



The International Journal of Psychoanalysis

ISSN: 0020-7578 (Print) 1745-8315 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/ripa20

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To cite this article: Roger Willoughby (2026) Freud and the use of iconography in curating his public profile, The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 107:4, 563-597, DOI: [10.1080/00207578.2025.2596029](https://doi.org/10.1080/00207578.2025.2596029)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207578.2025.2596029>



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Published online: 21 Jul 2026.



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Freud and the use of iconography in curating his public profile

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ABSTRACT

Visual images of Freud abound in popular and psychoanalytic culture, though they have been largely bypassed without scrutiny in the literature. This neglect obscures a proper understanding of this important part of psychoanalytic iconography and in particular the genesis of Freud's drive (and that of early colleagues and other key stakeholders) to promote "brand-Freud" and psychoanalysis locally, nationally, and internationally. Offering the first in-depth exploration of this topic, the present article considers Freud's relation to his imaging, the functions of this in promoting recognition and affiliation, and the key curated "official" forms this took during the period from 1906 to 1939. In doing so, close scrutiny is paid to Freud's imaging in three domains: the 1906 medal by Carl Schwerdtner, Max Halberstadt's photographs, and selected portraits and sculptures, noting in each case how these images were disseminated in the psychoanalytic literature and as material objects. In the process of doing this, the paper reveals an underappreciated mechanism in the propagation of psychoanalysis and some of the vital functions such imaging served.

KEYWORDS

Imaging Freud; visual culture; advertising; branding; affiliation; loss

Introduction

Within the early pioneering phase of psychoanalysis, and particularly before training was formalised, joining the movement entailed grasping the core tenets of psychoanalysis and having this recognised ideally by Freud and in due course by his proxies (Bergmann 1997, 2004). Georg Groddeck is a classic example. Freud claimed him as one of his own on 5 June 1917, declaring that: "The man who has recognized that transference and resistance are the hubs of treatment belongs irrevocably to the 'Wild Hunt'" (Roazen 1976, 336). With the early transmission of psychanalytic filiation being thus a personal matter, and as the person of Freud was equated with psychoanalysis, a good working knowledge of and adherence to his thought and praxis was a *sine qua non* for the aspiring psychoanalyst. This equation of Freud with psychoanalysis variously created wishes to meet and to know Freud, or at least to know about Freud, with proximity to him conferring relative

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status and power. In his absence, substitute representations were frequently sought, some of which might take concrete form. These might include, for example, association with recognised others in the field, knowledge of and attitudes towards canonical texts, ritualised practices, the cultivation of a particular aesthetic, and – what the present paper is primarily concerned with – the creation, distribution and possession of visual images of Freud.

It is unsurprising in this context of transmission and belonging that some early affiliates and later commentators regarded psychoanalysis as akin to a form of religion. Jung would famously claim this in 1913 following his break with Freud (Brabant, Falzeder, and Giam-pieri-Deutsch 1993, 491). Recollecting the Wednesday Psychological Society meetings at Berggasse 19, the musicologist Max Graf (and father of “Little Hans”) said that: “There was an atmosphere of the foundation of a religion in that room. Freud himself was its new prophet ... Freud’s pupils – all inspired and convinced – were his apostles” (Graf 1942, 471). And Graf went on to extend his metaphor from religion to the church being founded (i.e. to the institutionalisation of psychoanalysis), where no deviations from orthodoxy were allowed. Similarly, the American author Cornelia Parker (1926), as an outsider, noted Freud was regarded as a god by his followers in Vienna. Looking back, Martin Bergmann (1997, 83) conceded that “a religious atmosphere” infused the creation of psychoanalysis, while Philip Rieff (1966), Douglas Kirsner (2004), and others went further in their claim that psychoanalysis may still function as a secular religion (see also Cooper-White 2018).

Be that as it may, others have taken up this quasi-religious metaphor to consider Freud’s teaching and biography as literary icons. Madelon Sprengnether, for example, suggested that, through his partial self-disclosures in his foundational texts, Freud “enfold[ed] his life into the history of psychoanalysis, ... [and] recreat[ed] himself as a cultural icon” (Sprengnether 1995, 12). Freud in that sense became a case study, perhaps the chief psychoanalytic case study, which successive generations have chewed over as they served their apprenticeships. Sprengnether’s depiction of Freud as an icon, however, deploys that term in a somewhat figurative sense, in primarily referring to psychoanalytic texts or narratives. Freud’s canonic texts became touchstones of revelation and – despite often iterative development and indeed supersession of ideas therein – were at times regarded as dogma by some. His frequent gifting of his books and publications to colleagues and friends formed a preferred way of simultaneously cementing relationships and disseminating his ideas, a distribution which was less conflictual on the whole for Freud personally than that of his images.¹

In its more traditional literal sense, an icon – in the context of the Orthodox Church – may be defined as “A representation of some sacred personage, in painting, bas-relief, or mosaic, itself regarded as sacred, and honoured with a relative worship or adoration” (Oxford University Press 2024). This sense of the term, with its focus primarily on the visual, has been conspicuously absent from discussions of Freud. Given the prevalence of visual images of Freud culturally, and the saturation of the psychoanalytic world in them, it is no surprise that Didier Anzieu (1986) felt able to tolerate his editors completely cutting out “an iconography consisting of illustrations” from the English edition of his

¹In this context Christfried Tögel has noted 57 instances of Freud gifting books to colleagues, friends, and family members with a dedication and date (email to the author, 21 October 2025), while over 30 individuals are noted in the present paper as recipients of his image. Both counts are undoubtedly only partial reflections of the absolute numbers in each case.

monumental *Freud's Self-Analysis*, claiming that they were too well known to need further reproducing. Such hegemonic saturation of the field has, I suggest, contributed to the widespread inattention these images have received in the psychoanalytic literature. Michael Molnar's (2006, 2015) work is a notable exception to this.

In this context, the present paper offers the first published exploration of how an iconography emerged around Freud during the period 1906–1939, which was carefully curated by both Freud and his followers, and which I will argue served a binding function, supporting processes of filiation between individuals, Freud as the leader, and nascent institutions. Concentrating primarily (though not exclusively) on the dissemination of visual imagery of Freud through psychoanalytic texts and among analytic colleagues, the core of the study rests on a review of the extensive early psychoanalytic literature digitised by the International Psychoanalytic University in Berlin, the holdings of the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna, and the library of the British Psychoanalytical Society.

Freud and the revealing image

When Walter Benjamin wrote that “The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses” (1939, 239), he alerts us to the possibilities – welcome or otherwise – of photography revealing us, both to ourselves and to others. During the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, Bergstein (2010) argues, the camera was regarded as an “‘insight machine’ revealing deep character traits”, while the photographic portraits it produced “functioned as ghostly surrogates for the person portrayed, and as such were charged with mysterious efficacy in the realm of everyday life” (263).

For Freud, as perhaps for most of us, this process and its results would arouse a certain ambivalence. As an adolescent, Freud could feel self-conscious about his appearance: Heinrich Braun recalled him then as shy and convinced he was actually ugly (Tögel and Kogel 2026). Such a conflicted stance towards his own image would dog Freud for much of his life, which in middle age appears to have become amalgamated with disquiet about aging. In September 1907, for example, Freud wrote to Jung that over “the last fifteen years [i.e. since the early 1890s] I have never willingly sat for a photographer, because I am too vain to countenance my physical deterioration” (Maguire 1974, 88). This was a trait Freud shared with his mother Amalia, who famously resisted being associated with signifiers of aging (Martin Freud 1957; Sophie Freud 2007). Edoardo Weiss recalled Freud's own dislike of his greying hair (Roazen 2005, 66). Elsewhere (Willoughby 2024), I have suggested that Freud's brief experimentation with reducing his facial hair to just a moustache and sideburns in 1908 was an attempt to stave off signs of aging and that his *fin-de-siècle* procrastination in taking up opportunities to meet his admired elder brother Emanuel was linked to his perception of Emanuel's aging and inevitable mortality.

We may thus glimpse here something of the roots of Freud's ambivalence vis-à-vis his own imaging, wherein he was on the one hand self-conscious about them and on the other was eager for recognition and had a sense of his own iconic status. He would, as we shall see, explicitly connect some of the imaging to be discussed here to notions of posterity. Sculptures, portraits, and photographs all offered to preserve a representation of the self, a double or doppelgänger which might endure beyond one's lifetime. In “The uncanny”, Freud himself cites Rank's influential 1914 work *Der Doppelgänger* (*The Double*)

in this respect and goes on to highlight the practice among Ancient Egyptians of making images in durable materials, which with the lessening of primary narcissism switch “from having been an assurance of immortality, [to becoming] the uncanny harbinger of death” (1919, 235). With Freud also connecting that which is *unheimlich* with that which was once very familiar, with the repetition-compulsion, and with the omnipotence of thoughts, the death foretold may also point backwards to earlier experiences of death and loss. The double may thus have evoked for Freud not only unsettling thoughts of transience and of his own inevitable death, but earlier experiences of agony including the death of his revenant infant brother Julius and Amalia’s likely consequent depression during this formative period (Green 1983; Whitebook 2017).

Freud of course revealed himself to a considerable extent to the public gaze, particularly in writings such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Such revelation was primarily pedagogic in intent and was carefully curated on the whole, with a veil of privacy drawn over that which he did not wish to share with his various audiences. While speech and texts, despite careful curation, might conjure up images in the public mind and at times reveal more than intended, direct visual material (and particularly photographs) were regarded as being more immediate and veridical, and were associated with pleasure or entertainment. For Freud (1915b), thing-presentations (as contrasted with word-presentations) were seen as ontogenetically and phylogenetically older forms of thought, more directly linked to the unconscious. And the interplay between these two forms was seen as important for mental health, for the cure, and for culture. As with images in dream construction and interpretation, Freud paid careful attention to his appearance and the look he might create for the other in both everyday interpersonal settings and in photographs and works of art that might form more enduring public representations of him. Existing in forms that were variously curated, masked and censored, images might evoke not only pleasure, but also uncertainty, anxiety, and particularly publication anxiety (Britton 1994), given their status as objects mediating psychic processes.

In the analytic setting, one method Freud used in partially managing the gaze of the other was through his use of the couch, which at the same time allowed greater reflective and expressive freedom (Freud 1913a). Another means of managing the gaze came through the use of clothing, which, according to Flügel (1930), serves as a cultural means of offsetting shame or sensitivity through its decorative, shielding, and protective functions. Freud certainly cut an elegant figure in his professional life, being carefully groomed, typically wearing a suit, waistcoat, and tie (Greenberg 1993; Wittels 1948). While Jones (1955, 430–431; see also Brody 1976) noted Freud was “invariably neat and correct”, he qualified this by claiming he was “not smart or fashionable”. Prior to the First World War, Freud would habitually wear a dark lounge suit with a stiff white low collar and a ready-made black bow tie. He would don his frock-coat for his three o’clock consultations.

In unspoken contrast (or perhaps in addition) to Flügel’s general thesis, Jones (1953) asserted that Freud always regarded having a neat appearance as important, connecting this with self-respect. And Greenberg (1993) saw Freud’s sartorial presentation as part of his efforts to counter pervasive anti-Semitism and exclusion (see also Cooper-White 2018, who argues these factors shaped psychoanalysis). Relatedly and more generally, we might see such presentations as a marker of embourgeoisement and dressing congruently to an

elite clientele (who typically consulted Freud in Berggasse, a modest address at the time that surprised or wrong-footed some visitors, see for example Breton 1922 and Ruitenbeek 1973). Asked directly about his style in 1935, Freud told Elliot Philipp that: “It’s very, very important – a doctor must look smart and tidy. Patients don’t have such confidence in people who dress sloppily” (Freeman 2000, 150). Freud was here acknowledging the importance of initial impressions, of suggestion, and of promoting something of an initial positive transference through his dress and general grooming. Outside of such settings, Freud did not extensively relax his sartorial presentation. Jackets and ties were customary attire in Freud’s culture and he generally adhered to such dress in his private time and on holidays, insofar as may be judged from contemporary accounts (e.g. Tögel and Kogel 2026) and photographs.

Dressing the part, and certainly in mid-life, did not make sitting for photographs or other forms of visual imagery an easy matter for Freud (Bergstein 2010). Being the subject of the gaze of the artist, the photographer, the camera, and an imagined audience could be provocative. Freud’s eldest son Martin picked up some of this instinctively when he wrote:

From the moment my father became internationally famous, he was continuously photographed until the end of his life and the result distributed throughout the world. For those posed photographs he used what his children called his *Photographier-Gesicht*, his photographing face, rather a stern, serious face which did not for a moment reflect his kindly and friendly nature, not severe and reserved, as the world must regard him if they judge him by posed photographs. Sigmund Freud was a very nice grandfather and his true nature is always shown when he is photographed with a grandchild or two. (Martin Freud 1957, 192)

Grandchildren of course were temporally remote from senescence and might offer some prospect of transcendence and continuity. Without the counterpoint of their reassuring presence and gaze, and the triangulation they introduced into the frame, Freud’s *Photographier-Gesicht* could be glimpsed in both photography and other media too. Freud was aware of this. Writing to Marie Bonaparte in May 1926, he commented that: “An etching which Schmutzer completed for the birthday strikes me as excellent. Others find its expression too severe, almost angry. Inwardly this is probably what I am” (Ernst Freud 1961, 370). Suggesting a more integrated view of the professor, Martin Grotjahn (1979) proposed Freud’s public countenance as captured in such images related to his honesty and eschewal of conventional social photographic poses.

Imaging Freud

As an adolescent and into adulthood, Freud would exchange photographs with family members, such as his older brothers Emanuel and Philipp (Willoughby 2024), his wife Martha and sister-in-law Minna; friends, such as Eduard Silberstein (Boehlich 1990) and the Hammerschlags (Ernst Freud 1961); and colleagues, such as Fliess (Masson 1985). This was very much in keeping with fashionable society, within which the sale, distribution, and collection of *carte-de-visite* and cabinet card-type imagery was widely popular, part of the social media of its day (McCauley 1985; Rudd 2016).

Here, Charcot was a prominent precursor to this promotional utilisation of imaging (notable, for instance, in Brouillet’s 1887 painting *A Clinical Lesson at the Salpêtrière*, in

being the subject of a medal, and in distributing his photographic image). Freud, for whom Charcot was something of a hero, collected and displayed examples of all three of these forms of his representation. Freud of course had other heroic identifications too, from Heinrich Schliemann and Hannibal to Oedipus, which were comforting compensations in the face of experienced losses and disappointments (Breger 2000, 2009). Collecting stories of these iconic figures in his library, as well as in images of various sorts, was paralleled for Freud in his passion for collecting ancient gods and other antiquities. Such identifications also fuelled Freud's driving ambition early on and later powerful self-belief, asserting the value of psychoanalysis as it began to take iterative form, and into which his own identity was inscribed. In this respect, photographs (and other imaging) of Freud acquired a certain totemic quality within the nascent psychoanalytic field.

With this gradual emergence and spread of psychoanalysis in the early decades of the twentieth century, Freud continued the dissemination of his image to many colleagues and friends, and occasionally to patients, mostly on or after the termination of treatment. Known recipients of Freud's photographs included Abraham, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Berkeley-Hill, Marie Bonaparte, Bose, Brill, Helene Deutsch, S.H. Foulkes, Angie Frink, Horace Frink, Carl Herold, Edith Jackson, Jones, Jung, Robert Knight, Hans Liebermann, Pfister, Reich, John Rickman, Wulf Sachs, Elizabeth Severn, Thelma Steiner, Jan van Emden, and Johan van Ophuijsen, among many others. Such prints were often solicited (and highly prized) by their recipients, although it is clear that Freud sometimes also gave his photograph to visitors more spontaneously. In this context, these often-personalised gifts appeared to be marks of approbation, filiation, or encouragement. The size of the photograph gifted reflected the importance of the recipient or the level of their services (Schröter 2010, 548) and it is clear that some recipients gained multiple photographs over the years. In contrast to his earlier symmetrical exchange of photographs, the dissemination of images during this latter period tended to be less often reciprocal.

Turning from the personal dissemination of his image to its more general publication in journals, books, the press, and elsewhere was a major step in the creation of what we may here call brand Freud. It was initially a step (at least in its concrete form) that was seemingly initiated more by Freud's close followers than by Freud himself. One relatively early adherent, Joan Riviere, thus noted not only Freud's own "need for recognition", but also "*the wish of followers that he have it*" (Riviere 1956, 353–354; my emphasis). It was a view emphatically echoed by Paul Federn (1947).

As a precursor to this step into the limelight, Freud had his photograph taken in Vienna by Ludwig Grillich (1855–1926), for a hygiene exhibition, possibly the *Allgemeine hygienische Ausstellung*, which took place between 12 May and 15 July 1906 in Vienna. Whether Freud subsequently participated in any way in the exhibition is unclear (the event goes unmentioned in the literature), but he hated the rather smart-looking photographs Grillich had taken (see Figure 1). Writing to Jung on 19 September 1907, he declared

Two years ago I was obliged (by the regulations) to have my picture taken for the Hygiene Exhibition, but I so detest the picture that I won't lift a finger to let you have it. At about the same time my boys [actually, Oliver Freud (Paskauskas 1993, 242; Schröter 2010, 225)] took a picture of me, it is much better, not at all artificial. If you like, I shall find a print for you. (Maguire 1974, 88)



Figure 1. Ludwig Grillich’s “detested” photograph of Freud, c.1905/1906. Source: Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung Vienna.

For Freud at this point, the carefully posed and manicured image of himself, seated diagonally and looking directly at the camera-viewer, he seemed to suggest, looked too “artificial”, as though he did not really recognise himself in it, or as though it held something of the uncanny (Freud 1919), and he had no wish that it be circulated. Over the next two decades or more, it very rarely saw the light of day. Its one known appearance during this time was as the frontispiece to the English revised edition of the biography of Freud by Fritz Wittels (1924), a book and an enterprise that Freud *also* disliked.

In contrast to Grillich’s photographic portrait, Freud was far more welcoming of the image Oliver took of him (see Figure 2). In that photograph, Freud appears in profile, facing to the left, with his arms folded, disengaged from his viewers. As such, it is a rather arresting image (of which there are at least three minor variations). Sanctioned by Freud as his first apparently “official” photograph (Schröter 2010, 225), it was published in 1908 as part of the brief biographical entry on him in Gustav Müller’s (1908) *Deutschlands, Oesterreichs-Ungarns und der Schweiz Gelehrte, Künstler und Schriftsteller in Wort und Bild* (134–135). This is the earliest authorised published photograph of Freud that has been observed (see also Freud, Freud, and Grubrich-Simitis 1985, 178–179; Maguire 1974, 88). Building on these foundations, we shall now turn to consider three interrelated forms of Freud imaging: in medallion art, in photography, and in portraiture and sculpture.



Figure 2. Oliver Freud's "much better" photograph of his father, c.1905/1906. Source: Chronicle/Alamy Stock Photo.

Imaging Freud: The Schwerdtner 1906 medal

Straddling the taking of that photograph and its publication in Müller's work came what can be regarded as the first representation of Freud purposely produced for public dissemination and consumption: the medal created of him in 1906 by the prominent Viennese medallist Carl Maria Schwerdtner (1874–1916), the son of the sculptor and medallist Johann Schwerdtner (1834–1909). Commissioned by Paul Federn (1871–1950) on behalf of his local followers as a surprise gift for Freud to mark his fiftieth birthday, Schwerdtner designed the medallic portrait from photographs of Freud, most probably using the previously discussed images Oliver had taken of his father in late 1905 or early 1906 (see [Figure 2](#)), and a copy of Freud's *Oedipus and the Sphinx* bookplate, designed by Bertold Löffler (1874–1960) in 1901 (Abram et al. [2019](#), 1532–1537; Pichler [2010](#)) for the reverse. Schwerdtner and Löffler had previously worked closely together as publishers of the satirical magazine *Quer Sacrum* in 1899.

The medal itself (see [Figure 3](#)), situated firmly in the classical tradition as the vast majority of images of Freud produced during his lifetime would be, had Freud's head in profile, facing left, surrounded by the stylised legend SIEGMVND FREVD WIEN MCMVI, in bas-relief on the obverse. Spelling "Sigmund" as "Siegmund" here, Mattonet ([2002](#)) and others suggest, was perhaps a framing device to depict Freud as a victor ("Sieg" meaning victory). Be that as it may, this spelling very much reflected a Germanic nineteenth-century interest in Romanticism and medieval tradition, and it had previously



Figure 3. Carl Schwerdtner's Freud 50th birthday medal, 1906, in bronze. Source: Author's collection.

been used on both the 1901 Löffler bookplate (Abram et al. 2019) and by Freud himself on the title page of his 1880 John Stuart Mill translation.

The reverse of the medal depicted a naked Oedipus answering the Sphinx, with the line from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* "ΟΣ ΤΑ ΚΛΕΙΝ" ΑΙΝΙΓΜΑΤ' ΗΙΔΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΟΣ ΉΝ ΑΝΗΡ" ("He who solved the famous riddle and was a man most powerful") vertically in the medal's right field. Produced initially in bronze, approximately 59.8 mm in diameter, and supplied in a simple circular card box, the medals were struck by the Vienna Mint and retailed by them from at least 1912 up to 1985. A tiny number of seemingly early examples were also produced in 900 fineness silver (Galst and Van Alfen 2013, 240), only two such examples having been seen by the author in the last 30 years.² On the earliest bronze examples, the rim is plain (as may be seen on the medal Freud gave to Jung in October 1907), while later striking had "MÜNZE WIEN" stamped in small capital letters on the rim (Michael Beckers [President of the Austrian Numismatic Society], personal communication; contrary to the assertion made by Weiss 2021), and some later versions (perhaps produced during the post-Second World War occupation or for the export market) have "MADE IN AUSTRIA" and "BRONZE" thereon.

When Freud was presented with the medal on his birthday and read the inscription, he reputedly became pale and agitated, as though he had seen a ghost, at least as Ernest Jones (1955, 15) later related. Federn (1947; cf. Forrester 2010), Jones's probable source, more simply notes that Freud was "deeply moved". Asking who had chosen the inscription and Federn replying that he had, Freud told him how as a young student at the University of Vienna he would look at the busts of famous former professors and imagined his own bust being there among them in the future. The startling feature, however, according to Jones, was that the Greek text on the medal mirrored that which Freud had imagined on the plinth of his wished-for bust in the university.

²Freud (1925a) suggested to the publisher Ernst Heimeran that the medal was produced in both large and small sizes. This, however, seems likely to be an error, arising from Freud having been given Schwerdtner's original (larger) maquettes from which the actual medal dies were produced using a reducing machine.

While this might be seen as an arresting example of a wish fulfilled, a dream come true, or a form of *déjà vu*, Mattonet (2002), Regier (2005) and later Weiss (2021), among others, have drawn attention to alternative possibilities. The most notable of these relates to an actual misspelling in the Greek text on the medal itself (which Mattonet initially pointed out), where what should be the word “KAEIN” is rendered as “KLEIN”, which would in German mean “small”. The meaning is thus shifted from Oedipus (Freud) having heroically solved a “famous” riddle to the suggestion that it was a “small” riddle and thus no great achievement. Jones, perhaps mischievously or possibly maliciously, draws still further attention to the text (having reproduced the *erroneous* Greek text alongside the *correct* English translation), telling his readers that when he asked Freud to translate the passage, claiming his own Greek was no longer up to the task, Freud had “modestly said I must ask someone else to do it” (Jones 1955, 15). There is another twist in this story, however. The Freud Museum in London has a large bronze example of the medal on display, 148 mm in diameter, which is more probably an original maquette that Schwerdtner and/or the Vienna Mint worked on and from which the actual regular sized medals were produced. The Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna has a uniface maquette, of the same size, for the reverse design. Interestingly, this example bears the correct Greek text, the lambda in the word “KAEIN” seeming to have been amended at some point post the initial striking, whereas the London piece retains the original error. When exactly this correction occurred or on whose instructions is unclear, though its existence highlights that someone early on had tumbled to the mistake, and very probably to how it might be construed, and made a decision to correct it. Given that the small medals carry the mistake, the initial striking of these must have commenced before the error was identified and the dies at the mint went unmodified for future production runs.

Freud evidently liked the medal and his portrayal on it and – despite the mix-up with the Latin “L” for the Greek lambda – was certainly not averse to disseminating it. Writing to Jung on 19 September 1907, Freud declared “The best and most flattering of all [representations of me] is probably the medallion that C. F. Schwerdtner made for my fiftieth birthday. Just say the word and I shall have it sent to you” (Maguire 1974, 88). As well as sending one to Jung, Freud gifted examples of the medal to other close family, friends, and colleagues, including to his brother Emanuel in July 1906 (Willoughby 2024, 116) and to Havelock Ellis in 1912 (Freud 1912). Coming slightly later to the psychoanalytic scene, Jones belatedly obtained an example from Eduard Hitschmann (Jones 1955, 15), apparently unaware that the medals were being retailed to the general public by the Vienna Mint. Emanuel Freud commented to his younger brother that there was “an additional value in this medal being a token of the esteem and affection entertained for you by your many friends and disciples” (Willoughby 2024, 116). Beyond such collegial recognition, the medal would serve as an iconic vehicle for disseminating the twin brands of Freud and psychoanalysis.

Schwerdtner included his medal in several prominent exhibitions, including the Imperial Jubilee Exhibition in Vienna in 1908 (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Münz- und Medaillenkunde 1908, 64), the American Numismatic Society International Exhibition of Contemporary Medals in New York in March 1910 (American Numismatic Society 1911, 300–301), and the International Fine Arts Exhibition in Rome in 1911 (Anon 1911, 121).

Such displays inevitably promoted both artist and model. As a brief postscript to this discussion, Carl's younger brother, Hugo Schwerdtner (1875–1936), was later introduced to Freud by Adler and became a member of the Wednesday Society from 9 October 1907 for a time (Nunberg and Federn 1962, 202).

Imaging Freud: The Halberstadt photographs

On 30 September 1909, on his return from his historic trip to the USA, Freud visited his mother-in-law Emmeline Bernays (1830–1910) in Hamburg and while in the city he sat for a studio photograph by Max Halberstadt (Franzen and Weinke 2025; Toegel 2024, 282). The resultant photograph depicted Freud leaning over the back of a chair, with his arms loosely crossed and the left side of his face (from the viewer's perspective) in semi-shadow (see Figure 4). It was, Freud informed Karl Abraham on 23 November 1909, a "bad photograph", although it revealed "how heavy the demands were that America made on me physically" (Falzeder 2018, 97). Serendipitously, Halberstadt (1882–1940) became Freud's son-in-law on 25 January 1913 when he married Freud's daughter Sophie (1893–1920), his "Sunday's child", and Freud's subsequent patronage of his work resulted in Halberstadt becoming the principal supplier of photographs of Freud to mainstream publishers for the next 20 years. By October 1913, the original 1909 image had rather grown on Freud, so much so that he declared it was an "official" photograph and that he "want[ed] to go down in posterity in this form" (Schröter 2010, 485).



Figure 4. Max Halberstadt's September 1909 photograph of Freud, taken in Hamburg. Source: Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung Vienna.

Despite the longevity of this artistic, commercial, and familial relationship, its photographic results were carefully curated and distilled essentially into just four principal “official” images. Each of these depicted Freud neatly besuited, unsmiling, and gazing directly at the camera-viewer, the first three of them with Halberstadt’s characteristic lighting. The 1909 image initially appeared as the frontispiece to two psychoanalytic publications in 1911, in the *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse* (1,12) in September that year and in the first Russian edition of Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in October.³ Between then and 1928 the image was republished relatively sparingly, known appearances including in Theodor Reik’s (1914) essay “Der Schöpfer der neuen Seelenkunde (Professor Sigmund Freud)”, in Freud’s (1916 and 1921) Dutch editions of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, in volume 2 (*The Interpretation of Dreams*) of the *Gesammelte Schriften* (1925c), on the front page of the *Jüdische Presszentrale Zürich* on 26 February 1925 (Anon 1925), in a seventieth birthday message in the Jewish family magazine for science, art, and literature *Menorah* (Anon 1926a), and in Siegfried Bernfeld’s (1928) entry on Freud in the *Jüdisches Lexikon*. Later, in the 1930s, it would appear in the 1932 Greek edition of *On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, in the Japanese editions of *Totem and Taboo* (1930), *The Ego and the Id* (1932), and *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1933), the 1935 New York English edition of Freud’s *Autobiography*, and its 1936 German version *Selbstdarstellung*.

Freud also gave copies of this image to various friends and followers. By October 1913, with increasing fame, requests for his photograph were ramping up and he told Max Halberstadt that he was “terribly tormented by demands for my photograph” (Schröter 2010, 485). A partial solution to this presented itself when the editors of the Parisian serial *Nos Contemporains* requested Freud’s permission to include a brief biography and photograph in a forthcoming issue. As a bonus, they would create a copper etching based on Halberstadt’s photograph and would supply Freud with a batch of “héliogravure sur cuivre” prints, with his signature printed below the image, for a fee (Paskauskas 1993, 242–243; Schröter 2010, 484–485). While the article failed to appear in the Parisian journal, Freud did obtain a supply of heliogravure printed copies from them of the 1909 photograph in about December 1913 which he subsequently used to satisfy demands from his public for well over a decade. One such example, originally sent to Yvette Guilbert, dated May 1925, forms part of the collection in the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna.

Following the war, Freud and Martha visited their daughter Sophie and Max Halberstadt in Hamburg from 13 to 21 September 1919, during which time Freud sat for a further set of “official” portrait photographs (Falzeder 2018, 405; Schröter 2010, 548; Toegel 2024, 380). The first of these is probably Halberstadt’s best known and most reproduced image of Freud (Molnar 2015, xxi). A three-quarter length study of Freud, with his hallmark cigar in hand, pointing almost horizontally forward, and his watch chain very visible, the image made prominent use of light and shadow, Halberstadt’s so-called Traut lamp casting a distinctive shadow on the back wall behind his sitter (Franzen and Weinke 2025, 12). As with the 1909 image, the left side of Freud’s face (from the viewer’s perspective) is in semi-shadow and softer focus. These features did not just add dimensionality and subtlety, but also offered viewers a figurative representation of the lighter and darker sides of the

³My thanks to Christfried Tögel for establishing the previously elusive publication date of the Russian edition.

human personality, of the conscious and the unconscious, and of visibility and concealment. As such, the image (and others in this series) conveys a hint about the complexity of psychoanalysis and of Freud himself, engaging the viewers curiosity with respect to both. Nicknamed “the big, angry one” (“*die grosse, böse*”) by Freud in February 1920 (Schröter 2010, 558), this photograph (see Figure 5) was initially published in 1924 as the frontispiece to volume seven (*The Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis*) of Freud’s *Gesammelte Schriften*. It subsequently appeared in the 1924 Swedish edition of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, in Carl Dymling’s (1924) interview with Freud, published in the Swedish daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, then in the Viennese weekly *Das Interessante Blatt* (Anon 1926b) on Freud’s seventieth birthday in 1926, and on the dust jackets of Freud’s *Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens* (1929a), *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* (1930c), *Kleine Schriften zur Sexualtheorie und zur Traumlehre* (1931), *Theoretische Schriften* (1911–1925) (1931), and *Schriften zur Neurosenlehre und zur Psychoanalytischen Technik* (1913–1926) (1931). It also appeared in Czech, Danish, Dutch, Hebrew, Japanese, Polish, and Yiddish translations of major Freud texts between 1928 and 1936.

At least two other variations on this photograph were taken during Freud’s September 1919 sitting with Halberstadt, both of those observed being essentially close-up, truncated versions of the first image (see Freud 1922 and Kardiner 1977, 4). In one of these, Freud’s pose has shifted slightly, with his jacket pulled back fractionally on the right revealing a little more of what was possibly his spectacles case protruding from his waistcoat pocket and the cigar now angled downwards at about 45 degrees. Freud referred to this one as “the milder, cropped one” (“*die mildere, verkürzte*”) (Schröter 2010, 558). All three photographs were distributed to colleagues and affiliates, the two variants being largely initially restricted to such usage during Freud’s lifetime.

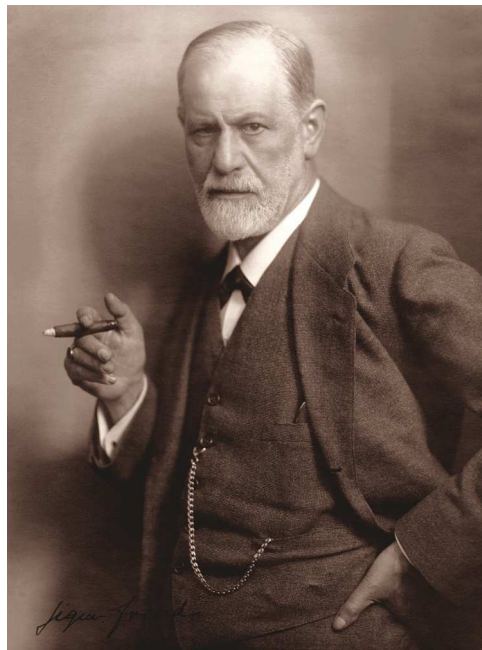


Figure 5. Max Halberstadt’s September 1919 photograph of Freud, taken in Hamburg. Source: Spangenthal Collection, England.

The third distinct Halberstadt “official” image of Freud seems to have been taken during Freud’s 16–21 September 1922 stay in Hamburg with his now widowed son-in-law and was revealed to some acclaim at the International Psychoanalytical Association Congress in Berlin shortly afterwards (Schröter 2010, 596; Toegel 2024, 410; *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10). Minus cigar, with his hair noticeably greyer, Freud with a somewhat quiescent expression gazes directly at the camera-viewer (see Figure 6). It first appeared in the prospectus for the *Gesammelte Schriften* (Marinelli 1995) and in that work was the frontispiece to volume 10 (*Totem and Taboo*, and other works) in 1924. It occupied the same position in Freud’s (1925b) eponymous essay “Sigmund Freud” (later titled *An Autobiographical Study* in its English language iteration), which initially appeared in Louis Grote’s *Die Medizin der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, before being reissued in Grote’s collection *Führende Psychiater in Selbstdarstellungen* (Freud 1930a), and by Freud (1934c) as a stand-alone volume under the title *Selbstdarstellung* and in its first English language translation published in London the following year (Freud 1935), with the same photograph each time. (The subsequent 1936 German and 1935 American English editions of these latter two volumes utilised the 1909 Halberstadt portraits, as noted earlier). It reappeared in 1926 as the frontispiece to the *Almanach der Psychoanalyse 1926*, the Verlag’s new and ultimately financially unsuccessful flagship annual edited by Adolf Storfer (1926; see also Marinelli 1995, 22), and in Friedrich Thieberger’s (1926) and Arnold Ascher’s (1926) largely overlapping special issues of their Jewish *B’nai B’rith* journals celebrating Freud’s seventieth birthday. Two years later, the photograph was

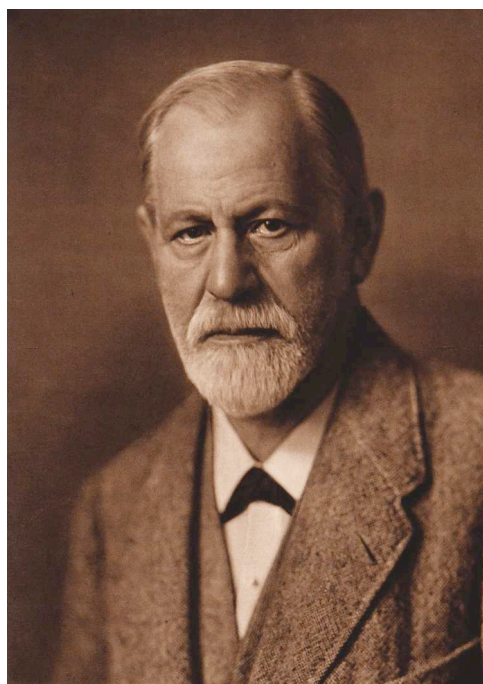


Figure 6. Max Halberstadt’s September 1922 photograph of Freud, taken in Hamburg. Source: Weinke Collection.

reused in the 1928 article on Freud, by “H.L.” (possibly Heinrich Loewe⁴), published in the *Sammelblätter jüdischen Wissens*, while in 1929 it featured in Isidor Sadger’s long-lost controversial *Sigmund Freud: Persönliche Erinnerungen*, and in July 1930 it was included as the frontispiece to the English edition of *Civilization and its Discontents* (Freud 1930b), thus becoming the first photograph of Freud published in a volume of the *International Psychoanalytical Library* series. It appeared in at least four further translations during the early 1930s, including the Japanese editions of *Totem and Taboo* (1930) and *Gesellschaft, Religion und Zivilisation* (1931), and the Portuguese translations of two of Freud’s essays, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death” (1915c) and “The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest” (1913b), combined into one volume, titled *Pensamentos Sobre Guerra e Morte e O Múltiplo Interesse da Psicanálise* (Freud 1934a), and of *An Autobiographical Study*, titled *Minha Vida e a Psicanálise* (Freud 1934b). The latter volume additionally bore a photograph of the 1931 Oscar Nemon wooden bust of Freud on the dust jacket, of which more later.

The final Halberstadt photograph to be considered here was taken in 1929 (according to its caption in the *Standard Edition*, volume 22 [1964], where it appears as the frontispiece). Halberstadt probably took this portrait when he visited Freud for lunch on 17 March that year in Schloss Tegel, the psychoanalytic sanatorium run by Ernst Simmel just outside Berlin (Danto 2009; Toegel 2024, 476). In line with the purported location, the photograph lacks the usual studio background and distinctive lighting. Freud, suited and now wearing round spectacles, is seated in a cane chair, facing diagonally to the right, his face partly turned towards the camera-viewer, his gaze thereon, and in his left hand he holds a cigar which points down at about 45 degrees (see Figure 7). Freud had begun to wear glasses for long-sightedness on a regular basis in 1927 and these became a characteristic feature of his iconography from that date onwards.

This fourth Halberstadt image was first used on the dust jacket of Theodor Reik’s (1930) *Freud als Kulturkritiker*. It later appeared in the Japanese edition of *Sexualtheorie Verbotstheorie* (1931), the 1933 Serbian translation of the *Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis*, in various newspapers, including the Swedish *Dagens Nyheter* (Anon 1934), and obscurely on a cigarette card, issued by Kedem Cigarettes in Mandatory Palestine in about 1938. One slight variation of the image is known, darker in tone, with Freud’s hand with the cigar in it more upright, though this was not apparently published during Freud’s lifetime.

With the rise of National Socialism in Germany Max Halberstadt’s work largely dried up from 1933 and he began to consider options elsewhere, ultimately fleeing to Johannesburg in 1936 (Franzen and Weinke 2025). His licensing fees from the four key images discussed above, all of which remained in demand, had been relatively modest (e.g. in 1930 he charged a fee of 10 Marks to supply and license the reproduction of his 1922 photograph in the English edition of *Civilization and its Discontents*), but from his correspondence with Freud (Schröter 2010), from oral tradition within the Halberstadt family (Peter Rosenthal [MH’s grandson], personal communication, August 2025), and from Wilfried Weinke’s work (Franzen and Weinke 2025), it is clear that as time went on many publishers – particularly outside the psychoanalytic mainstream – both evaded these fees and omitted credits.

⁴Heinrich Loewe was a librarian at the Berlin University Library and a contributor to the *Jüdisches Lexikon*, some of whose articles were used in the *Sammelblätter jüdischen Wissens*. My thanks to Christfried Tögel for making this suggestion.

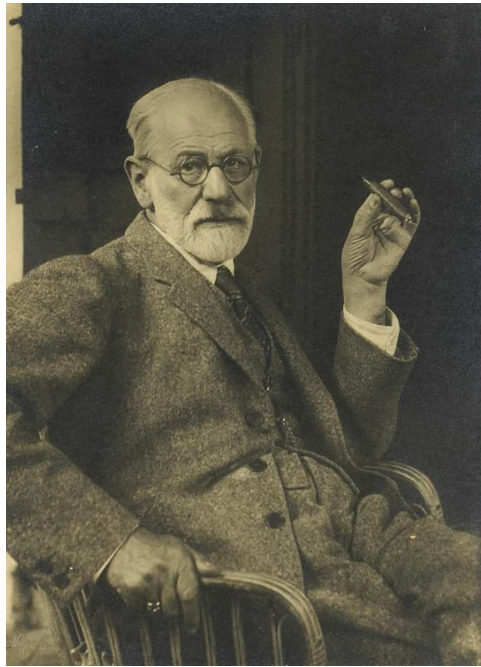


Figure 7. Max Halberstadt's March 1929 photograph of Freud, probably taken at Schloss Tegel, near Berlin. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Max Halberstadt made no further additions to the catalogue of “official” Freud photographs. There had been an attempt in February and March 1931, apparently instigated by Adolf Storfer (1888–1944), to commission further portrait photographs to accompany publications marking Freud’s seventy-fifth birthday. Holding the monopoly granted him by his father-in-law as the supplier of his authorised images for publication and sale, Halberstadt was willing to undertake the photoshoot in Vienna. The plans collapsed, however, amid acrimony among the Verlag management team, and Freud declared that “the old pictures are good enough for me” (Schröter 2010, 631).

During the 1920s and 1930s a handful of images of Freud produced by other photographers percolated into some psychoanalytic publications. Apart from images taken in the 1890s that were pressed into service in the *Gesammelte Schriften* and some of the related translations, the 1930s saw Freud sit for photographic portraits by Genia Brinitzer (c.1930), László Willinger (in July 1931 and again in c.1935), Hans Casparius (in summer 1933), and Marcel Sternberger (on 21 August 1938). Made little use of at the time, these images gained some prominence in the literature following Freud’s death. Aside from these photographers and formal psychoanalytic publications, 1938 and 1939 saw Freud’s image appear far more extensively in the print media as press photographers documented his exit from Vienna and life in London.

Imaging Freud: Portraiture and sculpture

The final set of representations of Freud to be briefly discussed here are the portraits and sculptures he sat for. While there were at least 20 such pieces (Tögel and Kogel 2026), the

present discussion will be limited to six of these. Most of these were commissioned for organisations or individuals other than Freud and his immediate family, by either colleagues or the artists themselves. The earliest of these pieces, the portrait by the Jewish avant-garde Expressionist painter Max Oppenheimer (1885–1954), which Freud sat for in January 1909, is in some ways the most unusual. Commissioned by Paul Federn as a wedding present for Freud's daughter Mathilde, it depicts Freud most unusually without his trademark beard (see [Figure 8](#)), which he had shaved off the previous year while visiting his brother Emanuel in an apparent effort to cultivate a younger look. While Freud was seemingly happy with the portrait, giving Oppenheimer a copy of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in gratitude (Toegel 2024, 275), Mathilde disliked it and returned it to Federn. Rarely seen afterwards, it was donated following Federn's suicide in May 1954 to the New York Psychoanalytic Society, where it remains. The relative obscurity of this image reflects not merely its rejection by its intended recipient, but more especially its curation out of the canon of Freud images, its depiction of the beardless Freud introducing a dissonant element into what would become the familiar iconography.

By 1913 Freud and his ideas were increasingly well known. In a move that was arguably both reflective of and sought to capitalise on this, the Viennese psychoanalytic publisher and bookseller Hugo Heller (1870–1923) commissioned the Prague-born Jewish painter and printmaker Max Pollak (1886–1970) to make an etching of Freud. Pollak had previously studied under Ferdinand Schmutzer, of whom more later, at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Beginning in November 1913, Pollak took seven sittings to complete

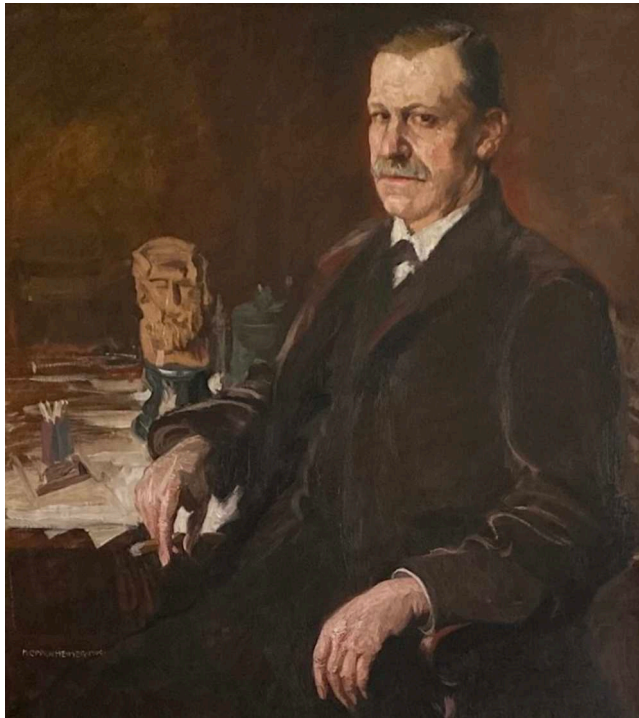


Figure 8. Max Oppenheimer's January 1909 painting of Freud, the only image of him in adulthood without his beard. Source: New York Psychoanalytic Society & Institute.

the necessary face-to-face work (Paskauskas 1993, 247; Toegel 2024, 331). In the soft-ground etching, marked with a dramatic use of light and shade, Freud sits at his desk, pen in hand, illuminated by the light from the window, with a phalanx of Egyptian and Graeco-Roman figurines facing him, their backs silhouetted by the light, positioning would-be viewers further back. With Freud and the desk positioned on a diagonal, Freud gazes as if in thought, past his “old and grubby gods” (Masson 1985, 363; see also the discussion by Molnar 2006), towards what might be an imagined wider company of viewers (see Figure 9). Completed in early 1914 in a limited edition of 50 copies, each signed and (advertised as being, but not all were) numbered by Pollak, the first 25 copies were printed on Imperial Japan paper, while numbers 26–50 were issued on Van Geldern laid paper. Heller offered these for sale from his premises, the Wiener Graphisches Kabinett at Bauernmarkt 3, at 100 kroner (or 85 marks) and 60 kroner (50 marks) respectively, and ran half-page advertisements for them on the back cover of *Imago* from 1914 through to 1918 (see Figure 10). Sales were depressed no doubt due to the outbreak of the First World War. In 1922 Hugo Heller & Co. became a public limited company, trading as Bukum A.G., and reprinted the etching under their new imprint. It was also republished in various books and periodicals, including in *The Graphic* (23 April 1927, 13) and the 1933 and 1936 Dutch editions of Freud’s *Introductory Lectures* (*Inleiding tot de studie der Psychoanalyse*). Later, Pollak designed the diploma recording the conferral of the honorary title “Citizen of the city of Vienna” on Freud, which was belatedly presented to him on his seventieth birthday in May 1926, and drew him for a second time in December 1930 (Toegel 2024, 500).

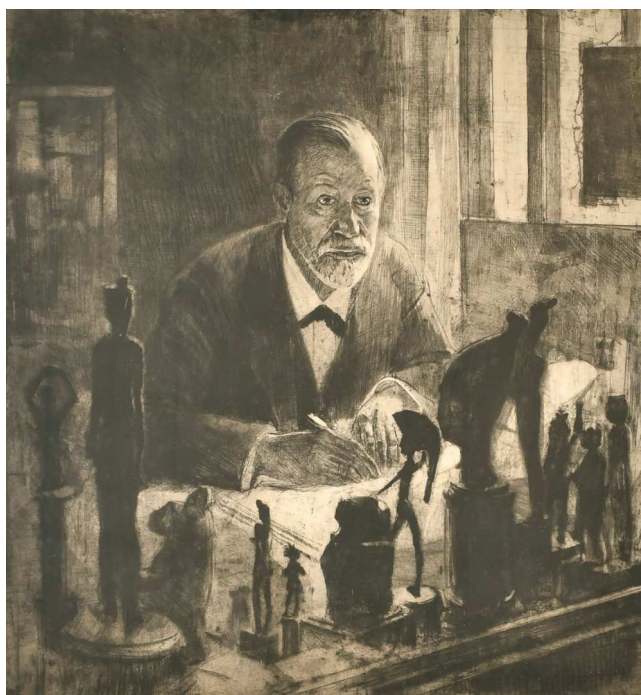


Figure 9. Max Pollak’s 1914 etching of Freud in Vienna. Source: Bonhams.



Figure 10. Hugo Heller's advertisement of Max Pollak's etching in *Imago*. Source: Author's collection.

Not long after Pollak's engraving appeared on the market in 1914, the German-Jewish artist Hermann Struck (1876–1944) – who was a nephew of Abraham Berliner (1833–1915), an acquaintance of Halberstadt, and later a friend of Arnold Zweig – approached Freud for permission to draw him with a view to producing a lithograph and an etching. Both were in Carlsbad at the time and Freud sat for him there on 27 July 1914, the day before Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. During the sitting Freud was keen to discuss his own writings on art, continuing a theme he had begun with Pollak. The resultant images depicted Freud in profile, facing left on the lithograph and right on the etching, reminiscent of Oliver's photograph and Schwerdtner's medal. Oriented thus, Freud's image may be the asymmetrical object of the gaze. Five proof versions of the lithograph and three of the etching were ready by 2 November, which increased following Freud's feedback to seven lithographs and four etchings by the end of the month. In January 1915 Freud signed the initial numbered limited-edition run of 20 etchings and 20 engravings in pencil with his surname to aid Struck in marketing them (Freud 1915a; Struck 1914). Struck had hoped Hugo Heller would sell the edition, though his pre-existing contract with Pollak seems to have stymied this.

Of the two images, Freud preferred the etching and it is an example of this which Martha hung above her desk. Writing to Struck on 7 November 1914 about this, Freud declared that:

The etching strikes me as a charming idealization. This is how I should like to look, and I may even be on the way there, but it seems to me I have got stuck halfway. Everything that is shaggy and angular about me you have made smooth and rounded ... You have put my [hair] parting on one side. Furthermore, my hairline runs across the temple in a rather concave curve. By rounding it off you have greatly improved upon it. Very likely this

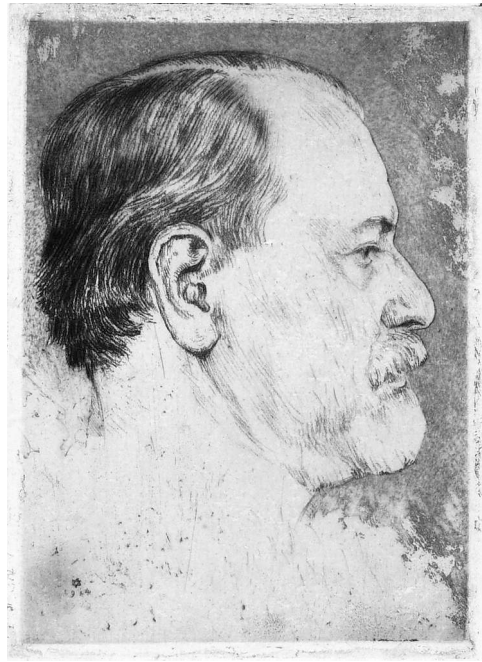


Figure 11. Hermann Struck's 1914 etching of Freud in Vienna. Source: Peter Harrington Books, London.

correction was intentional. In a word, I feel the etching to be a great honour. Each time I look at it I like it better. (Ernst Freud 1961, 312)

Later, in 1920, Struck reworked the right facing etching, softening the appearance of Freud's jawline (see Figure 11), and Freud commented enthusiastically on the proof print in July. Published this time as part of the limited edition *Köpfe* (1920) portfolio, only 150 numbered sets were produced, of which the first 50 were a deluxe issue, each etching on watermarked laid paper being signed by both artist and sitter.⁵ Neither the 1914 nor the 1920 editions were apparently reproduced elsewhere during Freud's life-time, something that perhaps contributed to the two produced editions retaining the aura of exclusive fine art (Benjamin 1939).

A similar comment may be made about the next piece, the bronze bust of Freud sculpted by David Paul Königsberger (1890–1956). Commissioned in 1920 by Max Eitingon, Königsberger began the work from photographs before completing it in July over nine sittings with Freud. In the sessions Freud placed a figurine from his collection next to Königsberger in order "to please him" (Toegel 2024, 389; see also Königsberger 1936 and May 2006, for the artist's recollections of Freud). Freud signed the final model himself. The finished bust, cast in bronze, framed Freud within a neo-classical tradition, with bared shoulders and without glasses, his hair and beard rather smoothed, his expression serious (see Figure 12). Eitingon, on behalf of the Secret Committee, gifted Freud the completed bust on his

⁵Of the various examples of the Freud etching from the deluxe issue seen, all carry Freud's signature, this time as "Sigm. Freud", in pencil. There were 12 etchings in each portfolio, the other sitters being Lovis Corinth, Albert Einstein, Gerhart Hauptmann, Wolfgang Heine, Ludwig von Hofmann, Arno Holz, Arthur Nikisch, Wilhelm Ostwald, Max Reinhardt, Richard Strauss, and August von Wassermann.



Figure 12. David Paul Königsberger's 1920 bust of Freud, the sculptor's personal copy as signed by Freud on the bottom right. Source: Oliver Ottenschläger/Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung Vienna.

sixty-fifth birthday (Jones 1957, 26, 83; Wittenberger and Tögel 2001, 116). Writing to Eitingon, Freud suggested that "It gives the impression of a head of Brutus, with a rather overwhelming effect" (Jones 1957, 26). Similarly, he told Ferenczi that it was "a ghostly threatening bronze doppelgänger", alluding most probably to his recent paper "The uncanny" (Freud 1919), before adding that "there is no doubt about its artistic worth" (Falzeder, Brabant, and Giampieri-Deutsch 2000, 55). Photographs of the bust appeared in Theodor Reik's (1924) *Das Zelt* article on Freud and Franz Kieslinger's (1932) article on Königsberger in *Menorah*. It was subsequently donated to the Goethe-Haus in Frankfurt in 1932, following Freud's receipt of the Goethe Prize in July 1930. This original cast, if not destroyed by the Nazis, would have been lost when the museum was destroyed by Allied bombing in 1944. The Vienna Society gifted a cast to the University of Jerusalem in May 1936 (Königsberger 1936) and the artist's own cast was included in the exhibition of 20th Century German Art held at the New Burlington Galleries in London in July 1938 (*West London Observer*, 22 July 1938, 10) and the Royal Academy's 1941 spring exhibition. Ernest Jones later presented a cast of the bust to the University of Vienna and it was installed in their arcade court on 4 February 1955 (Jones 1957, 242). A wax copy was displayed as part of the American Psychoanalytic Association's Freud Centenary Exhibit held in Chicago in April 1956. Following Königsberger's death,⁶ his bronze cast passed to

⁶Königsberger came to Britain as a refugee before the Second World War and settled in Chelsea, in London, where he continued to work as a sculptor and portrait painter. Interned for seven months during the war as an enemy alien, Königsberger was released in recognition of his significant reputation as an artist and sculptor. Having become a British citizen in 1948 (see The National Archives, London, ref: HO 334/219/46550), and changed his name to David

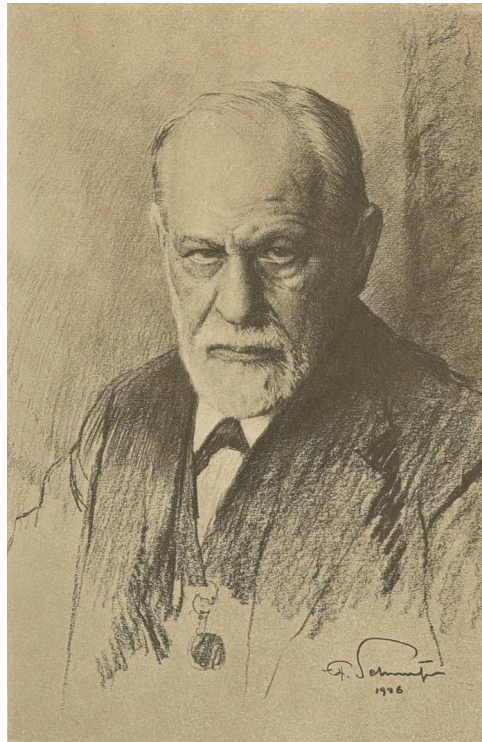


Figure 13. Ferdinand Schmutzer's 1926 etching of Freud in Vienna. Source: Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung Vienna.

his sister Ida Pulay and thence to her daughter Uli Lloyd Pack (*The Observer*, 1 November 1969), who later donated it to the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna.

The penultimate piece to be discussed here is the Ferdinand Schmutzer (1870–1928) etching of Freud. A distinguished Jewish engraver, artist, and photographer, Schmutzer was a professor in the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Freud had agreed in February 1926 to sit for him. Working initially from photographs he took, Schmutzer visited Freud for several sittings on Sundays to complete the work (Schmutzer 2008, 143; Toegel 2024, 445). In the etching, which embodies Schmutzer's distinctive use of light and shade, Freud – with his head slightly lowered, resulting in a degree of lower scleral show – gazes directly at the viewer (see Figure 13), echoing Halberstadt's 1909 and 1919 photographs. In large (600 × 448 mm) and small (354 × 278 mm) formats, at least three variants of the former and five of the latter exist (Weixlgärtner 1930), with their production continuing after Schmutzer's death.

Contrary to his past experiences of being shown proofs prior to a work's release, Freud first encountered Schmutzer's finished representation of him in the windows of Artaria & Co. around the time of his seventieth birthday. Writing to Schmutzer on 10 May 1926 (by which time he had received his own copy), Freud remarked that friends and family

Paul, he died suddenly on 3 May 1956. His funeral service was conducted by the Rev. John D. Pearce-Higgins at Putney Vale Crematorium on 8 May and his ashes were scattered there in the Garden of Remembrance (see also the *Westminster & Pimlico News*, 11 May 1956, 4 and the *Chelsea News & General Advertiser*, 15 June 1956, 4).

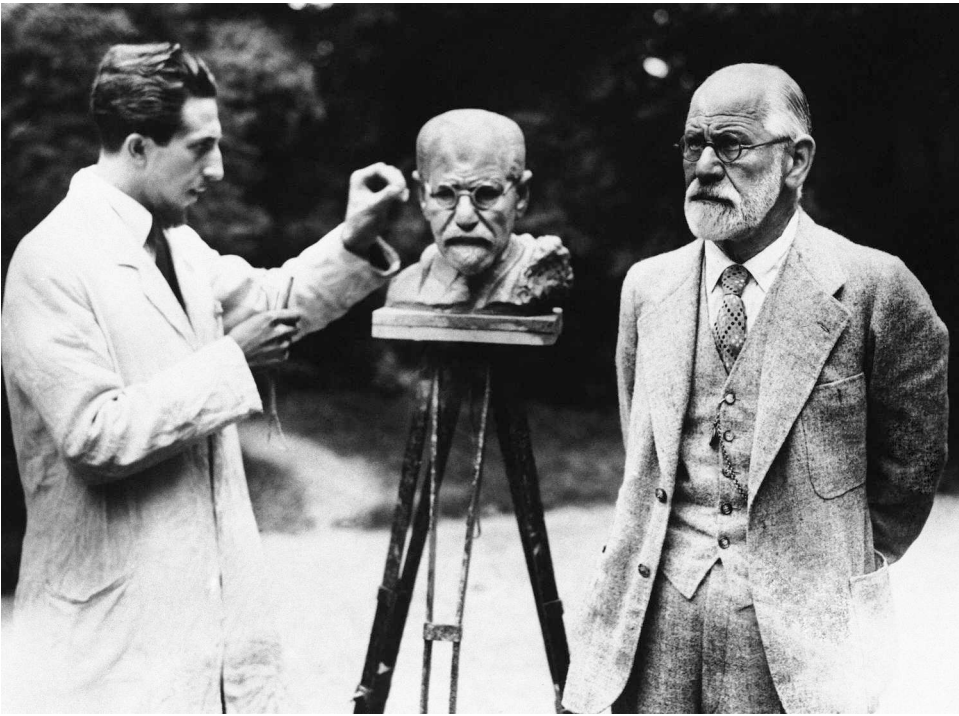


Figure 14. Oscar Nemon, Freud, and the bust of Freud in July 1931 at the Mautner Villa in Pötzleinsdorf. Source: Associated Press/Alamy Stock Photo.

ultimately thought it a good likeness, adding that for him: “It gives me immense pleasure and I feel the need to thank you for the trouble you took in rendering my nasty face and to reiterate the assurance that only now do I feel preserved for posterity” (Freud 1926; see also Ernst Freud 1961, 370). Echoing as it does his earlier 1913 comments to Max Halberstadt, Freud’s concern for his historical legacy here as captured in visual art is noteworthy. Versions of the engraving were reproduced as the frontispiece to the Freud seventieth birthday issues of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* (May 1926, 12, 3) and the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (July–October 1926, 7, 3–4), following which they appeared as the frontispiece to the 1927 edition of the *Almanach*, in George Viereck’s (1927) *American Monthly* article on Freud, in volume 10 of Freud’s *Gesammelte Schriften* (1928), in the 1930 and 1934 Chinese edition of Freud’s *An Autobiographical Study*, in the 1932 and 1937 Japanese editions of Freud’s *Analytische Liebestheorie* (*Analytical Libido Theory*, volume 9 of his translated works), and the 1932 Czech *Anthology of Psycho-analytic Works* (*Sborník Psychoanalytických Prací*), edited by Emanuel Windholz, 120 copies of which formed a special edition, each of which was signed by Freud. Different versions also appeared on the dust jackets of the 1935 New York edition of Freud’s *Autobiography* and its 1936 German iteration *Selbstdarstellung*. On 20 August 1936 Freud sent Schmutzer an inscribed copy of the latter edition with his thanks.

The final likeness to be considered here is the bust created by the Jewish sculptor Oscar Nemon (1906–1985) in July 1931 during Freud’s summer stay at Mautner Villa in Pötzleinsdorf (see Figure 14). Paul Federn – on behalf of the Vienna Society –

brokered the introduction, to which Freud agreed after some reluctance. The resultant bust, larger than life size, depicted Freud in glasses, his expression solemn or perhaps resigned, his facial features softened, especially in detailing his hair and beard; a certain “modernist reduction” (see Zec 2023, for a detailed discussion of this and Nemon’s other Freud sculptures). Writing to Max Eitingon during the process, Freud noted that “The head which the gaunt, goatee-bearded artist has fashioned from the dirt is a very good and an astonishingly lifelike impression of me” (Freud 1931). In fact, on the basis of the clay original, Nemon produced three heads: in artificial stone, bronze, and (uniquely for the sculptor) wood. Offered his choice of these at the end of October, Freud opted to have the wooden bust. The stone and bronze examples apparently went to Alexander Freud and Heinrich Meng respectively (Meng 1956). Nemon himself exhibited the bust in his highly successful *Têtes* show at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1932. The wooden head was subsequently depicted on the dust jackets of Freud’s 1932 German edition of *Vier psychoanalytische Krankengeschichten* (*Four Psychoanalytic Case Histories*) and the 1934 Portuguese translation of *An Autobiographical Study* (*Minha Vida e a Psicanálise*), and as the frontispiece to the 1933 *Almanach*. The bust and the process of its creation attracted considerable attention in the popular press, including on the cover of the 20 July 1932 issue of the Parisian fashion magazine *VU* (see Figure 15), which was followed inside with perhaps the most extensively illustrated feature on Freud in popular press up to this date (Bandy 1932).

Nemon subsequently suggested to Freud that, aside from his brother Alexander who asked to also have a bronze cast of the 1931 head, there had been no demand for further copies. In his reputed response, Freud declared, probably ironically: “Have no illusions; you will have to wait three generations before such a request is made from my followers” (Rodman 2003, 372). When this reported conversation took place is unclear, though Nemon recalled that at that time in his career he was philosophically disinclined to produce multiple copies. Be that as it may, Freud clearly knew better the demand for his image among his followers and the public at this stage (Freud 1930d) and Nemon would revise his stand on commercial reproduction. Thus, in 1934 Nemon produced a smaller casting of the bust, some eight inches tall, which was advertised for sale through the Verlag at US\$30 or £6 each (see also *Almanac* 1936). Having sent an example to Anna Freud, she thanked Nemon “most sincerely for the most extraordinary delight that you have given me”, before going on to add that, “The bust is admired by everyone who sees it. To me it appears – I hardly dare say this – even more human and animated than the larger one” (Anna Freud 1934). Later, in 1936, Freud again sat for Nemon, this time for an intended monumental sculpture. Smaller castings of this (and of related studies, half bodies, heads, and a medal) were subsequently produced, though it was not until 1970 that the first full-size version was produced and unveiled at Swiss Cottage, in London. A picture of Nemon’s 1936 model for the statue appeared in the 1937 edition of the *Almanach*. In a revealing concatenation, Nemon would go on to sculpt Sándor Ferenczi, Paul Federn, Marie Bonaparte, René Laforgue, Adolf Storfer, Ernest Jones, Melanie Klein, Abraham Brill, Donald Winnicott, Peter Glauber, Phyllis Greenacre, and Margaret Mahler.

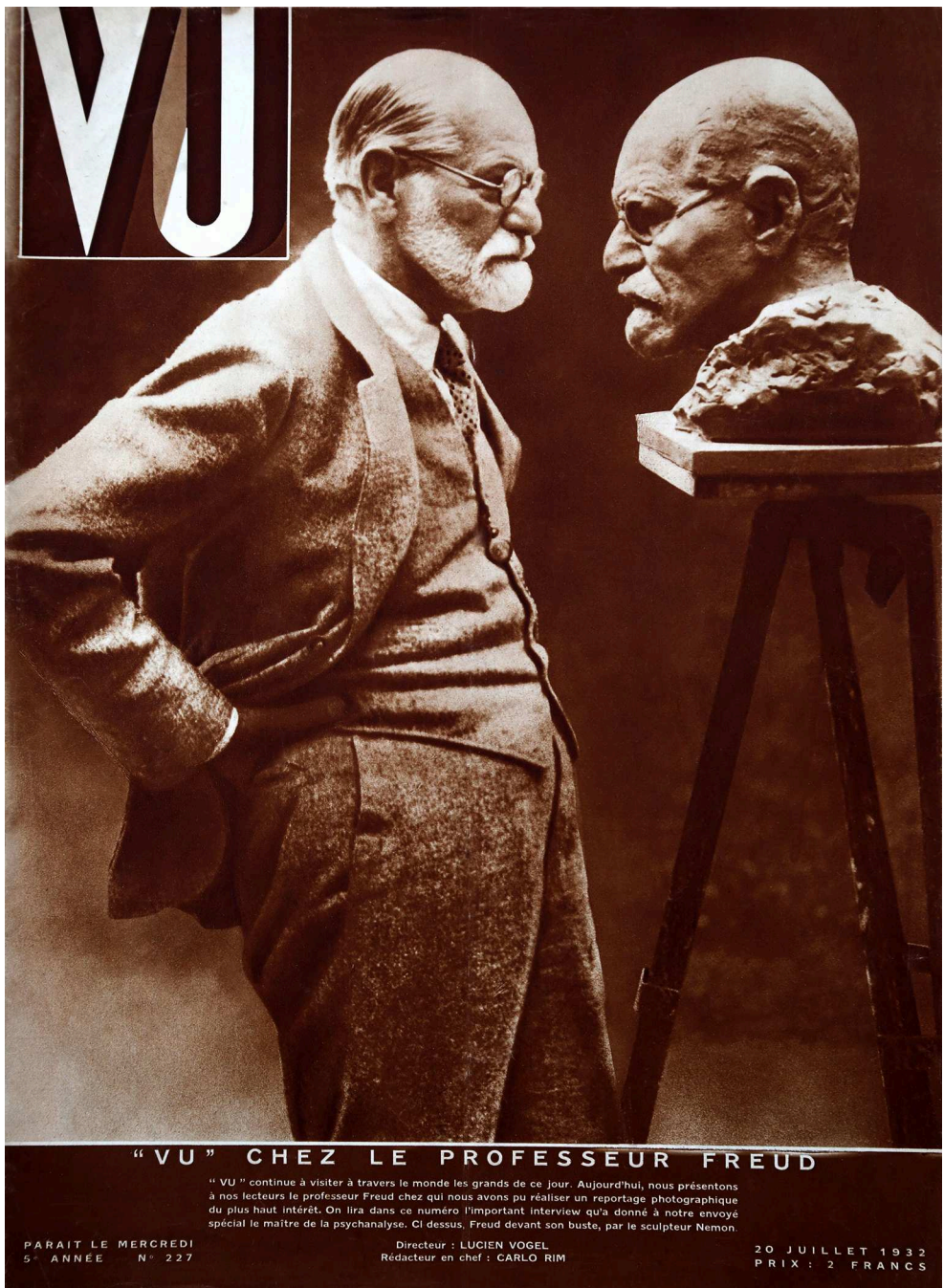


Figure 15. *VU* magazine cover, 20 July 1932, depicting Freud inspecting his bust, as sculpted by Oscar Nemon in July 1931. Source: Alamy Stock Photo.

Brand-Freud

Ambitious and keen for recognition, both for himself and for psychoanalysis (Breger 2000, 2009; Masson 1985, 266; Tögel 2013), Freud sought to disseminate his work through a combination of texts, treatments, and teaching, and later through colleagues and interested followers, aided by processes of institutionalisation. Publishing texts had been a key to the dissemination of ideas and building brands since at least Luther (Pettegree 2015) and this was no different with Freud, whose writing was widely admired for its elegance, subtlety, and narrative power. However, Freud's entry into this marketplace of ideas in the opening years of the twentieth century coincided with both an increased public interest in the biographies of society's significant actors and a growing visual appetite to see such figures, which was catalysed by developments in photography, lithography, and the birth of cinema. For Freud, who was ambivalent about having his photograph taken or sitting for portraits (and famously opposed to his would-be biographers), images were a language of the unconscious and culturally he related the Jewish prohibition against making graven images (that might lead to idolatry) to an abstract elevated conception of God, one that *cannot* be seen, which produced "a triumph of intellectuality over sensuality or, strictly speaking, an instinctual renunciation" (Freud 1939, 113).⁷ In spite of his engagement with the Moses of Michelangelo and his passion for collecting antique statuary, it was a view Freud was sympathetic to.

This hard-won advance in intellectuality, as Freud put it in *Moses and Monotheism* (an increased capacity for symbolisation and abstract thinking), however, was far from ubiquitous and many of his colleagues and followers not only wanted Freud's captivating texts, but also wished to possess or behold his image. A small unofficial trade had begun in these by 1907. Jung, for example, boasted to Abraham in January 1908 that his wife had recently bought him "a really superb photograph of Freud, ca. 12 × 20 cm" for 10 francs from a Zurich photographer and that Abraham could procure a copy too if he wanted. Jung had in fact taken the original photograph himself and in it Freud appeared "wonderfully handsome ... The best picture of Freud I have ever seen" (Adler and Jaffé 1973, 6). Not wholly comfortable with requests for his image from unfamiliar colleagues and still less from the wider public, Freud nevertheless conceded to service requests more often than not (see Brecht et al. 1985, 48, for a counter-example). Signed photographs were particularly popular.

By 1914 Hugo Heller was selling the lithographs and etchings of Freud from his shop in Vienna and he probably also stocked Max Halberstadt's official photographs. Other retailers seem to have also participated in this merchandising. With the establishment of the Verlag in 1919 (Marinelli 1995), it became the main supply hub for official Freud photographs and art (Freud 1929b). Marketing these was predominantly a low-key activity, which was now accepted by Freud, albeit without enthusiasm (see for example Freud's [1925a] very understated reply to Ernst Heimeran when the latter enquired about representations of Freud in visual art). Nevertheless, the trade in images had now become official. Analysts visiting Vienna would often purchase photographs from the Verlag's offices and some would attempt to have Freud autograph them if they were able to

⁷This is James Strachey's translation, wherein 'Geistigkeit' is rendered as 'intellectuality'; in the original English translation, Katherine Jones had rendered this more literally as 'spirituality'.

secure a visit. When Robert Knight – perhaps pushing his luck slightly – sought his autograph on *three* photographs he had bought in August 1936, Freud was initially reluctant to sign the second and third images. He did so, however, when Knight pressed his request, explaining that Freud knew the two other analysts he was buying those images for and that they would both prize them much more with his added signature (Knight 1937).

This form of relatively personal dissemination of his image Freud seemed to recognise as a marker of his colleagues' filiation to him, wherein material images helped mediate separation and sustain a degree of connection (as Abraham had also noted; see Falzeder 2018, 88). Within the nascent psychoanalytic movement, images of Freud thus functioned as an adjunct to texts and teachings in cementing the emotional and intellectual bonds. Despite his reservations, Freud also found these signifiers helpful at times. In 1909, for example, in the midst of his landmark though unsettling visit to the United States, Freud was pleased to encounter his own photograph hanging on the wall in A. A. Brill's New York apartment, a visual proof of their positive relationship (Bergstein 2010, 265). And he knew, not least from his own visual and tactile interactions with his collection of antiquities, how useful they might be in aiding thinking.

At an institutional level, local branches of the *Verein* would typically hang an image of Freud in their premises, indicating their values and allegiance or fealty. This was a not-insignificant declaration of faith, and interference with such iconic paraphernalia in the institutional analytic setting typically revealed profound ideological value shifts. Perhaps the most notorious example of this occurred in 1935 when the portrait of Freud was replaced by that of Hitler in the Berlin offices of the *Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft* (DPG), its Jewish membership having been pushed to resign as an appeasing manoeuvre towards the National Socialists and their anti-Semitic ideology. Otto Fenichel's protests about this iconographic switch, which he saw as marking a capitulation to Nazism, were without effect (Brecht et al. 1985, 181; Roazen 2001).

Fenichel's stance highlights how such images were the subjects of psychic investment, particularly by those in the psychoanalytic movement. One illustration of this was highlighted by Theodor Reik. He described looking at his Max Pollak etching of Freud, as if by accident, when he was struggling with his writing. It was 19 June 1940, almost nine months after Freud's death, but for a moment it was as if Freud was resurrected, as if he stepped out of the past, warm and encouraging. The impression passed and Reik was, as he put it, "called again to the labor of sorrow, that unseen, prolonged process of separation in which we take leave of our dear departed" (Reik 1940, x; cf. Reik 1956, x). It was something of a transitional phenomenon, a waking version of the good dream (Khan 1962). From another vertex, Galatzer-Levy (1988) reported supervision in the early 1970s with Heinz Kohut, whose small study was dominated by Schmutzer's etching of Freud, an "icon" which "literally hung over us as we presented cases". Here, it was as though they were under the uncanny gaze of Freud himself, illustrating one of the ways in which modern power relies on internalised (or, in this case, semi-internalised) surveillance and the prospect of judgement, exciting or otherwise (Sedlak 2019). Recalling these supervision seminars, Galatzer-Levy felt Schmutzer's Freud had a "benign interested expression", though reviewing the etching today (over 50 years later) he thought it bore an "angry expression" (personal communication, August 2025). Kohut had about 100 copies of the Schmutzer portrait reprinted, on a smaller

scale, which he used as gifts particularly to graduating candidates from the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute (Thomas Kohut, personal communication, August 2025).

Turning to the mass distribution of his image through print media, Freud was unenthusiastic about the prospect. In July 1928, for example, on being told by Marie Bonaparte that she had accidentally omitted his photograph from the French translation of *An Autobiographical Study*, Freud replied that:

Adding pictures of an author seems to me a bad habit, a *nuisance*, a concession to the public's bad taste. What the author looks like is of no concern to the reader. If he wishes, he can, in his imagination, without being contradicted, provide him with an ideal beauty. (Amouroux 2022, 393 [emphasis as in the original]; cf. Jones 1957, 151)

Freud's claim on this occasion was both late and rather hollow: he had sanctioned the publication of his image in books, journals, and other print media for the previous two decades. Brand Freud was by this time in full swing, with Freud's visual image being used to promote and popularise the inextricably intertwined brands of Freud and psychoanalysis.

Concluding remarks

When, in 2001, Riccardo Steiner “wondered if Freud, like other artists, was compelled again and again, to work on his self-portrait” (Blum and Kafka 2002, 484), he probably had in mind the various iterations in textual form of the history of psychoanalysis that Freud published over the years rather than actual portraits of the professor. Relatedly, many others have commented on the ways in which Freud's followers curated his reputational image posthumously (e.g. Borch-Jacobsen 2012; Marinelli and Barber 2004), though again without much reference to actual images of him. It is a somewhat curious neglect, perhaps partly attributable to the very ubiquity of these visual images within the psychoanalytic field.

The present study addresses this neglect, revealing the complex relationship Freud had with his image, and its concrete visual representation, and how photographs and other forms of fine art came to be pressed into service advertising the conjoined brands of Freud and psychoanalysis. In contrast to Freud's conflicted relationship with his image and what it might signify for him, his early followers showed a considerable appetite for them, promoting their creation and publication, and collecting the results. Max Halberstadt and his fellow visual artists, in their turn, often gained considerably, not least from having Freud as a distinguished client.

As numerous authors have theorised in relation to Freud's own collecting (Muensterberger 1994; O'Donoghue 2019; Rizzuto 1998), the demand in the psychoanalytic movement to collect or for possession of Freud's image was likely a way of managing transience and sustaining valued object-relationships through representational concrete forms, as well as asserting affiliations at a social level. This dynamic process continues a century later. To what extent Freud and his surrogate images were transformed into icons and idealised in this process by his early and subsequent followers remains a moot point. A psychoanalytic identity will entail a certain identification with Freud's work (Erlich 2023; Wille 2008), and his curated visual image, with its light and shadow, is an inevitable accompaniment to any profound and at the same time critical engagement with him in his totality. And Reik's aforementioned comments on mourning (“the labor of sorrow, that unseen, prolonged process of separation in

which we take leave of our dear departed” [1940, x]) are particularly apposite here. Freud’s photographs still help us to think and to feel.

Acknowledgements

I particularly thank Richard H. Armstrong, Michael Beckers, Arkadi Blatow, Daniela Finzi, Philip Kuhn, Luc Mary-Rabine, Peter Rosenthal, Christfried Tögel, and Wilfried Weinke for their help with the present article.

Translations of summary

Freud et l’utilisation de l’iconographie dans la présentation de son profil public. Des images visuelles de Freud abondent dans la culture populaire et psychanalytique, bien qu’elles aient été largement court-circuitées sans examen dans la littérature. Cette négligence vient voiler une compréhension appropriée de cette part importante de l’iconographie psychanalytique et, en particulier, la genèse de la volonté de Freud (et de ses premiers collègues et autres intervenants essentiels) de promouvoir la « marque Freud » et la psychanalyse, localement, nationalement et internationalement. Offrant une première recherche approfondie sur cette question, cet article examine la relation de Freud à son imagerie, les fonctions que celle-ci a exercé vis à vis de la promotion de la reconnaissance et l’affiliation, et les formes soigneusement sélectionnées qu’elle a revêtues de 1906 à 1939. En procédant ainsi, une attention particulière est portée à l’imagerie de Freud dans trois domaines : la médaille de 1906 de Carl Scherwdtner, les photographies de Max Halberstadt, et une sélection de portraits et de sculptures ; dans chaque cas, l’accent est mis sur la dissémination de ces images dans la littérature psychanalytique et au travers d’objets matériels. Ce faisant, l’article révèle un mécanisme sous-évalué dans la propagation de la psychanalyse, ainsi que certaines des fonctions vitales assurées par une telle imagerie.

Freud und die Verwendung von Ikonografie bei der Gestaltung seines öffentlichen Profils. Visuelle Darstellungen von Freud sind in der Populär- und Psychoanalysekultur reichlich vorhanden, wurden in der Literatur jedoch nicht weiter betrachtet. Diese Vernachlässigung verhindert ein angemessenes Verständnis dieses wichtigen Teils der psychoanalytischen Ikonografie und insbesondere der Entstehung von Freuds Bestreben (und dem seiner frühen Kollegen und anderer wichtiger Akteure), die „Marke Freud“ und die Psychoanalyse auf lokaler, nationaler und internationaler Ebene zu fördern. Als erste eingehende Untersuchung zu diesem Thema befasst sich der vorliegende Artikel mit Freuds Verhältnis zu seiner Bilddarstellung, deren Funktion bei der Förderung von Anerkennung und Zugehörigkeit sowie den wichtigsten kuratierten „offiziellen“ Formen, die diese in der Zeit von 1906 bis 1939 annahm. Dabei wird Freuds Bildsprache in drei Bereichen genau untersucht: die Medaille von Carl Scherwdtner aus dem Jahr 1906, die Fotografien von Max Halberstadt sowie ausgewählte Porträts und Skulpturen, wobei jeweils darauf eingegangen wird, wie diese Bilder in der psychoanalytischen Literatur und als materielle Objekte verbreitet wurden. Dabei deckt der Artikel einen unterschätzten Mechanismus bei der Verbreitung der Psychoanalyse und einige der wichtigen Funktionen auf, die diese Bildsprache erfüllte.

Freud e l’uso dell’iconografia nella costruzione del suo profilo pubblico. Le immagini di Freud sono onnipresenti nella cultura popolare come in quella psicoanalitica, eppure sono state per lo più trascurate dalla letteratura critica. Questa mancanza di attenzione ha impedito di comprendere in modo adeguato questa componente fondamentale dell’iconografia psicoanalitica e, in particolare, della genesi dell’impulso di Freud – condiviso da alcuni dei suoi primi collaboratori e da altri protagonisti del movimento psicoanalitico – a promuovere il “brand Freud” e la psicoanalisi a livello locale, nazionale e internazionale. Proponendo la prima analisi approfondita di questo tema, il presente lavoro esamina il rapporto di Freud con la propria immagine, le funzioni che tale rapporto ha svolto nel promuovere il suo riconoscimento pubblico e un senso di affiliazione, e oltre a ciò le principali forme “ufficiali” e curate che tale iconografia ha assunto nel periodo compreso tra il 1906 e il 1939. A tal fine, verrà condotta un’analisi dettagliata dell’uso dell’immagine di Freud in tre ambiti: la medaglia del 1906 realizzata da Carl Scherwdtner, le fotografie di Max Halberstadt e una scelta di

ritratti e sculture, mostrando per ciascuno di questi casi le modalità di diffusione delle immagini tanto nella letteratura psicoanalitica quanto come oggetti materiali. Attraverso questa analisi l'articolo mette in luce un meccanismo finora sottovalutato nella diffusione della psicoanalisi, e insieme anche alcune delle funzioni cruciali svolte dalle pratiche iconografiche in esame.

Freud y el uso de la iconografía en la curaduría de su perfil público. Las imágenes visuales de Freud abundan en la cultura popular y psicoanalítica, aunque han sido por lo general dejadas de lado, sin escrutinio en la literatura. Este descuido dificulta una comprensión adecuada de esta importante parte de la iconografía psicoanalítica y, en particular, del origen del impulso de Freud (y de los primeros colegas y otros actores clave) de promover “la marca Freud” y el psicoanálisis en el ámbito local, nacional e internacional. El presente trabajo ofrece la primera exploración a fondo de este tema. Considera la relación de Freud con el manejo de su imagen, la función de ello en la promoción del reconocimiento y la afiliación, y las principales formas “oficiales” curadas que adoptó durante el periodo de 1906 a 1939. Para ello, se examina detalladamente el manejo de la imagen de Freud en tres campos: la medalla de 1906 de Carl Schwerdtner, las fotografías de Max Halberstadt y una selección de retratos y esculturas, y se señala en cada caso cómo se difundieron estas imágenes en la literatura psicoanalítica y como objetos materiales. En dicho proceso, este trabajo revela un mecanismo subestimado en la propagación del psicoanálisis y algunas de las funciones vitales que cumplieron dichas imágenes.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Patient anonymisation

Potentially personally identifying information presented in this article that relates directly or indirectly to an individual, or individuals, has been changed to disguise and safeguard the confidentiality, privacy and data protection rights of those concerned, in accordance with the journal's anonymisation policy.

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