

LDI Final Report, MCZ

Project Title: “Jacques Burkhardt and the Thayer Expedition to Brazil (1865-1866)”

Project Manager: Robert Young

Report Date: 10 April 2007

Background statement: “Jacques Burkhardt and the Thayer Expedition to Brazil (1865-1866)” is a Harvard University Library Digital Initiative (LDI) project providing online access to the Ernst Mayr Library’s Jacques Burkhardt Collection of watercolors and pencil drawings as well as other Thayer Expedition Papers--correspondence, field notes, diaries, sketches, photographs, specimen records and other materials relating to the fifteen-month collecting expedition to Brazil led by Louis Agassiz.

Born circa 1808, Jacques Burkhardt was Louis Agassiz’s personal and principal artist. Having studied in Munich and Rome, the Swiss painter served as Agassiz’s full-time artist in Neuchatel in the early 1840s. After Agassiz left for America, Burkhardt reunited with him in New York in 1847 and spent most of his career drawing under the MCZ founder’s supervision. Burkhardt’s turtle illustrations for Agassiz’s quintessential work, *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States* (4 v., 1857-1862)--widely considered the most elaborately produced American zoological publication of the era--helped establish Burkhardt’s reputation within the natural history community. Burkhardt’s zoological drawings and landscapes produced during the Thayer Expedition to Brazil (1865-1866) were the culmination of a brilliant although unpublicized career, and he passed away ten months after returning to Cambridge due to an illness aggravated by Brazil’s hot climate.

The collection’s 976 scientific drawings consist of 518 watercolor and/or pencil drawings of fishes and miscellaneous vertebrates and invertebrates, together with the original color drawings ultimately adapted on stone by lithographer A. Sonrel (including Burkhardt’s classic turtle series) for Agassiz’s *Contributions*, and 458 fish watercolors and/or pencil drawings from the Thayer Expedition, most drawn from life (Thayer fish drawings, ARC 209). Most of the scientific drawings include pencilled manuscript annotations, many by Louis Agassiz and Joao Martins da Silva Coutinho, an engineer and naturalist who joined the expedition upon its arrival in Brazil. Agassiz’s anatomical observations illustrate his focus on species differentiation in his study of Brazilian fish distribution.

Digital images of the scientific drawings accompanied by item-level catalog records are in HUL’s Templated Database (TED), Ernst Mayr Library (MCZ) Artwork Collection, at: http://ted.hul.harvard.edu:8080/ted/deliver/home?_collection=mcz.

60 non-scientific drawings include Burkhardt’s Brazil landscapes done during the Thayer Expedition as well as a sketchbook of street scenes and landscapes of Rome, Italy, produced in 1828 (Rome sketchbook, sAg 168.60.16).

The collection also includes 5 portrait photographs--3 solo images of Burkhardt; 1 photograph with Burkhardt, Theodore Lyman and Alexander Agassiz; and 1 Thayer Expedition group portrait with Burkhardt, Coutinho, D. Bourget, Newton Dexter, Walter Hunnewell, William James and Stephen van Rensselaer Thayer (Portrait Collection)--and 1 daguerreotype featuring Burkhardt, Lyman and A. Agassiz in the same undated sitting as the previously mentioned photograph, in a slightly different pose (sAg 168.60.1).

Digital images of the non-scientific drawings, portrait photographs and daguerreotype, accompanied by item-level catalog records, are in HUL's Visual Information Access catalog (VIA).

Burkhardt's Rome sketchbook (the drawings of which can be accessed through VIA) can also be seen in its structural entirety (covers, etc.) through HUL's Page Delivery Service (PDS).

Other related materials are in the Thayer Expedition Papers, which include field notes, specimen lists, correspondence, diaries, sketches, and other materials, digital images of which can be accessed through the links to PDS found at:
http://library.mcz.harvard.edu/special_collections/thayer_expedition.php.

The goals of the project were reached as follows:

Weissman Preservation Center staff cleaned, matted and provided other conservation treatment as necessary for all the Burkhardt/Thayer materials.

The project manager cataloged all 1206 drawings in TED and OLIVIA.

The Digital Imaging Lab digitized the 1206 drawings, all of which have been deposited in DRS.

The manuscripts have been digitized, with multi-page objects available through PDS and single images through IDS.

The portraits have been digitized and cataloged in OLIVIA.

The works cataloged in OLIVIA have been added to VIA.

Summary of implementation methods: Conservation provided by Weissman Preservation Center.

Drawings and papers digitized by Digital Imaging Group, Harvard College Library.

Drawings and item-level catalog records accessible through TED and VIA.

Manuscripts available through Page Delivery Service.

Harvard library catalog of record: HOLLIS: bibliographic records for Jacques Burkhardt Collection and Thayer Expedition Papers.

Access also through Ernst Mayr Library web site's Library Services menu, at: <http://library.mcz.harvard.edu/>.

List of staff who worked on project: Robert Young, Constance Rinaldo, Dana Fisher, Margaret Hale, Suzanne Kriegsman, Robin Wendler, Julia Featheringill, David Remington, P. Petry, Karsten Hartel, Sarah Reidell, Dorothea Burns.

Lessons learned: The importance of making our resources available to the widest possible audience.

Overview of project timeline: 10 April 2003 - March 2007. Difficulties affecting project progress: TED database development took longer than planned; digitization began later than planned; other job responsibilities significantly slowed the progress of the project manager's cataloging.

Final budget figures and summary of categories covered by funding:

Funds have been spent on:

- LDI-MAP service: meetings, TED planning, and project documentation account for most of the LDI-MAP time. Topics include: TED database design, cataloging guidelines, and documentation.
- Reformatting services at HCL DIG.
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Projected Budget

Multi-year project total:	\$24,762.00
Reformatting:	\$21,517.00
LDI MAP services:	\$3,245.00
LDI Contribution:	50%
MCZ Contribution:	50%

Actual Expenditure

Multi-year project total:	\$26,508.00
Reformatting:	\$23,263.00
LDI MAP services:	\$3,245.00
LDI Contribution:	50%
MCZ Contribution:	50%

Pictures:

