vienna) 22, 24, 25, 157, 205, 207, 209  
Graz Art Photography Club 28  
Grillparzer, Franz 88  
Grobleben, Paul 30
- Haas, Robert 82  
Haerdtl, Oswald 80, 82  
Hainzlmayr, Franz 43  
Haller, Albrecht von 40  
Haluschka, Hugo 28, 29, 47  
Hannau, Hans W. 48, 49, 50, 69, 76, 108, 127, 135, 208, 209  
Hege, Walter 144  
Heidegger, Martin 210  
Heimatschutzverband (Austria) 16  
Heimwehr (political movement) 59  
Henning, Paul 51  
Hielscher, Kurt 144  
Hitler, Adolf 105, 131, 132, 149, 173  
Hofer, Andreas 96, 168, 190  
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von 88  
Holzmeister, Clemens 184
- Jacobi, Lotte 45  
Jägermayer, Gustav 41  
Jarka, Horst 90  
Johann (Archduke) 40  
Jung-Österreich (Catholic youth organization) 117, 135  
Junk, Rudolf 22, 25, 207
- Kallmus, Dora 44  
Kammerhofer-Aggermann, Ulrike 74  
Karnitschnigg, Maximilian 45, 58, 66, 69, 72, 84  
Keller, Tait 53  
Ketzler, Max 78  
Klimt, Gustav 79  
Klotz, Anton 98  
Kögl, Franz 76  
Koppitz, Anna 157, 191, 192  
Koppitz, Rudolf 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 44, 47, 49, 69, 99, 107, 108, 110, 113, 119, 125, 127, 157, 159, 191, 192, 199, 202, 209  
Kraft durch Freude (KdF) (political organization) 71, 130, 134, 138, 140  
Kranewitter, Franz 182  
Kraus, Josef 190  
Kretschmer, Ferdinand 79  
Kruckenhauser, Stefan 61, 62, 63, 86, 113, 114, 116, 136, 138, 143, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150, 184, 192, 193, 194, 195, 197, 210  
Kuhfahl, Gustav Adolf 17, 18, 22, 29  
Kühn, Heinrich 25, 86, 207, 208  
Külley, Gabriel A. von 184  
Kunstgewerbeschule (Vienna) 47
- Lassek, Albert 136  
Lauzensky, Alfred 47  
Leica (Fotoapparat)  
Leica (photo camera) 26, 61, 63, 135, 138, 207, 210  
Leifhelm, Hans 107, 108, 110, 111, 117, 191  
Leitgeb, Josef 117, 157, 186, 188, 207, 208  
Lendvai-Dirksen, Erna 111, 112, 113, 144, 154, 156  
Löffler, Bertold 47
- Macho, Fritz 99  
Mader, Karl 66  
Matzer, Ulrike 174  
Mell, Max 117  
Middle European Ski Club 60

- Moser, Simon 114, 116, 117, 119, 121, 125, 127, 129, 135, 136, 144, 152, 154, 155, 156, 167, 168, 169, 182, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 210, 211
- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus 198
- Müller (Otto Müller Verlag, publishing company) 114, 143, 150
- Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) 131, 132, 135, 148, 157, 192, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211
- Neues Leben (political organization) 38, 71, 81, 82, 116, 130, 210
- Niklitschek, Alexander 50, 190
- Oberkofler, Joseph Georg 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 117, 157, 182, 186, 207
- Obermüllner, Adolf 41
- Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (political organization) 130
- Österreichische Lichtbildstelle 76
- Österreichischer Alpenverein 41
- Österreichisches College (Vienna, Alpbach) 188
- Österreichische Verkehrswerbung 48
- Perkonig, Josef Friedrich 54, 67, 69, 190, 208
- Pernhart, Markus 41
- Pernter, Hans 123, 125
- Perscheid, Nicola 25, 207
- Perutz company 46
- Petersen, Arnold 31
- Rathkolb, Oliver 174, 189
- RAVAG (Radio Verkehrs AG) 72
- Reichsbund Deutscher Amateur-Fotografen 135
- Renger-Patzsch, Albert 144
- Retzlaff, Erich 154
- Retzlaff, Hans 144, 157
- Reznicek, Burghard von 138
- Riehl, Wilhelm Heinrich 15, 16
- Rilke, Rainer Maria 88
- Rohkrämer, Thomas 15
- Roosevelt, Eleanor 209
- Rosenberg, Leo 48, 49
- Roßmanith, Rudolf 46, 136
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 40
- Rübelt, Lothar 66
- Rudorff, Ernst Friedrich Karl 16
- Sachsse, Rolf 133, 134, 195
- Sartorius, Hugo 135
- Sator (publishing company) 189
- Schiele, Egon 79
- Schmachtenberger, Erika 203
- Schmiedbauer, Alois 143
- Schneider, Hannes 61, 210
- Schubert, Rainer 131
- Schuschnigg, Kurt 105, 132, 184
- Seidlmayer, Hans 45
- Sickert, Adolf 168, 170, 197
- Sketh, Arthur 200
- Spengler, Oswald 154
- Springenschmid, Karl 54, 102, 103, 104, 105, 162, 207
- Stadtverein Salzburg 143
- Steiner, Albert 58
- Stifter, Adalbert 88
- Stock, Max 154
- Strelow, Liselotte 150
- Sturmmair, Ernst 175, 176, 177, 182, 206
- Suppanz, Werner 37
- Traunmüller, Robert 176
- Tyrolean State Museum (Innsbruck) 25, 207
- Tyrolia (publishing company) 90, 91, 114, 117, 135
- Urania (institution for adult education) 75
- Utgaard, Peter 173
- Vaterländische Front (political organization) 36, 38, 59, 70, 71, 81, 103, 116, 130, 210
- Verband Deutscher Amateurphotographenvereine 20, 30
- Verband österreichischer Amateurphotographen-Vereine 29, 49, 75, 135, 175, 205, 209
- Verein für Heimatkunde, Heimatschutz und deutsches Kulturleben in Österreich 16
- Verein für Heimatschutz in Tirol 16
- Vialardi, Alberto Luigi 41
- Vogl, Franz 42
- Volksbund der Katholiken Österreichs 131
- Voss, J. 137
- Waggerl, Karl Heinrich 39, 117
- Wagner, Richard 66
- Walch, Willy 168
- Walde, Alfons 67, 68
- Wanner (photographer) 76
- Warstat, Willi 136
- Weingartner, Josef 184
- Weittenhiller, Arnulf von 70, 108
- Wenter, Josef 168
- Winnig, August 159
- Wolff, Paul 58, 76, 138, 144, 157
- Wolf, Wilhelm 117, 119, 126, 185
- Wunschheim, Erwin von 71
- Zangerle, Ignaz 88
- Zdarsky, Mathias 148
- Zeiss Contax (photo camera) 135
- Zernatto, Guido 54, 55, 58, 59, 71, 189
- Zühlcke, Max 63, 210



Wilhelm Angerer, *Song of the Blessed*,  
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