CHIM & THE MEXICAN SUITCASE

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ABSTRACT

“Chim and the Mexican Suitcase” analyzes the photographer Chim’s negative sequences which are contained in the so-called Mexican Suitcase. This is a holistic study which relates Chim’s subjectivity towards the narrative process found in his photographing of the Spanish Civil War by considering the visual narrative’s evolution that both the photographer and the French press (Regards magazine) experienced when creating photo-reports in 1937. The thesis also analyzes how technology changes the perceptions and scholarly practices of visual studies.
My debts of gratitude begin to “La Caixa Bank” for sponsoring my Masters program at Georgetown University. I am very grateful as well to my advisers Prof. Michael Coventry and Dean James Schaefer for their unconditional support, wise suggestions, and for encouraging the interdisciplinary approach of this project. I owe special thanks to Cynthia Young, curator of Robert Capa’s collection at the International Center of Photography in first place for giving me the opportunity to do research on the negatives, for her trust and time dedicated to listen to my ideas; and secondly, for her orientation and advice, which finally inspired the path of my thesis project. I also received generous assistance from Claartje Van Dyck and Chris George at the ICP, whose humor and help made my months of research a rewarding experience. In Spain, thank to Jenaro F. de Retana from Amorebieta-Etxano’s archive for helping me to identify Chim’s photographs in that location, and to Guillermo Tabernilla of Sancho de Beurko, as well to all my friends that helped me giving me accurate information related to the identification of different negatives, Guillermo, and Ame, and to the MP for being always there. I also would like to thank Carles Castello Catchot, and Javier Bustos Salvagno for listening my endless conversations about Chim’s photographs; I thank their patience and suggestions. My final debts of gratitude belong to my beloved family, Gabino and Ale, and my parents Mercedes and Gabino, who have always showed unconditional support to my life projects. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my grandfather Gabino Gonzalez Quintana, who personally suffered the Spanish Civil War, and whose smile I saw reflected in every photograph of these young militiamen.
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** 

1

**Chapter One: Context**

1. The Mexican Suitcase  
   1.a. What is the Mexican Suitcase?  
   1.b. The History (-ies) of the Mexican Suitcase  

2. Photojournalism on the Making  
   2.a. The rise of the illustrated magazines  
   2.b. The illustrated magazines in France  
   2.c. Regards: Publisher of photographs from the Mexican Suitcase

3. Chim  

**Chapter Two: Analysis**

3. Chim’s trips to Spain.  
   3.a. First trip, April 1936  
   3.b. Second trip, August 1936  
   3.c. Third trip, January 1937  
   3.c.1. Roll of film number 001 – Bilbao, Madrid & Estremadura

4. Regards & The Mexican Suitcase  
   4.a.1. Pouterman’s Article, “Religion and Civil War”  
   4.a.2. The Illustrated Report in the Cloister of Amorebieta.  
   4.a.3. The photographic illustration of Pouterman’s article.  

   4.b.1. The article, “A Field Mass in the Basque Front”  
   4.b.2. The Illustrated Report of the Field Mass  
   4.b.3. Chim’s notebook

   4.c.1. The article, “The Barbarians…”  
   4.c.1. The Illustrated Report of Palace of Liria

5. Appendix. Original transcripts of Regards articles in French  

**Chapter 3: Reflexion**

6. New technology applied to photography analysis.  

**Conclusion**  

101

**Thumbnail list credits**  

108

**Bibliography**  

109
Introduction

It seems ironic how obscurity kept one of the most important Spanish Civil War photographic treasures in perfect condition. Three small cardboard boxes that gathered dust for years preserved 126 rolls of film. These negatives not only constitute a unique part of the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War, but are indeed record of the first years of the work of Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and Chim (David Seymour).

This legacy arrived at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in NY in December 2007 after having been lost for almost 70 years. The previous whereabouts of the so-called Mexican Suitcase -- it was found in Mexico City -- is a compilation of rumors and personal testimonies. The curiosity and debate surrounding its discovery have added symbolic meaning to the Mexican suitcase, generating discourse in the public narrative, even though only part of its content has been revealed. The media covered the find closely, a consequence of the interest Robert Capa’s life and photographic work have always generated. The news headlines, in fact, were all directly related to him: "The Capa Cache,"¹ and "Lost negatives may shed new light on famed photographer."² The media almost ignored Chim and Gerda Taro, whose photographic work is also in the boxes.

Research on the Mexican Suitcase began when the negatives arrived at the ICP. They went first through the conservation process, where experts stated they were in very good conditions, deciding to keep the rolls of film in the original cardboard boxes. Later, more than 4,000 negatives were scanned in high-resolution and the images uploaded to the ICP’s archive database. Since then, the ICP Exhibition Department has been classifying and documenting the

¹ New York Times, January 27, 2008
² CNN, February 2, 2008
images. The researchers determined that the rolls of film contained in the boxes broke down roughly into a third each by Chim, Capa, and Taro and almost all of the photographs were taken during the Spanish Civil War, between May 1936 and spring 1939.³

I was assigned by Cynthia Young in June 2009, curator of the center’s Capa collections, to conduct research on the nearly 1,500 negatives which were attributed to Chim. Three months of research and discoveries encouraged me to write this thesis.

The Mexican Suitcase negatives have revealed surprisingly a wealth of new work made by a then-young Chim. Some of his iconic images’ negatives were also found in the rolls of film in the boxes such as a woman nursing a baby during a land reform meeting in Estremadura, May 1936, and his portraits of Dolores Ibárruri, known as “La Pasionaria.” But, there were also many unpublished negatives of his coverage of the Basque country and Asturias, as well as an as-get undocumented series portraying everyday Spanish life.

Chim’s work has not been fully appreciated, and it has been almost ignored in recent publications. I am not the first researcher who has noticed that Chim’s photographs of the Spanish Civil War have been overshadowed by the attention paid to Robert Capa, or Henri Cartier-Bresson, as well as to other Spanish photographers such as Augusti Centelles, Luis Torrens, or Francisco Segovia.

Trisha Ziff, the woman who finally recovered the Mexican Suitcase for the ICP, also supported this idea in her web page saying, “Capa’s work has dominated our visual understanding of the Spanish Civil War, and the media’s response to the boxes reflects this

³ http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitcase/
overwhelming obsession with his work.” This situation has also been the consequence of the previous lack of evidence about Chim’s work in the Spanish Civil War, since before these negatives were found; there were no solid collections available of Chim’s coverage during this period. The analysis of the Mexican Suitcase is finally bringing justice to Chim.

The appeal of this project has been discovering Chim’s unique point of view, while analyzing the media in which his photographs were published. This is one of the reasons I am focusing this thesis only on Chim’s work contained within the Mexican Suitcase. Another reason is that months of dealing on a daily basis with his negatives have given me the ability to analyze his work on a different level. Chim’s rolls of film contain invaluable sequences of his pictures, which will allow us for the first time to understand his approach to the process he followed in creating the narrative of the events he covered during the first years of his career, as special correspondent for Regards magazine, a French illustrated weekly.

The historiography of the Spanish Civil War is an endless compilation of books and chronicles of events. However, few of those works have examined the role of the press and their attempts to influence public opinion. Therefore, this thesis not only pursues an understanding of Chim’s composition, content, and the aesthetics of his photographs during the Spanish Civil War, but attempts a holistic study of his job as special reporter of Regards magazine, as well as an analysis of the illustrated reports published by this French magazine.

The role Chim played as an individual photographer will be considered one element in the complex business of generating meaning in the media. Maren Stange’s Symbols of Ideal Life:

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4 http://www.zonezero.com/exposiciones/fotografos/ziff/
Social Documentary in America 1890-1950⁵, is exemplary in refusing to center any research wholly on the achievement of photographers. She recognized the crucial role of editors, text-writers, agencies – the entire institutional structure that enabled the photographs to exist. Similarly, Preston said, “the most radical versions of individualism tend to imagine and celebrate journalists as free-floating, autonomous actors”⁶ ignoring their work environment. This examination of the mechanisms of the press as a whole will be integrated with Chim’s point of view, since the creation of an image with a camera lens always involves some degree of subjective choice through selection, framing, and personalization of the photographer.⁷

Coming from a discipline such as art history, where methodology emphasizes among other things formal studies, historical context, or specific meaning of the object, I had to consider for the purposes of this thesis expanding that approach, because the visual preeminence of Chim’s negatives, and the illustrated reports’ interpretation demanded a broad range of questions.

Margaret Dikovitskaya in her book “Visual culture”⁸ was crucial to understand the advantages of adopting the interplay among art history, cultural studies, and visual studies in this thesis. In her book, Dikovitskaya interviewed W.J.T. Mitchell, who commented that visual culture does not have a distinctive methodology. Rather she proposes that the researcher consider, “This is my field of inquiry, here is where I will focus my attention, and these are the

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⁶ Sturken, Marita. P. 16
questions I will ask.”

Following, this eclectic method allowed me to combine different processes in order to study the mechanics followed by Chim and Regards magazine in the creation and elaboration of the photo-reports.

David Campany, in his book “Photography and Cinema”, also emphasized the particular importance of maintaining photography studies as a hybrid and fluent discipline. For Campany, photography has always had its own complex engagement with time and movement, and has been more dispersed than any other medium: “Almost from the beginning [photography] was put to use across the spectrum of the arts and sciences.”

Photography studies spread so quickly that getting a grip on the particular nature of photography soon proved difficult, and has remained so, which is why interdisciplinarity is crucial to its success.

The interplay of the technical and the social has fundamentally shaped how photography has developed. Capturing moments and recording visual facts were its essence; these shaped everything from camera manufacture to the expectations of their users. Photographs have cross-cultural and cross-temporally transportable messages. Through which meaning is transmitted via shared codes. Julia Kristeva, speaking of the semiotic notion of intertextuality declared that “every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe of it.”

Every text and every reading (in our case visual reading) depends on prior codes.

Chapter One introduces a variety of concepts and contexts in order to better understand to the principal characters of this thesis: The Mexican Suitcase, Chim, and Regards magazine. The

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9 Interview with W.J.T. Mitchell in Visual Culture: the Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn (ibid.) P. 78
11 Ibid. p.11
12 Cited in “Semiotic for Beginners” by Daniel Chandler, p.1. www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html
result is a blend and clash of what Roland Barthes would define as the “already-written.” My hope is that the selection and mosaic of references to diverse texts will help the reader fully understand the circumstances of when, where why, and by whom the Mexican Suitcase was created.

Chim’s photographs were a product of the rise of the fully illustrated magazines. These publications fed off the public’s visual fascination with the visual, cinema, including the new printing techniques, and the ready availability of photographs of current events. The printed press was the main platform where the photographs were published, circulated, and interpreted on a daily basis during the 1930s. This press viewed the world from a cultural-materialistic perspective in which photographic practices appeared as products of cultural and political processes of a specific historical moment.

Chapter Two will study and compare the relationship between text and photographs merged into the form of photo-essays. Many of Chim’s photographs contained in the Mexican Suitcase were published in this form by Regards magazine. As the photographic meaning is closely tied to the conditions of their production and use, I will frame Chim’s discourse as part of journalistic practices during the mid-1930s.

Brennen, and Hardt, “Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography,” provided me with a variety of perspectives to study the photographic images as visual expressions of material culture, which “speak to the question of…the process of history in the context of

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understanding the experience of the visual in modern media environments.”17 Their essay addressing the visual analysis of a 1930s newsroom was extremely helpful in understanding the structure, work conditions, and processes of the press at that time. It helped me visualize the circumstances Chim had to work under as a photojournalist, while working for Regards magazine.

The reader will not find a complete visual description of the 50 rolls of film from the Mexican Suitcase that I researched while at the ICP, but rather an analysis focused on finding the holistic meaning of the most relevant stories published by Regards. Chapter Two will consider different processes followed by editors, writers, and Chim to shape the photographer into a significant narrative.

Sturken and Cartwright, in their book “Practices of looking, and introduction to visual culture” 18 explained how an image or object is encoded with meaning in different levels, for example, when the photograph is created, or when it is in the production level, (Chim and Regards respectively). In this view, Chim intended, on both conscious and unconscious levels to present his view as a photographer while telling a visual story. In turn, Regards magazine tried to impose an intended meaning to those images, so their viewers would interpret the magazine’s article in a specific way. On the other hand, Gregory C. Stanczak in “Visual Research Methods” brought to my attention that analyzing images has epistemological implications, questioning the nature of knowledge itself and how it relates to truth, belief, and justification. For Stanczak, photography analysis requires asking questions such as, “What are our disciplinary, sub-

disciplinary, and personal expectations about what information is valid for what purposes?" So, not surprisingly, this study will negotiate meanings through my own memories, knowledge, and cultural frameworks, which will inevitably influence my interpretation of the photographs.

Roland Barthes suggested the most effective approach to the study of photographs should be “varied but restricted in time.” Therefore, the methodology applied to this second chapter to decode the photographs will compare three photo-essays of Chim published next to Regards’s articles, which were taken during the first six months of the Spanish Civil War. This chapter will start analyzing form and content of Regards’ articles translated from French to English; secondly, the text will be compared to Chim’s photographs published next to the article, in order to see how the selection of his images supported Regards’ propagandistic message embedded in the illustrated report. Finally, I will study each one of the photographs published in the photo-essay to try to emphasize Chim’s subjectivity through an aesthetic insight.

Chapter Three of “Chim & The Mexican Suitcase” will describe the complete process I followed to get detailed information from the negatives. I will stress the fact I began the research having only the hi-definition digital files of the 35 mm negatives, some of Chim’s biographies, and the scanned issues of Regards magazine, therefore technology was essential to perform my research. I will narrate the step-by-step process I followed to do my research of the negatives at the ICP, in order to support my claim that new digital tools are opening creative systems or methodologies to photography studies, as well as changing the perception of Art History practices.

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It is also my intention, in this first academic approach to the Mexican Suitcase, to encourage historians to fully contextualize the photo-stories that Chim, Capa, and Taro covered during the Spanish Civil War, while they were collectively creating the archetype of the modern war photographer.
Chapter One

This chapter introduces the reader to the Mexican Suitcase from a variety of perspectives. It will not only try to make sense of the 4,300 negatives taken by Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and Chim during the Spanish Civil War, but will also describe its content in technical terms, and discuss the history surrounding the boxes’ trip until they were found. Many questions will be addressed, including when the Mexican suitcase could have been created and who its creator was. I will also approach the events that lead to the discovery of the boxes, and the nearly ten years of difficult negotiations that led to the ICP’s recovery the rolls of film.

The second section of Chapter One will argue that the Mexican Suitcase’ photographs were the product of a particular place and time, specifically France in the mid-1930s. It will analyze the photographs in context of the complex business of photojournalism, and will explain how they generated meaning in the media. I will study the journalistic practices and the rise of illustrated magazines during the 1930s, not only in France, but Germany where the illustrated reports previously developed.

This research will also consider the importance of the photographer’s perspective, in this case, the role Chim played in constructing the visual story-telling of the photo-essays. Hence, the last part of this chapter is dedicated to the biography of Chim, focusing on how he started his career as photographer when he moved to Paris, and the first assignments he had in Regards magazine, where many of his photographs were published.
1. THE MEXICAN SUITCASE.

1.a What is the Mexican Suitcase?

The so-called "Mexican Suitcase" appeared in the public scene for the first time in the New York Times, January 27, 2008.\(^{21}\) The author of this article wrote that the object was not exactly a suitcase, but rather three flimsy cardboard valises. Later, in a February 2, 2008 CNN news web report, C. Clifford described them better as, “three cardboard boxes full of rolls of film”.\(^{22}\)

![Figure 1](image.png)

The size of the Mexican Suitcase vintage boxes is only 11x14 inches (27.9 cm x 35.6 cm) and as Brian Wallis, Curator in Chief at the International Center of Photography, aptly noted, they look like candy boxes.\(^{24}\) In the beginning, it was believed they were completely handmade,

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\(^{21}\)"The Capa Cache" by Randy Kennedy - http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/arts/design/27kenn.html?_r=1
\(^{22}\)http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/02/01/war.photos/index.html
\(^{24}\)3 minute video at http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/02/01/war.photos/index.html#cnnSTCVide
but recent information published in the ICP web page\textsuperscript{25} describes them as commercial cardboard boxes, which were frequently used by photographers in the 1930s because they were a more efficient way to store film than envelopes or notebooks.

Two of the boxes have faux leather tops, one red and one green, divided into 50 handmade carton sections, each of which contains several rolls of 35mm film. Inside the lids, a grid of squares has been drawn labeling the corresponding film. The third object is an 8x10 inches (20.3 cm x 25.4 cm) Agfa paper box. It contains envelopes of film labeled on the outside as to maker and subject.\textsuperscript{26}

We do not know who created the Mexican Suitcase, nor the year it was made. Csiki Weiss, Robert Capa’s darkroom assistant, has been considered an option, as his son, Gabriel Weiss, identified the handwriting in the boxes as his father’s, but no technical studies have been performed to confirm who created the boxes. In Chapter Two, I propose a possible time-line of its creation based on the placement of some of the negatives in the box compartments.

The Mexican Suitcase contains the work of three leading twentieth century photographers: Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and Chim (David Seymour.) The boxes do not have a complete collection of the work of these photographers during the Spanish Civil War, but the negatives it does provide full continuous shots of many of their important stories, work that was lost for nearly 70 years until the negatives were recovered by the ICP in December 2007. This photography center, founded by Capa’s brother in New York, identified some of the negatives using their archives records and the Regards publications as reference. Two thirds of the materials were Capa and Taro’s work, and the rest were attributed to Chim. In some cases, each

\textsuperscript{25} http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitcase/conservation.html
\textsuperscript{26} http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitcase/conservation.html
roll of film contained different stories, that is to say, in one roll of film there were two or three stories that were not connected at all in time, or space, making the classification even more difficult.

Approximately 4,300 frames in 126 rolls of 35 mm film are contained in the vintage boxes, of which fifty rolls have been attributed to Chim. When I began to work with the negatives during the summer of 2009 a large number of them were still unidentified, especially the photographs taken by Chim in his trip to Northern Spain during the first months of 1937. After three months of research at the ICP, I was able to identify many of the locations depicted in Chim’s negatives. This information can be consulted today at the ICP archives in New York by appointment.

1.b. The History (-ies) of the Mexican Suitcase.

The Mexican Suitcase has gone through a long journey, following unclear and sometimes twisted path. The discussion that follows is not about the uncontestable history of the boxes’ fate, but is rather a contrasting summary of published articles, that will try to thread together pieces of different subjective testimonies.

The earliest known documentation of the story of the missing negatives may be a letter written by the darkroom manager and fellow photographer of Robert Capa, Imre "Csiki" Weiss dated July 5, 1975. In this letter, Csiki recalled while he was running away from the imminent German occupation of Paris back in 1939, he put the negatives located in Capa’s Paris studio (located at 37 rue Froidevaux) in a rucksack, and then tried to escape by boarding a ship to Mexico through Bordeaux. Csiki, who was a Jewish Hungarian émigré, was aware that he could
be detained anytime, so when he met a Latin-American Republican sympathizer, he asked him to take the boxes of film to a consulate for safekeeping. That was the last time he saw the negatives.

In the years to come, Robert Capa apparently never expressed any remorse that many of his most famous images of the Spanish Civil War had disappeared, probably considering their loss as part of war’s misfortunes. It was not until after his death, when his work was being compiled and documented for inclusion in the Venice Biennale (1979), where his brother Cornell Capa triggered interest in the lost negatives. The concept of a “suitcase” first appeared in the article Cornell published in the French magazine *Photo*, No. 143, 1979. He specifically called on the photographic community for information concerning “…a suitcase full of documents and negative.” As a result, several searches were undertaken in Latin-American consulates with no results. After years without notice, the negatives had been considered all but lost; but a phone call received by the ICP in 1995 changed the course of the suitcase’s history.

The list of fortunate events that lead to the discovery of the boxes, began in 1992, when Benjamin Tarver, an American filmmaker who had lived in Mexico since 1970 received an unusual inheritance. A friend of his mother, a woman who Tarver called affectionately “aunt,” and who was the widow of General Francisco Aguilar Gonzalez, gave him some boxes full of negatives. Tarver was told those negatives had made all their way from France, when the General returned to Mexico after being Ambassador of the Vichy Government in 1941, but Tarver had no idea how those negatives had been acquired by Aguilar Gonzalez.

To shed some light to this question, recall that in Csiki’s letter of 1975, he mentioned that he had given the boxes to a Chilean whom he met on the street in 1939 while he was running

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away from the Nazis. We do not know if this anonymous man, whom Csiki entrusted, delivered the negatives personally to the Mexican Embassy in Vichy, or if he passed them to another person who finally deposited the boxes in the Embassy. We do not even know if the negatives Csiki took from Capa’s studio were these. He was trying to escape and his personal survival was what really mattered, not the accurate identification of his belongings.

Tarver kept the inherited boxes in a closet for nearly 3 years until he decided to inspect the negatives conscientiously. One of the images that called his attention was of a woman sleeping on a bed wearing a man’s pajamas. For Tarver, the woman in the picture was obviously close to the photographer; and probably she could be the key leading to the photographer’s identity.

![Figure 2](http://www.asakopako.com/wp-content/gerdataro1.jpg)

**Figure 2**

It was not until 1995, after Tarver attended an exhibition of the Spanish Civil War organized by the Queen’s College (USA) in Mexico City, when another piece was added to the
puzzle. The photographs in the exhibition prompted Traver to recall the negatives he had been analyzing earlier that year. He wrote to Professor Jerald R. Green, one of Queen’s College experts in the Spanish Civil war, informing Prof. Green that he had material similar to that in the exhibition, and attaching some contact sheets printed by him. Queen’s College’s reply suggested that Tarver send the negatives to Professor Green to make further inspection of them. Tarver did not trust this unexpected request and decided to continue the research by his own means.

From this point, we have two different versions of what happened later; *El Periodico de Catalunya* affirmed in an article written by Juan Villoro that Tarver’s next move was to contact Sarah Lowe, a curator who identified the woman sleeping on the bed as Gerda Taro, Robert Capa’s youthful love. Lowe put Tarver in contact with Taro’s biographer, Irme Schaber, who finally put Benjamin Tarver in contact with Cornell Capa.

On the other hand, Trisha Ziff, a film producer living in Mexico City, says in her webpage²⁹ that Professor Green from Queen’s College was the one who had passed Tarver’s letter on Cornell Capa. Either way, the fact is that the connection between the last Mexican suitcase caretaker, Benjamin Tarver, and the ICP was finally made in 1995, at which point a long period of negotiations began.

Many things have been said about why it took eleven years for Benjamin Tarver to give the Mexican Suitcase to the ICP. It is known that Richard Whelan showed extreme interest in the lost negatives after knowing their existence, because he was writing “*The Definitive Collection, Robert Capa,*” and he wanted to include the new material in his book (something that in the end

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did not happen). Yet it is not clear what caused the relationship between Tarver and the ICP to erode to the point that he questioned his decision to give them the boxes.

Tarver declared to *El Periodico de Catalunya* he was worried about the moral sense of his actions; he did not want any money, but he wanted the negatives to be in a safe place.\(^{30}\) The question is why it took eleven years for Tarver to decide that the ICP was the right place, specially considering that the ICP is a well-known and trusted photographic institution. Another question Kristen Lubben, curator at the ICP, and Trisha Ziff asked themselves is why, when Cornell Capa and Richard Whelan were aware the photographs were in Mexico City, they never attempted to contact Csiki Weiss, whose permanent residence was also in the Mexican capital.\(^{31}\)

Whatever the reasons were, long-time friend of the ICP, Trisha Ziff was, the only person who was able to close the deal between Tarver and the ICP. In 2007, Tarver did not get any money, but was granted the rights to film a future documentary about the negatives. Finally, the Mexican Suitcase negatives were reunited the rest of Capa’s collection in the ICP archives December 2007.

The second part of the story began when the ICP recovered the boxes. They contacted experts from the George Eastman House and Museum Photographics\(^ {32}\) to inspect the Mexican Suitcase. They determined that the film was in relatively good condition, something that was unexpected because most of the film was nitrate-based. This type of film is prone to degradation if poorly stored, and under some conditions there is even the possibility of spontaneous

\(^{31}\) www.zonezero.com/exposiciones/fotografos/ziff/
\(^{32}\) Grant Romer, Director of the Advanced Residency Program for Photographic Conservation and Michael Hagar.
combustion. Apparently, the stable climate of Mexico City, where the negatives were kept most of the time, protected the film from any extreme changes in environment that could exacerbate deterioration.\textsuperscript{33}

After several months of research, a team from the George Eastman House developed a special film holder to capture digitally each frame of the rolled film.\textsuperscript{34} An ICP Imaging Technician scanned all of the film using a custom-built film carrier that supported the vintage film without the need to cut the rolls.\textsuperscript{35} The scanning was done using a Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III camera connected to an Apple computer, exposing the film at f16 at 1/6 second, capturing the raw file images, and then converting them to DNG files with Adobe DNG converter. The DNG files are approx. 40 MB each.\textsuperscript{36}

There is little real evidence concerning the whereabouts of the Mexican Suitcase during the last 70 years, and the testimonies seem blurred after such a long time. The press had paid more attention to revealing details of the story of General Francisco Aguilar Gonzalez,\textsuperscript{37} the man whose wife had left the boxes to Tarver, and whose name appears on a list of war criminals for embezzlement of funds raised in Mexico to help refugees escape from Spain.\textsuperscript{38} Perhaps further research in the French or Mexican archives will help one day to clarify how the boxes ended up in Mexico.

\textsuperscript{33} http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitecase/conservation.html
\textsuperscript{34} ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Chris George
\textsuperscript{36} http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitecase/conservation.html
\textsuperscript{37} http://www.elperiodico.com/default.asp?idpublicacio_PK=46&idioma=CAS&idnoticia_PK=529816&idseccio_PK=1026
\textsuperscript{38} General Francisco Aguilar Gonzalez @ www.elperiodico.com
2. PHOTOJOURNALISM ON THE MAKING.

In their 1995 book, “Eyewitness,” 39 Richard Lacayo and George Russell describe the 150 years of photojournalism filled with images of society, scandals, war, disaster, crime, tragedy, and social concerns. Photography as a visual expression of culture, 40 increased awareness of many social issues that previously had been only narrated, and when visually depicted, the notions of time and space adopted different dimension, for example, the impact of war photography.

At the end of the 19th century, developing technologies in ink-printing methods -- relief, intaglio and planographic -- were adapted to the photographic image 41 making possible new experiments in combining photographs and text in magazines and newspapers as well as But, it was not until the 1930s that fully illustrated magazines were created, feeding off the public’s visual fascination with the cinema, and the ready availability of photographs of current events. The magazine’s editors explored new ways to find a balance between text and images, as well as composing creative page layouts. Photographs soon began to take up more space in magazines and newspapers, and were a selling point, especially on the front page. 42

The 1930s were a hybrid decade in which the power of the visual was taken to a different level. 43 The Venice Biennale in 1932 introduced for the first time the Film Festival, recognizing cinema as an art form, and influencing newspapers editors to take inspiration from its multiple

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A complementary breakthrough was the development of new cameras, which spurred the capabilities and spontaneity of the photographers. For example, the Leica which produced a negative 24 x 36 mm, had better lenses, did not require a tripod, and was small enough to put into the photographer’s pocket, giving a freedom of movement unknown before. Held close to the eye, it could be tilted to change the orientation of the image, while the precision of the viewfinder meant that the setting could be continually adjusted as required. The fast loading roll film allowed photographers to take many different shots from a variety of angles; to take close-ups of faces and expressions, isolating details from their backgrounds, and to capture fleeting moments. Suddenly, the photographer was able to take many "points of view" of an event, instead of simply showing a static single frame. Gradually, with the growing dominance of print journalism, photography became the primary means by which the public understood events: the text explained, but the photograph showed.

A broader definition of news was conceived after people began consuming great number of photographs in a daily basis. The press became more competitive and sophisticated with the new flood of pictures, changing the form of publications. Photography, particularly action photography, gained precedence over formulaic and static compositions. After the First World War, the ability to photograph war in real-time constituted an unprecedented challenge to photographers, who needed to act fast in unknown territory. (Zelizer p. 68) The fundamental unfamiliarity with the reporting of wars caused photo-reporters to improvise the form and construction of their visual narrative. The documentary style of photography, with its affinity to

“the real” and therefore to the claims of journalistic objectivity or social truth, made a successful debut,\textsuperscript{47} prompting the emergence of professional image organizers in various fields: picture editors working for popular and avant-garde publications, film editors, and new types of art historians, all set loose by the new techniques of photographic reproduction. (Campanys p. 63)

Journalists are the first to agree they use formulaic story styles, gathering quotes, facts, and so on to construct a story with the intended structure and content. Like traditional storytellers, journalists often work by taking general themes and structuring them into a coherent narrative, using established formulae. “Approach a story with a certain point of view, a frame of mind, and then you fashion it to fit that formula.”\textsuperscript{48} Journalists have to work quickly and efficiently, slotting new information into frameworks that are clearly understood by storyteller and audience. Gaye Tuchman argues that this frame as reduces the range of possible meanings of any event into “industrially” acceptable categories. Frames are thus tools for imposing meaning as well as “psychological stimuli” for audiences to process information.\textsuperscript{49} To put in another way, iconic images that have become widely accepted interpretations of the past construct social consciousness and continue to influence audience experiences or feelings.

In addition, Jack Lule argues that archetypal myths can also be found every day within news. In his book, \textit{Daily News Eternal Stories}, he writes “News comes to us as a story, the telling of a happening, the dictionary says, written or spoken with the intention of entertaining or


informing”. Journalists are part of a long storytelling tradition, where they draw their tales from a deep but nonetheless limited body of story forms and types.\textsuperscript{50}

Concerning Lule’s research, news and myth also share an emphasis on real stories. The media where the Mexican Suitcase photographs saw public life requires drawing distinctions between fact and opinion, between nonfiction and fiction. Stories published by the illustrated magazines tried to place special significance on the real using photographs, even though as we will see in the second chapter, the photographs were used to support “the verisimilitude” of propagandistic stories.

\textbf{2.a. The rise of the illustrated magazines.}

The magazine by itself was a material and visual complex sign of modernity. It was not only the product of creative people and artists, but the result of the collaboration of writers, reporters, photographers, and an editorial board.

A period of professional adjustment to a new interdependence between words and images in the reporting of events followed the debate if photographs were an appropriate form of expression for the press.\textsuperscript{51} During the 1920s Germany was the world center of what was considered a new profession, photojournalism. The fatherland of cameramen such as Dr. Erich Salomon and Alfred Eisenstaedt summed up the rapid evolution in capability and technique of photography with the term \textit{Foto-auge} (photo-eye) -- photography as mechanical seeing.\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
Germany was also developing the best cameras and lenses in the world, advances, like the Leica camera described previously, and which allowed producing better quality images, and new portability enable photographing challenging situations, such as battlefield snapshots.\(^5^3\) Further, the Bauhaus School of Architecture and Design was giving a new place to photography in the world of illustration. The photographer became a self-contained mobile observer, whose lines of communication were greatly extended when press syndicates began to experiment with techniques for transmitting photographs by wire.\(^5^4\) As a result, photography not only proliferated in the illustrated magazines, but also in newspapers, and hard & soft cover books.

The photo-essay became an innovative medium by questioning the social and political structures that served the interest of the upper classes in the Weimar Republic, through a visual and more effective way. Confronted with the powerful and effective construction of reality by the bourgeois mass media, the radical left mounted its own mass publications to contest the bourgeois interpretations of events by presenting workers' interests and thus to form a proletarian public sphere. In particular, Willi Munzenberg launched a formidable multitarian leftist mass media conglomerate. The most important and successful of the publications in that group was the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (AIZ).\(^5^5\)

On the other hand, Kurt Korff was the visionary editor of the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* (BIZ) magazine, which was originally founded in 1890, but was transformed in the late 1920s by its publishing director Kurt Safranski. In fact, this magazine published what is considered to be

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the first true photo story in 1929, “The silent existence of the holy men at the monastery of Notre Dame de La Grande Trappe”, photographed by the Hungarian André Kertész.56

2.b. The illustrated magazines in France.

French publishers had been watching the success of the German weeklies featuring journalistic photographs, but their readers were at first reluctant to see images in a medium where text was supposed to predominate.57 It was not until the rise of popular cinema in France after the 1920s, when finally photographs were demanded in French culture, culminating in a mass-market illustrated press.

The combined effect of print culture and cinema was a cumulative conversion of all things into photographic reproduction. Nothing was beyond the scope of the camera, which threatened a leveling of experience and, for good or bad, an erosion of traditional categories of knowledge. Disparate things could be brought into equivalence via photographic reproduction on page or screen.58

During the 1930s Paris offered a particularly creative ambience, a city full of artists, writers, intellectuals. The capital of France was nodal city for the many émigrés who had come to the capital fleeing the totalitarian surge in Germany. Other people simply wanted to live in a country where it was easier, in both economic and ideological terms to practice photography, a craft that was still seen as marginal in other places.59 This situation created a field of talented

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photographers willing to innovate and embrace modernism, making photojournalism adopt a unique personality.

Figure 3

One of the illustrated magazines which first came to life in France was Vu. It was launched in the spring of 1928 in response to a growing demand for news presented in visual form. Conceived as a “beautiful film” that would bring all of life within the range of the human eye, Vu was designed to provide its readers experiences similar to newsreels watched by millions of people each week. Vu’s size was 14 1/2 x 10 5/8 x 1/8 in. (36.8 x 27 x 0.3 cm) and the composition of its pages are blocks of photography, much of it in an overtly experimental style that incorporated elements of Russian Constructivism and the German Bauhaus, but with a distinctive touch toward the surreal and poetically non-literal. Lucien Vogel, the founder of Vu, was able to create a new magazine style by engaging the imagination of the reader through the

61 http://www.ascmag.com/blog/page/2/
innovative design of its pages. In every sense, *Vu* was avant-garde, even when documenting quotidian events.\textsuperscript{62}

In 1932 *Paris-Soir*, a popular newspaper in Paris declared, “the image has become the queen of our time. We are no longer happy to know, we want to see”.\textsuperscript{63} The rise of a modern visual culture was established throughout the 1920s, and every publication that wanted to be considered important placed a photograph next to the story, not only to authenticate it, but to give its exact physiognomy.

This experimental phase provided insights into the potential of visual communication, creating new complex visual codes, which supported the interests of press editors. Since then, audiences have become more sophisticated participants in the mediated realities of the press, whose photographic coverage retains a central position in explaining the world.\textsuperscript{64}

Magazines became political objects during the 30s, with or without an explicit statement to that effect, and even if their publishers presented them above all as aesthetic products. As Mark Morrison argues in, “*The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception - 1905-1920,*” the press was then a diversified field of daily and periodical publications in which artists and intellectuals articulated their political discourse. These cultural elite assembled by remarkable contributors, including writers as Romain Rolland or Tristan Tzara participated actively in magazine culture -- as editors, writers, illustrators, photographers,


directors; something that not only made public their political commitment, but the magazine position as well.  

2.c.  Regards: Publisher of photographs from the Mexican Suitcase.

Regards was one of the most popular weeklies during the 30s, and the periodical where many of the photographs contained in the Mexican Suitcase were published for the first time. Regards was created in 1932 as a socialist title encompassing a broad range of subjects, and was highly acclaimed for the quality of its investigative reporting. Regards called itself “the illustrated newspaper of the Popular Front” – an electoral alliance of Left parties in France. The social function of Regards had a specific political inclination, even though the relationship between the magazine and the social context went beyond any political program. As consequence, their content not only depicted societal or cultural stories, but embraced the psychology of propaganda, going deep into the risky territory of political ideology.

Regards featured politics, entertainment, sports, and serialized novels. Sold at 1 franc 25 per twenty-four-page issue, Regards’ size was 14 1/4 x 10 3/4 x 1/16 in. (36.2 x 27.3 x 0.2 cm) and boasted a print-run per issue of over 100,000 copies in 1936. Yet circulation alone is a poor measure of its influence or impact; over recent years much debate has been focused on exactly how the media helped shape public opinion. The dialogue between image and culture of the society, which produces and consumes it, offers insights of the way magazines and photographs transmit both meaning to their public, and into the collective imagination of society.

66 Ibid.
Regards was standing between aesthetics and politics; a modern platform where photographers, as Chim, built their reputation. Regards magazine was focused to create awareness of the deplorable economic and social conditions of the working people of France, and as it will be explored in the next chapter, to advocate for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War.68

3. CHIM.

“Chim was a deeply cultured, well-read, highly intelligent, and very private person”.

Cornell Capa.

The photographer David Szymin was born on November 20, 1911, in Warsaw, Poland, then a province of Czarist Russia. When he was a photo-reporter in Paris in 1933, he professionally used the nickname “Chim,” which was the French phonetic abbreviation of his surname Szymin.69 Chim ended up being also the colloquial way people called him, hence, the ICP decided David Szymin will only be referred as Chim for future publications.

Chim’s father was a well-known book editor and spared no effort to give his son an excellent education sending him to the Jewish Gymnasium Ascolah in Warsaw, and then to learn the most recent modernist trends in typography and layout at the Akademie der Graphischen und Buch Kuenste (Academy of Graphic and Book Arts) in Leipzig (1929-1931). When Chim completed his studies, he went back home with the idea of following in his father’s footsteps, but the rise of Fascism and anti-Semitism in Poland pushed him to change his plans, forcing him to emigrate to France, where he enrolled the Faculty of Science at the Sorbonne.

68 Bondi, p.24
When Chim moved to Paris in 1931, he did not imagine that the amateur picture-taking of his childhood would become the medium of his future professional career. Chim was then a young student in financial need, as a consequence of the bad economic situation his father’s business was having in Poland. Not wanting to be a burden to his family, he began to work with the local Parisian portraitist David Rapaport, a friend of his family, and who gave him the opportunity to photograph some stories for his small photo agency “Rap.” Chim borrowed a 35mm Vidom camera from Rapaport, and tried to take photographs suitable for publication. Chim had had no formal training in photography, but as we will evidence his early contact sheets next chapter, he was not ignorant of what was going on in the field. Some of his first snapshots had a straightforward documentarian approach; others denoted the influence of geometric planes and contrast of light and shadow, precepts of the Bauhaus and Constructivism, which he probably learnt in the Academy of Leipzig, where he studied new color printing techniques for books.\textsuperscript{70}

Subsequently, Chim began to take reportorial pictures in and around Paris showing special interest in exploring the city’s nightlife, where he also met Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa. These three men would end up sharing a fifth-story walk-up studio, and a friendship that endure the rest of their lives.\textsuperscript{71} During the first days of their career, these young enthusiasts were part of what became a new species, the freelance photographer, who provided photographic material to the press even they did not have a fixed contract. The photography

demand was so high during those days that being a freelance worker allowed them to make a living.\textsuperscript{72}

Chim was part of the second generation of photojournalists, which arose after the Great War. He had been educated under the precepts of the Bauhaus -- form supported function -- and his task was photographing news.\textsuperscript{73} Press photographers had no control over their job description at that time; editors or agencies who commissioned them had little more. The job meant following whatever was going on, being in the right place at the right time.\textsuperscript{74} This situation would evolve with time, and photographers became more explicit and self-conscious to consider themselves as professionals, searching for an appropriate photojournalist model during the 1930s.\textsuperscript{75}

The rise of illustrated magazines in France during the 30s made possible for amateur photographers as Chim, to start a career in photojournalism at the ground level. When \textit{Regards} went weekly on February 3, 1934, Chim was there to answer to their increased photographic needs. Fortunately for him, \textit{Regards} was among the rare publications to credit its images, and beginning with the fifth issue, dated March 2 of the same year, we find Chim’s published work fully credited for the first time.\textsuperscript{76}

Chim’s biographies usually describe him as a man of intellect, a scholar versed in politics, science, and the arts. Chim’s personal testimonies are limited to some notes and letters, and after reviewing the few books has being written about him, we find out the story of a man

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{73} Bondi, Inge. \textit{Chim The Photographs of David Seymour}. Hong Kong: Bulfinch, 1996. Print. p.1 \\
\textsuperscript{74} Frizot, Michel, and Cédric De. Veigy. p.7 \\
\textsuperscript{76} Bondi, Inge. \textit{Chim The Photographs of David Seymour}. Hong Kong: Bulfinch, 1996. Print. p.4
\end{tabular}
whose life has been recounted by others. Henri Cartier-Bresson, a close friend of his said, “Chim was a man of secret compartments and he forgot to make them communicate”. I consider that a profound mind such as Chim’s probably forgot to communicate those “secret compartments” on purpose; an idea also supported by John G. Morris, who said, “Chim defied characterization and evaded it.”

Chim’s involuntary confessions are his photographs, records of his experiences, and witnesses to his photographic look and sensibility. Chim made photojournalism his life, and photography his passion. I believe David Szymin only wanted to be remembered as Chim.

![Figure 4](http://museum.icp.org/museum/collections/special/chim/pics/b-19.jpg)

**Figure 4**

Finally, the Mexican Suitcase will not be analyzed as an object itself, but as part of complex photojournalistic machinery. This collection of negatives was probably made as a compilation or catalog of the Spanish Civil War images, which were published in the printed media. Our tendency to see the Mexican Suitcase as an invaluable documentary legacy of the
Spanish History distracts also from the fact these photographs were Capa, Chim and Taro’s professional portfolio, which final goal was to illustrate a French propagandistic photo-magazine, Regards.

The study of photo-essays has played a minor role in the Spanish Civil War historiography, and magazines are usually studied only from an economic, political or historical perspective. Therefore, next chapter will approach the illustrated press from a visual perspective dealing specifically with photographic records, and the process they followed before becoming part of the social collective memory.
Chapter Two

4. CHIM’S TRIPS TO SPAIN.

The visual cultural construction of the photographs and their relationship with the printed media requires an exhaustive formal analysis of the image, in order to get a close meaning relationship. This second chapter will try to explore in detail the processes Chim as a photographer, and Regards as an illustrated magazine followed to create a photo-report, which ended up being part of the collective memory of the Spanish Civil War.

As David Perlmutter explained in his book “Photojournalism and Foreign Policy Icons,” some researchers have been skeptical about theorizing the influential effects photographs have had on viewers. However, their presence, already persistent during the 1930s should not only be considered as simple illustrations, but powerful influential representational images.

The explorations of how the processes of Chim and the French weekly Regards were related, begins for the purposes of this study in 1936. Chim had already been working for Regards approximately two years when he was sent abroad to cover the conflict in Spain. Regards wanted to present the stories of the Spanish Civil War with their particular propagandistic message, and decided Chim was the special correspondent who could truly depict the democratic nature of the Republican cause.

Documentary photography had been strengthened in the press during the mid 1930s, when the production process was facilitated by intensive technological development in both, the

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photographic and printing technique. By this time, Chim’s camera was Leica, which was
designed to use 35-mm cinema film on a winding roll, and produced negatives with a frame size
of 24x36mm, with 36 exposures to a roll. It was the lightest and compact camera with a built-in
rangefinder, which allowed the photographer to focus the image quickly. Three successive shots
could be taken in five seconds.\textsuperscript{79} Leica was manufacturing compact lenses of far greater light-
passing power than ever before, and faster films which, in allowing exposures to be made
without a flash, made possible both night pictures and interior shots; all these innovations were a
far cry from the panoramic viewfinders and glass negative plates used by World War I
photographers.\textsuperscript{80}

Some documentation arrangements, like visa and press licenses had to be made before
Chim traveled to Spain as a consequence of the censorship and limitations that came up after the
government, making the designation of “official” photographers during the war coverage
obligatory. After completing the paperwork, Chim visited the Spanish territory during the spring
of 1936 not only photographing the stories that arose, but experiencing the outbreak of a war, its
causes and consequences. In particular, land distribution was one of the most pressing problems
on the agenda of the Spanish Popular Front.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{81} Bondi, Inge. \textit{Chim The Photographs of David Seymour}. Hong Kong: Bulfinch, 1996. Print, p. 42
4. a. First trip, April 1936.

![Figure 5 (cropped)](image1) ![Figure 6 (original)](image2)

Figure 5 (cropped) Figure 6 (original)

Just a month before the war began, Chim took one of his most powerful images, Land distribution meeting, Estremadura, Spain. 1936. This photograph portrayed a prematurely aged woman nursing her child. This cropped image\(^6\) was used later in Spanish posters, (fig. 5) becoming an icon of Republican Spain. She represented the motherhood, symbol of patient suffering, comfort, and care for others. The full frame version of this photograph had never seen before until the Mexican Suitcase appeared, (fig. 6) giving us now the opportunity to study in detail the criteria Chim applied when he edited his work.

As with pictorial brainstorming, where visual ideas are created by word association, so too, pre-visualization can take place by picture association.\(^5\) Chim had achieved this skill probably by reading illustrated magazines, and the selection of the mother suckling her child proves how he was relating the events he photographed with his subjective imaginary thinking. For example, Chim focused his attention on the group of mothers and children, framing them in the viewfinder, while deciding to discard other elements in the photograph. Chim’s selection is

\(^3\) ICP # ms_034_018.
\(^4\) I use crop to mean the act of cutting out a photograph in any shape from the encompassing visual field.
evident in the original negative, as we can see how he avoided a young man and a child, whose bodies were only partially depicted; despite the fact they were standing closer the camera lens.

Therefore, cropping off the picture can take place at different points, in first place, when the photographer is deciding the subject and composition of the frame, and secondly, in the darkroom. As we compare the original versus the cropped photograph, we can determine post-visualization also played an important role in the composition. When Chim was in the darkroom, he decided the main character of crowd was the mother suckling her child, and eliminated the context of the land reform meeting leaving only some curious faces in the frame that fitted in the 35 mm portrait template, and which added some dynamism to the composition.

Chim edited his work balancing grey tonal values in the composition and using the contrasted diagonal of light that clearly crosses the women’s face to center the photograph’s elements. In addition, he made a high contrast print to dramatize the light effect. As Inga Bondi, biographer of Chim described, “The light falling over her face imparts an aura of eternity to the picture.”

Chim was already applying good composition standards in 1936, by enhancing the image’s communication value using advanced technique, and fast interpretation of political events, like in this case, deciding the concerned peasant mother was what best described the political purpose of the meeting.

4. b. Second trip, August 1936.

Chim’s special reports in Spain where intermittent, so after his first visit, he returned to Paris to cover other political events, such as the victory of the Front Populaire – the political French equivalent of the Spanish Republic. Months later, the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) broke out with a military uprising in Morocco on July 17, 1936 triggered by events in Madrid.

Within days, Spain was divided in two, the Second Spanish Republic, or “Loyalist” Spain, and a Nationalist Spain under the leadership of insurgent generals, and eventually, under the orders of General Francisco Franco.\textsuperscript{87}

As a result of the outbreak of the Civil War, Chim made his second trip to Spain the summer of 1936 to the city of Irun, a town located on the border between Spain and France in the Basque Autonomous Community. \textit{Regards} wanted to have the first reactions of the imminent war, and sent his special reporter to the front. For Chim, this assignment was both the beginning and the end of his career as an action photographer in the front, because as Bondi explained in his biography, “he necessarily had to wear glasses”, making him vulnerable and “even useless in action.”\textsuperscript{88} Witnesses of Chim’s unique presence in the front are some vintage photographs of a group of young Basque soldiers with no uniforms firing cannon, or performing a hand grenade attack.\textsuperscript{89} Two days after Chim’s action-packed coverage was published in \textit{Regards} on September 3, 1936, Irun fell to the Nationalists, who organized a march to celebrate the success of isolating the Basque country from the French border, as well as closing this frontier to the rest of Spanish people.\textsuperscript{90}

After this event, Chim traveled to Catalonia and by mid-October he was photographing Madrid. He was already dedicating his career to photograph the other side of war, reporting special stories that supported the political ideal of the Republican cause.

\textit{4.c. Third trip, January 1937.}

Chim’s coverage of Spain was intensified during the new year of 1937 beginning in the Catalan Pyrenees, where he photographed elderly peasants who had replaced the young miners


\textsuperscript{89} These negatives are not contained in the Mexican Suitcase.

\textsuperscript{90} Naggar, Carole, p. 7 @ http://www.davidseymour.com/chim_essays.html
who were fighting on the Catalan front. His photographic stories during this period were a complete success, and published in seven consecutive issues of Regards, giving Chim the recognition for which he was looking. These illustrated reports are a compilation of portraits and stories of improvised Republican forces – made up of general population of agricultural and urban workers who were hoping to overthrow Fascism.

This is the list of Regards issues, where Chim’ stories were published consecutively,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MAGAZINE</th>
<th>ISSUE#</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
<th>ORIGINAL FRENCH TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-Jan</td>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td>Mineurs des Cimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Jan</td>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>4, 5, 8, 9</td>
<td>Madrid toujours... A travers la Republique Basque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Jan</td>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>A travers La Republique Basque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Feb</td>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Cover, 6, 7, 10</td>
<td>Religieux et Miliciens Basques fraternisent. Au cloitre d'Amorebieta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-Feb</td>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>Cover, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>Dans les tranchees sous Oviedo. Assiegee par les mineurs Asturiens. Dans les faubourgs d'Oviedo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Mar</td>
<td>Regards</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>La Messe de Camagne sur le Front Basque</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chim’s rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase were originally classified into 50 different sections. When I was at the ICP identifying chronological order and location of the photographs, I determined that the negatives were certainly separated by author, in this case Chim, but grouped randomly in time and space. An example of this disparity within the Mexican Suitcase compartments is Chim’s roll of film number 001. The analysis of this first roll of film will show how different cuts of film were placed in the same compartments of the Mexican Suitcase;

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91 These negatives are not contained in the Mexican Suitcase.
92 Classification number given by the ICP after scanning the roll of film.
even if they were part of different stories. These facts could help bring to light new details about the Mexican Suitcase’s creation, as we will study later this chapter.

4.c.1. Roll of film number 001- Bilbao, Madrid & Estremadura.

In his third trip to Spain, Chim photographed, among other stories, Basque ships armed to break the insurgent’s blockade, (fig.7) The first negatives of the Mexican Suitcase are sequences of the SS Aya Mendi, Bilbao Harbor [January 1937.]

Figure 7

After a sequence of 22 photographs of the steam ship, and its improvised Loyalist marines, a 4 cut-piece roll of film with a completely different content was found. The first image on it shows buildings bombarded, which location was unlikely to be identified due to lack of visual references, but in the third shot, (fig.8) a sergeant was portrayed holding a flag that says, “Pasionaria Regiment, number 13, 3th Battalion.”

Figure 8

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93 ICP # ms_001_001 to _004.
94 ICP # ms_001_052 to _055.
This battalion was serving in Madrid with 2,224 soldiers in October 1936, and had joined the Fifth Regiment after their participation in the Mountain Headquarters (*Cuartel de la Montana*) battle in July 1936. Therefore, these shots were probably taken during Chim’s previous trip to Madrid in the summer of 1936.

Continuing with the story of the random placement of the negatives contained in the compartments of the Mexican Suitcase, 4 shots of Gerda Taro, (fig.9) a Jewish German war photographer were also found in the roll of film 001. Taro worked alongside Chim, and Robert Capa, who was her photographic as well as romantic partner.

![Figure 9](image)

She appears in this short sequence portrayed next to a donkey, (fig.9) the strong light and the landscape reflected in the photographs lead Cynthia Young, ICP curator, to believe these shots were taken during Chim’s travel to Extremadura in May 1936. To support her hypothesis, I found out the farmer in the frames 3 and 4 is wearing a traditional Estremadura straw hat, which reinforces the photograph location.

The disparity of the placement of Gerda Taro’s negatives is repeated again in the roll of film number 42, fact that becomes an important source to determine the possible timing of the Mexican Suitcase creation. The roll of film 42 contain sequences taken mainly in Toledo, (Castilla-La Mancha) but then, we find 2 shots of Taro inspecting an arid terrain; and finally 3 sequences of her posing with a good friend, (fig.10,10a) This last group of negatives stands out,

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95 ICP # ms_ ms_001a_001 to _004.
because the two women were not even photographed in Spain, but probably in France, based on the title of the French newspaper.96

![Figure 10, Figure 10a]

**Gerda Taro left.**

Taking into consideration the random placement of Gerda Taro’s cut-pieces of film into the Mexican Suitcase compartments, it is possible these boxes served also as one of the final archives of Gerda’s negatives after her death in the battle of Brunete, (Spain) in July 1937, when she was only 27 years old. Because we can find personal photographs of her in France, (fig.10,10a) or the photograph where she sleeps with a man’s pajamas, (fig.2) I consider that the Mexican Suitcase was created sometime before she died, when the rolls of film were at first classified and tagged in the box lids. Then, after Gerda Taro died, her portraits were incorporated into the boxes compartments as the ultimate place where they belonged. On the other hand, if we take into account that the last date classified in Chim’s negatives, March 1937, it narrows the possible time-line of the Mexican Suitcase creation between March and July 1937, before Taro’s death.

The way the Mexican Suitcase was organized, gives us the idea it was meant to be a compilation of photographs taken during the Spanish Civil War. Chim, Capa & Taro were working together by then, and could have made this collection of negatives as common

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96 We can read, “La Place...” The truth of the Roman’s massacre. (*La verite sur le massacre des Romains.*)  
97 ICP # ms_042x33 and ms_042x004.
professional portfolio, which apparently was kept in Capa’s studio in Paris. But, as Frizot and De Veigy explain in their book *Vu*, photographers during the 1930s did not see their names mentioned in the publications mostly at that time and, “they did not even own their own negatives.” 98 There are reasons why we should not rule out the possibility that the published negatives were the property of *Regards*; after all, these photographers were working on assignment for *Regards* as special correspondents in Spain, and the magazine considered those stories “exclusive” to them. Hence, despite the fact the Mexican Suitcase belongs to the ICP now, further studies related to French property rights during the 1930s, or these photographers’ contracts should be done just to clarify this inquiry.

5. REGARDS & THE MEXICAN SUITCASE

The following section of this chapter focuses on *Regards* magazine as the platform where Chim’s photographs of the Mexican Suitcase were published. I have selected three different stories issued in *Regards* to show how the process of storytelling was made in an illustrated report. Two of the articles were published within a month of each other on very similar topics, “*Religion and Civil War*” 99 on February 4, 1937 and “*A Field Mass in the Basque Front*” 100 in March 4, 1937. The third one was a small article titled “*The Barbarians*”, 101 November 26, 1936.

Starting with an analysis of the articles, and moving through photographic sequences, this study traces an encounter not only between the writer and photographer’s points of view, but the editor’s interpretation, which perspectives finally merged in the illustrated report publication.

99 *Religion et Guerre Civil, my translation.*
100 *La Messe de Campagne sur le Front Basque, my translation.*
101 *Les barbares, my translation.*

5.a.1. Pouterman’s Article.

J.E. Pouterman was Chim’s partner covering the conflict in Northern Spain during the first months of 1937, documented on the cover of Regards February 4, 1937 (issue 160) that states, “Religious and Basque militiamen fraternize...a moving report of our special correspondents Pouterman and Chim.”

I was unable to find any information about Pouterman’s biography, and the only reference of him as special reporter was mentioned in the cover page and article of Regards issue 160 (fig.11) Analyzing Pouterman’s story published p.8, Regards February 4, 1937 we can understand how his essay contributed to the meaning of Chim’s photographs published next to

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102 Regards size,14 1/4 x 10 3/4 x 1/16 in. (36.2 x 27.3 x 0.2 cm)
103 Regards magazine, issue 160. February 4, 1937. Cover page. Image courtesy of the ICP.
the article, as well as Chim’s illustrated report published one page before in the same issue. Therefore, I will analyze in detail the article “Religion and Civil War,” where Pouterman fully documented the trip that both, he and Chim made to Northern Spain.

The article’s first lines introduce the reader not only to a Basque modern society, but to a state whose inhabitants were willing to defend their society from Fascism. Pouterman’s description of the Basque country used poetic qualifying adjectives, surrounding the story with an idealistic ambiance, “I admired the impeccable functioning of its industry…the hectic activity of Bilbao port.” Pouterman interviewed a variety of people, including politicians, workers, military, and businessmen, to confirm there was general consensus the Basque country was living in democracy.

Second, the reporter defined the political position of the Basque people calling them, “a bourgeois society living in democracy.” This statement deserves attention because Regards magazine is commonly described as a communist-inspired weekly. Nevertheless, they were aware the Republican cause could only get public opinion in its favor if and only if, as Brothers commented in her book War & Photography, “the communist elements in its political formation be downplayed, and the moderation of the cause [democracy] firmly established.” Therefore, Pouterman emphasized the Basques were not Marxist, or following Blum or Stalin, mentioning in his article, “…they do not create collective ownerships of land, or industries.”

The role of the Church in the war is questioned in the third paragraph. Pouterman asks if the Catholic Church was allied with the elements of political corruption, and the rebels. Or, on

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105 Regards magazine, issue 160. February 4, 1937… See appendix (1)
107 Regards magazine, issue 160. February 4, 1937… See appendix (2)
the contrary, if “its charity would support the Basque faith to fight fascism.”

In the next part of the discourse Pouterman related how that there was no conflict between the Republican aspirations and the Basque Church, conversely, he reported on a normal Sunday Mass in the church “San Vicente” in Bilbao.

He described how people attended the service in large numbers, and how this was performed without interruption. “A dense crowd left the church, while other men, women, and children were waiting under the square of church to come in.” Pouterman related another Mass in the same article, “Religion and Civil War,” this time celebrated at the front. The report also gave us the necessary background to understand the unique position the Roman Catholic Church had in the Basque Country. They supported the Second Republic government, despite the fact that the official political position of the Roman Catholic Church in the rest of Spain was on the Nationalists side.

As the final destination of Pouterman’s trip, he visited the cloister of Carmelite of Larrea in Amorebieta, founded during the XVII century and which had long tradition and influence in the Basque territory. He pointed out the respectful relationship between militaries and members of the religious order, who had been living together in the monastery since the war began. Pouterman ended the article saying, “An atmosphere of perfect serenity reign over the shadows of the vaults. A father, his eyes closed, is seated in front of the organ. No, neither him nor the brothers who accompany the song, look like tormented men.”

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108 Regards magazine, issue 160. February 4, 1937. See appendix (3)
109 Ibid. See appendix (4)
110 Ibid. See appendix (5)
111 Regards magazine, issue 160. February 4, 1937. See appendix.
5.a.2. The Illustrated Report in the Cloister of Amorebieta.

The Church as an institution supported the Nationalists’ side, among other things, because the Republican political agenda was pursuing the secularization of the State. The Spanish people considered the Church’s position a betrayal, and responded with a first violent action executing priests and nuns, as well as the burning of numerous monasteries. Such events were widely covered in the media, and positioned the Republicans as murderers to Europe’s eyes. Regards magazine in their propagandistic effort to change that perspective, tried through different articles to generate a new image that Republic and Church were coexisting in harmony, such was the case of Amorebieta in the Basque Country.

Moving through the text to a formal analysis of the images, Regards preceded the article “Religion and Civil War” (p.8), with a two-page displayed composition (p.6-7), which was

112 Ibid. p. 5-6.
presented as a Chim photo-report titled, “Through the Basque Republic... in Amorebieta Cloister” (fig.12). Seven images developed a visual storytelling by-product of the last paragraph of Pouterman’s article, when he recounted the “atmosphere of perfect serenity” in the monastery. The negatives used for this story are located in the rolls of film 004, 005 and 006 of the Mexican Suitcase, which the three of them comprise 111 photographs. These were taken by Chim not only in the cloister, but in different locations of Amorebieta (today Amorebieta-Etxano), Basque Country in January, 1937.

The Mexican suitcase sequences taken in the cloister of Amorebieta show three basic stories -- the military fraternizing with the monks, a ritual in the sacristy, and a funeral mass. Chim had to deal with poor light quality conditions within the church, which is the reason why he shot around 30 photographs exclusively of the funeral mass. The images below (fig.13,a,b,c.) serve as an example some of the sequence shots of the organ player, who was also mentioned by Pouterman’s article,

![Figure 13](image1.png)

![13a](image2.png)

![13b](image3.png)

![13c](image4.png)

113 ICP # ms_005_146/_143 to _145.
The first image of the priest playing an organ (fig.13) was the one published in the illustrated report, and the three following shots (fig.13a.b.c) are the ones contained in the Mexican Suitcase. The unseen sequences allow us to analyze Chim’s photographic technique, such as how he moved the camera to get better light, or how he was deciding to frame different elements in the composition (i.e. monk on the back, or front.)

The monumental architecture of Amorebieta’s cloister, the monk’s habits, and the light softened by glass windows, were the perfect setting to show the ceremonial and mystical ambiance that surrounded the religious life. A good example of this effect, were the photographs taken in the sacristy, where Chim took some snapshots of monks praying and performing a Catholic ritual. (fig.14.a.b.c.)

It seems likely that, the composition of those Amorebieta photographs was influenced by André Kertész’s photo-report “The silent existence of the holy men at the monastery of Notre

114 ICP# ms_006_178 to _181
Dame de la Grande Trappe," published by the German weekly Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung in 1929, and which is considered to be the first true photo-story published. Kertész was one of the most interesting and provocative photographers of his day and as Lacayo and Russell described “the photo-essay format was virtually invented for him.”

In addition, Kertész published another similar illustrated report in Vu magazine titled "Under the Rules of St. Benedict life" in 1930. Both photo-essays show monks praying and following rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.

Within the same two page layout, where the previous photographs were published, Regards magazine gave a prominent place to a photograph on top presenting some monks reading at the library; the caption says, “The monks follow in complete quietness their occupations at the library. Who could believe two steps away, in the same cloister, the militiamen are ready to depart to the front.”

Regards editor’s idea was showing their readers how the Basque Country monasteries were following their peaceful routine while coexisting with Republicans. Semiotic studies would say the concept library is directly related to the meaning calmness, being probably the reason why this photograph was chosen to take a prominent position in the page layout. This idea of “normality” was reinforced with the magazine’s cover photograph of a monk smiling to a soldier, showing how coexistence and dialogue was possible among them.

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115 Eyewitness p. 77
116 Vu magazine. No. 109 p. 337, 16 April 1930
118 Dans la biblioteque du cloitre, les religieux poursuivent en toute quietude leurs occupations. Qui pourrait croire que dans le meme cloitre, a deux pas, logent les miliciens prêts a repartir pour le front; my translation.
5.a.3. The photographic illustration of Pouterman’s article.

When it comes to the images that were placed next to Pouterman’s article “Religion and Civil War,” (fig.15) it appears in the eyes of the reader that they do not exactly correspond with the events mentioned in his narrative.

Pouterman mentioned in his article, “Religion and Civil War,” he made a trip all through the Basque country region, recounting locations as Bilbao, or the countryside, but the three photographs chosen by the magazine editor to illustrate the essay were taken only in the small town of Amorebieta.

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Figures 15

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Surprisingly, the photograph that shares same length size with the article corresponds to a teacher giving class of Basque geography, and which reference does not appear at anytime in the narrative.

To understand why these images were chosen to illustrate the article, we should take into consideration that the conventional response of photographs and the media where they were published, depended in a fundamental way upon “common sense constructions”. Therefore, we should guess the message Regards was trying to send here was related to the conditions of peace, democracy and education the Basque society was trying to sustain, versus the incoming war.

If we analyze the photograph, (fig.16) it shows how the classroom had on top of the blackboard a crucifix decorating the classroom, a symbol of Catholicism. The teacher is teaching geography to first graders, or posing as doing so. The map drew in the blackboard shows the provinces of, Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, and Álava (Spanish), and which were written in Basque as, “Bizkaya, Guipuzkoa, or Araba.” The Basque language was banned when the Fascist regime was established after the Civil War.

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Kress & Leeuwen said in their book *Reading Images the Grammar of Visual Design*, “Pictorial structures are never merely formal: they have a deeply important semantic dimension…they are ideological”. 122 This image calls the audience to think about future innocent victims, “children of war.” The topic would concern Chim the rest of his career, “Chim’s heart had always gone out to children,”123 explained his biographer Inga Bondi. Indeed, UNICEF asked him in 1948 to take photographs for a book depicting Europe’s children victims of war, one of Chim’s most touching and famous works.

Coming back to the analysis of the photograph, the symbolic meaning of the geography class could have been referred to the fact Basques shared border with France, and the fate of their neighbors would sooner or later affect French people. History confirms us what happened at the end of war was that thousands of Republicans tried to enter France in their effort to run away from Franco’s dictatorship.

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121 ms_004_94/989/93/96.
The second photograph to be described, according to size in the page design, shows the militiamen aligned holding flags (fig.17). Chim tried different angles until he got the last shot (fig.17b), where clear diagonals are repeated constantly not only in the soldier’s alignment, but in the shadows, and the flags too, giving the impression of military order or discipline. The “Battalion of Transmissions,” as these soldiers were described in the captions, was probably displaying the flags to add expressiveness to the illustrated report, or probably training for future military parades. More meaning can be added to this photograph taken in Amorebieta’s garden, if we consider the place which was originally consecrated to pray and labor, adopted now after the breakout of war, the function of training field of soldiers.

![Figures 17a, 17b, 17c](image)

**Figure 17** 17b 17c

Finally, the editor chose a portrait of the Superior of Amorebieta from among the 111 negatives taken in the monastery, the third image to be placed next to the article. (fig.18). This portrait of a pleasant old man was cropped from the original portrait to emphasize the monk’s expression. The interest of this portrait lies less in the subject portrayed, but in the Superior’s sincere smile.

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124 [ICP # ms_004_115/_114/_113.](#)
In turn, Pouterman included in the Amorebieta’s article, an interview made to the monks in the cloister quoting the following response, “To serve God, we don’t need arms.” Relating this statement with the Superior’s photograph, it is possible Regards wanted to show the monks represented an unlikely threat to the Republic.

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125 Image cropped, ICP # ms_006_184 and _185. The reproduction of this image is only for academic purposes. To obtain a print or permission to reproduce Chim images, please contact Magnum Photos at 212.929.6000 or photography@magnumphotos.com
5.4. Regards magazine, issue 164. March 4, 1937.

Figure 19

5.4.1. The article, “A Field Mass in the Basque Front.”

Exactly one month after Amorebieta’s article was published, Regards included in the new issue (#164) an article titled, “A Field Mass in the Basque Front” (fig.19). This time the authorship of the article was not mentioned in any place of the magazine. It is important to remember, copyright regulations during the 1930s followed different stipulations from today, being common that the writer’s name were not mentioned, or his/her work credited.

But, we know after the previous analysis of the piece of news “Religion and Civil War” by Pouterman, that he also personally attended a Field Mass in the Basque country. Just to recall,

126 Regards magazine, issue 164. March 4, 1937, pp. 6, 7.
we might look back on what he wrote, “I had the opportunity to attend a Field Mass celebrated in the front,”\textsuperscript{127} which opens the possibility this article was also written by Pouterman, and he developed it a month later based on the previous story published in February. Nevertheless, there is not news or information given in the “Religion and Civil War” article, detailing the location of the Mass, so we cannot affirm both Masses were the same.

“A Field Mass in the Basque Front,” is a short essay describing how a battalion attended Mass on a Sunday morning in the mountains near the town of Lekeito, Biscay. The author began relating the story describing the placement of the religious meeting, “…hills where trench are spread and the sea appears in the distance.” Afterwards, to give some dramatic context to the article, he commented that a terrible battle had happened days before.\textsuperscript{128} From this point, the writer described how the Sunday Mass was celebrated, “The voice of the priest took up the silence…”\textsuperscript{129} Then, he gave details of the rest of the religious event with a suspicious by close correlation between images and text, which all together purports that the story of the article was based on the negative sequences of the Mexican Suitcase. To say it in other words, the essay was probably not written after the reporter’s experience, but following the visual information given by the photographic action series taken by Chim in Lekeito. This hypothesis confirms a new style of communication was being created by the photo-magazines. Photography was no longer used merely for illustration, but was truly the dominant ingredient influencing articles and page layouts.\textsuperscript{130}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{127} Regards magazine, issue 160. February 4, 1937. See appendix (5)
\textsuperscript{128} Regards magazine, issue 164. March 4, 1937. See appendix (1) I did not find historic record of that battle.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. See appendix (3)
\end{flushleft}
Once again Regards cast the article, “A Field Mass in the Basque Front” in deliberated terms to keep proving to the audience that “the Catholic militiamen gave the total sacrifice of their life to the Republic.”¹³¹ My argument is the photographs and text composition were inflected and adapted to ensure maximum persuasive effects, clearly designed for propagandistic purposes.

Fifty five photographs were taken at the Field Mass, around February 1937. The obsessive detail Chim showed photographing the details of the Mass, hint the direction he was specifically asked to cover the Mass consciously, following the idea of a preconceived story Regards’ editors wanted to publish.

5.b.2. The Illustrated Report of the Field Mass.

For the purposes of this second visual analysis, I want to bring to the reader’s attention to the important advances that were adopted in photographic printed technology by France during the 1930s. The main technical advance joint the illustrated magazines production was the rotogravure printing, invented in the latter quarter of the 19th century. This technique was designed, among other things, to use elements on positive film allowing dealing with images in the layout of every page of the magazine; this meant that what you had in front of you was an object that corresponded exactly to what would be seen on the printed page. Photographs came in the form of positives on celluloid film, while text and captions were typeset on cellophane. Headlines could either be typeset or hand-drawn on celluloid as well, allowing lots of room for

¹³¹ Regards magazine, issue 164. March 4, 1937. See appendix (4)
creativity. The rotogravure allowed as well, quality ink reproductions of photographs, which in Regard’s case were printed in shades of brown, close to sienna color.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 20**

“A Field Mass in the Basque Front” is a good example of how the photographs were cropped, enlarged, and cut to fit the page layout composition (fig.20). In particular, the image on top right of a military musician shows how it was cut in the front, merging in a subtle way with the title emphasizing the feeling of depth (fig.21a).

The caption of the photograph said, “The organ is absent in this Mass in the open air. To remedy, a militiamen improvise religious themes with his flageolet.”

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In addition, this portrait also gets a reference within the article’s narrative, “a drummer, militiamen of the Basque country, improvise with his country style a religious theme playing with his flageolet…” This is one of the images which were fully described in the essay, being part of the story, or as I will try to prove next, to construct the narrative.

To support this claim, a couple of images were similarly narrated in detail within the article. First, the photograph of an old chair with liturgical objects (fig.19); then, the small frame just right next to it, and in which the caption says, “While disguising the altar, the wind blows; with infinite precautions, two militiamen light a candle.” The drummer’s portrait also got attention in the captions and the narrative, the militiamen’s photograph lighting a candle (fig.22) was also described in the article, as follows “over the improvised altar, the flame of the candles flickers in the wind; in the distance, the cannon…gives the priest a reply.” In addition to this quote, we can say the photograph of the chair correlates the concept of “improvised altar.”

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136 Image cut from Regards’ article, issue 164, pp. 6-7, ms_009_281.
137 Regards magazine, issue 164. March 4, 1937. See appendix (3)
Figure 22  22a  22b  22c

Chim photographed almost 10 times the militiamen setting the altar. The sequence on top shows how close he pushed the camera trigger between the shots (fig.22b.c). This may indicate Chim was trying to record the Basque Mass using basic cinematic principles, such as immediacy of the narrative, in opposition to the concept of economy of expression usually applied to the picture taking. As a result, these 35mm negatives, of the Field Mass before battle, could be compared at some points to stills from a movie’s roll of film.

5.b.3. Chim’s notebook.

Regards magazine, and the Mexican Suitcase sequences have been the primary resources I had used from this point to analyze Chim’s work published in February 4, and March 4, 1937. But a third document, not less important, the so-called “French notebooks” help closing on a high note the study of the process was followed in the photograph’s selection and composition of the previous illustrated reports.

\(^{139}\text{ICP # ms}_008_245/_244/_246\text{ and }246a.\)
The French notebooks contain the contact prints of Chim, Capa and Taro’s negatives from 1936–39. As Cynthia Young described them in the ICP web page, “these notebooks were produced to show the full coverage of stories to potential editors and to keep track of which images were used by the publications”. 140

The notebooks were discovered by the Spanish Professor Carlos Serrano, when doing research in the Parisian National Archives during the 1970s. Chim’s contact sheets are part of one of the eight notebooks found, 8 x 10 inches, (20.3x25.4 cm) and contain small images pasted onto the pages, which many of them are original negatives contained in the Mexican Suitcase.

The contact sheet that will be first analyzed is Chim’s selection of Amorebieta’s photo-report “#1 Basque country,” 141(fig.23) This page is an invaluable selection of negatives that shows Chim preferences and favorite framings of his photo-report, proving he also participated actively in the edition of his photographs when working for Regards.

140 http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitcase/story.html
141 There are two contact sheets of Amorebieta illustrated report, “1 Pay Basque, and 2 Basque” respectively.
In this first contact sheet (fig. 23) we can see the images were marked with different symbols, and numbers, which were codes to indicate information related to the photographs and their publication characteristics. For example, the symbol “X” indicated the negative had been published. The selection Chim made of the photographs in this page shows members of the monastery and the military fraternizing. The last two images portray the Amorebieta’s Superior in two different attitudes, first smiling, and then praying. Regards’ two-page layout shows the first photograph was the one published, and also cropped, symbols [x] and [-] respectively.

142 French Notebook, contact sheets by Chim.
On the other hand, the contact sheet titled, “The Mass before the battle” (Le masse avant le bataille,”) published March 4, 1937 (fig.24), shows a different pattern of the images if we compared them to Amorebieta’s story. It appears, Chim was grouping these negatives by subject as following, the photographs on top left showed the preparation of the “improvised altar” next, the frames followed the story-telling of the mass celebration, and the last shots depicted the soldiers in devote religious attitude, like praying on their knees.

\[143\] French Notebook, contact sheets by Chim.
The contact sheets were made by Chim, and his hand writing in the titles on each page proves it, but it is difficult to determine if the symbols were his, or written by a Regards editor. The scribbled annotations are specific coded information seen more suitable to editorial staff, than the photographer himself, because they referred instructions about printing size, or cropping characteristics, instead of aesthetic decisions. As way of illustration of the difficulty of interpreting the symbols, observe the next negative’s annotations (fig.25).

Figure 25

As Brennen and Hardt explained in their book “Picturing the past,” the newsrooms during the 1930s had chaotic working environments, where writing, and photographing as mass production “occurred under conditions of anonymity and availability,” being only part of a machinery of journalism where subjects became part on an industrial process. So, despite the authorship of the marks, and if they were made by Chim or not, the contact sheets are with no

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144 French Notebook, contact sheets by Chim.
doubt the most subjective documentation we have about Chim’s point of view concerning his photographs. Thanks to the French notebook, we know he pre-selected the negatives for publication, and he indeed had good notions of how to edit his work. The final point is that some of the tiny glued frames in the pages were not published or contained in the Mexican Suitcase negatives,\(^ {146}\) fact that indicates the rolls of film recently found are not complete stories.


![Figure 26](image)

The third issue of Regards to be analyzed concerning Chim’s photographs and their relationship with the storytelling process of the illustrated report is dated November 26, 1936, which was published approx. three months before the articles analyzed in this second chapter. The reason why this single one-page layout called my attention is because it also reflects the

\(^ {146}\) Chim notebook page 2, frames 7 & 8. For more information consult at the ICP.

\(^ {147}\) Regards magazine, issue 150. November 26, 1936.
complex relationship between the photographs published in Regards and the rolls of film’s organization in the Mexican Suitcase.

5.c.1. The article, “The Barbarians…”

With a short but clearly propagandistic message, the article “The Barbarians…”\textsuperscript{148} talked about how the Second Republic had a Committee of Cultural Heritage Protection, which was taking care of the Spanish art pieces, speaking how some young communists and socialists Republicans were safeguarding the art master’s pieces.

The photo-report comes as a response to the bombardment of the Palace of Duke Of Alba (Palacio de Liria) in Madrid, saying how the magazine just acquired knowledge that, “…the Palace Of Duke of Alba, which contained inestimable tapestries, and paintings of Vela[z]quez, by Goya had been recently destroyed by the planes of Franco-Hitler.”\textsuperscript{149} This Palace had been used as the Communist headquarters of the Republicans since the beginning of the Civil War, and had been the residence of the aristocratic House of Alba since its construction in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century.

The anonymous author questions the audience to wonder if the photographs taken by Chim describe the Republicans annihilating the National art, or if contrary, they were preserving it with love.

\textsuperscript{148} First part of article “Les barberes...” published in Regards, November 26, 1936.

\textsuperscript{149} Regards magazine, issue 150. November 26, 1936. See appendix (3)
5.c.2. The illustrated-report of Palace of Liria.

Some historical conditions must be related before analyzing the photographs that illustrated the article “The Barbarians.” As I had explained in the article “Religion and Civil War,” published February 4, 1937, the Republican soldiers had raised against the Roman Catholic Church during the first days of the imminent war. In fact, Chim photographed some Loyalist militiamen looting a church in Barcelona during the spring of 1936.

Figure 27

Figure 27 shows a man armed with an ammunition belt, left closed fit up, and a couple of decapitated heads of what were once sculptures of saints. This photograph contains lots of symbolism, especially related to the position of the Republicans towards the Church, as well as the direct attack to its heritage. In sharp contrast with this image, the set of photographs placed next to the illustrated report, “The Barbarians,” by Regards six months later, speaks to the nature of the Republic willing to preserve religious art, instead of destroying it (fig.26). The pictures revealed uniformed soldiers cataloguing art work, carrying a big crucifix on their shoulders,

waxing the Palace floor to a shine, or a group of armed men and women marching in front of the Royal Palace (fig. 27)

Figure 27

We cannot determine the exact date these photographs were taken by Chim, but it was probable during the late summer 1936, when he was working in Madrid reporting other stories, like the photo-report of the famous women combatant Dolores Ibárruri “La Pasionaria,” who was documented giving speeches in Madrid by then. The photographs used in this illustrated story are part of different events Chim reported the first days of the Civil War, and which sequences are contained in the Mexican Suitcase compartments.

151 Cropped image to show detail of Regards magazine, issue 150. November 26, 1936, p. 11
152 For example, Dolores Ibarruri. Meeting in Madrid. Summer 1936. ms033_039
Following the cataloging numeric order of the Mexican Suitcase of the different stories used for this photo-essay, the roll of film 019 will be first analyzed, and which picture is located in the page layout down right. (fig.27). The caption says it was taken in the Palace of the Duke of Alba, (Palace of Liria) and shows a militiaman waxing the wooden floor of one the salons of the House of Alba. This photograph claims the argument the Republicans were looking after the Spanish Cultural Heritage with extreme interest, safeguarding it in perfect conditions (even cleaning the place).

Figure 28

28a

28b

28c

Chim took 31 shots of a group of militiamen in different rooms of the Palace, not only preserving the art work, but performing different activities (fig.28.a.b.c). These photographs clearly follow a pre-conceived storytelling and despite they were not published in a single photo-report, it tries to communicate the idea the militiamen was looking after the Spanish Cultural Heritage. To do so, Chim photographed in detail some signs hanged next to the pieces of art,

153 ICP # ms_019_006/_007/ _013 and _014.
which were saying things like, “It is strictly forbidden to touch any object. Communist Party”\textsuperscript{154} (fig.29a).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Figure 29 (original) 29a (cropped)}
\end{figure}

To add some context, it must be considered during the Spanish Civil War many historical buildings, and art pieces were destroyed as consequence of the bombardments, like the example of \textit{Palacio de Liria}. The Nationalist press blamed the Republicans for allegedly doing so, referring to them as “barbarians,” a term continuously documented in some Fascist magazines.\textsuperscript{156} Because of this, it is very likely \textit{Regards} titled the November 26, 1936 article, “The Barbarians…,” to confront directly the veracity of the Nationalist declarations vs. the “reality” of the photographs they were presenting. Besides, they finished the article saying, “The fascist do not kill only women and children. They destroy the art that makes the glory of a country and a people. They are the new barbarians.”\textsuperscript{157}

The rest of sequences taken in the Palace, showed some Loyalist soldiers posing as if they were the new “noble” residents of the Palace of Liria (fig.30b.c).

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{154}“Prohibido terminantemente tocar ningun objeto. P.C.” (Spanish)
  \item \textsuperscript{155} Cropped to show detail from ICP # ms_019_015
  \item \textsuperscript{156} Reference from book at the ICP.
  \item \textsuperscript{157} \textit{Regards} magazine, issue 150. November 26, 1936. See appendix (4)
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
On the other hand, the frame top left illustrating the article, is presenting a small group of militiamen marching in front of the Royal Palace of Pardo, in Madrid (fig.27). This time within the roll of film 035, Chim only photographed a short sequence of 11 negatives of soldiers mounting guard, or marching victoriously next to the “Plaza de Oriente.”

The third and last story used to illustrate “The Barbarians…,” was Chim’s photo-report taken in the Convent of “Descalazas Reales” in Madrid. This significant set of photographs tried to demonstrate the Republican government’s effort to catalog and preserve diverse art pieces during the Civil War period. This story is contained in two different rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase; first number 036, and then roll 039. Within them, full sequences of the woman cataloging a painting, or the two adolescent militiamen carrying big crucifix on their shoulders (fig.31).

\[158\] ICP # ms_019_008/009/011 and _012.
In order to reconstruct the process followed in the production and selection of the photographs, which composed “The Barbarians…” page layout (fig.30), the images are example of how Regards chose the images accordingly to their visual meaning, instead of real content. For example, though the photographs of the soldiers marching, and cleaning the floor (fig.27 top left and 28) were indeed taken in the Palace of Liria, the woman cataloging a painting, and the two adolescent militiamen carrying big crucifix (Figure 31b and 31) were in fact taken in another location, the Cloister of “Descalzas Reales” in Madrid. The photography sequences show that the Republican Government through the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Department of Fine Arts trying to preserve the art pieces in “Descalzas Reales.” But, on the other hand, the objects of art depicted in these photographs were not related to the ones mentioned in the article “The Barbarians…,” where Regards allude the master’s pieces had been destroyed by the Fascist air raid.

To summarize, Regards merged three different photography reports by Chim to develop the illustrated story of the Palace of Liria’s air raid. As they mentioned in the article “The Barbarians…” the “inestimable … paintings of Vela[z]quez, and Goya,” were lost, reason why
the editors decided to incorporate a photograph with a painting, even if it was not from Velazquez or Goya. We can conclude the frame of the woman cataloging a picture, and the militiamen carrying the big crucifix were included to relate the concept “art pieces” through visual form within the photographs, despite they did not were related to the true meaning. The purpose of Regards’ editor choosing these photographs was to facilitate the readers to visualize the article’s leitmotiv – Republicans taking care versus Nationalists destroying cultural heritage.

On the other hand, while I was doing research in the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C., I found a reproduction of the photograph of the woman cataloging a painting with two soldiers (Fig. x) in the book, “Fotografía E Información De Guerra: España 1936-1939.” This time, the photograph was not published in Regards magazine, but in “SFIR” magazine, a Russian publication.160 The photograph was not attributed to Chim in the book, and the caption only said, “Representative of the State Commission of Arts, being helped by young combatants, is writing the inventory of one of the paintings saved in a Spanish Museum”161 (Convent of “Descalzas Reales”, Madrid.) We acknowledge Chim’s photographs were published by other French publications, like Vu magazine, or the newspaper Ce Soir; as well as the British magazines, Illustrated London News, or the Weekly Illustrated. Inge Bondi, biographer of Chim, pointed out Chim’ stories were sold outside France trough the agency Alliance. Nevertheless, Regards magazine was the first one to publish the Spanish Civil War photographs. On the other hand, the fact Chim’s work was published in different countries brings to the table another interesting line of research, such as, what other meanings his photographs of the Mexican Suitcase adopted in the international press.

160 First time a photograph of Chim is documented in a Russian newspaper.
“Religion et Guerre Civile”

(1) Je reviens d’Euzcadi, J’ai parcouru la Republique Autonome Basque d’un bout a l’autre de son territoire, J’ai visite ses villes et ses campagnes; j’ai admire le fonctionnement impeccable de son industrie; j’ai vu l’activite fievruse du port de Bilbao; j’ai parle avec ses homes politiques: j’ai interroge des ouvriers, des bourgeois, des militaries, des chefs d’entreprises; et partout je n’ai constate q’un seule volonte, farouche et tenace: celle de defender jusqu’au bout les libertes basques et la Republique Espagnole.

(2) Le peuple basque n’est pas <marxiste>, il n’est vendu ni a Blum, ni a Staline, comme le proclame quotidiennement le bouffon de Radio-Seville, Queipo de Llano. Le peuple basque s’est donne un gouvernement bourgeois et democratique. Il n’a collectiv ise ni terres, ni usines, et sur toute l’étendue de sa Republique, Il n’a pas detruit une eglise. Il est profondement attaché a la foi catholique. Sa piete, connue dans toute l’Espagne est plus ardent que jamais.

(3) Est-ce cette foi authentique des ouailles qui a preserve l’eglise basque de la corruption politique et sociale que les republicains espagnols denoncent chez le reste du clerge de la peninsula comme le principal resort de la sedition militaire?

Ou est-ce, au contraire, la probite morale des pretres basques, qui a aide le peuple a garder intact sa foi chretienne?

(4) Toujours est-il que dans le Pays Basque espagnol, il n’existe pas de conflit entre les aspirations republicaines de la population et l’Eglise. Nombreux sont les pretres basques fusilles par les factieux pour avoir refuse de faire cause commune avec les ennemis du peuple. J’ai rencontre a Bilbao plus d’un pretre qui avait du luir l’enfer fasciste. Et l’éveque de Vittoria lui-meme a ete constraint d’abandonner son eveche, aujourd’hui sous la domination de Franco, pour aller se refugier a Rome.

Un quart d’heure plus tard, je puis observer les mêmes scènes devant d’autres églises de la ville.

(5) Le lendemain, j’ai eu l’occasion d’assister à une messe de champagne célèbre sur le front. Tous les bataillons formés par le Parti Nationaliste Basque – il y en a un qui porte le nom d’Ignacio Loyola – ont leurs aumôniers. Ces prêtres accompagnent les combattants jusqu’en première ligne, sous le feu de l’ennemi. L’un d’eux m’a dit:

- Non, nous ne sommes pas armés. Pour servir Dieu, on n’a pas besoin d’armes. Il paraît que de l’autre côté, chez les rebelles, on rencontre des prêtres faisant le coup de feu, même à la mitraillette. Ce n’est pas à moi de les juger. Mais nous autres, prêtres basques, nous ne voulons pas marcher contre le peuple. D’ailleurs, nous ne faisons que suivre l’exemple de notre évêque.


“La Messe de Campagne sur le Front Basque”

(1) C’était près du village de Lequeistio, en pays basque, par une matinée de dimanche où tout était calme sur le front. Sur les collines ou s’échelonnaient les tranchées et d’ou l’on aperçoit la mer, au loin, il n’y avait que le grand vent du large’ a peine, par instants, de rares coups de fusils s’échangeaient entre les avant postes; a intervalles réguliers, un canon tonnait, quelque part; dan le ciel d’un autre secteur, des obus éclataient, comme des flocons d’ouate.
(2) La bataille avait été terrible les jours précédents, et les deux adversaires pansaient leurs plaies. Le bataillon, que tenait le secteur, confiant la garde de ses tranchées à une campagnie de grenadiers, descendit sans arme vers le village. Et la, devant un humble ferme à cinq cents mètres de lignes, près des maisons que les bombardement avait en partie detruites, une messe fut celebree.

(3) La voix du pretre montait dans le silence; sur l'autel improvisé, la flamme des cierges tremblait dans le vent; au loin, le canon qui tonnait toujours, a intervalles reguliers, faisait au pretre les repons. La musique d'orgue manquait a cette messe champetre; un tambourinaire, milicien du pays basque, improvisa su des airrs du pays une musique religieuse qu'il joua sur son flageolet en l'accompagnant des roulements legers et sourds de son tambourin.

(4) Les paysans, que la guerre n'avait pas chasses de leur village, s'étaient joints aux miliciens. Ils etaient tous la, dans le calme de leur force interieure, ces miliciens catholiques qui avaient fait le don total de leur vie a la Republique.


“Les barbares...”

(1) Ceux qui aneantissent l'art national ou ceux qui le preservent avec amour? Ce n'est pas sans emotion que nos lecteurs regarderont les photographies de cette page. Elles ont ete prises par notre ami CHIM, au cours d'un recent sejour a Madrid, dans le palais du duc l'Albe. Le gouvernement du Front Populaire a cree, voici plusieurs mois, une COMMISION DE CONSERVATION DES OEUVRES D'ART.

(2) Les MILICEDES BEAUX ARTS, composees de jeunes republicains communistes, socialistes, montent la garde au tour des chefs-d’oeuvre de l'art espagnol. Le peuple veille sur le patrimoine culturel, en pleine guerre civile, parmi les bombardements.

(3) Or, on apprenait ces jours derniers que le palais du duc d'Albe, qui refermait d'inestimables tapisseries, et des tableaux de Velasquez, de Goya, avait ete detruit par les avions de Franco-Hitler.

(4) Les fascistes ne tuent pas seulement les femmes et les enfants, ils detruisent l'art qui fait la gloire d'un pays et d'un peuple. Ils sont les nouveaux barbares.
Chapter Three

This chapter focuses on the interdisciplinary paths I had to follow during my research to validate the analysis of “Chim & The Mexican Suitcase,” as well as how technology is changing the perceptions and methodology of researchers. Margaret Dikovitskaya, in her book “The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn,” explains that visual studies are an interdisciplinary field, where “art history, anthropology, film studies, linguistics, and comparative literature encountered poststructuralist theory and cultural studies.”

My aim in this chapter is to add the important role that new technology is playing now in the visual studies to that framework.

7. New technology applied to photography analysis.

When Cynthia Young, curator at the International Center of Photography (ICP), asked me to date and locate the places depicted at Chim’s rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase, as accurately as possible, I realized that getting specific data from approximately 1,500 negatives would be challenging. With only 3 months, I had to start the research almost from scratch.

I began the study June 1, 2009, when the ICP gave me access to the electronic version of the negatives. First, I started doing a literature review, and then getting familiar with the resources I had available at the ICP. One of Chim’s few biographies, Inge Bondi’s “Chim, The Photographs of David Seymour,” was tremendously helpful. It contextualizes his life, and gives basic information about his work in Spain, as special photographer of the Civil War. Then, I consulted Carole Naggar’s essays at Chim’s official webpage, which are part of the research she is doing for the future publication of a revised biography of Chim. Her notes gave me specific details about every photographic work Chim had done. The book and the website gave

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163 http://www.davidseymour.com/chim_essays.html
me access to trusted information. Although the platform of publication varies from one author to another, both, were reliable sources.

Nevertheless, it was not until I analyzed the scanned issues of Regards magazine, the French weekly, where Chim had been publishing his work during the mid-1930s, that I was indeed able to confirm the dates of many of his stories contained in the Mexican suitcase. The ICP has in property a large Regards’ collection in their archive, issues of which have been scanned in hi-definition. The fact I had access to the “original-digital” magazine at any time has validated the accuracy of the information I am presenting in this thesis. This type of twenty-four/seven accessibility would not have been possible if consulting the “original-hard-copy,” due to obvious conservation measures applied to Regards’ 70 year old paper.

After cross-referencing Chim’s biographic information with Regards magazine’s date of publication, I was finally able to date Chim’s negatives in the Mexican Suitcase between spring 1936 and March 1937.

Further, I tried to get historic information focused on the Spanish Civil War in order to narrow the dates, and even the specific timing of some events that Chim photographed. So, I consulted some of the books I had available in New York related to the Spanish Civil War, which I thought could help me to identify some of the stories. Unfortunately, the information of the books I was able to consult lacked any formal studies about battles, meetings, or parades. Thus, I went online in order to see if I could get any information at newspapers. To exemplify the process I followed, I will explain in detail the case of the roll of film 035, which was taken in “La Plaza de la Puerta del Sol” in Madrid.
We can find documented in Chim’s biography, he was photographing Madrid the summer of 1936. The images (Fig. 32,a,b,c) show some loyalist soldiers doing a parade in “Plaza de la Puerta del Sol,” which is one of the most well known and busiest places in Madrid. This square is the centre (Km 0) of the radial network of Spanish roads, and the different photographs taken by Chim, let us even go further and locate the march all through Calle Mayor.

Following the visual information criteria, I Googled different data to obtain any reference of the Spanish Civil War in Madrid published in newspapers, and after consulting different databases, I found the Basque webpage “Guipuzcoa 1936,” which scanned diaries and newspapers published in Spain during 1936. They were able to collect information from every single day of that year, and offer direct access to the .pdf file of the original newspaper. The communist newspaper “Frente Popular,” page 3, dated August 26, 1936, caught my attention. After reading the publication I found the next citation, “This evening a Parade of the Republican army was verified in the centric streets of Madrid all the way up to Puerta del Sol…” Hence, recalling the details given previously, [both the photograph and the document give the same
location --Puerta del Sol - and the same date --summer 1936]. In spite of the correlation, there is not any visual reference next to the article published by “Frente Popular” reporting the parade, so Chim’s photographic sequences cannot be considered the same event according to Cynthia Young, curator at the ICP.

The reasons Young gave me were that the information given by “Frente Popular” cannot be correlated to Chim’s negatives, due to lack of photography evidence in the newspaper. This argument speaks of the nature photographs in the press are considered documents, which verisimilitude is rarely doubted. Besides, there were apparently many parades in Madrid during war time, so the parade reported August 26, 1936 by “Frente Popular” could have been only one of them.

Just to reinforce this statement, we might look back to previous chapters in this thesis, where I mentioned the printed press included pictures as veracity vehicle of information during the 1930s. Although, when the images versus the story are analyzed in detail, the objective representation of photographs as facts seems to be compromised. Basically, press information should be questioned because the ethical standards followed by newspapers or illustrated magazines during the 1930s are far away from the sacrosanct stipulations photojournalist and editors are forced to follow today.

Coming back to the photographs of the parade at “Puerta del Sol,” it must be considered they were never published, or seen before the Mexican Suitcase was found, which is the case of many other rolls of film in the boxes. Moreover, technical studies should be performed in order to get closer dates of the picture taking. Though, this was not the main concern I had when analyzing these frames, because I already had a time line frame, (summer 1936-spring 1937) and
for the purposes of this study the value resided in the stories photographed, and published, as well as the fact they were part of action sequences.

Because we have the full negatives’ sequences, we can also determine Chim’s photographs adopted the form of story-telling, which was sometimes pre-conceived by Regards’ editors, and other times by Chim’s eye. The historical distance of the event has allowed me to go behind the camera lens to understand Chim’s symbolic meaning of his photographs by finding some patterns in his work. Among the best examples to approach Chim’s perspective, there are his portraits of the combatants of the Spanish Civil War.

Chim’s rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase do not show militiamen in the front line action, but in the trench. The negatives show a pattern of Republican militiamen posing for portraits; these photographs are very personal, and it is common to find dramatic close-ups, which speaks of Chim’s interest in emphasizing the human character of the Spanish Civil War. It is important to remember the press coverage of this war was intensive, and the photographers who stood up for the Republican cause, wanted to facilitate its victory through their photographs.

As Caroline Brothers explained in her book “War and Photography”, when referring to the Loyalist soldiers’ characterization in the press, “Myths of the heroic fighting man already current in popular discourse were revived and deployed for propagandist ends.”

This could have been certainly Regards point of view concerning the portraits of the Loyalist soldiers. Even though, if we follow common conventions referred to the camera’s photography techniques of distance and angle; the portraits of Chim show he had much deeper interest in presenting the anonymous soldier as a person, than just as heroic soldiers. As way of illustration, we will

analyze one of the contact sheets of the French notebook, which Chim devoted to Republican militiamen’s portraits.

There are different perspectives how these portraits could be analyzed, demographics, collective memory, historical document, but if we want to take into account the photographer’s insight, we must first talk about the close-ups. These militiamen’s portraits were taken abstracting the subject from any background context. As the article published by Aberystwyth University defined, “Close-ups focus attention on a person’s feelings or reactions, and are used

\[\text{Figure 33}\]

168 Chim’s contact sheet p. 2 of portraits, from the French notebooks. Image courtesy of the ICP.
in interviews to show people in an emotional state." So, Chim was trying to emphasize the excitement, or concerns these idealist anti-fascist men had while fighting the war.

Turns out to be interesting Chim’s selection of photographs in this contact sheets were taken only from the shots made in Asturias, approximately February-March 1937, despite he photographed many other soldiers all over his trip in Northern Spain. Chim chose the militiamen portraits in serene attitude towards the future of the Republic in Spain, taking into consideration the people from Asturias, just had fought 3 years before, October 1934, in what is known as “The Revolution of Asturias,” where the workers had tried to support the Socialist Republic of Asturias, but failed.

The fact Chim made two contact sheets of militiamen portraits speaks to us about the interest he had focusing the man behind the soldier. He selected a variety of characterizations of the Republican militiamen, such as the young combatant, the farmer, the intellectual (fig. 34, a, b, c, respectively). In addition, we can see how the majority of them were portrayed without arms, or uniforms, presenting them only as civilians fighting for a cause.

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169 www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/short/gramtv.html
170 ICP # ms_023_025/ ms_025_017.
Intertextuality gives these shots a different meaning today. Although it could be considered a dependency of intermediality between these photographs, and the information read about the number of Republican deaths reported in the North of Spain during the war; cross-generational memory has inevitably changed the perception of these pictures, making us consider this could have been the last time those young militiamen were portrayed alive.

Turning to the analysis of the Mexican Suitcase negative sequences, it was my goal to get specific information of the objects photographed in an attempt to locate more precisely where these shots were taken. As I explained previously in chapter first, the negatives were scanned in hi-definition after they arrived to the ICP. So, because I had access to the digital form of the rolls of film, I could zoom very detail information, something that seemed impossible at the 35mm. As a result, I was able to analyze every single detail of the negatives, like for example reading the text of small papers Chim photographed; in this specific instance, [“A letter pinned in a wall”] contained in the roll of film 042 (fig.35)

![Figure 35 (original) 35a (zoom)](image)

This image if analyzed as a 35 mm negative, would have given us little information, perhaps suggesting it was a tribute made to some soldiers fallen in combat. But, thanks to the hi-

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171 ICP # ms_042_029.
definition of the scanning I was able to read some fragments of it (fig.35a), first getting a specific location and date, “Ocana, Toledo, August 1, 1936”, second, reading how the “Band of D. José Vega Lopez” was asking to the militiamen of Ocana to respect the “war comrades,” which photograph was attached to the announce. (Apparently, the men portrayed had been confused with rebels.) The letter finished saying, “Greetings and Long Live the Republic!”

Another example of the advantages given by the analysis of the digital image within the same roll of film 042, was a negative showing a truck transporting some militiamen with a cannon. After getting the specific form of the cannon by zooming the object, I typed the criteria in Google images, and finally got a comparative picture which shape perfectly matched with the cannon photographed by Chim. Thanks to www.rojoyazul.net, an online publication which offers in detail analysis of the weapons of the Spanish Civil War, I could identify the cannon as a Schneider Cannon 75/28, model 1906 (Fig. 35b)

![Figure 35](http://www.rojoyazul.net/militaris/armanento/artilleria.htm)

172 http://www.rojoyazul.net/militaris/armanento/artilleria.htm
173 ICP # ms_042_044
174 The zoom of this image is from another frame in the same sequence in roll of film 042 / ms_042_042.
To summarize, the hi-definition of the scanned photographs, and the online publications helped me to complete the captions of Chim’s negatives in a very short period of time. For example, the negative figure 35 came from having no information at all, to have a complete caption as follows,

- Chim (David Seymour) [“Artilleria U.H.P” transporting Schneider Cannon 75/28, model 1906, near Ocana, Toledo, Spain], August 1936.\textsuperscript{176}

Coming back to the processes I followed to do research of the visual information contained in the Mexican Suitcase, new sources came up into my way, this time presented in the form of social media. To my surprise the platforms Flickr, and Panoramio were very helpful to identify certain locations of the negatives.

The online magazine \textit{Wired},\textsuperscript{177} describes Flickr as a platform where photographs can be uploaded, stored and organized, with the plus of being a social network with blog-friendly tools, which means any image can be posted directly to a blog from Flickr. This online community has

\textsuperscript{175} http://www.rojoyazul.net/militaris/armarento/artilleria.htm
\textsuperscript{176} Caption following ICP standards.
\textsuperscript{177} http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/2004/12/65958
become very popular, and by October 12, 2009 they published they have reached 4 billion photographs in their site. Another advantage of Flickr is that allows users to tag their photographs, which for the purposes of doing research turns out to be very helpful, because the search engines identify the tags information as criteria.

The best example I can give concerning the advantages of Flickr while looking for visual information is the roll of film 007, which was taken in the Basque country, January 1937. Chim’ sequences of stories not only showed the step-by-step action of the event, but there is always a shot from a church, a city monument, or a sign which could illustrate and give some additional information about the location. The fact Chim consecutively followed this practice shows he was very professional, and methodic, something that has become invaluable for cataloging his work.

So, in the roll of film 007, there is a short illustrated report of a flea market, which was not published by Regards, but now can serve with purposes of ethnographic studies as a document of Basque country’s markets during the 1930s. After the sequence of 10 photographs of people selling fresh farm products, as well as traditional Basque pottery, a couple of photographs of a church and its entrance were taken by Chim, (fig. 36,a,b) and a panoramic view of a port finally closed the image set of roll of film 007 (fig. 36c).

178 http://blog.flickr.net/en/2009/10/12/4000000000/
So, I knew Chim was photographing the Basque country during that time, to be more specific the Biscay region. Therefore, in order to identify the name of the town, I started the Google search looking for “Biscay churches,” trying to correlate the fig. 36a, and 36b with a photograph uploaded on the web. The result I got was an endless list of pages and blogs, which enlisted themselves churches in the Biscay region, certainly showing some photographs, but after taking a deep look at them, not image matched the church’s bell tower Chim photographed in fig. 36a.

An additional inconvenience was the majority of churches in Biscay are devoted to the Virgin Mary, which in Spanish are called “Iglesia Santa Maria,” to say it in other words, the churches in this region had the same prefix name, “Church of Holy Mary”. So, instead of focusing in the whereabouts of the church, I decided to use the visual information available of the last shot, (fig. X) which indicated the town was somewhere in the cost of Biscay, Cantabrian sea.

179 ICP # ms_007_214/_215/_216/_217.
This time, I first used Google maps to make a complete list of the seaside towns in Biscay, and then typed in Google image every single town I had enlisted. Little towns in Biscay have already official web pages sponsored by their Municipality. The information available in these pages may vary, but I could realize many of them offered virtual tours linked to Flickr in what is called the “geotagged photos”. Finally, while I was taking a look to panoramic views of the seaside town of Lekeito, I found within the image gallery of its webpage\textsuperscript{180} that the church perfectly matched every moulding, window, and detail of Chim’s photograph of the Catholic church was, “Santa Maria de la Asuncion” in Lekeito, Biscay. Identification accomplished, I can affirm “virtual” tours are an excellent tool for researcher to do “virtual field” work.

In other respects, when I had to identify the roll of film 014, it turned out to be more complicated than other rolls of film, because I could identify four different places, which were photographed one after another in the same negative sequence. To say it in other words, Chim was traveling through the Basque Region sometime around January 1937, and for this specific photo-report, he only used one roll of film within his Leica, while visiting 4 different places.

The first thing that popped up in one of the frames (fig. 37) was a commemorative plaque on a building façade. Thanks again to hi-definition digital negative; I could zoom the image and read “In memory of the distinguished artist D. Placido Zuloaga, Glory of Eibar”\textsuperscript{181} (fig.37a).

\textsuperscript{180} http://www.lekeitio.com/web/castellano/Lekeitio/visitasvirtuales/visitas.htm
\textsuperscript{181} Complete caption of the plaque, “En memoria del insigne artista D. Placido Zuloaga, Gloria de Eibar, el pueblo hizo colocar esta lapida en la casa en que vivio, 1850 to 1908” (Spanish)
The city and Municipality of Eibar it is not in Biscay, where Chim spent most of his time while visiting Northern Spain, but a place located in Gipuzkoa, also a province in the Basque Country. I did research on Eibar’s history and it turned out to be known for its weapons and its metal mills (specifically steel and iron). In addition, nearby Eibar many battles were fought in the *Intxorta* mountains (*Haundi, Txiki, Gaztelu*) resisting the Nationalists occupation during the first months of 1937.\textsuperscript{183}

After realizing virtual tours where worth to take, I decided to go a step forward and used Google Earth to literally make a general virtual tour of Eibar region, trying to see where Chim had been photographing the roll of film 014. When I was exploring the satellite image map I discovered another helpful digital tool, Panoramio.\textsuperscript{184}

Panoramio is a geolocation-oriented photo sharing website, which is connected to Google Earth and Google Maps. This tool adds photographs of places of interest to the virtual map of Google, which can be accessed just by clicking on top of them. Panoramio’s goal is to allow

\textsuperscript{182} Ms_014_004
\textsuperscript{183} http://www.memoriahistorica.org/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=378
\textsuperscript{184} http://www.panoramio.com/
users to learn more about a given area by viewing the photographs that other users have taken at that place. For a visual reference of Panoramio’s interface in Eibar, see image below, (fig.38)

![Figure 38](http://www.panoramio.com/map/#lt=43.1841801&ln=-2.4732889&z=4&k=2)

Unfortunately, the city of Eibar today, strongly differs from the city of Eibar in 1937, because it suffered air raids from the Nationalists. On the other side, we must consider 70 years of growth and progress have changed the city’s configuration. As consequence, I was not able to identify the buildings photographed by Chim in Eibar.

But, in my effort to get any information, I exchange large e-mails with the “Association Sancho de Beurko,” which have published different monographic books of the Spanish Civil War in the Basque Country, in order to see if they could help me to contrast the visual information I had in the negatives, with some documentation about Eibar’s history concerning

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185 http://www.panoramio.com/map/#lt=43.1841801&ln=-2.4732889&z=4&k=2
186 http://sanchobeurko.atspace.com/
the Nationalists air raids. My contact in Sancho de Beurko was Guillermo Tabernilla, who was very kind, and willing to help me with the investigation. Nevertheless, despite the fact I accurately described him how the buildings looked like, or quoted to him the text of the plaque I mentioned previously in this chapter, Tabernilla was unable to give me any positive result.

Everything would have been much easier if I would have been able to send him a copy of the digital negatives for his study. Unfortunately, the copyright of the images did not allow me to do that. My opinion about this case is that copyright standards should be more flexible when an image is being studied, because in the case of roll of film 014, it was only a lose-to-lose situation.

One good piece of information I got when contacting Sancho de Beurko, was that they had documented Chim’s photographs published in the Basque magazine “Gudari.” This fact open a new window for research, such as how many Spanish magazines published the photographs contained in the Mexican Suitcase, not only Chim’s, but Robert Capa and Gerda Taro’s as well. Hopefully, after the complete catalog of the images will be published, the Spanish researchers will start completing the pieces of the Mexican Suitcase’ puzzle.

The next photograph I was able to identify in roll of film 014 was figure 39. This frame showed some country houses (caserios), and in the background, a small fraction of what seemed to be a church. Technically, this is not a good photograph, so I deducted Chim have taken this picture just to have more detailed information about the location he was photographing. He probably had to follow a tight schedule, when traveling to the Guipuzkoa region, which did not allow him to go closer to the church, and take a better shot of it.

187 sanchobeurko@gmail.com
The identification of figure 39, “Parrish of Our Lady”, (Parroquia de La Asunción de Nuestra Señora,) Elgueta, Guipuzkoa was probably the most challenging research I have done for the Mexican Suitcase. First, I only could see depicted in the frame a small fraction of the tower. Second, I did not know if this tower was a part of an old fortress, castle, or if it was a church. Third, following the negative sequences of the roll of film 014 I knew it was not Eibar, so it could be any town in Guipuzkoa. I began my search looking in Panoramio and Flickr for Gipuzkoa images, but I did not find any result. It was not until I typed the “lucky” criteria combination in Google images that I identified a very similar shot from the tower, figure 39a, which caption said “Exit to Eibar” (see reference 26). After doing some research I found out the “Parrish of Our Lady” was located in the city of Elgueta. Eibar and Elgueta were the only two towns of Guipuzkoa that were still on the Republican side during the first months of 1937,\(^{191}\) when Chim was visiting. Both cities fell to Nationalists by April 1937, therefore, I was also able to date Chim’s roll 014 before April of that same year. Just as a final note, I want to mention the only shot I found of the “Parrish of Our Lady” (full size) was in the webpage www.linaje.net, which is dedicated to do research on lineage, and heraldry. Hence, I want to bring to the

\(^{188}\) ICP # ms_014_025
\(^{189}\) http://www.pueblos-espana.org/pais+vasco/guipuzcoa/elgeta/ SALIDA+HACIA+EIBAR/
\(^{190}\) www.linajes.net/gallery/elguetanuestraseñora.jpg
researcher’s attention that the right photograph could be found in the most unusual places in the web.

The culmination of this chapter will come with the analysis of another photograph contained in the roll of film 014, fig. 40.

![figure 40](image)

**Figure 40 40a (zoom)**

Studying the Mexican Suitcase is a great opportunity to see how the semantic dimension of a photograph is influenced by subjectivity, and intertextuality processes. Images are charged with meaning, and this last example of figure 40 will try to show how the reader’s interpretation of an image can contradict sometimes the original message. Kress and Van Leeuwen in their book “Reading Images” explain how photographs can ‘say’ (some of) the same things as language. For these authors, reading a specific image, “… is always about detail. It contains a multitude of embedded ‘analytical’ processes.” Before to continue developing this statement, I invite the reader to take a quick look again to the photograph figure 40, and try to attach a quick meaning to it.

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192 ICP # ms_014-036, the second image was cropped to show detail.
The most salient level of reading of this photograph is the Nazi swastika (fig.40a). Most people know what a swastika is and/or looks like. After World War II the symbol is related to Nazi’s ideals of classic superiority, pure race, and their ideal of a long-lasting empire. We know the photographs were taken during the Spanish Civil War, so having both pieces of information, the stage and the symbol, the first idea that came up to me was that the portrayed subject could have been a Nationalists soldier (considering the fact that Nazis and Nationalists were allies.)

Nevertheless, that idea did not make much sense, considering the photographs were taken by Chim, which by the way, never photographed a fascist soldier, at least in the Mexican Suitcase. So, I went to the second level of reading, which was analyzing “the hat” the militiaman was wearing. I identified it as a txapela or boina vasca (Basque beret), which was commonly used in Northern Spain, especially in the Basque Country during the 1930s. This positive matching created a conceptual contradiction, why is a Republican militiaman wearing a Basque beret with a Nazi swastika attached to it?

I knew the swastika had its origin outside Nazi Germany; the Nazis adopted the symbol from the Roman and Greek swastikas, nevertheless, this sign has been used in many different cultures. I also had seen during my years living in Spain, the Basques had its own swastika called “lauburu,” a symbol which has been found in very ancient funeral wakes in the Basque Country, and which currently is widely used as an identifying symbol of Basque identity. Therefore, my first interpretation was that this militiaman was wearing a Basque beret with a lauburu. But at

the same time, when I began the technical study of the image, I noticed the swastika’s shape of Chim’s photograph was too angular to be a lauburu. (Compare figure x and x.)

This situation, took me again to the point of classifying the image as, [“A militiaman wearing a Basque beret with Nazi swastika”] (fig.40) This time, in order to clarify the context, I decided to analyze the complete photography sequence of the roll of film 014, which as I previously said, has never been published. Surprisingly, the action series that were next to the militiaman wearing a Basque beret with Nazi swastika were directly related to Regards’ article “Religion and Civil War” by J.E. Pouterman, which I analyzed previously in Chapter two.

Let me explain, Pouterman reported in his article “Religion and Civil War” published by Regards February 4, 1937 there was no conflict between the Republican aspirations and the Basque Church, on the contrary, he reported a normal Sunday Mass in the church “San Vicente” in Bilbao. Well, I identified that [“A militiaman wearing a Basque beret with Nazi swastika”] was photographed outside the Church of “San Vicente”, Bilbao, and as the negative sequences showed, he seems to be waiting outside the church to attend Mass. See sequence below (fig.41.a,b,c) as well as the full size image of the Church of San Vicente (fig.41d).

[^194]: ICP # ms_014-036 (cropped.)
[^195]: http://www.biocrawler.com/w/images/3/3b/Lauburu.jpg
Therefore, this information confirmed the sequences were probably taken mid-January 1937, according to Pouterman’s article publication date, which was February 4, 1937. From this point, the analysis of figure 40 had reached a more complex stage, so I decided to transfer the information I had available to a basic communication model, such as,

Source \ Encoder \ Signal \ Decoder \ Destination.

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196 ICP # ms_014-035/_036/_037/_038
198 *Regards* magazine, issue number 160. February 4, 1937.
199 Fig. 2.6 Kress, Gunther R. *Reading Images the Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print. p. 50
The process I followed to give meaning to the photograph -- signal -- had shown multiple communication variables. For example, we do not know who the source was, though we have some circumstantial information (date-location). Then, Chim was both encoder of the symbol (Nazi swastika), and decoder of the message he wanted to give to the final destination of his photograph, Regards magazine. At the same time, Regards was destination of Chim’s signal, and future encoder of the photograph to its magazine’s audience. Finally, the readers of illustrated magazines in the mid-1930s were supposed to be the final destination of the signal, but instead, academic studies in 2010 are trying to interpret the photograph lacking the original message.

Hence, as in this case we cannot construct a narrative based purely in facts, I will follow a visual representational structure to get relatively reliable guides to the truth or factuality of the message, based on the classificatory, analytical, and symbolical concepts of the photograph. Having the circumstances of date, and location, I developed a larger specific question to solve the unknown meaning of the photograph,

Why was the Basque Republican militiaman wearing a Nazi swastika – with its contradictory symbolic meaning-- when attending Sunday Mass in the Church of San Vicente, Bilbao by mid-January 1937?

When I began to read about Bilbao’s history during the first days of 1937, I found out in the web page www.gudontzidia.edu, eight pages of an original document, uploaded in.pdf format, which stated an interesting event. The report was the official position of the Basque Marine adopted when capturing the German ship called Palos, “December 23, 1936 at 9:45 am, 5 miles next to Cabo Ogano, the crew of the ship ‘Bizkaya’, under command of the Basque
government, captured the ship *Palos*...” After reading the complete testimony, it stood up the fact the Basque Marine confiscated the German-Nazi ship because it was transporting gunrunning cargo, ammunitions, and transceivers, which were addressed to the Nationalists. The capture of ship “Palos,” and the material confiscated was without a doubt big news in Bilbao, and also in France, because even *Regards* magazine published this story in their issue 158 January 21, 1937.

My argument is that if we analyze again in detail the shape and form of the swastika (fig.40a), it indeed indicates it is an original Nazi swastika, which it could have been probably taken from the confiscated material from “Palos” ship. The swastika looks like a pin, or as if it was cut from a Nazi uniform; the militiaman’s attitude in the photograph speaks of someone showing off a war trophy, in this case a Nazi symbol.

David H. Dye, in his book *“War paths, peace paths,”* explained how war-trophy symbolism was related to honor and prestige, and that they reinforced the role of warfare, “trophies, or their iconographic representations, were…status emblems, and rank signifiers.” So, if we reconstruct the message the Republican militiaman was trying to send by wearing the Nazi swastika (fig.40), it would be probably related to the confiscation of the ship *Palos*. The Basque militiaman readopted the message of superiority the Nazi-swastika had, and applied it then to the Republican “superiority.”

In fact, there is another similar case in the roll of film 027 of the Mexican Suitcase. The portrait of a young militiaman in Oviedo, Asturias (fig.42) shows how he is wearing a cape that

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has a crescent moon embroidered on it (fig.42b), a symbol of the Islam and which was probably taken from a soldier from Morocco, which were Nationalists allies as well. The fact this Asturian militiaman was wearing the cape in the trench, certainly indicates it was a war trophy as well.

Figure 42  42a  42b

As we have been able to see, analyzing a photograph does not stop at appearance, but probes beyond the surface, to deeper more hidden levels. The visual elements depicted in photographs, allow us to abstract concrete information related to its reality or physical existence, but the representational meaning can only be subjectively suggested by the way of semantic and intertextuality machinations.

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202 ICP # ms_027_023/_024, and zoom _024
Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been analyzing the photographic work of Chim contained in The Mexican Suitcase from a holistic point of view by means of relating Chim’s subjectivity towards the process he followed when photographing the Spanish Civil War, as well as the editorial work of illustrated story-telling performed by the French magazine Regards, press platform where his work was published during the mid-1930s.

The Mexican Suitcase is property of the International Center of Photography (ICP), which has recently acquired the photographic material after being lost for almost 70 years. The boxes with rolls of film were found in Mexico City, and that is the reason why they have been called the Mexican Suitcase.

The Mexican Suitcase is a compilation of approximately 4,000 negatives taken during the Spanish Civil War by three avant-garde photojournalist, the famous Robert Capa, considered the father of photojournalism, and his professional and sentimental partner Gerda Taro; and last but not least Chim, a Polish photographer, whose photographic work has barely been studied from a technical or academic point of view.

Chim started his career as photographer working for the photo-magazine Regards, communist French weekly, which sent him as special reporter to the Spanish Civil War to cover some stories in order to publish them with propagandistic purposes, such as supporting the Second Republic of Spain. Chim’s rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase contain the unedited sequences of his photo-reports taken at the Spanish Civil War between spring 1936 and March 1937.
I began the analysis of these photographs when I interned for the ICP in the summer of 2009, after Cynthia Young, curator of the Robert Capa’s collection assigned me to classify and identify the locations that Chim depicted in his photographs. After three months of research I was surprised by the richness of the new information I found in the negatives, therefore I decided to write my thesis at Georgetown University focusing on these photographs.

In Chapter One, I introduced the concepts I used to develop my thesis -- Mexican Suitcase, Chim, and Regards magazine -- through a narrative thread, which discourse I related in other chapters. First, I started explaining in detail what the Mexican Suitcase is; not only by describing its technical details, but trying to correlate different testimonies of the history path the Mexican Suitcase followed until it was discovered. Connecting the information I had available, I made a hypothesis of who could have been the creator of the Mexican Suitcase, or the possible timing when the photographs could have been originally classified in the three card-boxes. Nevertheless, the lack of primary resources concerning these topics did not allow me affirm any result as facts, but instead opened a new set of questions related to the creation of the Mexican Suitcase.

Second, I contextualized under what conditions photography and journalism were coming across in France during the 1930s, as well as trying to understand the processes photo-magazines followed before publishing their stories. I found the news room was experimenting new journalistic professional standards by the inclusion of real-time event photographs; as a result, illustrated magazines did not use stipulated methodologies, but improvised their work as it progressed.
On the other hand, a new dichotomy was present between text and photography, concerning the authority of which was leading the narrative of the story. Photography got a higher hierarchy in the press, because in the case of the illustrated magazines there were cases where traditional storytellers had to restructure the stories narrated to fit the photographic report. Following the formulae of cinema, the photo-essays were a printed extension of films, when sometimes the text contained in the page layout gave the impression it was only placed next to the photographs as the voice-over of the sequence photography, just as if we were listening to a narrator relating a movie.

In closing Chapter One, I provided Chim’s insights enunciating part of his biography up to the point he began working for Regards. I claimed that during the first days of his photography career, Chim can already be described as a modern photojournalist, a reporter with a camera. Furthermore, Chim’s photographs of the Spanish Civil War showed he had special sensibility to capture the character and soul of the people he portrayed, a mark that will define the rest of his photographic career. Rephrasing Henri Cartier-Bresson, “Chim picked up his camera the way a doctor takes his stethoscope out of his bag, applying his diagnosis to the condition of the heart.” So, Chim’s eye and perception of the events he photographed were decisive to design the story-telling constructed by Regards magazine.

For that reason, I considered the analysis of Chim’s photographs should not be analyzed separately from the printed media press, where they were published. My aim in Chapter Two was trying to interpret Chim’s original message, which he wanted to reflect towards the photo-report. Many of the rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase clearly showed how Chim was following a pre-conceived story, which probably was given in first instance by Regards. This

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French communist weekly wanted to portray the Spanish Republican cause as popular, liberal and democratic, making the pictures to correspond their intended propagandistic message. Thus, I also took into account including the editorial filter the photographs had to gone through before they were published. Regards’ editors attached to Chim’s photographs a complex array of meanings, contexts, and boundaries of controversy to present the story. This is the reason why I first analyzed the text that was placed next to the action series, in order to disclose the level of intertextuality Regards intentionally attached to the photographs, as well as how the role of captions and headlines attempted to direct the photography meaning. Later on, I articulate Chim’s photographs within the historical and political climate in which they were immersed, as well as connecting their context with the visual evidence contained in the negative sequences.

On the other hand, it seems the Spanish Civil War got the sympathy of the French leftist press because Regards decided to expand the amount of articles reported from the Spanish conflict. As consequence of this editorial decision, Chim got the opportunity to travel to Spain to cover the conflict as special correspondent, where he took photography sequences of different stories, of which almost 1,500 of those photographs were classified and contained in the Mexican Suitcase. Those negatives were selected, and strategically placed through a page layout design to support the message Regards was on the side of the Republican cause; henceforth, they decided to published eight consecutive issues, in this case, including Chim’s photographs.

As both, photographs and magazine were factual witnesses of the Spanish Civil War; I considered the value of its information would increase if studied together, instead of individually. Thereafter, I developed three examples of photo-essays published by Regards

The experimental design of the page layout performed by the illustrated magazines placed pictures next to other pictures, in order to make readers visually construct the events. This practice was by all means avant-garde in the mid-1930s, considering text had always had major relevance relating news in the press. Regards’ style of communication relied on explaining a story using photography not only as form of illustration, but as tool of truthfulness. In the same manner, the camera lens was the eye-witness, which supported the proverbial conviction, “Seeing is believing”.

Furthermore, Chim was aware of the way Regards would construct a photo-essay using his photographs, as consequence, he facilitated the editorial process by interacting the shooting of his action series with the future article’s leitmotif. More particularly, one of the things that stood up while I looked at the negatives was that the people portrayed by Chim were posing in “fictional” situations. For example, the case of the illustrated report “Through the Basque Republic… in Amorebieta Cloister,” published February 4, 1937 by Regards.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{204} Religion et Guerre Civil.
\item \textsuperscript{205} La Messe de Campagne sur le Front Basque.
\item \textsuperscript{206} Les barbares.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
As we can see in the sequence figures 43-43a, Chim was trying to visually conceptualize the idea -- Church and Republic fraternizing. For that purpose, he photographed a priest talking to the commander officer of the battalion which was using as barrack the Monastery of Carmelite of Larrea in Amorebieta. When analyzed the background of the previous images (fig.43, a), we can clearly see how the militamen were members of the audience of the scene Chim was photographing in the first level of the frame. These photographs are just a short example of how Chim indeed set some of the scenes he photographed, in this case to picture the idea of “dialog” among the soldier and priest. The composition of the image included as well elements of visual characterization, such as the fact these men were portrayed wearing their uniform, or habit respectively, which represented them as members of different institutions – military and religion.

On the other hand, I explained the creation of a magazine like Regards required the implementation of new technology, such as the printing techniques of rotogravure. This printing method is noted for its remarkable density range (light to shadow) and hence was a process of choice for photography reproduction. Discovered and perfected in the latter quarter of the 19th century, was adopted years later in France for photo-magazines as Regards. Similarly, the case

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207 [ICP # ms004_159/_161](http://www.wmich.edu/pci/gravure/)
of the camera Leica with a new small-format, which was like an "extension of the hand," allowed photojournalists as Chim the possibility of photographing stories in a more dynamic manner.

In the same way printed press comprised new technology to develop visual communication during the 1930s, the advances in digital photography and technological tools, such as internet and social media are helping today to change visual studies’ procedures. Therefore, in Chapter Three I narrated the steps I followed to perform the research study of Chim’s 50 rolls of film in the Mexican Suitcase, in order to be able to transfer the visual information contained in those photographs into text data for purposes of classification. I can affirm that without internet and its technological tools, such as Flickr or Panoramio, I would not have been able to identify any of the unpublished rolls of film. I relied on a virtual community to get the information I needed, and it work perfectly. Further studies in scholarly and professional practices concerning visual studies should be performed.

This thesis has been about processes; I began describing the path the Mexican Suitcase followed until it was discovered. Then, the way Chim composed, framed, shot, printed and edited his work. Further, the adaptation the Spanish Civil War stories had within the illustrated magazines in order to communicate specific messages, such as the thinking of Regards magazine. Or, the digestion the photographs suffered to be part of a page layout’s design -- selection, cropping, enlargement, composition. Finally, the processes that I as a researcher had to follow to analyze, relate, interpret, and give meaning to “Chim & The Mexican Suitcase.”

http://us.leica-camera.com/culture/history/oskar_barnack/
Thumbnail list credits

A thumbnail version of Chim’s negatives contained in the Mexican Suitcase was used in this thesis exclusively for academic purposes. All the images enlisted in this section are property of the International Center of Photography (ICP), and no part of these images may be reproduced or transmitted in any form. To obtain a print or permission to reproduce Chim (David Seymour) photographs, please contact Magnum Photos at 212.929.6000 or photography@magnumphotos.com. The official captions of the photographs are pendant of publication. Therefore, I am enlisting the images used in this thesis following the International Center of Photography digital catalog number as reference. ICP written permission in process.

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ICP # ms_001_001 to _004.
ICP # ms_001_052 to _055.
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ICP # ms_005_146/_143 to _145.
ICP# ms_006_178 to _181.
ICP # ms_006_184 and _185.
ICP # ms_007_214/_215/_216/_217.
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