

Bringing Sommer and Behles into focus through their stereoviews

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Abstract

The partnership between Giorgio Sommer and Edmond Behles, two nineteenth-century German photographers operating in Italy, is presented only in broad and often incorrect outline in the secondary literature. By taking into account a variety of evidence in connection with ever-changing stereoview mount styles, we bring the chronology under control and uncover some aspects of their working relationship. For the chronology, the partnership “Sommer & Behles” was established at some point between February 1863 and April 1864. Before then Behles was not a full partner and in Rome it was Joseph Spithöver who published and sold Sommer’s views. The end of the partnership came about in increments over the period from 1867-68, when they stopped marking photographs “Sommer & Behles”, to 1879, when Behles exited the photography business.

Giovanni Fanelli recently observed that “[t]he history of photography, still a rather young discipline, presents a fundamental difficulty: given the enormous quantity of works, the related documents are quantitatively scarcer than in other disciplines.”¹ This scarcity is true even for many of the most prolific publishers, including the Italian partnership Sommer & Behles, the subject of this study. Even if their stereoviews, *cartes de visite*, and larger

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¹“La storia della fotografia, disciplina ancora piuttosto giovane, presenta una difficoltà di fondo: a fronte dell’enorme quantità delle opere, i documenti relativi sono quantitativamente più scarsi rispetto ad altre discipline.” (Fanelli n.d., 1).

format photographs survive in large numbers, historians have uncovered very little about the chronology and nature of their relationship.

We can begin with some basic facts: Giorgio (Georg) Sommer was born in Frankfurt am Main on September 2, 1834, and Edmondo (Edmund) Behles was born in Stuttgart on July 21, 1841. There is no reason to doubt that Sommer established his photography studio in Naples in 1857, as he indicated in his later catalogs, and he continued to live in Naples until his death in 1914. Behles was based in Rome, though we do not know when he arrived there. He lived in Rome until his death in 1921.²

Marina Miraglia expressed our lack of basic knowledge regarding Sommer and Behles in the introduction to the catalog of a 1992 exhibition of Sommer's works:

The most intricate problem concerning Sommer's activity in the years 1857-ca. 1865 is the collaborative relationship established in that period in Rome with his compatriot Edmondo Behles (1841-1921), a problem to which, unfortunately, not even the meticulous research conducted, in preparation for this exhibition, in Rome and Naples at the relevant notarial archives and, in Rome, at the State Archives, has provided precise answers.³

Not only do we know very little about their relationship, but archival research has not even reasonably narrowed down the dates of their partnership. This is evident from the wide variety of dates that have been proposed. For Piero Becchetti (1978, 86), Sommer and Behles began their collaboration a little after 1860 and they parted ways in 1872; in a later article Miraglia (1996, 41-42) settled on the dates 1857 to ca. 1866, and John McGuigan and Frank Goodyear (2022, 63) are not far off that estimate with their 1857 to ca. 1867. Museums must be following other evidence. Both the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles opt for 1867 to 1874, perhaps based on (Darrah 1977, 119), and Museo di Roma claims 1865 to 1872.⁴

²(Miraglia 1992, 11; Hannavy 2008, 137).

³"Il problema più intricato, riguardante l'attività di Sommer negli anni 1857-1865 ca., è il rapporto di collaborazione istituito in quel torno di tempo a Roma con il connazionale Edmondo Behles (1841-1921), problema cui, sfortunatamente, non hanno dato risposte precise neppure le puntigliose ricerche condotte, in previsione di questa mostra, a Roma e a Napoli presso i relativi archivi notarili e, a Roma, presso l'Archivio di Stato. (Miraglia 1992, 11)

⁴<https://passatoprossimo.museodiroma.it/edmondo-behles/>.

One version of the story of the beginnings of the collaboration is also problematic. Miraglia tells it in an article on Sommer (1996, 41):

In 1857 he moved to Italy where he made the inspired strategic decision to open studios almost simultaneously in Rome and Naples, in association with a fellow German, Edmondo Behles (1841-1921).

[...]

Sommer worked briefly in Rome in September and October 1857, and then again in summer 1859. He employed stereoscopic and carte-de-visite formats [...] Leaving Behles in charge of the management and marketing of the negative archive of the Rome images, Sommer arrived in Naples in winter 1857-58, where he undertook new photographic projects that centered on the city and its environs.

We will see below that this story contains a fair amount of interpolation that extends beyond what is warranted by the evidence on which it is based.

While it is true that there is little documentation to bring Sommer & Behles into better focus, we are fortunate that the photos themselves contain valuable information that can help us fill in and correct the chronology that we read both in print and online, and which can even shed some light on the relationship between the two photographers. In an effort initially to understand the order in which the many different mount styles on Sommer and/or Behles stereoviews were introduced and retired, I recorded the dates that owners wrote on the backs. Also, because Sommer and Behles added new series of views as the years progressed and newer series will not appear on older mount styles, I collected scans of over 3,100 of their views to help with the chronology. The medals awarded to our photographers in 1865 and 1867 that are shown on later views also help with the dating, as do entries in tourist guides covering Rome and Naples.

Based on this and other evidence, the basic chronology becomes clear. To summarize the findings argued below, when Sommer established his studio in 1857 he enlisted the bookseller Joseph Spithöver to publish and sell his views in Rome while he published and sold his views in Naples. Sommer and Behles formed their partnership at some time between February 1863 and April 1864, at which point Behles became the publisher in Rome. They

marked all their work “Sommer & Behles” until, at some point between the middle of 1867 and March of 1868, they dropped the joint name and began marking their work either “Giorgio Sommer” or “Edmond Behles”. Both photographers continued to sell the same views as before and they even introduced new series to their common stock, while Baedeker continued to list “Sommer & Behles” in tourist guides of Italy until 1874. It was only when Behles quit the photography business in 1879 that one can say that they finally parted ways.

No catalogs of Sommer & Behles or of Behles alone are known, and the earliest catalog of Sommer I have seen is undated but was published no earlier than 1881.⁵ Those catalogs are still helpful, since they list most of the views that Sommer, and later Sommer & Behles, had been selling since the late 1850s. For the purpose of this article, I call a “Sommer view” any stereoview listed in Giorgio Sommer’s catalogs or one that clearly belongs to the series shown there. The large majority of views have titles. On the earliest views they are handwritten, after which the number and title are found printed vertically in the left side of the left image.

Sommer must have made several external contracts, because we sometimes find his views labeled with the name of another publisher, including Carlo Ponti (Venice), Michele Amodio (Naples), Giorgio Conrad (Naples), Josef Spithöver (Rome),⁶ Chauffourier & Girgenti (Palermo), A. Hautecoeur (Paris), Ferdinand Finsterlin (Munich), Hermann Manz (Munich), and Adam Gabler (Interlaken), and many others are anonymous. They are easily identified as Sommer views because the numbers and titles match what we find in Sommer’s catalogs, and the photos are identical to those on views labeled Sommer and/or Behles or they are close variations. Some examples are shown in Appendix 7.

The views of Sommer & Behles and of Sommer or Behles individually are numbered according to the same system. Views of Rome and Naples

⁵The catalog lists several photos that were taken in 1880 and 1881, like the series on page 9 under Ischia, “Casamicciola. Rovine dopo il terremoto del 1881.” That earthquake took place on March 4, 1881. Someone wrote on the title page of a photocopy of this catalog “Dovrebbe essere il catalogo del 1873” (“Must be the catalog of 1873”), but someone else corrected it, writing next to that: “Dopo il 1881 e prima di 1886” (“After 1881 and before 1886”). I suspect that some people have accepted the first annotation, and thus mistakenly cite it as Sommer’s catalog of 1873.

⁶These are on different mounts than the Spithöver views of Rome that were part of Sommer’s regular production before the advent of “Sommer & Behles”.

were the first to be published. Numbers 1-100 are topographical views of Rome beginning with St. Peter's church and ending with the same view showing the crowd on Easter day. Originally views of Naples and environs were also numbered in the range 1-100, but they were soon shifted to 201-300. Numbers 101 to 200 cover statues and a few museum interiors in Rome, and as will become clear below, subsequent series were introduced in chronological order. Views in the 300s beginning with 301 are of Pompeii and views in the 400s starting with 400 are of works of art in the Naples Museum. An October, 1865 ad for Sommer & Behles lists in addition Palermo, Agrigento, Messina, Taormina, Catania, Syracuse (all numbered in the 500s), Malta (600s), Florence, and Pisa (800s), with numbers in the 700s belonging to more views of Naples and environs.



The ad from the weekly Stuttgart newspaper *Schwäbischer Merkur* appearing in five issues in October, 1865.

Other places were added later, including Siena and Milan (800s), followed by Assisi, Terni, Pavia, Milan (renumbered and expanded), Genoa, and Torino (900s). Numbers in the 1000s and 2000s were already taken by photographs in other formats, so stereoview numbers then jump to the 3000s. Some additions were made to already existing series, like numbers 3301 to 3310 for further museum views Rome and views in the 3880s and 3890s for Pisa, and series were issued for the first time for Venice (3600s), Bologna (6650-6660), Verona (6750-6767), and northern Italian lakes (7200s). Occasionally numbers were recycled, like “No. 82. Piazza del Popolo preso dal Monte Pincio (Roma)”, which was reassigned at some point in the period 1867-69 as “No. 82. Via Appia. (Roma)”.⁷ Sometimes several consecutive views would be

⁷I have found the first version on D3, F2, and G2 mounts, and the second version on

renumbered, like the views of Siena and Milan first issued 1865-66 that were later renumbered in the 650s and 910s respectively, both to make room for more views of Florence in the 800s. Of the 1,060 stereoviews numbers I know so far from catalogs and examples, I have identified 47 numbers that were reassigned, and I have scans of 93 numbers that had been discontinued by the time the catalog of ca. 1882 was published.

Overview of the different mounts

Sommer and/or Behles published their stereoviews on many different types of mount. The 26 types that I have identified are shown below in Appendix 1 together with all owner dates that I have found written on them. (Take a look at them now—what I write below will make much more sense that way.) I have divided the types chronologically into nine basic groups labeled A through I, each of which is subdivided (e.g., A1, A2, etc.). The views of groups A, B, and C are anonymous or are labeled with the name or initials of Sommer or Spithöver. Those of groups D, E, and F are labelled “Sommer & Behles”. Group G views are marked either “Giorgio Sommer” or “Edmond Behles”, and those of groups H and I show “G. Sommer” or “G. S.” It should be kept in mind that we cannot be sure who took any particular photograph, though it stands to reason that Sommer took at least the majority of photos of Naples and Pompeii, and Behles took photos in Rome. Also, Sommer and/or Behles may have hired assistants to do some of the work.

So far I have not found any dates on group A or B views. Table 1 shows the range of owner dates I have found for each group C through I, with the number of dated views:

Sommer C	Sommer & Behles			S. or B. G	Sommer	
	D	E	F		H	I
1862-63	1864	1866-67	1866-69	1868-72	1871-73	1874-82
(4)	(15)	(36)	(35)	(69)	(3)	(13)

Table 1. Date ranges for groups C through I, with the number of dated views found.

For the relative dates of groups B and C we get some help from two views of Robert Rive. Like Sommer, Rive worked in Naples, and he published stereoviews on mounts in the same style as Sommer’s B and C. One view

G2, G3, and I3 mounts with the G2 dated by the owner to April 5, 1869. The different mounts are described and dated below.

with the design of group B is dated 1861, and one with the design of group C is dated 1867 (they are shown in Appendix 4).

The order in Table 1 is corroborated by observing the series covered by each group. New series were introduced throughout the period from 1857 to the early 1870s, and later series will not be found on earlier mounts. So I collected scans of all Sommer views I could find, 3,114 examples total.⁸ Table 2 below shows the breakdown by group, and their order agrees with the owner dates. Group C views include series not yet represented in group B, views of Florence and Pisa (800s) were first introduced in group E, and views of Milan, Genova, Torino, and other localities in northern Italy (900s) were new with group F. Views of Venice (3600s) and further views of Rome (3300s) and Pisa (3800s) first appear in group G, and the earliest views of Bologna (6600s), Verona (6700s), and Italian Lakes (7200s) so far are in group I.

	000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s	800s	900s	3000s	6000+
A	10	1	20	4								
B	21	1	23	23	1							
C	21	6	66	23	8	28	5	10				
D	122	30	56	45	16	13	6	23				
E	67	32	45	48	24	17	0	17	91			
F	49	11	108	51	25	13	3	41	99	42		
G	173	59	143	48	9	35	7	66	132	106	155	
H	3	1	18	18	5	10	1	13	25	22	9	
I	73	19	152	49	66	50	5	80	52	66	29	42

Table 2. Numbers of views found for all groups by series.

Together, the owner dates and the introduction of new series show that the groups were not issued across long spans of time, and they do not seem to have been issued concurrently with other groups. They followed one after the other, as we should expect. Views of a new group would be added to the current stock and all were sold together, though views of an older group do not seem to have remained in stock for more than a couple of years after a new group was introduced.

⁸I counted the number of individual examples. For instance, I have saved scans of four examples of “No. 813. Il Duomo di Firenze” on E3 mounts. It is almost always easy to tell that two scans are of different examples by their minor imperfections, like foxing or some stray mark on one that is not on the other, or a small difference in the positions of the photos on the mounts.

Groups A through D

This broad picture will now be refined by examining the groups one by one. Types A1 and A2 are similar, the only difference being that those published by Sommer in Naples are anonymous while those published by Spithöver in Rome read “JOS. SPITHÖVER” in top center and “ROMA” in bottom center. The titles, when they are present, are handwritten. Giovanni Fanelli first identified the anonymous A2 views of Naples as belonging to Sommer (Fanelli 2023). These views have the two-digit version of the view number in the lower part of the stereo pair straddling the left and right images or close to that line, so that, for example, a small white “46” marks a view that was later renumbered as 246. The A1 and A2 views of Rome also have the number in the same location, so that for example “6” is view number 6. The museum views of Rome and views of Pompeii carry the full three-digit number, such as “135” and “315”. It appears that at first the numbering of views of Rome and Naples was independent, each beginning with view #1. By the time views of Pompeii were introduced, the scheme described above was in place: 000s for Rome, 100s for Roman museums, 200s for Naples, and 300s for Pompeii.

In most cases these view numbers were erased beginning with group B, but for a few the small white number remained. For Naples, a “2” was added before the number, so that, for example, “27” became “227” straddling the images, to conform with the new numbering scheme (Fanelli 2023). Occasionally an erased number remained readable, as on view “No. 27. Arco di Tito Interno-(Biga)” on a D3 mount: .

Fanelli also observed that several other photographers published views on the same style anonymous mounts as A2, including Alexis Gaudin, Claude Grillet, and Robert Rive. Sommer views can be identified by the number between the images and by the fact that often the same views with the same numbers were later published on mounts marked as Sommer or Sommer & Behles (Fanelli 2023). Below are the numbers of group A views I have found so far:

		000s	100s	200s	300s
Rome (Spithöver)	A1	8	1		
Naples & Pompeii	A2	2		20	4

Table 3. Numbers of views found for the two group A types by series.

Beginning with group B and continuing in all subsequent groups, the

number and title are printed vertically in the left side of the left image. The styles of groups B and C are similar. One characteristic distinguishing them is the decoration that flanks the names and places:

Group B decoration



Group C decoration



Below is the printing on the right side of group B mounts:



The left side shows the series, “ROMA” for B1, “NAPOLI” for B2, “POMPEI” for B3, and either “NAPOLI” or “POMPEI” for B4. The numbers of views I have found for each type by series are given in Table 4:

		000s	100s	200s	300s	400s
Rome (Spithöver)	B1	21	1			
Naples	B2			16		
Pompeii	B3				21	
Naples & Pompeii	B4			7	2	1

Table 4. Numbers of views I have found for group A types for each series.

I ordered the first three group B types by view numbers. B1 is for views of Rome, which are numbered in the range 1-200; B2 is for views of Naples, numbered in the range 201-300; and B3 is for views of Pompeii, numbered in the range 301-399. On B4 mounts Sommer is no longer identified by his initials but as “G. Sommer”, and the series name, Naples or Pompeii, is on the

left. This way of marking the views continues with type C2, which is why I placed B4 last in group B.

Here are the right sides of group C mounts:



These types are contemporaneous. C1 again consists of Rome views published by Spithöver, C2 views cover Naples and Pompeii, where the label “NAPOLI” on the left now includes the topographical views (200s), the Naples Museum (400s) and the later Naples series (700s). C3 views are of other places (500s, 600s), and also Rome. The series names I have found so far for C3 are ROMA, PALERMO, MESSINA, TAORMINA, CATANIA, SIRACUSA, and MALTA. Based on catalog numbers they should include GRIGENTI as well. The table below shows the numbers of each that I have found (The C2 view of Rome should have been glued to a C3 mount):

		000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s
Rome (Spithöver)	C1	16	4						
Naples & Pompeii	C2	1		66	23	8			10
Other	C3	4	2				28	5	

Table 5. Numbers of views I have found for group C types for each series.

Having now covered all three groups that include a type with Spithöver’s name, we are in a position to justify the inclusion of A1, B1, and C1 as part of Sommer’s regular output and to say a word or two about Spithöver’s role. Like Sommer and Behles, Joseph Spithöver (1813-1892) was originally from Germany. He was not a photographer, but a bookseller who had established his business in Rome in 1845. In addition to books he published and sold artwork, including the photographs of James Anderson and stereoviews of

different anonymous photographers.⁹

The A1, B1, and C1 views, all of Rome and marked with Spithöver's name, unquestionably belong to Sommer's oeuvre. Appendix 3 shows some examples together with identical views on Sommer and/or Behles mounts and which match the views listed in Sommer's catalogs. It is true that other publishers, most notably Carlo Ponti, also issued Sommer views under their own names (Appendix 7), but these Spithöver views exhibit features indicating that they were part of Sommer's official production: the styles of the Spithöver mounts neatly conform to those published by Sommer in Naples for all three groups; both A1 (Spithöver) and A2 (Sommer) views have the small white view numbers between the images and which sometimes linger in later issues; and if we remove the Spithöver views from the lists above we find only 7 views of Rome for groups A, B, and C, compared with 107 views for Naples. Spithöver, then, must have been Sommer's designated publisher and distributor in Rome. We will discuss below Miraglia's claim that it was Behles who published views in Rome from the start.

Group D is the first of the partnership "Sommer & Behles". There are three types, D1, D2, and D3, that again were produced at the same time. Overall they are very similar, but they can be distinguished by the printing on the right side:



D1 views still have a bit of design flanking the names that is absent in D2, and in D3 the text, in a larger font, reads "Roma e Napoli" instead of "Napoli e Roma".

⁹At the bottom of the title page of the March, 1859 catalog of Anderson's photographs: "En vente chez / Joseph Spithöver / Place d'Espagne. Rome." The title page is reproduced in (Ofenbach 1997, 151).

I have found D3 views only of Rome, which agrees with the switching of the city names. D1 and D2 cover all of Sommer & Behles' output, including Rome. So it appears that D3 views were published and sold by Behles in Rome while D1 and D2 views were published and sold by Sommer. This practice is a continuation of what we saw for Spithöver and Sommer in the previous groups, for which Spithöver published only views of Rome while Sommer covered all of Italy and Malta. With Behles now officially a partner in Rome, there was no longer any need for Spithöver.

The difference between D1 and D2 is more than cosmetic. Above #200, they each have their own domain. D1 mounts were used for numbers in the 200s, 400s, 500s, and 700s, while D2 mounts were used for views in the 300s and 600s, and so far there is no overlap between them.

		000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s
Sommer	D1	3	4	56		16	13		23
Sommer	D2	35	13		45			6	
Behles	D3	84	13						

Table 6. Numbers of views I have found for group D types for each series.

Dating groups A through D

With the chronology established, we can now look into determining the dates for the transitions from one group to the next. I will first address the shift from group B to group C. Sommer took photos of the ruins of Gaeta soon after the city was taken by the Piedmontese on February 13, 1861, and one stereoview is on a B2 mount.¹⁰ So group B mounts had not yet yielded to group C at that time. Moving to the end of the year, I have found six C2 examples that show two different views of the December, 1861 eruption of Vesuvius (Appendix 4), three of each view. None of them has a number, and the handwritten titles in four of them are all different. For the first view the titles are “Eruzione del 8 Xbre 1861” and “Eruzione del Vesuvio 1861”, and on the back of the latter the owner wrote “I was an eyewitness to this in 1861”. For the second view the titles are “Eruzione del 13 Xbre 1861” and “Cenere del 16 Xbre 1861” (“Ashes from 16 Dec. 1861”). The examples I have found of these views on later mounts all come with proper numbers and titles. The numbers are 204 and 205, and the title of each is “Eruzione del Vesuvio. Dec. 61.”, sometimes with “(Napoli)” added. Handwritten titles

¹⁰<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12835/26297>.

after group A are very rare—I have found only one other example, also on a C2 mount.¹¹ The C2 views of Vesuvius appear to be quick productions issued during or immediately after the eruption. If I am right, then the change from group B to group C took place no later than the end of 1861. In partial support of this, I have a scan of a C2 view dated by the owner to February 7, 1862. Thus, I date the introduction of group C views to some time between February and December 1861.¹²

We have much less to guide us to date the shift from group A to group B. If group C views were introduced in 1861, then groups A and B were produced in the four-year period from 1857 to 1861. Looking at the numbers, I have found 35 group A and 69 group B views, so taking into account that Sommer was just beginning to build his business, we can guess that group A views were published for about the first two years of that period, from 1857 to 1859, leaving 1859 to 1861 for group B.

For the shift from group C to group D, marking the beginning of the partnership of Sommer and Behles, we turn to Pompeii views 356 and 357. Both are titled “Impronte unmane trovate al 5 Feb.^o 1863”, and show the casts formed from the cavities left by bodies after Pompeii was buried in ash in 79 CE. I show C2 examples of both views in Appendix 5, and for comparison I also show later examples of these two numbers. So group D views had not yet been introduced as of early February 1863. For a *terminus ante quem*, I have found a D2 view of Sommer & Behles dated by the owner to April 1864, as well as eleven D2 and D3 views of another owner dated May 1864 and one each of D1, D2, and D3 dated simply “1864”. The earliest reference to “Sommer & Behles” I have found is in the 1864 book *Roma Antica e Roma Moderna ovvero nuovissimo itinerario storico-popolare-economico*, by A. Finardi (Roma: Tipografia Tibernina). On page 284 in the list “Elenco dei socj” we find: “Sommer e Behles, Stabilimento Fotografico, Mario de’ Fiori 28.” Thus, the partnership Sommer & Behles and the publication of group

¹¹It is #246, with “Church of S. Severo. Naples” probably written by the owner. This number was reassigned from an earlier, different view, as 204 and 205 certainly were.

¹²Incidentally, the date “61” was dropped from the titles at one point. My scans of #204 include two on I1 mounts still with the title “Eruzione del Vesuvio. Dec. 61. (Napoli)”, but my example on an I4 mount reads simply “Eruzione del Vesuvio”. For #205, my scans on D1, F2, and G1 mounts show the title with the 1861 date, but on I1 and I4 mounts the “Dec 61” has been removed. What is more, Sommer’s catalogs do not list #204, but #205 is said to be titled “Eruzione, Novembre 1865.” I suppose that old eruptions didn’t sell well.

D stereoviews began some time between February 1863 and April 1864.

Among the works of art in the Vatican museum photographed by Sommer and/or Behles is the ancient statue group Laocoön. In her study of early photographs of the Laocoön, Maria Francesca Bonetti relates that on July 2, 1863 Sommer requested and was granted permission to photograph some of the principal statues in the Vatican, and that on September 20, 1864 both Sommer and Behles made a similar request.¹³ This could suggest that Sommer and Behles formed their partnership after July 2. But because there might be any number of reasons that Behles was not named in the first request, this bit of evidence is compelling yet inconclusive.

Miraglia's account revisited

My claim that Spithöver was the publisher of Sommer's views in Rome in the period 1857-1863 is at odds with Marina Miraglia's account of Sommer's and Behles' joint work in Rome in 1857 and 1858 and her date of 1857 for the beginning of the partnership. Accepting her version of events, Behles would have still been only sixteen years old when he took over the negative archive and the production of stereoviews and *cartes de visite*. This alone makes the story questionable. Even if he had been in Rome at the time, the publication and sale of views would have been better left to a professional like Spithöver.

The source Miraglia gives for Sommer's visits to Rome is the 1927 book *Das Deutschtum in Rom: Seit dem ausgang des Mittelalters* of Friedrich Noack, which lists Germans who had some connection with Rome. The entry for Sommer reads: "*Sommer, Georg*, Photograph aus Frankf. a. M.; in R. Herbst 1857 u. Sommer 1859. [PG.]" ("*Sommer, Georg*, photographer from Frankfurt am Main; in Rome Autumn 1857 and Summer 1859. [PG.]" (Noack 1927, 562). Noack's source for these visits, abbreviated as "PG.", is given earlier in the book as "Paßregister der preußischen Gesandtschaft zu Rom 1816-1870." ("Passport Register of the Prussian Embassy in Rome 1816-1870.") (Noack 1927, 51). The entry for Behles is: "*Behles, Edm.*, Maler und Photograph aus Stuttgart; 1869 ff. in R., Via Mario de'Fiori 28. [Guida Monaci 1872; DKV.]" (Noack 1927, 79). We should note that both entries are incomplete. We just saw above that Sommer was also in Rome in July 1863 to photograph works of art in the Vatican museum and we know that

¹³(Francesco et al 2006, 190-91). Bonetti also found that on May 10, 1867 Sommer and Behles together made a request to photograph the Lateran Museum statue of Sophocles. This Sophocles is shown in stereoview #200, last in the series 101-200. Later, on October 9, 1871 Behles obtained permission to work for two months in the museum.

Behles was already in Rome in 1864, well before 1869.

Evidently it was from this single entry on Sommer in Noack's book coupled with the assumption that Sommer and Behles worked together from the beginning of their time in Italy that Miraglia composed her narrative. In fact, group D stereoviews and Finardi's 1864 book are earliest references I have found to Behles and to the studio on Via Mario dei Fiori in Rome. We have no source that places Behles in Rome any earlier. This is not to say that Behles was not already working with Sommer before then, just that production and sale of photographs in Rome was initially the responsibility of Spithöver, and Sommer's partnership with Behles began later.

Group E

Group E is likewise composed of three contemporaneous types, and again they each have their own domain. But now the types are of different styles. This time we focus on the left side, which for E1 and E2 show the series name:



With this group Sommer & Behles added views numbered in the 800s, covering mainly Florence but also Pisa. They enlisted another German book-seller, Giuseppe (Joseph) Brecker in Florence, to publish and sell the new series, including stereoviews and photographs in other formats.¹⁴ Brecker had operated an establishment on Via Maggio in Florence since at least 1835.¹⁵ All 91 E3 stereoviews I have found are numbered in the 800s—84 of Florence and 7 of Pisa.

¹⁴On non-stereo photos Brecker's name is written as "Jos. Brecker" or "J. Brecker".

¹⁵Brecker posted advertisements in issues of the newspaper *Gazzetta di Firenze* in 1835 and 1836.

Apart from a single anomalous example of an E2 #885 (to be discussed at the end of this article), all E2 views I have found are of Rome. Behles chose this completely new style for the views that he sold.

That leaves mount type E1, for which the series title, “PALERMO” in the example shown above, is printed in the same new font as the “Roma” of E2. These views cover all of Italy except the new series that was sold by Brecker. Sommer would have sold E1 views in Naples and possibly in other venues.¹⁶ Of the 172 E1 views I have found, 21 are from the two series of Rome (000s and 100s). The right side of 11 of these Rome views reads “Sommer & Behles Roma e Napoli”, while the remaining 12 and all 151 covering other places read “Sommer & Behles Napoli e Roma”. Here are the numbers:

		000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s	800s
Sommer	E1	16	5	45	48	24	17	0	17	
Behles	E2	51	27							
Brecker	E3									91

Table 7. Numbers of views I have found for group E types for each series.

The coverage of group E coincides with the series named in the October, 1865 ad, including Florence and Pisa but not yet the views of Siena and Milan that were originally numbered in the 860s and 870s respectively. This agrees with the dates I found on group E mounts, which are uniformly 1866-67. In addition, CDV (E) shown in Appendix 8 shows that Sommer & Behles had already been awarded the 1865 gold medal by Vittorio Emanuele II before Brecker ceased publishing their photographs (see below for more on the medal). It was also during this period, in 1865, that Sommer & Behles submitted ten photographs to the International Exhibition held in Dublin that included views of Rome, Naples, and Messina.¹⁷

From the examples I have found there are differences in which views Sommer, Spithöver, Behles, and Brecker published. Spithöver and Behles only published views of Rome and Brecker was restricted to Florence and Pisa. By contrast, with the exception of group E views of Florence and Pisa

¹⁶Sommer notes in his catalogs that views could be bought through the mail, and Weinberg (1981, 43 n. 7) points out that another likely outlet for stereoview sales was tour guides.

¹⁷From the *Official catalogue* published in Dublin: “Sommer & Behles, *Naples*.—Ten photographs.” (OC 1865, 201). From the *Official catalogue* of the Royal Italian Commission: “**Sommer and Behles (Photographers)**. / *Rome*, and 4, *strada Pizzofalcone, Naples*. / 90. VIEWS OF ROME, NAPLES, MESSINA, etc.” (RIC 1865, 109).

(800s), Sommer himself published views covering all of Italy and Malta in all groups. The exception may stem from Brecker's contract, which appears to have given him the exclusive right to publish views in the 800s. Sommer thus retained control of the publication of views through group E, and from this perspective Behles was clearly the junior partner.

Group F

Group F mounts come in two types, most of whose differences can be seen in the right sides: the designs flanking the addresses are different, the addresses are switched, and the font is different.



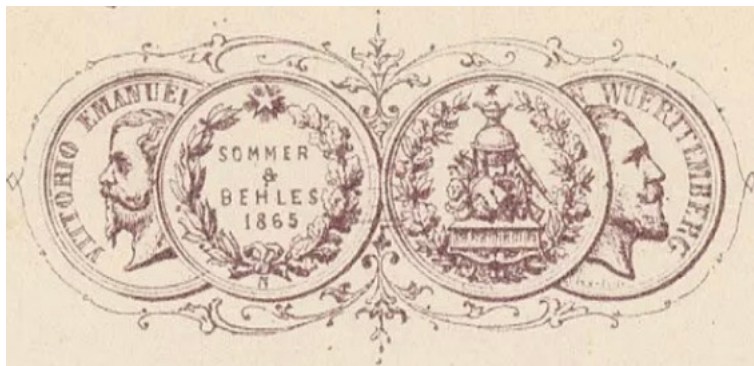
This time we cannot say that one type belongs to Behles and the other to Sommer. I have found only eleven examples on F1 mounts, one each of #2, #6, #22, #57, #302, #750, #751, #765, and #766, and two of #273, compared with 431 examples on F2 mounts. With such a great disparity in the numbers and with only four of the eleven F1s belonging to Rome, there seems to be no significance to the differences. Also, Brecker's name no longer appears, so we can say that with group F the mounts of Sommer & Behles become effectively uniform. Perhaps the printing of the mounts was now centralized, and the same blank mounts were shipped to the studios in Naples and Rome. For the distribution across the series, see Table 2 above.

Group F still has something interesting to offer, since it is the first group to show medals awarded to our two photographers.¹⁸ Two medals are shown on the left sides of the mounts. One is a gold medal awarded to Sommer & Behles in 1865 by Vittorio Emanuele II, and the other is a medal awarded to them by Charles of Württemberg. On the stereoviews they look like this:

¹⁸Contrary to what is reported in (Miraglia 1992, 17, 29 n. 54) and other sources, Sommer did not receive a medal at the 1862 London Exhibition. That medal was awarded to Carlo Ponti. The cause of the confusion lies with CDVs of Sommer that were published by Ponti and which show Ponti's 1862 medal. See Appendix 7 for Sommer stereoviews published by Ponti.



Here we see another difference between F1 and F2: the medals are reversed and their portraits face the other way. They are shown much larger on Sommer & Behles CDVs (here taken from an example of type (F)):



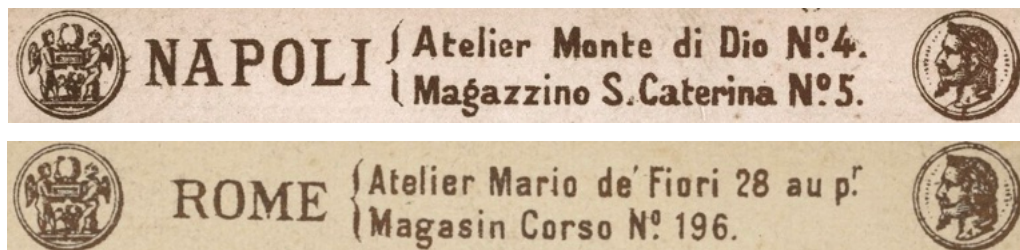
We knew from CDV (E) that the 1865 medal had been awarded before group E gave way to group F, and the Württemberg medal was awarded after that. All this is consistent with the dates I have found on F1 and F2 mounts, which range from November 1866 to 1869.

Group G

With group G the views are no longer marked “Sommer & Behles”. Type G1 is labeled with Giorgio Sommer’s name and addresses, while G2 and G3 show Edmond Behles’ name and addresses. They are otherwise identical, and are of the same general style as F2 views. All three group G types show the same two medals as group F, but now there is a third medal flanking the addresses on the other side of the mount. Here are the three types showing the addresses and the new medal:



The second address is different in the two Behles mounts. We will discuss them in the next section, but for now we cover the new medal. Here it is again, enlarged from examples of G1 and G2:



And again, the CDVs show it in more detail. Just as with the stereoviews, the CDVs from this time now carry the name of Sommer or Behles, and they are identical in style ((I), (J), and (K) in Appendix 8). Here are the three medals from a CDV of Behles:¹⁹

¹⁹According to (Palazzoli 1981, v) the 1865 medal was awarded “Ai distinti fotografi Sommer e Behles” (“To the distinguished photographers Sommer & Behles”). The text on the medal on these CDVs now begins “AI / DISTINTI / FOTOGRAFI / <illegible> / NAPOLI / 1865”. The illegible line probably should be “SOMMER E BEHLES”, but it seems to end with “TOARI”.



Sommer, but not Behles, had submitted photographs to the 1867 international exposition held in Paris.²⁰ The bronze medal awarded to Sommer is the third medal on the stereoviews and the CDVs. Below is a drawing of the medal from the title page of the book *L'Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée* (Paris: Bureaux d'abonnements, 1867), and below that is a photo of a medal from the exposition next to the medal on the stereoview enlarged for comparison:



²⁰Sommer's entry in the *Catalogue général* of the Exposition is: "Sommer (Georges), à Naples, — Photographies." (EU 1867, 125). Behles is not listed.

The Paris exhibition ran from April 1 to November 3, 1867, and prizes were awarded in a large ceremony on July 1.²¹ Thus, the views in group G were first produced after the middle of 1867. This agrees with the dates I have found, which range from March 1868 to 1872.

The slow end of the partnership

With “Sommer & Behles” no longer appearing on stereoviews and CDVs (and presumably on larger format photographs as well), we are led to the question of when the partnership was dissolved. We know that Sommer and Behles were still together in the Spring of 1866. In the May 25 issue of the weekly revue *Correspondance de Rome* there is a brief notice in which Sommer and Behles dispel the rumor that a nearby fire had destroyed the facility on Via Mario dei Fiori in Rome.²² And as noted above (footnote 13), on May 10, 1867 Sommer and Behles together made a request to photograph the Lateran Museum statue of Sophocles. Then, considering that only Sommer submitted photos to the 1867 exhibition and that group F stereoviews, dated by owners as early as March 1868, now show only “Giorgio Sommer” or “Edmond Behles”, the termination of the partnership seems to have taken place some time in 1867.

And yet, dropping the name “Sommer & Behles” for “Sommer” or “Behles” on their photographs does not seem to have affected their collaboration. The group G mounts are identical apart from the names and addresses, and those of Behles also show the 1867 medal received by Sommer. The same is also true of CDVs (I), (J), and (K). Both Sommer and Behles continued selling the views previously labeled “Sommer & Behles” covering all of Italy and Malta, so that the same view can be found with either name. The two photographers had already been in charge of individually publishing the views they sold in their respective cities during groups D and E, so stating the publisher as “Sommer” or “Behles” on the mounts might not have been much of a break from their previous practice.

²¹https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exposition_universelle_de_1867.

²²*Correspondance de Rome* no. 406, 1866, p. 165. The text reads: “Un commencement d’incendie aussitôt éteint par les habitants du quartier a fait dire que l’établissement photographique de la rue Mario de’Fiori (N° 28) était détruit. MM. Sommer et Behles, directeurs de cet établissement, nous prient de démentir ce bruit. Ni le laboratoire, ni les machines, ni les collections, n’ont été atteints et ces artistes continuent, comme par le passé, à donner à leurs travaux photographiques toute la perfection à laquelle ils sont parvenus grâce à leur intelligence de l’art et à leurs consciencieuses études.”

Another strong indication that Sommer and Behles continued to work together is that they both published the series for Venice (3600s) and Pisa (3800s) that were new with group G. In fact, I have found more Behles views of Venice than those of Sommer, 91 to 75 total for all groups G-I. What is more, for the first time we find Behles publishing views numbered from the 200s to the 900s, traditionally Sommer's domain (Table 8).

Then there are the Baedeker guides to central and southern Italy. Both the 1867 and 1869 English editions of the central Italy volume, under "*Photographs*", list "Sommer & Behles, V. Mario de' Fiori 28 and Corso 196.", and the same appears in the 1867 French edition and the 1869 German edition.²³ So the name "Sommer & Behles" continued on, even if it was no longer printed on the photographs. There will be more to say on this below, but for now let us look into Edmond Behles' slow exit from the photography business.

In November of 1871 Behles and one Eduard Eppler started a new venture, E. Behles & Comp., to assist German companies doing business in Italy. Their initial notice begins: "We hereby have the honor to inform you that we are opening a commission business under the name E. Behles & Comp."²⁴ A later ad from 1878 reads: "Bureau for information on business and credit relationships for the whole of Italy. Agency, commission and debt collection business. Export of horsehair and chicken plumage."²⁵

Around the same time he started that company Behles also became involved in the restaurant business, a move that caused the shift in addresses from mount type G2 to G3. Mario dei Fiori 28 was Behles' studio, and the second address on the stereoviews was the shop where the photographs were sold. On G2 views the shop address is "Corso No. 196", and on G3 views it is "Corso No 346/47". The first address already appeared earlier on Sommer & Behles CDVs (F), (G), and (H) shown below in Appendix 8, and "Corso 196" is given for Sommer & Behles in the 1866 German language Baedeker

²³(Baedeker 1867, 103; 1867b, 101; 1869, 90; 1869b, 89).

²⁴"Wir beehren uns hiermit Ihnen die ergebene Anzeige zu machen dass wir mit hentigem Tag ein Commissions-Geschäft unter der Firma E. Behles & Comp. erössnen." *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 16 November 1871, p. 5659. They posted similar ads in other German-language newspapers that same month.

²⁵"Bureau für Auskunft über Geschäfts- und Credit-Verhältnisse für ganz Italien. Agentur-, Commissions- und Incasso-Geschäft. Exportation in Rosshaaren und Hühner-Pflaumfedern." *Beilage zur Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 October 1878, p. 4316.

guide to Central Italy.²⁶ We do not know when the shop opened, but Behles was already selling views there by 1866, and it was still listed in the 1869 English and German guides. Then, in the 1872 French language edition, a beer hall now occupied that address: “Bière de Vienne, dans la nouvelle *Birraria*, Corso, 196”.²⁷ The section on “bier” in a German guide to Rome of 1875 describes the establishment:²⁸ “Viennese beer from Dreher, nice place; the owner is the Württemberg photographer Behles; the pint [costs] 35 centesimi. The food here is also very good.”²⁹ Behles’ partner in this business was Domenico Morteo, and the name of the restaurant was Morteo & Co.³⁰ The Italian Wikipedia article on Edmond Behles states that Behles sold his interest in the restaurant in 1877, but no source is given.³¹

With the conversion of the shop at Corso 196, Behles needed another place to sell his photographs. We find the new location mentioned first in the 1874 German edition of Baedeker: “grosse Auswahl bei Loescher (S. 81; daselbst auch die Photographien von Behles; Atelier: Mario de Fiori 28)”, which became in the English version of 1875, “*Loescher* (p. 84), who also keeps photographs by *Behles* (Mario de’ Fiori 28)”, and the both give Loescher’s address: “*Loescher & Co.*, Corso 346, 347, near the Piazza Colonna”.³² When Behles opened the beer hall he transferred his stock of photographs to Loescher’s shop located just down the street, and began printing Loescher’s address on his mounts.

Looking back to 1872, the French and the English editions of Baedeker no longer list Sommer & Behles under “Photographs”, but they list Loescher’s shop for the first time (though without yet mentioning Behles). So at some time between the publications of the 1869 and 1872 editions Behles trans-

²⁶ “Sommer & Behles, Mario de’ Fiori 28 und Corso 196.” (Baedeker 1866, 103-04).

²⁷ (Baedeker 1872b, 88).

²⁸ Here the address of the beer hall is given as Corso 195. It is usually given as Corso 196, but we also find Corso 195 and Corso 197 on occasion, and an 1879 ad for the restaurant gives the address as “Via del Corso, 194, 195 196-A- Via S. Claudio, 79” (*Guida Monaci* 1879, 5).

²⁹ “Wienerbier von Dreher, hübsches Lokal; der Besitzer ist der Württemberger Photograph Behles; der Schoppen 35C. Man speist hier auch sehr gut.” (Gsell-Fels 1875, 9).

³⁰ For Morteo’s name and his financial involvement with Behles, see *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d’Italia* 1875, 6067 and 1877, 4578. The name of the establishment is given there and in several Baedeker guides.

³¹ https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmondo_Behles.

³² (Baedeker 1874, 81-83; 1875, 84-85). In German the address is similarly “*Loescher & Comp.*, Corso 346, 347, bei Piazza Colonna”.

formed Corso 196 to a beer hall and enlisted Loescher to sell his photos. We might want to lean toward the latter part of this period, and even settle on 1872, because of the phrasing “la nouvelle *Birraria*” in the 1872 French guide and the absence of any mention of the restaurant in the English guide from the same year.³³

Even with his new business ventures, Behles still took an interest in photography. In 1873 both he and Sommer individually submitted photographs to the International Exposition held in Vienna, where they each received an “honorable mention”.³⁴ The editor of the catalog listing the entries misspelled both names: “31. **Beehles E.** e C., Roma. — Album fotografico.” and “39. **Sammer** Giorgio, Napoli. — Fotografie, vedute d’Italia.”³⁵

Baedeker guides of 1877 and 1879 in English, French, and German continued to direct readers to Loescher’s shop for Behles’ photographs.³⁶ But in the 1880 French and German volumes Behles is no longer mentioned,³⁷ nor does Behles’ name appear in any subsequent guide. The address of Behles’ studio at Via Mario dei Fiori 28 is last shown in the Baedeker guide of 1879, too. By 1881 that address was occupied a judge, Ignazio Borsari (*Guida Monaci* 1881, 315). We can thus settle on 1879 as the year that Behles left the photography business, give or take a few months.

Thus Behles’ G2 views, showing Corso 196, were first published in the second half of 1867 or early 1868. The switch to G3 views, showing Corso 346/47, took place in 1872, and G3 views were issued until Behles left the business in 1879. Sommer’s G1 views were introduced at the same time as Behles’ G2 views. Based on the dates I have found on both G1 and H2 views, I can only guess, without much confidence, that Sommer’s G1 views were retired around 1871.

We now turn to Giorgio Sommer in Naples. Under “Photographs”, Baedeker’s

³³In the 1867 and 1869 guides there had been in fact two references to Sommer & Behles. A few lines after the entry cited above, under “Portraits”, we find “Sommer & Behles (see above).” Both are absent in the 1872 French edition, but in the 1872 English edition this second reference was left in by mistake (Baedeker 1872, 87).

³⁴They are both in the list of those receiving “Menzioni onorevoli” in (Sonzogno 1873, 260), where Behles’ name appears as “Bechler E. e comp.” though they got “Sommer Giorgio, di Napoli” right.

³⁵Even in the index we find “Beehles, Edmond e Comp.” and “Samer Giorgio” (AU 1873, 133, 233, 281).

³⁶English references: (Baedeker 1877, 110; 1879, 111).

³⁷In French: “Photographies: grand choix chez *Læscher* (p. 108)” (Baedeker 1880, 111; 1880b, 104).

1869 English volume for Southern Italy lists “Sommer & Behles, Chiaia 2 and Strada Monte di Dio 4” and in the 1873 volume it is “*Sommer & Behles*, Strada S. Caterina a Chiaia 5, where views of every part of Italy may be purchased” (Baedeker 1869c, 31; 1873, 28). The 1874 German edition still has “Sommer & Behles, grosse Auswahl von Ansichten aus ganz Italien, Str. S. Caterina a Chiaia 5.” (Baedeker 1874, 28). By the fifth English edition of Southern Italy of 1875, only Sommer’s name is given: “*Sommer*, Calata S. Caterina a Chiaia 5, where views of every part of Italy may be purchased” (Baedeker 1875b, 27-28), and subsequent editions similarly list only Sommer. If the name “Sommer & Behles” disappeared first in the guides covering Rome, it is likely due to Behles no longer selling photographs in his own shop.

Sommer continued to take new photographs in the 1870s and 1880s, mainly if not exclusively in larger, non-stereo formats, while at the same time he continued to list the same stereoviews from the early years in his catalogs. For example, in the 1900 catalog he still listed 78 views from the original topographic series of Rome (1-100), though most of the shots had been retaken at different times in the 1860s and possibly even in the 1870s.³⁸ I do not know if Behles also continued to take larger format photos after ca. 1870, but for stereoviews he, too, continued to offer the old titles.

So far I have not found any stereoviews numbered above the 3000s on Behles’ G2 or G3 mounts, which include Bologna (6600s), Verona (6700s), and Italian Lakes (7200s), but that might be due to their scarcity. The earliest Sommer mounts I have found for Bologna and Verona are I2 and for the lakes I3. In total I have found only 5 views of Bologna, 21 of Verona, and 16 of Lakes Como and Maggiore (none yet for Lugano).

There may never have been an official end to the partnership Sommer & Behles. From all the evidence I have gathered, it seems that there was a slow parting of ways as the stereoview and CDV formats became less popular, beginning in 1867 with Sommer’s solo entry to the Paris exhibition and the dropping of “Sommer & Behles” from the photographs, and culminating with the closing of Behles’ studio on Via Mario dei Fiori in 1879.

³⁸Sommer lists 82 numbers (the first 52 is a misprint for 53), but four of those, 40, 55, 57, and 78, had changed titles since the time of group F views (Sommer & figlio 1900, 51-54).

Two more tables and a list

The order in which the individual mount types were introduced becomes difficult to estimate after group G. Sommer was already publishing H2 views in 1871, but we do not know which of H1 and H2 precedes the other, or if two or all three of G1, H1, and H2 were produced concurrently. At least G1 and G2 are close contemporaries, and the dates and styles of group I place them later than G and H. Within group I, the order I1 to I2 to I3 is clear from the dates I found and from the introduction of the 1873 medal on I2. I do not know how I4 fits with respect to I3, however. Table 8 below show the numbers of scans I have saved for groups G, H, and I for all series.

		Rome		Sommer's traditional domain							
		000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s	800s	900s
Sommer	G1	57	17	129	48	9	33	4	61	129	92
Behles	G2	100	40	6			1	2	3	6	13
Behles	G3	16	2	8			1	1	2	2	1
Sommer	H1	1		6	4	1	6		5	3	2
Sommer	H2	2	1	12	14	4	4	1	8	22	20
Sommer	I1	11	1	38		38	24	3	23	10	6
Sommer	I2	11	17	28	1	22	9		15	12	19
Sommer	I3	41	1	65	22	6	11	2	27	26	38
Sommer	I4	10		22	26		6		15	4	3

		Rome	Venice	Pisa	Bologna	Verona	Lakes
		3300s	3600s	3800s	6600s	6700s	7200s
Sommer	G1	3	46	9			
Behles	G2		68	5			
Behles	G3		23	1			
Sommer	H1		2				
Sommer	H2		7	1			
Sommer	I1		8	1			
Sommer	I2		5	1	1	7	
Sommer	I3		13		4	14	16
Sommer	I4		1				

Table 8. Numbers of views I have found for groups G, H, and I.

From all this, we can give the basic chronology for Sommer & Behles:

- 1857 Sommer establishes his studio in Naples.
Sommer publishes his views in Naples
while Spithöver publishes Sommer's views in Rome.
- Feb. 1863-Apr. 1864 Sommer & Behles established.
Photographs are now marked "Sommer & Behles",
and Behles is now in charge of publishing views in Rome.
- July 1867-Mar. 1868 "Sommer & Behles" replaced by "Sommer" or "Behles"
on photographs.
- 1872 Behles converts his shop at Corso 196 into a beer hall.
- 1874 "Sommer & Behles" last listed in tourist guides.
- 1879 Behles quits the photography business.
- 1903 Sommer issues his last known catalog
listing stereoviews and other photographs.

We can also tentatively assign dates to the different groups. Keep in mind that the dates refer to the mounts, and thus to production dates, which might be years after a particular photo was taken.

Group	Years	Authority
A	1857-1859	Sommer
B	1859-1861	Sommer
C	1861-1863	Sommer
D	1863-1865	Sommer & Behles
E	1865-1866	Sommer & Behles
F	1866-1867	Sommer & Behles
G1	1867-1871	Sommer
G2	1867-1872	Behles
G3	1872-1879	Behles
H	1871-1872	Sommer
I	1872+	Sommer

Table 9. Approximate dates for each group.

Anomalous group E views

Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has uploaded scans of many stereoviews to their site (<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl>). All eight E1 Sommer & Behles views that they show are on the wrong mounts. The views are of Rome, Naples, Palermo, Venice, and Pisa, but are mounted to cards labeled either “CATANIA” or “SIRACUSA”. We might think that this was simply a mix-up at the facility where they were produced but for the fact that the three views of Venice (#3610, #3623, #3629) and the view of Pisa (#3885) would not be introduced until the time of group G.³⁹ In addition, I have found two other E1 views, one of Pompeii (#302) and the other of Messina (#561), on mounts marked “SIRACUSA”. I have no explanation as to why old unused mounts would receive new photos like this, and I have not included these views in the statistics above.

Another Sommer view affixed to the wrong mount is an example of “No. 885. Palazzo del Podesta (Firenze)” on an E2 mount with the series name “ROMA”. In this case the oddity is that all other group E views of Florence are on the E3 mounts of Brecker, and all other E2 views are of Rome. I have not included this view in the statistics, either.

An appeal for assistance

I would appreciate any help with this project, including:

- Becchetti (1997, 348) lists two catalogs of Sommer’s photographs from the 1870s: “Giorgio Sommer, *Catalogo di fotografie d’Italia*. A. Ferrante, Napoli, 1870” and “*Catalogo di fotografie d’Italia e Malta*. Giorgio Sommer - Casa fondata nel 1857 Napoli, 1873.” Weinberg (1981, 46) also listed both in his bibliography. I would like to have scans of these catalogs.
- Miraglia (1992, 30 n. 69) cites some 1862 ads of Sommer: “Vedi gli annunci pubblicitari apparsi nel 1862 su ‘Il Giornale di Napoli’ (11, 13, 15 e 31 gennaio; 3 e 6 febbraio; 25 aprile). . .”. I would like to see those ads, but the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli has only digitized issues from 1870-74.
- What I would like above all are more scans of the fronts and backs of views with owner dates, and any other information that can augment or correct what I have presented here.

³⁹The D1 views #3629 and #3885 have numbers and titles, but the other two do not.

I will update this article as I get new information, and I will credit anyone who helps. I also will share the scans on which my statistics are based with whoever wishes to see them.

I can thank one person already: Giovanni Fanelli has provided valuable feedback as well as scans of several Sommer views. This is in addition to his numerous articles and books, which cannot be neglected by anyone who studies nineteenth-century Italian photography.

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Appendix 1. The 26 Sommer mounts.

A1



A1 is the type for the first Sommer views of Rome, which were published by the bookseller Joseph Spithöver. The handwritten title on this view is “St. Giovanni”, and the tiny view number “60” in white straddles the left and right images at the bottom, just above “ROMA”. The numbers are not negative numbers, but view numbers. Sommer often later replaced one pair of negatives with another, keeping the same number.

A2



The first views published by Sommer in Naples, covering Naples, Rome, and Pompeii, are anonymous. Some have the handwritten title on the left and the series name “Napoli” or “Pompei” on the right. On this view of the Temple of Ceres at Paestum the tiny number “84” in white straddles the two images near the bottom. This view is from the Naples series, and later became view #284.

B1



B1 is the type for views in the “ROMA” series. Beginning with group B the numbers and titles appear on the left side of the left image. This one reads “No. 14. Vila Medici.”

B2



B2 is the type for views in the “NAPOLI” series.

B3



B3 is the type for views in the “POMPEI” series.

B4



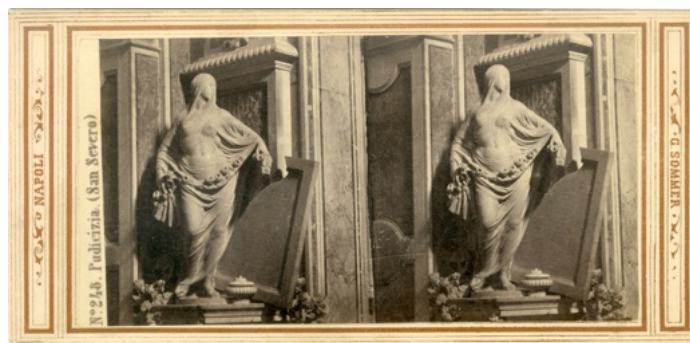
B4 replaced B2 and B3. The name is now “G. Sommer”, and this type was issued for both “NAPOLI” and “POMPEI”. Because I have found so few B4 views, they were likely issued for only a short period of time.

C1



Type C1 consists of Rome views published by Joseph Spithöver.

C2



Feb 7 1862; Oct 4
1862; Feb 27 1863 (or
1865?)

Feb 27, 1863.

Type C2 was issued for both “NAPOLI” and “POMPEI”, like type B4. A “NAPOLI” example is shown here.

C3



1862

Type C3 is for series published by Sommer other than “NAPOLI” and “POMPEI”. I have found so far “ROMA”, “PALERMO”, “MESSINA”, “TAORMINA”, “CATANIA”, “SIRACUSA”, and “MALTA”, so this type should also include “GRIGENTI”.

D1



1864

The basic style of group C carries over to “Sommer & Behles” group D, where again the series name appears on the left. Apart from a few views of Rome, D1 mounts were used exclusively for views of Naples and environs (200s, 400s, and 700s) and the various places numbered in the 500s (Palermo, Messina, etc.).

D2



Apr 1864; May 1864;
1864

Views of type D2 are identical in design to D1 except they lack the decoration on the right. Apart from views of Rome, D2 mounts were used exclusively

for Pompeii (300s) and Malta (600s).

D3



May 1864 (10); 1864

D3 views were issued for Rome only, and would have been published by Behles. Where D1 and D2 views read “Sommer & Behles. Napoli e Roma”, D3 views switch the cities: “Sommer & Behles. Roma e Napoli”.

E1



1866 (2); Dec 21 1866;
Jan 2 1867 (12)

E1 views cover all of Sommer’s output except the new series on Florence and Pisa. They all read “Sommer & Behles. Napoli e Roma” on the right except for some views of Rome that read “Sommer & Behles. Roma e Napoli”.

E2



1866 (3); Dec 16 1866

On this completely new style the font for “Roma” is the same as the series font for Sommer’s type E1. E2 views cover Rome only and were issued by

Behles.

E3



1866 (7); Dec 16 1866;
Jan 2 1867 (4); Feb 11
1867 (6)

E3 views, all numbered in the 800s for Florence and Pisa, were sold by Giuseppe Brecker in Florence. “Firenze” on the left is not the series but the location of Brecker’s business, so it appears even on views of Pisa.

With group F views, shown below, there is a uniform style for all outlets for the first time, and numbers now run through the 900s. Comparing F1 with F2, the decorations on the right are different, the medals are reversed, the addresses are switched, and the fonts are different. I have found only eleven examples on F1 mounts, compared with 431 on F2 mounts.

F1



Mar 1868

F2



Nov 1866; Dec 13
1866; 1867; Jan 2 1867
(7); Jan 4 1867; Jan 5
1867; Jan 30 1867;
Feb 11 1867 (12); Mar
1868 (2); Apr 11 1868;
May 1868; 1868 (2);
Oct 1 1869 (2); Oct 14
1869

The basic style of F2 is carried over to group G views marked only “Sommer” or “Behles”. The three types below are identical except for the names and addresses.

G1



Mar 18 1868; Mar 19
1868; 1869; Feb 1869
(2); May 12-14 1869
(7); Jul 31 1869 (2);
Sep 8 1869; Sep 9
1869 (8); Sep 24 1869;
Oct 1 1869 (6); Oct 12
1869; Jan 7 1870; Jan
10 1870; Feb 1870 (2);
Feb 10 1871; 1872 (2);
Mar 18 1872

G2



Mar 12-Apr 13 1869
(28); Oct 1 1869; Oct
3 1869

The address of Behles’ shop is “Corso No. 196” on G2 views, an address he had occupied since at least 1866.

G3



On G3 views the shop address is now “Corso N° 346/47”. This is the bookstore of Herman Loescher, who sold Behles’ views after Behles turned Corso 196 into a beer hall in 1872.

H1



Compared with G1, the mount and the printed border on H1 views are now rounded, and two 1867 medals are shown. The “Napoli” on the right is Sommer’s home city, not the name of the series. This type is not common.

H2



Jul 13 1871; Jul 20
1871; Jul 1 1873

H2 is a throwback to the early type B2, with no medals and a squiggly decoration flanking the initials “G. S.” It is not just the owner dates that tell us that these are not early views. Later series numbered in the 800s, 900s, 3600s, and 3800s are found on H2 mounts.

I1



Nov 1874; Dec 1875
(4)

I1 is an updated version of H1. This particular view is titled “755. Mangiatori di maccheroni” and is listed under “Costumi” in Sommer’s catalogs. Some of the views numbered in the 700s are genre views.

I2



Jan 12 1875; May 1875

The medals from top to bottom are: 1873 Vienna, 1865 Italy, ca. 1866 Württemberg, and 1867 Paris. Taking into account the new medal and the dates, this type was introduced in the period 1873-74.

I3



May 1878; May 23
1878; Aug 23 1878;
Jun 1882

The royal coat of arms has been added between the medals. There are variations on this type for both the frilly decorations and details in the medals.

I3



May 1882; Jun 1882

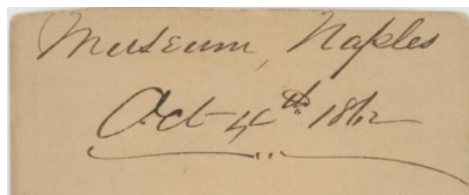
Besides yellow, some I3 mounts are orange and others are red.

I4

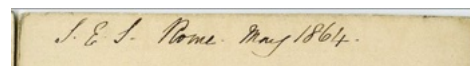


I4 is like I3, but with a different font. The quickest ways to tell is that the "G" is wider and the "R" in "Sommer" no longer extends below the line. H4 mounts are orange or red.

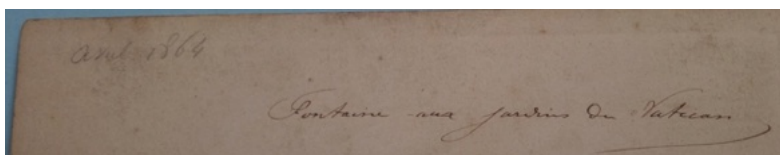
Appendix 2. Some sample owner dates



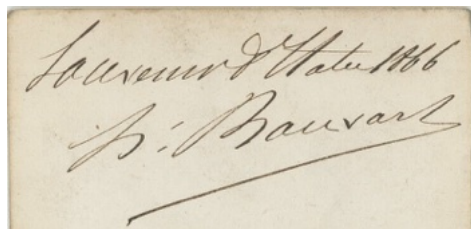
"Oct 4th 1862"; C2 #453



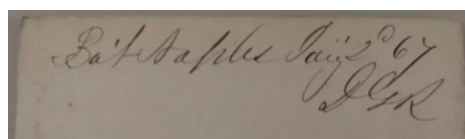
"May 1864"; D3 #27



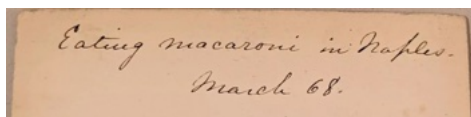
"Avril 1864"; D2 #55



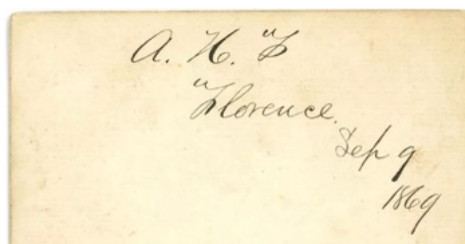
"1866"; E2 #850



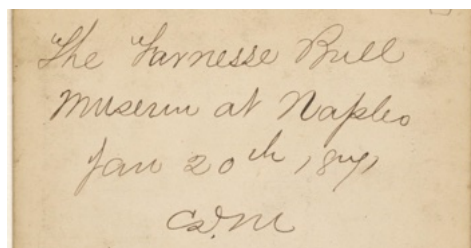
"Jan'y 2^d 67"; E1 #206



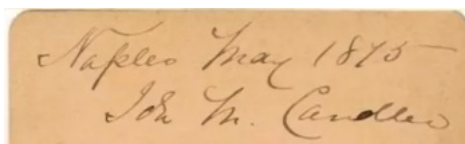
"March 68"; F2 #755



"Sep 9 1869"; E1 #867



"Jan 20th 1871"; H2 #401

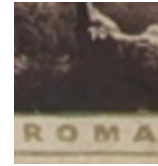


"May 1875"; I2 #212

Appendix 3. Some group A, B, and C views with their later counterparts marked Sommer and/or Behles.

The first view below carries the handwritten title "Tivoli Tempio di Vesta", with a tiny white "70" on the far left of the right image, near the bottom. Below that is a Sommer & Behles version from the same negatives, with the title "No. 70. Tivoli. Tempio di Vesta." I have also found this view from the same negatives on D2 and F2 mounts.

A1

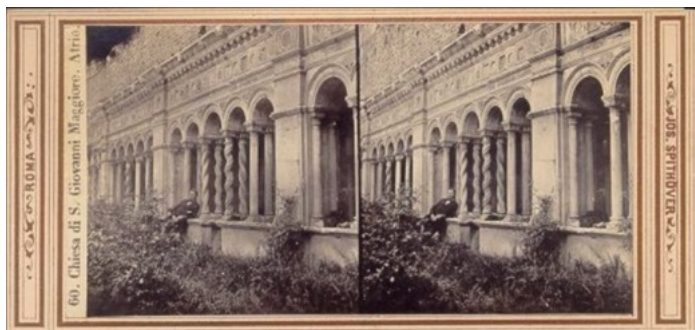


D3



The two views below are both titled “No. 60. Chiesa di S. Giov Maggiore Atrio”. They are later versions of the A1 sample shown above in Appendix 1. The C1 view is from the same negatives, but the E1 view and other examples I have found on D1, E2, and G1 mounts, are from another pair of negatives.

C1



E1

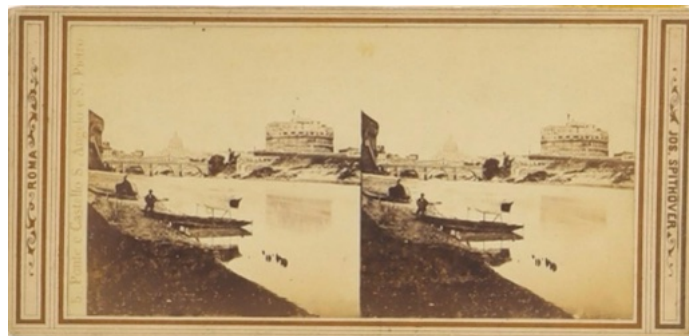


The next three views are all titled “No. 5. Ponte e Castello S. Angelo e S. Pietro.” I have also found this view from the same negatives on an F2 mount. The versions I have found on G1, I3, and I4 mounts are from a different pair of negatives.

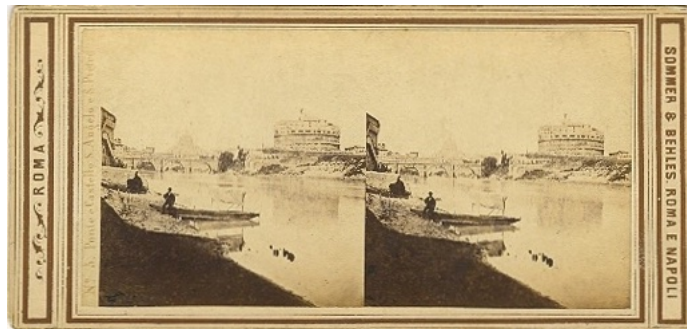
B1



C1



D3



The next three are titled “No. 24. Colosseo preso dai giardini farnesi.” The first two are from the same negatives, like other examples on E2 and G2 mounts. The third is from a different pair of negatives, like I3 and I4 examples I have found. Typically Sommer worked from one pair of negatives at a time, occasionally replacing them with a new shot.

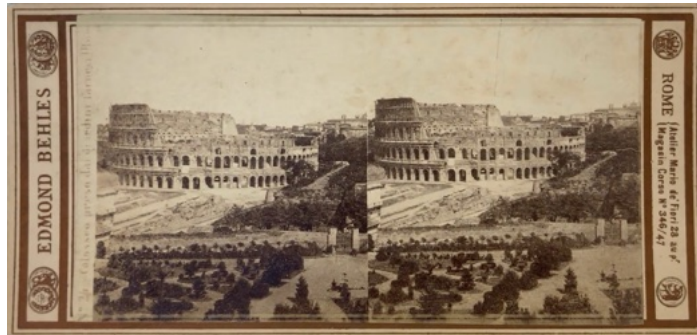
B1



D3



G3



The view below is titled “No. 284. Pesto—tempio di Cerere”. It is a later version from the same negatives of the sample A2 view shown above in Appendix 1. I have found this view also on C2, D1, G1, and I2 mounts, all from the same negatives.

F2



The next three are all from the same negatives. The A2 version reads “Posilipo” and “Naples” with a small “37” in the bottom right of the left image, while the other two are titled “No. 237. Strada del Posilipo.” I have not found this number for other mount types yet.

A2



C2



F2



Appendix 4. Two dated views of Robert Rive.

B



The decoration is the same as that of group B. This view is dated 1861.

C



The decoration is the same as that of group C. This view is dated 1867.

Appendix 5. The December, 1861 eruption of Vesuvius.

These views seem to be drawings based on photographs. Neither is stereo.
The first three examples later became No. 204.

C2



“Eruzione del 8 Xbre 1861”. The eruption began on December 8.

C2



“Eruzione del Vesuvio 1861”. Written on the back: “I was an eyewitness to this in 1861” (<https://www.worldofstereoviews.com/pompeii.htm>).

C2



No title.

The next three later became No. 205.

C2



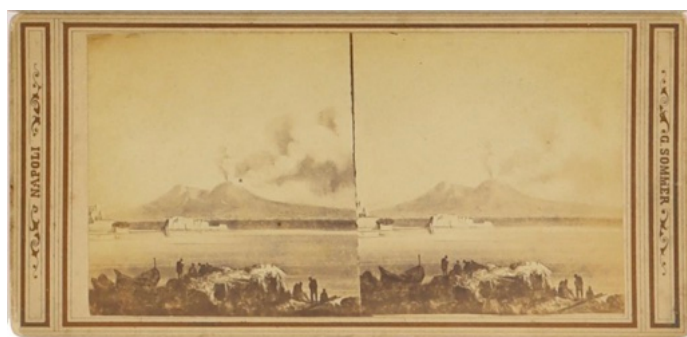
“Eruzione del 13 Xbre 1861”.

C2



“Cenere del 16 Xbre 1861”.

C2



No title.

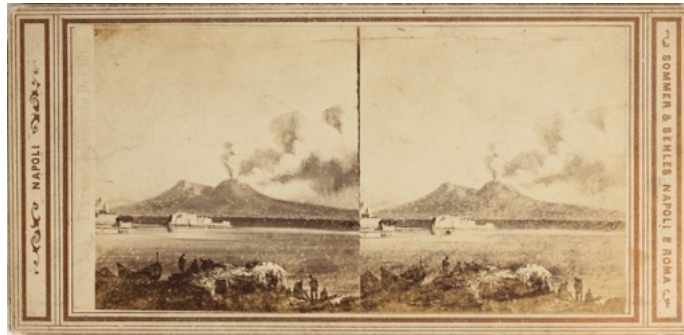
Below are three later versions of the same views, after they received proper numbers and titles.

I1



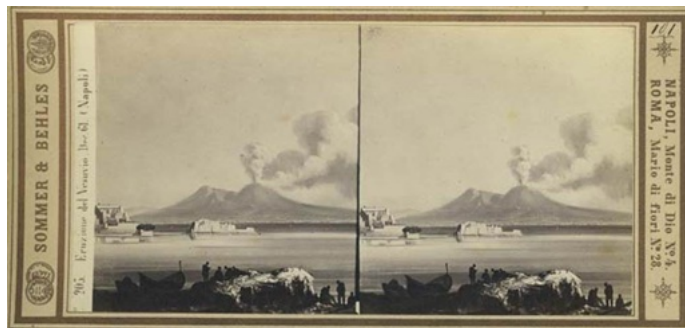
“No. 204. Eruzione del Vesuvio. Dec. 61. (Napoli)”.

D1



“No. 205. Eruzione del Vesuvio. Dec. 61.” (The title is barely readable.)

F2



“No. 205. Eruzione del Vesuvio. Dec. 61. (Napoli)”

Appendix 6. “Impronte umane trovate al 5 Febº 1863”.

C2



No. 356, without number or title.

C2



No. 357.

D2



No. 356.

D2



No. 357.

Appendix 7. Some Sommer views by other publishers.

We begin with three views showing one each of Carlo Ponti and another of Sommer and/or Behles from the same negatives. Sommer views marked with Ponti's name or initials are common. I have found them so far in the 000s, 100s, 200s, 300s, 700s, 800s, 900s, and most frequently the 3600s (Venice). Some carry Sommer's number and title while others do not.

The first two are titled "No. 28. Arco di Tito (Roma)". Ponti's blind stamp appears to the left of the title in the first view.



G2



“No. 932. Galleria V.E. (Milano)”



G1



“No. 3606. Torre dell’Orologio (Venezia)”.



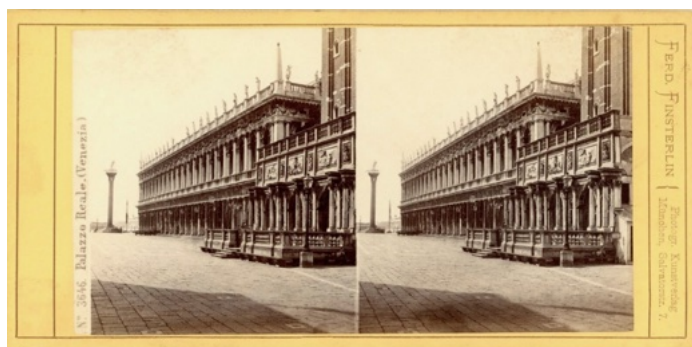
G2



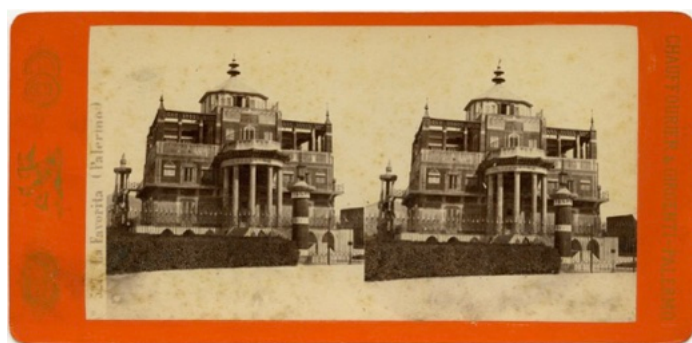
Below are Sommer views from other publishers.



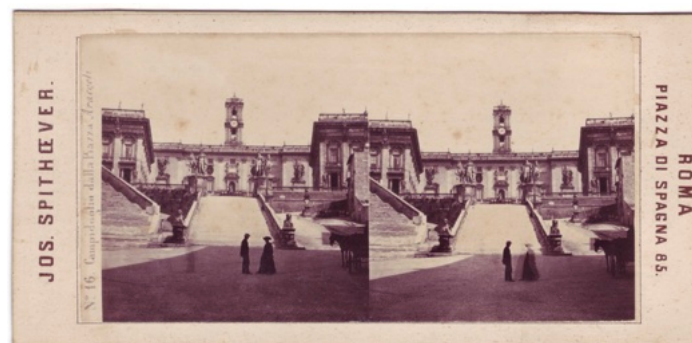
Giorgio Conrad (Naples). “No. 830. Monumento di Dante. (Firenze)”.



Ferdinand Finsterlin (Munich). "No. 3646. Palazzo Reale. (Venezia)".



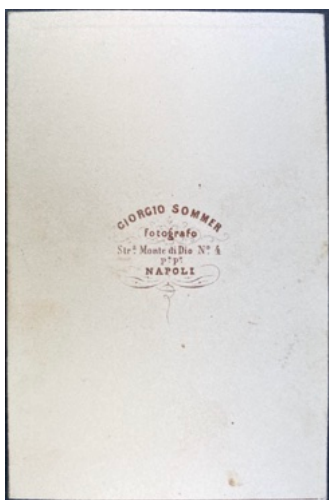
Chauffourier & Girgenti (Palermo). "No. 527. La Favorita (Palermo)".



Joseph Spithöver (Rome). "No. 16. Campidoglio dalla Piazza *Araceli*". I have found 13 Sommer views on this type of mount with Sommer's number and title in the left image. The same English tourist who dated one D2 and ten D3 views "May 1864" wrote the same date on two of these Spithöver views. These views were probably printed after the creation of Sommer & Behles, and under the same kind of agreement Sommer must have made with Ponti, Conrad, and others.

Appendix 8. *Cartes de visite* of Sommer and/or Behles.

There are more variations than the types I show here.



(A)



(B)

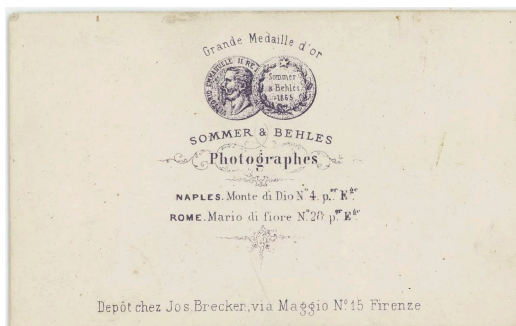


(C)

(B) and (C) are common early Sommer & Behles designs. Judging by the order of the cities, (B) was published by Sommer and (C) by Behles.



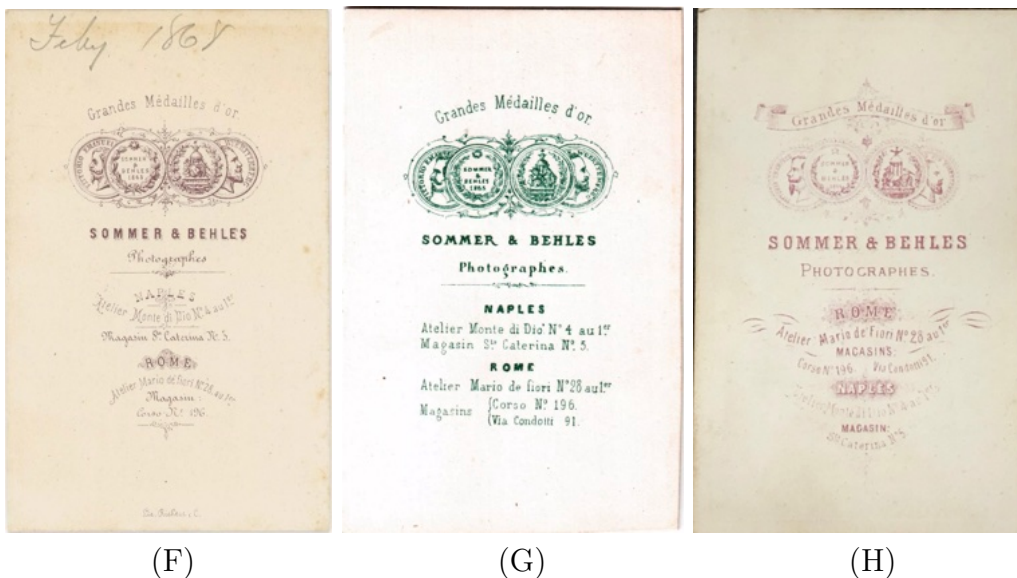
(D)



(E)

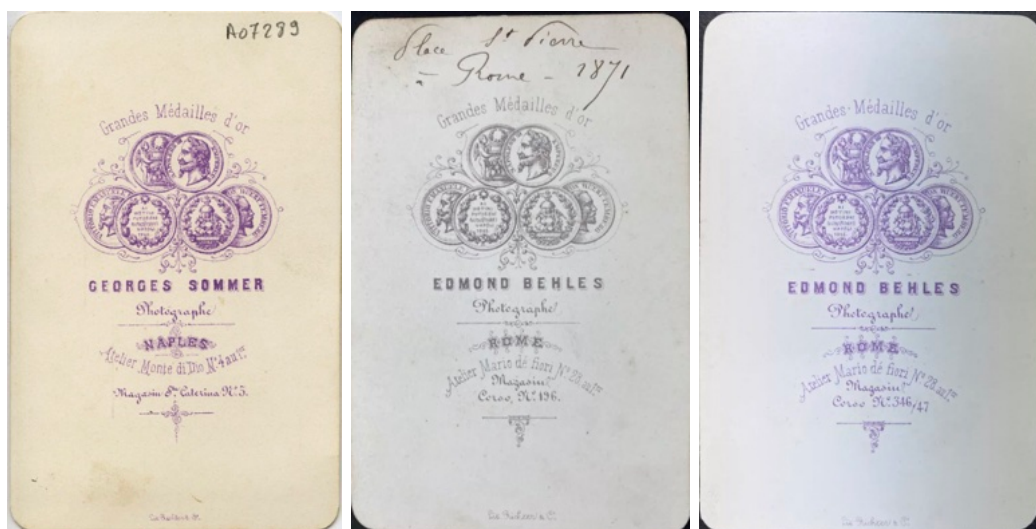
(D) and (E) were printed after the awarding of the 1865 medal and before

the awarding of the Württemberg medal. (E) was published by Jos. Brecker, and corresponds to stereoview type E3.



(F), (G), and (H) show both the 1865 Italian medal and the Württemberg medal. They date from the time of stereoview group F, but here we have the addresses of the shops that sold their photos. (G) and (H) show Behles' address "Via Condotti 91" that is lacking in (F). That was the address of the offices of two steamship lines: Valery Frères et Co. and Campagnia Florio. Perhaps Behles made an arrangement with them to sell his views. Based on the order of "Naples" and "Rome", CDVs of type (F) and (G) were probably sold by Sommer, while those of type (H) were sold by Behles.

The Getty Museum shows a series of CDVs with dates, all apparently from the same owner. Five of them are dated February 20, 1867, and are of types (C), (D), and (F), and two more of types (D) and (F) are dated February 23, 1867. From other sources are a type (C) dated June 22, 1867 and two type (F)s from March 20, 1867 and February 1868. These are all topographic or other non-personal views.



(I)

(J)

(K)

(I), (J), and (K) correspond to stereoview types G1, G2, and G3 respectively. (J) shows the address of Behles' shop "Corso No. 196", while (K) shows the address of the bookstore of Loescher & Co., "Corso No. 346/47". The address at Via Condotti is no longer shown. (I) and (J) would have been first produced in the second half of 1867, and (K) would have been introduced in 1872. I have found three of (J) with the date 1871, all by the same owner.



(L)

(M)

(N)



(O)

Types (L) through (O) are later designs for Sommer CDVs, all from 1872 or later. I have not attempted to put them in chronological order.