

# bulletin

Finance & Photography

2021

*eabh* (The European Association for  
Banking and Financial History e.V.)



# bulletin

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Finance &  
Photography

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**Dear members and friends of *eabh*,**

Photographs are a key part of the archival collections of many financial institutions. Their emotional charge, their documentary power, their immediacy and universality set them apart from other archival documents. Used well, they provide an asset for any financial institution.

This volume features articles from 17 financial institutions in eleven different countries. Almost 300 photographs provide glimpses of institutional practice over a span of 150 years. The photographs reveal stories about staff members, office buildings, and money; and they tell us about fashion, cultural movements, financial and industrial innovation, poverty, gender, colonization, leisure, and much more.

This issue is the first of a series, and part of a wider project to explore the connections between finance and photography. *eabh* would like to invite its member and partner institutions to join in by contributing to the second volume of the series.

Why are photographic collections important for your financial institution? How do they contribute to defining corporate culture and identity? How has the emotional appeal of photographs helped you to engage with your employees during the 2020/21 lock-down period? How can archivists enhance the use of photographs as historical sources? What new opportunities are being presented by digital collections?

We look forward to hearing your responses and, in the meantime, we hope you enjoy reading this volume.

The editors



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# The ABN AMRO historical photographic collection

An image of the bank, the Netherlands and beyond

Jaap-Jan Mobron

The ABN AMRO Art & Heritage department manages one of the largest corporate collections in the Netherlands, and certainly the most diverse. Just the fact that this collection includes modern and contemporary art as well as historical objects and archives makes it special. There is also great diversity within the main categories of art and history. For example, the art collection includes: sculptures, installations, video and conceptual art, work in a huge range of painting and graphic techniques, forms and sizes, including art photography. In total, there are about 5,000 modern and contemporary works of art, a number that continues to grow every year thanks to a modest acquisitions budget. The historical collection consists of many more sub-collections: shares and archives; coins and medals; advertising flyers, films and objects; money boxes and period furniture; banknotes and fire safes; maps and atlases; machines and façade coats-of-arms, models and gold scales; sculptures and paintings, books and last but not least historical photography.

ABN AMRO started purchasing modern photography relatively late, the focus being on the more traditional visual arts up to the 1990s, as is the case with most older corporate collections. Therefore its collection of art photography remains modest in size and not all movements within late 20<sup>th</sup> century photography are represented. The focus is on work by Dutch photographers such as the street photographer Ed van der Elsken, the portrait photographers Philip Mechanicus, Koos Breukel, Céline van Balen, the naturalist photographer Elspeth Diederix, the portraits of people living on the margins *in situ* by Dana Lixenberg and the experimental

work of Gerald van der Kaap, in addition to work by internationally known names such as Andreas Gursky, Martin Parr and Massimo Vitali. There are also a remarkable number of photographs made by painters and sculptors such as Marijke van Warmerdam and Jan Dibbets. However the main focus of this article will be the historical photographic collection.

In terms of origin and function, ABN AMRO's historical photo collection probably differs little from that of other banks or larger companies. The oldest photos date from the 1860s, the most recent are digital images. The emphasis is on architecture and portrait photography and capturing work situations, whether in populated or unpopulated offices, with the front of house staff and cashiers or in the back office, or at events for staff or clients. It furnishes illustrative material for staff magazines or Intranet and Internet sites.

What sets this collection apart is its size, scope and diversity. The collection includes an estimated 100,000 items. The total number remains uncertain due to registration backlogs, but also because the collection is still growing. The scope of the collection is very broad. The topographic collection is remarkably comprehensive. In addition, thousands of

images have been preserved from branches or locations worldwide: Hong Kong, Singapore, London, Istanbul, Buenos Aires, Shanghai, Chicago, Johannesburg, Jeddah, São Paulo, Penang, Mombasa, Antwerp—and so on. The former Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) are particularly well-represented.

Another sizeable sub-collection consists of thousands of photographs of staff members from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century: from chairs of the board

The collection includes an estimated 100,000 items.



1. Dealing room of the ABN AMRO head office, Foppingadreef Amsterdam, 1998. Photo: Bert Verhoeff. © ABN AMRO/Bert Verhoeff

and directors to desk clerks and doormen, either posed in groups or for individual portraits, whether for the purpose of identification or for other purposes.

The photo collection also provides a unique picture of broader socio-economic, technological or cultural-historical developments within the banking system and beyond; banks always worked and still work in a social context, after all. Examples include the pneumatic tube systems in the 1900s, the monotonous rows of typists in the 1920s, the staff associations or holiday resorts in the 1950s, the introduction of the computer (and the mini skirt) in the 1960s, the office garden in the 1970s, the impressive trading rooms in the 1980s, and so on.

Formally preserved and made accessible since the founding of the ABN AMRO Historical Archive department in 1992, the collection derives from the legacy of the bank together with the accumulated holdings of its predecessors: ABN AMRO, Algemene Bank Nederland (ABN), Amsterdam-Rotterdam Bank (Amro Bank), Fortis, Rotterdamsche Bank, VSB, Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (Netherlands Trading Society), the Centrubank, Spaarbank te Rotterdam, Amsterdamsche Bank, Nederlandsch-Indische Handelsbank, Twentsche Bank, R. Mees & Zoonen, to name but a few. A separate art department was created in 1976 by the Amro Bank: the Amro Art Foundation, renamed the ABN AMRO Art Foundation in 1991 after the merger between ABN and Amro Bank. In 2010, the historical and art collection of Fortis Bank Nederland was added to that of ABN AMRO after these two banks were merged following nationalization by the Dutch government. In 2012, the art department was merged with the Historical Archive to form the ABN AMRO Art & History department. Finally, a new department name was chosen in 2020: ABN AMRO Art & Heritage.

The foundation set-up has been maintained up to the present day. The ABN AMRO Art & Heritage foundation has the legal ownership of the entire collection while its economic use lies with the bank. This protective construction proved its worth in 2007 when ABN AMRO experienced a hostile takeover by a consortium of three foreign banks, and was cut up and distributed among the consortium partners. The bank's collection was spared this fate.

The photographic collection of ABN AMRO reflects the numerous mergers which resulted in the current make-up of ABN AMRO Bank. Each of the constituent

banks pursued its own policy when it came to photographic records. Business considerations usually dictated the kind of pictures being taken, but sometimes the

selections bore a purely personal mark. For example, N.E. Rost Onnes, Managing Director of Hollandsche Bank-Unie, was keenly interested in documenting the construction and renovation of the bank's premises over the years. His interest survives in several attractive albums and series. Building reports were also made by other forerunners of ABN AMRO, such as the Asian

head office of the Netherlands Trading Society in Batavia (present-day Jakarta) in the former colony of the Dutch East Indies in the early 1930s, and of the Amsterdam head office on the Rembrandtplein of the Amsterdamsche Bank in the 1920s, and its extensive renovation, modernization and extension in the 1960s and 1970s. After the completion of an important new bank building, a professional photographer was often hired to photograph the exterior and the typically completely empty interior. From the 1920s, these series were regularly used as illustrations for promotional publications with which the bank proudly presented its new office to the world. An example of such a photo assignment is that done by Jan van Dijk in 1926 and 1936 of the head office of the Netherlands Trading Society on Amsterdam's Vijzelstraat, now the location of the Amsterdam City Archives. When the bank left this building in 2001, a photographer (Paul van Riel) was approached again to make a record of both this building and the Amsterdamsche Bank building on Rembrandtplein, which would soon be put up for sale by the bank. This work was commissioned by the Historical Archives department.

Through its business interests in the former colonies, the Netherlands Trading Society left behind a sizeable collection of colonial photographs dating from 1870–1940, with sizeable records of the Dutch East Indies and to a lesser extent for Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles (Curaçao and Aruba). It includes extensive documentation of a number of land development companies and an exceptional series of portraits of tellers working at the company's offices all over the world. Each office was required to periodically submit photographs of its employees for identification purposes. Personal details and special features were often written on the back of the photos.

**The photo collection also provides a unique picture of broader socio-economic, technological or cultural-historical developments within the banking system and beyond; banks always worked and still work in a social context, after all.**



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2. ABN Office Marktstraat 34 in Delfzijl, 1970. Photo: Aart Klein. © ABN AMRO/Aart Klein





3. Twentsche Bank Office Prins Hendrikkade Amsterdam, 1954. Photo: Ad Windig. © ABN AMRO

4. Retirement party for Karel van Aalst in the present Tropenmuseum, 1934. Photo: Erich Salomon. © ABN AMRO

5. Photo of the Nutsspaarbank Alkmaar promoting school savings, ca. 1935. © ABN AMRO



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 15. Hollandsche Bank-Unie office building on Coolsingel in Rotterdam, 1952. © ABN AMRO



16. Back gallery of the Padang sub-agency of the Netherlands Trading Society, Dutch East Indies, ca. 1910. © ABN AMRO

The main part of the Rotterdamsche Bank collection shows its provincial network. A picture of nearly every branch from the period around 1960 has survived, mostly taken by professional photographers. Amsterdamsche Bank/Incasso-Bank had a similar series produced at roughly the same time and a series of hundreds of glass negatives and a number of enlargements have survived. A series of most ABN and VSB Bank branches in the 1980s also exists. The managing boards of the banks figure prominently in the collections, either posing for portraits, group photographs or captured at official occasions. Banking vaults were another popular subject with the forerunners of today's ABN AMRO Bank.

Advertising photography commissioned by the bank forms a small but attractive part of the historical photo collection; sometimes well-known photographers were hired, such as Ad Windig and Dolf Toussaint. The photographs taken by such photographers can be highly aesthetic. In fact we witness the emphasis in photography shifting from the pre-war period, when photography had a documentary character, striving to give a complete and especially impressive image of a building, to a growing emphasis on form—shapes, structures and lines—or man and his environment, followed by more spontaneous photos taken to record unusual perspectives and serendipitous situations.

All in all, a wonderful picture of the changing face of front-office and back-office banking has been preserved in the thousands of pictures taken of both small and large branches—offering general and more detailed views of their exteriors and interiors, whether empty or occupied. A large part of the collection is made by anonymous photographers, but as mentioned, there is also work from famous names, including the abstract photographer Rien Bazen, the celebrity photographer Godfried de Groot, the modernist landscape photographer Aart Klein, the portraitist Max Koot, the photojournalists Ton ter Heege, Vincent Mentzel and Cas Oorthuys, work from the pioneering Pieter Oosterhuis studio, work by Marius Meyboom, best known for his documentation of the Dutch Famine (1944–45), the German photographer Hans Spies and the celebrated portrait photographer, Jacob Merkelbach.

The work of Dr Erich Salomon (1886–1944), regarded as a pioneer of photographic journalism, occupies a special place in the collection. Concealing a camera

in a hat, briefcase or sling, he was the first to succeed in taking photographs in courts of law, casinos and ballrooms without being noticed. He was renowned for his entirely new approach. Salomon photographed the rich and famous of his time in everyday settings, i.e. gesturing, smoking and, above all, talking. He invariably offered the photographs to his surprised subjects, making such an impression that he was increasingly considered a welcome guest, and, more importantly, an equal: the gentleman photographer with the invisible (candid) camera. The bank's photo collection contains a set of original photographs taken by Erich Salomon in 1934–1937, all reportage series concerning the Netherlands Trading Society: of the

reception of East Indian monarchs and their spouses at the head office of the bank, of the internship that Prince Bernhard held at the bank before his marriage to the then Princess, later Queen, Juliana, and of the retirement party for chairman of the board Karel van Aalst in the present Tro-

penmuseum in Amsterdam. The people photographed show the un-posed and spontaneous attitude that is so typical of Salomon's work. Fortunately, each of these photographs has survived exceptionally well.

The management and preservation of the historical photo collection of ABN AMRO has received extra attention in recent years. For example, an external specialist has been hired on several occasions to provide more order and better insight into the collection, a collection that holds work recorded using diverse techniques and digital platforms: offset, light print, heliogravure, lithography, albumin print, carbon print, Polaroids, small and large screen slides, colour and black-and-white, stored in boxes, carousel or loose and disordered, printing as contact sheets or in sizes ranging from 5x5 cm, A4, A3 and larger or in non-standard sizes, single negatives, in films or in strips, inter-positives and duplicate negatives, CDs, DVDs, USB sticks, 5 ¼ and 3.5" diskettes, ZIP disks and external hard drives. Not-yet-examined sub-collections have been mapped and cleaned, inventoried, registered and repackaged in the correct packaging material. Plenty of work remains to be done, partly due to the growth of the collection.

Acquisition is always a difficult task in a corporate environment in which safeguarding its heritage is by definition not a core task. Advancements in photo technology have created an extra challenge in the management of the collection of historical photography in recent

The management and preservation of the historical photo collection of ABN AMRO has received extra attention in recent years.



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17. Twentsche Bank office A.J. Ernststraat in Amsterdam, 1962. Photo: Dolf Toussaint. © Dolf Toussaint heirs

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A collection can legitimize the bank historically, show the bank's role in society over the centuries, at home and abroad, and underline and visualize the social role and awareness of the bank. By sharing its collection of art and historical property with the public, the bank is giving something back to society, as it were, by taking care of what is in fact shared cultural property.

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decades (as well as for other sub-collections). Digital photography makes physical storage almost irrelevant, so that an important reason or motivation for transfer to the company history department—relocations, reorganisations, staff turnover and so on—has largely disappeared. This requires a more active acquisitions policy, for which the time and resources usually are lacking.

A partial solution to this problem is the occasional hiring of professional photographers to fill or prevent gaps in the collection. For example, in 2016–2017 the press photographer Bert Verhoeff photographed typical or unusual work situations and conditions at various front- and back-office locations on behalf of the Art & Heritage department. In addition, back catalogues have also been purchased (including image rights) from photographers who have worked a lot for the bank in the past.

Although the collection managed by Art & Heritage is certainly comparable to a museum collection in terms of its nature and size, the context in which the work is carried out remains business-oriented and therefore commercial. The department's *raison d'être* in the final instance lies in the business model of the company that pays for the maintenance of the museum collection. A collection can legitimize the bank historically, show the bank's role in society over the centuries, at home and abroad, and underline and visualize the social role and awareness of the bank. By sharing its collection of art and historical property with the public, the bank is giving something back to society, as it were, by taking care of what is in fact shared cultural property. It also supports company pride, the corporate identity of the company and the unique character of the bank.

The department is therefore always looking for good opportunities to deploy its collections, including the photo collection. The latter can be used in the form

of a (temporary) exhibition in one of the bank's offices, possibly with an accompanying (digital) publication and guided tour, but also as a form of decoration using wall-sized photo blow-ups of old bank branches.

Photography is the quintessential medium of our day. It speaks an engaging visual language that can reach a wide audience, especially young people. It can represent the bank as a modern, socially responsible organisation, and photography is therefore ideal for use in social media. At the moment this is happening only in a limited and non-structured way. Here is another task for the department. A major step in this direction has recently been taken with the introduction of a bespoke website, as the corporate website offered (much) too little space for this department: <https://art-heritageabnamro.nl>. The site, which was launched in September 2020, demonstrates the diversity and quality of the collection as a whole, including the photo collection.

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#### Author's profile

Jaap-Jan Mobron is a historian and art historian who has been affiliated with ABN AMRO Art & History department since 1993. As well as being responsible for the department's academic, popular and online publications, his activities include arranging exhibitions and tours on aspects of banking history.

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18. Cement loaders during the construction of the Batavia (Jakarta) office of the Netherlands Trading Society, 1930. © ABN AMRO



# The photography collections of the Bank of Italy's Historical Archives

Anna Rita Rigano

A few years have passed since May 2011, when the Bank of Italy's Historical Archives (ASBI) took part in *eabh* Archival Workshop on 'Photography Collections of (Financial) Companies—A Corporate Historical View'. The goal of the meeting was 'to learn more about the existence, importance and use of corporate photography collections in (financial) organisations for a broader public'.<sup>1</sup> In this short overview, we will pick up the thread of that conversation and provide an update on the activities of the Photographic Archives and its collections.

Photography is a fairly common communications tool used by banks and financial institutions: to skeletonize, photographs are employed for both internal and external purposes. First, the images offer a window into significant moments in the life of an institution and its employees, recording events attended by important political or economic figures or keeping track of change and growth in the institution's real estate assets and its art collections. Second, photography is used to raise the visibility of an institution, publicizing the opening of new branches or in the conduct of its promotional campaigns. This latter purpose is nearly absent in Bank of Italy's photography collections, since the Bank has not needed to use photography for marketing purposes, but instead has used it more narrowly as a tool to record institutional activities rather than for propaganda. Let us therefore briefly describe how the collections are organized, their size, the types of materials they contain,

the time span they cover, the places photographed, and the most important genres of photography employed. To conclude, we offer some considerations on the future content and form of the Photographic Historical Archives in the digital age.

## A little history

In 1997, the Bank of Italy's Historical Archives began an awareness campaign among the Bank's directorates and branches to encourage them to help locate any hidden repositories of photographs; this enabled us to gather a considerable number of photographs in analogue format which are now held at the Historical Archives. The Bank's staff was invited to take part in this initiative, and

thanks to the enthusiastic participation of former and current employees, the Historical Archives received many photographs, both as gifts and on loan. The Photographic Archives have grown but remaining gaps have spurred searches further afield, outside of the Bank, to supplement

**Photography is a fairly common communications tool used by banks and financial institutions: photographs are employed for both internal and external purposes.**

internal sources and widen the perspectives represented. We turned to cultural organisations, State and private historical archives and photo agencies to uncover further traces that the Bank of Italy, through its representatives, has left during formal meetings, official visits, economic summit and so on; this too has proven fruitful, with visible progress made.

At the same time, the search was extended to the Historical Archives' own fonds of documents,



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1. Portrait of Paolo Baffi

which frequently contain photographs and/or drawings that accompany the correspondence. Our hopes were rewarded. Hidden among the papers is a rich collection, fragmented and varied, certainly, but in many ways interesting. And so the Photographic Collections have continued to grow.

In 2006, then, former Governor Guido Carli's heirs donated his archive, a very valuable one that enables us to track all of Governor Carli's activities inside and outside the Bank. In 2015, we received the donation of the archive of Niccolò Introna, former Director General of the Institute. We are now finalizing the acquisition of another rich repository of photographs, those of Governor Paolo Baffi (1911–1989), whose family has decided to donate them to the Historical Archives. This is another needful key piece of the Bank of Italy's collective memory (Photograph 1).

### The collections

There are essentially two channels through which the Photographic Archives obtains materials. The first consists of photos that have been taken and/or acquired by the Directorates, whose functions are connected to the production and/or gathering of photographs, by the Bank's branches and by the representative offices abroad in the course of their work. This group consists of the Property Collection (*Stabili*), the General Affairs Archives, the Archive of the Secretariat to the Governing Board, the Branch Office Collection, the Delegations Collection, and, finally, the Directorates Collection. This last collection contains the Bank's oldest photographic riches: the Alinari Album, created between 1867 and 1868, which is a kind of all-encompassing portrait of the Bank's staff and a symbol of the Bank's geographical expansion (Photograph 2).<sup>2</sup> The Historical Archives Collection, containing photographs belonging to the textual fonds, falls into the same category.

The second source of materials added to the Photographic Archives consists of donations and acquisitions. These include the Carli Archives, the Baffi Archives, the Introna family Archives and the External Acquisitions Collection. As stated above, between the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, the Historical Archives obtained a number of photographs from press agencies or professional photographers; others were copies of photographs acquired from other institutions or archives, and finally others were donated by the Bank's staff members. As with

all the other open archives, the photographic collections are continually growing. The Bank now possesses around 50,000 photographs produced from the second half of the 1800s to the early 2000s and expects to add to this in the future. They are currently being organized and numbered and many of the fonds have been restored. Starting from 2018 the Bank of Italy's Historical Archives has joined the Census of Photographic Archives operating throughout

the country promoted by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage<sup>3</sup> and has started digitization for conservative and consultation purposes.

### A look at some collections

**Property Collection (*Stabili*)<sup>4</sup>** The Collection of almost 5,000 positive images (very few negatives), mainly in black and white and covering the period from roughly 1930 to 1985, stands out because of its planning and its focus on a specific subject, which ensures that it is united by a common theme. The name of the collection comes from its original holding department, then called the 'Buildings Directorate', which since the early 1930s has supported the photographic services in recording the Bank of Italy's buildings in Rome and in all its branches. It is particularly significant because the time-frame and geographical reach are broad and enable us to follow the changes made to the buildings, and in some cases even to the adjacent urban areas. The collection is also consulted to evaluate what maintenance and restoration work needs to be carried out on the buildings that are subject to restrictions to protect their historical and artistic value.

It contains a number of album series, including: 'Branches-Colonies', 'Branches-Regions', 'Branches-Miscellaneous' and 'The Rocco Giglio Collection', plus numerous single photos stored in folders. A large black and white photo album from the mid-1950s is dedicated to Palazzo Koch, the Bank of Italy's headquarters. The album of the Sciamanna photo agency allows us to take a tour of the reception rooms and the offices of the members of the Governing Board, and to compare the past and the present arrangement of the Bank's art collection and the underlying stylistic choices (Photograph 3).

Images of the branch buildings located in the extra-metropolitan areas of the colonies<sup>5</sup> have appeared in various publications. The Bank of Italy, an actor in the country's colonial expansion as the currency-issuing bank, built its own offices from scratch and in many cases even

The Bank now possesses around 50,000 photographs produced from the second half of the 1800s to the early 2000s and expects to add to this in the future.

the private homes of its employees, adapting them to the instructions of the governmental authorities, to their urban environments and to the tastes of the architects commissioned for the projects. While in the cases of Tripoli and Mogadishu, the architectural style was Moorish, the same cannot be said for Benghazi, where the building was more rationalist in appearance, while the branch building in Rhodes was part of a larger project to redevelop the island's port area (Photographs 4 and 5).

**General Affairs Archive** This archive stems from the contribution, in 2011, of the photographs taken by the General Affairs Directorate while photographing events held within the Bank. Currently it is a fond of un-numbered films, slides, contact prints and photographic plates dating from 1985 to 2003, the year in which the Directorate stopped using analogue cameras. The fond will be expanded in the future with the addition of digital files. Among the most important subjects of the photographs are the Bank's Annual General Meeting of shareholders, conferences, inaugurations, official visits by governors of foreign central banks or delegations, group portraits, ceremonies, retirement celebrations, events at the Bank's banknote printing works and the machinery used in banknote production, and its coin collections.

**Archive of the Secretariat to the Governing Board** The Secretariat to the Governing Board, which works for the members of the Bank of Italy's Governing Board, donated a sizeable archive of photographs, consisting of 50 albums and a number of boxes of photographs roughly covering the years 1960–2009. This archive, which is currently being organized and numbered, contains an assortment of photographic materials (negatives, positives, slides, contact prints, digital photos, in black and white and colour) in a variety of styles covering a range of subjects. Without a doubt, the images of the celebration of the Bank's 100-year anniversary (1993), the Day in Honour of the Governor Donato Menichella (1986), the Baffi Lectures, the Annual General Meetings of the Bank in the 1990s and 2000s, and the members of the Governing Board, photographed in various formal occasions are of great importance. These include Guido Carli, Paolo Baffi, Rinaldo Ossola, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, Vincenzo Desario, Antonio Fazio, Lamberto Dini, Fabrizio Saccomanni and Mario Draghi. (Photographs 6 and 7).

**The Bank of Italy's Historical Archives Collection** This collection, which currently contains about 9,500 images, includes photographs from the Historical Archives paper files, re-organized, catalogued and digitized. Special care has been taken in putting it together to preserve the link between the correspondence and the attached

photographs and to respect their contextualization and their original provenance. This remarkable collection is a mixture of a variety of genres of positive images (still life, furnishings, portraits, official events, ceremonies, Fascism, war damage, buildings sites, forgers' police photos and dossier, reproductions of works of art, colonial architecture, work or recreational activities, family photographs, Christmas holidays, etc.) and it stretches chronologically from the end of the 1800s to the 1970s (Photograph 8).

**Carli Archives** The Guido Carli Archives comprise 55 albums of positive images (currently being digitalized) and around 1,000 loose, colour and black and white photographs that mainly document Guido Carli's public activities during the period 1949–1992. The archive is partially organized: 34 albums are arranged chronologically and, within each one, by event.

Guido Carli's curriculum vitae is extensive (1914–1993): economist, head of industry, Governor of the Bank of Italy, and Treasury minister. A large part of the photographs relates to his work at the Bank of Italy and the events at which he represented it. One of the salient moments is without a doubt the annual reading of the 'Concluding Remarks', which is traditionally held at the end of May, accompanied by the publication of the Annual Report. But the backstage moments in the preparation of the event are also captured in photographs: from the 'ritual' of the joint reading practice of the text, attended only by those involved in its drafting, to its printing. However, there is also no shortage of images linked to the social and recreational activities of the Bank, such as Christmas lunches, the delivery of gifts to the children of employees for the Epiphany, and exhibitions (Photograph 9).

**Introna Family Archives** The archives were donated in 2015 and consist of around 500 monochrome photographs, loose and in albums. Some of them portray the institutional activities of Niccolò Introna (1868–1955), while others comprise portraits and images relating to his home and personal life. Introna, hired in 1886 by Banca Nazionale nel Regno d'Italia, which later merged with other regional banks to form the Bank of Italy, climbed the career ladder to become Inspector General, Head of Supervision and later Deputy Director General in 1928. In 1944, he was appointed Special Administrator (for the liberated parts of Italy) and was tasked with taking delivery of the Bank of Italy's gold reserves that had been left in Fortezza and found by the Allies on May 1945, the same year in which he became Director General. He resigned in 1946. We can therefore see moments in Introna's career: visits to the Bank's branches, inaugurations of new construction sites or buildings, official ceremonies, especially during the Fascist period, but also some informal occasions (Photograph 10).



2



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- 2. Alinari Album. Employees on a business trip to Frankfurt, 1868
- 3. 'Palazzo Koch' Album. Participants' lounge, second half of the 1950s. On the walls two tapestries from the Riccardo Gualino art collection
- 4. Main façade of the Mogadishu branch building c. mid-1930s
- 5. Main façade of the Rodhes branch building, c. mid-1930s
- 6. Day in honor of Donato Menichella. From left to right: Governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi with Federico Caffè and Tommaso Padoa Schioppa. Rome, Palazzo Koch, 1986



7. The Governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, heading to the Annual General Meeting with the Board of Directors and the General Director of the Treasury, Mario Draghi. Rome, Palazzo Koch, 1991/1992

8. Counterfeiters laboratory. Milan, 1959

9. Meeting for the joint reading of the Concluding Remarks. Rome, Palazzo Koch, 1963



10



11

10. Colonel James Penick of the Allied Finances Agency returns the gold of the Bank of Italy to the General Director Niccolò Introna. Rome, May 1945  
11. Theatrical performance: 'The Brigands', 1939

**External acquisitions collection** This miscellaneous collection contains more than 1,600 images, obtained from press and photo agencies (Ansa, Olympia Publifoto, Team, Antonio Sansone), Institutes, Archives or donated by Bank employees. It includes an assortment of typical photographic materials (positive images, slides, contact prints, digital photos, black and white and colour photographs) in a variety of genres and styles. The purchased materials were selected for their historical value and the quality of the photographs. The images document the participation of the Bank's representatives in international summits, conferences, official events, meetings, visits by representatives of foreign states, shareholders' meetings and so forth. Photographs received from Bank employees mainly capture recreational activities, parties or other moments within the life of the Bank (Photograph 11).

### Archival research and some thoughts on the future

To conclude this *excursus*, this seems to be the appropriate occasion to recall a statement in the guidelines of the 2009 Florence declaration: 'The study of photographs cannot be extrapolated from the context in which they are conserved: the archive. The archive is in its materiality an autonomous and unique structure, not simply the sum of the single photographs that constitute it'.<sup>6</sup> It is a statement that one should bear in mind, when working on organizing a photographic collection or archive and when trying to understand its layers, resulting from its natural evolution or subsequent assembly. The same holds true when cataloguing photographs, thanks to which it is often possible to grasp the materiality, the technique, the context in which they were taken, the value and the authenticity of that given moment, and the authorship of the shot. The Historical Archives mainly use the Ministry for Cultural Heritage's photograph catalogue system (F—Photography standard, FF—Photographic Fonds standard), which has been in widespread use for many years and is familiar to researchers. Photographs are catalogued in a database that, once fully up and running, will make it possible to search through the Historical Archives entire holdings: paper files, photographs, interviews, film clips and videos.

Nowadays we are used to the fact that photography has become a digital medium; its materiality is made up of colour, saturation, luminosity and contrast and is no longer captured on a piece of film or in its positive image. However, it has not lost its beauty and storing it has not become any safer. The fragility of the support medium, the storage space and the preservation methods, though not tangible, nonetheless require that precautions be taken: to be appropriately preserved and usable, a different approach is needed with a digital photographic collection to protect it against technological obsolescence and instability so that it can be used long into the future. Digital images are preserved long

term by a virtual system of arrangements, metadata, technological refreshing and software updates—all factors that have to be carefully evaluated. At the same time, digitization of the analogue collections, even if done for preservation purposes and not just for online consultation, certainly cannot replace the tactile and surface elements of the original, just as a catalogue entry of a photograph is not a translation of the image into words, but is rather a useful information and research tool.

All photographs: ©ASBI

### Author's profile

Anna Rita Rigano graduated in Letters and Philosophy at the University of Messina in 1983 and then in Paleography, diplomatic and archival science at the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (now Vatican Apostolic Archives). Starting from 1985, she began to work with historical photography, cataloguing and photographic recognition techniques. Since 1990, she has been working at the Historical Archives of the Bank of Italy and, since 1997, she has curated the photographic collections. She holds a PhD in Economic development history and theory from the LUISS-University Guido Carli of Rome (2005). She is an ordinary member of the SISF (Italian Society for the Study of Photography).

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- 1 *eabh*, 'Photography Collections of (Financial) Companies — A Corporate Historical View' - Call for Papers.
- 2 Miraglia M. (ed). 2003. *Il potere dell'immagine. Ritratto della Banca Nazionale nel 1868*. Roma, Laterza (Collana storica della Banca d'Italia. Serie documenti, 14).
- 3 <http://www.censimento.fotografia.italia.it/>
- 4 The collection keeps the same name given to the corresponding paper-based fond.
- 5 At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Bank of Italy opened branches in Libya, Eritrea, Somalia and Rhodes in order to promote Italian economic and commercial expansion in Africa. After Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, the Institute approved the opening of further branches in that region too. After World War I, the Italian territory also included part of Istria and Dalmatia and branches were opened in Rijeka, Pula, Zadar, Tolmin (Fiume, Pola, Zara, Tolmino). During World War II, following the Italian occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, branches were opened in Ljubljana, Split, Kotor, Cetinje, Sibenik (Lubiana, Spalato Cattaro, Cettigne, Sebenico). All the extra-metropolitan branches were closed after World War II. Source: <https://www.bancaditalia.it/pubblicazioni/quaderni-asbi/2017-003/index.html>
- 6 [https://www.khi.fi.it/pdf/photothek/florence\\_declaration\\_EN.pdf](https://www.khi.fi.it/pdf/photothek/florence_declaration_EN.pdf) accessed on 10 July 2020.



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# Views of the past

## Barclays branch photographs

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James Darby

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Barclays Group Archives is responsible for safeguarding the corporate memory of Barclays PLC, a universal British bank. The records are diverse, including ledgers, correspondence and even physical artefacts such as old bank fittings and signs. When the archive team launched their website five years ago, one of the first collections to be digitized was the photographic collections of past and present branches.<sup>1</sup> The collection is extensive and includes images of branches from almost all major towns and cities, including villages and other locations such as factories, hospitals and military bases across the UK.

Many of the branches no longer exist, or have moved from the grand old city centre branches to smaller business units or in shopping malls. The photographs remind us of an era when banks were the cornerstones of the High Street, often being literally situated on the corner of the street! Branch buildings were often specifically designed with fancy cornices and coats of arms above the doorways. We get a lot of interest in old bank branches both from historians as well as the current owners of former branches. These are possible to identify if you know what to look for and people love to see a photograph of when the building was a Barclays or a Martins Bank. Like all photographs, they represent a moment in time— showing street furniture, road signage, old advertising, vehicles and buildings. Sometimes we have to use these clues present in the picture to estimate a date when it was taken.

In the 1970s Barclays undertook a major interior and exterior refit of all its UK branches. The refit was part of a re-branding process after the merger of Barclays and Martins in 1969. It was at this point that Barclays adopted its corporate blue identity and new simpler, stylised version of the Spread Eagle logo which it had been associated with since 1690. Out went the traditional style counters and grills, which were replaced by glass screens, new counters and, in some branches, an open-plan arrangement.

A good example of how bank history is illustrated by the photographic collection is the former Bank Plain branch in Norwich. The photographs together with written histories and building plans piece together a complete picture. Of the many banking families that came together in 1896 to form Barclay & Co., the Gurneys of Norwich were well-

known and contributed a great deal to the local community with family members being Lord Mayors of Norwich. The main series of photographs that we hold are from the construction of the new Bank Plain building in 1926.<sup>2</sup>

In May 1775, John and Henry Gurney opened the Norfolk and Norwich Bank in St Augustine's. Three years later, Henry's son, Bartlett Gurney bought a recently constructed house belonging to Alderman Poole, a wine merchant, at 3 Redwell Plain in Norwich. As the Gurney operation grew, so the house became a landmark, the street being known as 'Bank Plain'. In the years following 1896 when Gurneys merged with other Quaker bankers to form

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**The collection is extensive and includes images of branches from almost all major towns and cities, including villages and other locations such as factories, hospitals and military bases across the UK.**

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1. An image from 1926 showing construction of the main domed roof



- 2. The main counter of the earlier (pre-1926) building looking east
- 3. Bank Plain exterior in 1965
- 4. The banking hall highlights the prosperity and confidence of the era
- 5. The main banking hall after refurbishment in 1984

Digitization has allowed the photographs to be viewed by a much wider audience and become a lasting memorial to the architecture and banking practices before the digital era.

Barclay & Co., it was becoming clear that a radical change was necessary to accommodate Barclays' expanding business. The frontage now extended the length of Bank Plain and the single door on the corner became inadequate to admit a burgeoning clientele. The rebuilding was done in two parts. Phase one began with the Local Head Office portion to the South (at the limit of the old garden) and progressed towards the directors' rooms. All the extensions to the original house were demolished and the site excavated, revealing several disused wells underneath. The second phase began in July 1929 and was completed in October 1931. The strong rooms now covered more than 5,000 square feet and new offices, covering 40,000 square feet, were built above. The new banking hall was the longest in England, measuring 150 feet long, by 71½ feet wide and 52½ feet high. The walls were panelled to a height of 7½ feet in grey and black marble, and sixteen 40 foot pillars were decorated with gold leaf. Within seven bays near the ceiling were concealed 'revolutionary' electric flood lamps, making Norwich 'the most beautifully illuminated banking premises outside London' according to local press. Public entrance was by double doors at each end of the hall, with impressive entrance porches. At the Northern end of the hall were the Securities, Foreign and Income Tax departments. Ledger work and waste machines were located in the centre and an archway at the Southern end led to the offices of the local directors.

By the 1970s, the banking hall required significant alterations to meet the needs of a modern and more customer-focussed style of banking. A major £3.4 million refurbishment programme was begun in August 1982 and completed by December 1984. The Chairman, Sir Timothy Bevan, commemorated the event by burying a 'time-capsule' containing coins, postage stamps and photographs of the branch and staff. The work involved the redesign of the banking hall, the provision of a wheelchair entrance,

and the creation of managerial suites and interview rooms, bringing Bank Plain up to date after 200 years of history.

The quality of photographs is generally very high, the obvious exceptions being the very early nineteenth century images; digitization has allowed the photographs to be viewed by a much wider audience and become a lasting memorial to the architecture and banking practices before the digital era.

All photographs: © Barclays Group Archives

#### Author's profile

James Darby qualified as an archivist in 2011, and spent the first years of his career working at the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness and the People's History Museum in Manchester, before moving to Barclays in 2018. He now works in a team of five staff, providing access to the archives of Barclays, its predecessors and constituents for both internal and external customers.

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- 1 The photographs can be found on the branch photos section of the Barclays Archive website <https://www.archive.barclays.com>
- 2 Barclays Group Archives ref 513/6

# 54 Lombard Street

## At work and play

Maria Sienkiewicz

Within the archives of Barclays Bank, in amongst the ledgers, minute books, premises registers and all the other standard banking records, are three small photograph albums.<sup>1</sup> These albums contain no information about the Bank's financial dealings or its strategic direction, but they stand out as a rare example of a personal view of life as a bank clerk at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The albums contain 350 photographs of the staff of Barclays' head office at 54 Lombard Street in London at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Barclays had been formed as a limited company in 1896 by an amalgamation of twenty private banks, and the Lombard Street premises had previously been the office of Barclay, Bevan, Tritton and Co., one of the leading banks in that amalgamation. Lombard Street was renowned as the centre of the English banking world, and the Barclay partnership, through its various predecessors, had been at its heart for over two centuries.

The archivists at Barclays do not know how the albums came to form part of the corporate archive. They appear to be the private work of a staff member, rather than an officially-commissioned record. They arrived at the archive in Manchester in 1989 as part of a mass influx of material that had previously been brought together at the London head office. They had clearly been well used—the binding was disintegrating, so the archivists placed each page within a Melinex sleeve, then assembled the

sleeves within three binders to retain the integrity of each album while still making it possible to consult them.

The majority of the photographs are small (approximately 4x7 cm), and are contained within mounts which house four photographs to a page. Larger photographs glued to a page also occur sporadically. The photographs

are a mixture of sepia and black and white. A great many of the photographs have been captioned—somebody (possibly the photographer) has written on the mounts next to each photograph, naming the people in them and sometimes providing the date. Other dates also appear next to names occasionally, and it is thought that these mark the dates at which people started working for the Bank.

The albums are entitled '54 Lombard Street: At Work and Play' and contain a mix of formal group shots, 'candid' office scenes, and photographs of the staff at social events. Given what is known about the technical challenges of photography in the early 1900s, to what extent any of the photographs were truly candid is debatable, but there are certainly shots which seem surprisingly natural.

The office photographs show members of staff in their workplace, looking as if they have been caught by surprise. Often with a pen in hand, most of them look directly at the camera. Some look slightly alarmed, others faintly suspicious, some are very clearly smiling. Unsurprisingly, they are all white men, but they are very far from being anonymous bank clerk clones. Short hair was obviously

**Lombard Street was renowned as the centre of the English banking world, and the Barclay partnership, through its various predecessors, had been at its heart for over two centuries.**





edbh bulletin

- 2-3. Typical 'candid' scenes showing men apparently interrupted at their work
- 4. A great example of ledgers in their natural environment
- 5. A rare scene with no people, but lots of evidence of how they worked
- 6. An ornate telephone is clearly visible in the centre of this picture



7. Shots taken from the customer's perspective are relatively rare  
8-9. Two good examples of group shots which were more obviously posed  
10. Typical 'candid' scenes showing men apparently interrupted at their work





11-15. Shots of staff on days out and at sporting events

16. Group shot from a day out. Note the tiny rosette they are all wearing. The tall man in the middle of the back row (without a hat) is Mr H S Davy, who was the first Barclays man to die on active service during World War One

de rigueur, but there's quite an array of facial hairstyles on display, ranging from clean-shaven faces through to splendid, waxed moustaches and full beards. While they are all wearing smart jackets, waistcoats, shirts and ties, there is plenty of evidence of individuality in their dress, expressed through coloured waistcoats, patterned ties, pocket squares and even the occasional buttonhole.

These office photographs also provide rare views of the working environment. While banks do seem to have commissioned photographs of the exteriors of their buildings, and of their banking halls, these photographs are highly unusual in facilitating access to spaces that would have been strictly off-limits to all but the men who worked in them. The ledgers, which now form a significant and precious part of the archives, can be seen in their 'natural environment'—lined up on shelves, piled up on desks, open and in use. The paraphernalia of banking is visible, forming the backdrop to the photographs—the round rulers, ink wells, spikes, coin shovels and scales. Seen in detail, the high sloped desks and their accompanying stools look scuffed and worn, there are scraps of paper on the floor—a far cry from the imposing gleaming mahogany and marble of the banking hall. Also in evidence are new inventions—electric lights and telephones, harbingers of the changes to come in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which would alter this world beyond recognition.

Even more unusual are the photographs that were taken outside the office, which include days out and sporting events. The staff can be seen participating in a variety of sports, from tennis and cricket to tug-of-war, and there is even a great action shot of runners crossing a finishing line. Staff are pictured in rowing boats, on donkeys, on bikes, taking tea, and playing musical instruments. Collars and ties are still very much in evidence, but straw boaters make frequent appearances, and the general atmosphere of these photographs is relaxed and happy.

It is this evidence of camaraderie between the men that is, perhaps, the most striking thing about all of the photographs, both in the office and out. Knowing the strict rules under which bank clerks worked, it is easy to imagine that their lives were dull and routine, little better than that of Dickens's Bob Cratchit in the time before Scrooge had his epiphany.<sup>2</sup> However, these photographs give an impression of a workforce at ease with each other and their surroundings in the workplace, and happy to spend time together outside the office.

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**There is potential for much wider use on a variety of subjects ranging from working conditions to men's fashion.**

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The photographs have been barely used beyond Barclays. The archives team have made use of them regularly over the years to illustrate articles and exhibitions on banking history for colleagues, but believe there is potential for much wider use on a variety of subjects ranging from

working conditions to men's fashion. The fact that many of the men are named also opens the collection up for very specific research into those individuals. In recent years, the archive team have added individuals' names to the catalogue entry for the albums to better facilitate searching. This

has enabled a number of men who lost their lives during World War One to be identified, and their photographs have been added to the Imperial War Museum's *Lives of the First World War*.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the photographs have been digitized. Although they are not currently available online, Barclays Group Archives would be happy to share the digital images with researchers. This is a wonderful collection with huge potential!

All photographs: © Barclays Group Archives

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### Author's profile

Maria Sienkiewicz qualified as an archivist in 1996, and spent the first eight years of her career working in the public sector before moving to Barclays in 2004 as Group Archivist. She now leads a team of five staff, providing access to the archives of Barclays, its predecessors and constituents for both internal and external customers. She is also an honorary supervisor at Liverpool University, in connection with two AHRC-funded PhDs based at Barclays.

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1 Barclays Group Archives ref 33/929

2 A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (1843) told the story of miserly businessman, Ebenezer Scrooge. Bob Cratchit was his over-worked and under-paid clerk.

3 The main site is at <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/> See <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/searchlives/arthur%20zillwood%20warner/filter> for an example using one of the photographs

# Central Bank of Ireland's photographic collection

## The value of visuals

Sinéad McDonnell

Established in 1927 as the Currency Commission, the Central Bank of Ireland is responsible for the management and regulation of the Irish banking system, as well as being Ireland's representative within the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) and for international monetary affairs. At present, the Bank Archive's holdings comprise more than 12,000 paper files, 2,000 Bank publications, over 600 architectural plans, 250 ledgers, various artefacts and some 6,000 photographic items, with the archive continuously growing.

Our photographic collection begins in 1932 with a large framed portrait of all the attendees from the British Empire Economic Conference/Ottawa Conference, which included three Irish delegates—Seán T. O'Kelly (Ireland's 2nd President); Sean Lemass (former Taoiseach of Ireland); and Joseph Brennan (Chairman of the Currency Commission and first Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland). Joseph Brennan makes his next official appearance in the Bank's photographic collection in a portrait of the first Board meeting of the Central Bank of Ireland's Bank Commission, where he is seated front and centre. The photo-

graphic collection at present covers the years 1932–2019 encompassing an array of themes including various buildings owned by the bank; banknote and coin designs; the change over to the euro; senior staff portraits; staff sports

and social events; landscape photographs; bank conferences and social events; and also the dreaded 'miscellaneous' album (Photograph 1).

The Bank's photographic collection was realised as a genuine asset to the Bank upon the launch of the Archive's reading room, the online archive catalogue, the Bank's exhibition celebrating their 75th anniversary, and the Bank's exhibition titled 'Pounds, Shillings and Independence', all in 2017. Prior to this, there was little knowledge of the value of the bank's photographic collection in relation to garnering public interest, using it as a historical tool, or using it for social media, solely due to the wider lack of knowledge surrounding the archives themselves within the organization.

During these launches, the photographic collection was used a great deal as part of the Bank's marketing campaign and was featured in news articles, social media posts and informative booklets. The 'Pounds, Shillings and Independence' exhibition, the 75th anniversary exhibition and video (which detailed the evolution of the bank since 1943) and an additional informative booklet, made great use of the banks photographic collection,

displaying the unique evidential value a photograph can serve to provide an historical narrative. The collection is now in constant use due to various exhibitions held at the Bank, whether it be for Culture Night, VIP visits, or school/

**Not only are financial institutions' photographic collections an asset for displaying their historical timelines through subjects such as corporate events; architecture; and currency, they are also an asset for revealing the character of these institutions.**



1. First meeting of the Board of the Central Bank of Ireland, 1st February 1943. Joseph Brennan, first Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland seated third from the right



2. Story boards featured in the Central Bank of Ireland's visitor centre, detailing the history of the Central Bank of Ireland and featuring images from the Bank's archive  
3. Lady Clerks sitting outside Foster Place, former headquarters of the Currency Commission/Central Bank of Ireland, c. 1940's



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4. Central Bank of Ireland colleagues enjoying a work social event, 1955



5. Left - Dame Street Tower, designed by Irish architect Same Stephenson during construction c. 1976; Right – Dame Street Tower c. 2016, prior to the Bank's move to the new building on North Wall Quay. Both photographs feature the famous Ha'penny Bridge  
6. Central Bank of Ireland's new headquarters situated on North Wall Quay, Dublin City



7. Draft design of the £100 B Series banknote, featuring Gráinne Mhaol. This banknote was never circulated due to lack of demand
8. £50 Consolidated banknote, also known as the Ploughman Banknotes. These notes were in circulation between 1929-1953. The Ploughman series was a series of Irish banknotes issued by the Currency Commission of Ireland as a transitional measure for eight Irish banks with the arrangement that the banks withdrew their previous individual banknote issues
9. Series B £5 banknotes being checked over during printing in the Currency Centre c.1980



group visits; the photographs are usually the part of the exhibition individuals linger around longest (Photograph 2).

Not only are financial institutions' photographic collections an asset for displaying their historical timelines through subjects such as corporate events; architecture; and currency, they are also an asset for revealing the character of these institutions. Staff photographs spanning from the 1940s through to the present-day feature staff enjoying days out, participating in sports events, celebrating birthdays, Christmas, promotions and retirement parties; and taking part in the annual theatrical production. We have come to find this particular theme of photographs truly captivates staff, past and present. In 2018, the Archives decided to introduce a project that needed the participation of all willing staff. As the photographic collection is so large, and the Archive is relatively new to the Bank, we found it quite difficult to be able to name all staff featured in these photos. An appeal was placed on the Bank's intranet to all staff, calling for anyone interested in helping the Archive name the unknown individuals in the collection. There was great interest in this and over fifty staff visited the Archive's reading room over the following weeks to look through the thousands of photographs and name anyone they recognized. The project not only helped to catalogue the Archives' holdings, it also allowed the staff to appreciate the size of the collection and gave them opportunity to travel down memory lane and enjoy a laugh between colleagues and friends. Following on from this project, the Archive was contacted by the Communications Department in the Bank to discuss various planned retiree events. Through these events, the Archive received the names of over fifty former staff members that were interested in assisting the Archive with this project. The retirees then contacted other past staff members and before long we had groups in the reading room every week for five weeks, which then coincided with the Archive receiving even more photographs to add to its collection. This is an ongoing project that the Archive makes an effort to arrange every year, and all contributions have been of great value to the Archive. While many of these photographs are not available to the public, they are available to staff members and family (Photographs 3 and 4).

With regard to external researchers, the most requested photographs from our collection come under

architecture and currency. Since the launch of the online catalogue, the Archive has received requests from architectural students to view the collection containing the images of the Bank's former headquarters located on Dame Street, Dublin. This building was built by architect Sam Stephenson. The building was completed in late 1978 and it was the Bank's headquarters until 2017, when all staff moved the new headquarters located down the river Liffey at North Wall Quay. The Dame Street building was constructed in a Brutalist style and is Ireland's only 'suspended building', with its eight floors hanging from central concrete cores. Each floor was built on the ground and then raised into place. This particular building courted controversy, as during its construction it exceeded the original planning permission height by thirty feet and building was put on halt for a year until a new approval was granted. Due to this controversy, and style of the building, it proves to be a popular topic amongst students. Photographs of the Dame Street 'Tower' are also regularly used in exhibitions aimed at the general public as major-

ity of the population who lived in Ireland during the 1970s will have memories of this dispute, and more often than not are hugely interested in seeing the construction photographs, as it's not very often you see a building's floors being hoisted from the ground up (Photographs 5 and 6).

Currency has also proved to be a favourite amongst external researchers, with annual statistics showing this topic making up approx-

imately 30% of material viewed in the Archive's reading room. Numismatists are particularly interested in the design of old Irish banknotes—namely Series A and B, and the Consolidated banknotes. Images from the Central Bank of Ireland archives have been used in numerous publications, printed and online, and on numismatic websites (following relevant copyright approval). The Bank has hosted talks and exhibitions solely based on these banknotes, with great reviews. One note in particular that is of interest to the public is the Irish £100 B Series banknote, featuring Grace O'Malley (an historical figure in 16th century Irish history, in Irish folklore she is commonly known as Gráinne Mhaol, anglicized as Granuaile). This note was never released to the general public due to lack of demand and its design was largely unknown, along with its draft designs. This design is now featured in many publications

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The photographic collection of the Central Bank of Ireland provides a captivating historical record of the Bank, its staff, its buildings, and the nation's currency through the years.

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and online informative sources. The bank does not hold this physical banknote, only photographic evidence of the proposed designs, and therefore it is extremely valuable to the history of Irish banknotes (Photographs 7 and 8).

In order to preserve the history of the Central Bank of Ireland, the Archive team visited the Currency Centre to document all banknote-printing processes prior to the cessation of banknote printing in Ireland. The team photographed printing machines, printing plates, dyes, and even staff workwear. There are some photographs from when the Currency Centre opened in 1974, and due to security reasons, some photographs cannot be released to the public. However, the printing staff in the Currency Centre are highly appreciative that their lifelong work has been documented and preserved in the form of a photographic print. A number of these photographs can be released for general consumption, and will hopefully be used in an upcoming exhibition to observe the end of banknote printing in Ireland and to celebrate the work of the printing staff (Photograph 9).

The photographic collection of the Central Bank of Ireland provides a captivating historical record of the Bank, its staff, its buildings, and the nation's currency through the years. It is a hugely important section of the archives and for the history of the Bank, as they are unique to the Bank itself. Digitizing the photographic collection is the next step for the Archive of the Central Bank of Ireland, and through this, we hope to reach a wider audience and share with them the visual history of the bank.

All photographs: © Central Bank of Ireland

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#### Author's profile

Sinéad McDonnell joined the Central Bank of Ireland as Archivist in 2016, and became Archives Manager in 2019. She previously worked as project archivist in the National Library of Ireland in 2014 and 2015. She has her master's degree in Archives and Records Management from the University College Dublin and her undergraduate degree in Archaeology also from the University College Dublin.

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# The Croatian National Bank's photography collection

Ena Kurolt

'Whatever else a photograph may be about, it is always about time',<sup>1</sup> said the famous American landscape photographer, Richard Misrach. Photographs allow us to preserve important moments for eternity, to relive significant events later on, or to really feel the atmosphere of an historical period. This is true of the photographs held in the collection of the Croatian National Bank (CNB). This small collection has grown over the years to provide a record of important, and less important but interesting moments and experiences.

The CNB is celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of its establishment in 2021. The Constitution of Croatia, adopted in December 1990, designated the CNB as the central bank of the Republic of Croatia and defined its responsibilities, while the Regulation on the National Bank of Croatia on 8 October 1991 and the decision to replace the Yugoslav dinar by the Croatian dinar defined and specified the responsibilities and functions of the central bank. Due to its relatively short period of existence and some other factors, the photographic collection of the CNB remains small.

In 2001 the publishing department of the CNB proposed using photography to record the history of money in Croatia as well as the history of the CNB main building and in the same year permission was granted to take photographs of all employees for the purpose of their publication on the Bank's intranet site. This sparked an interest in recording events both inside and outside the

Bank. Since digitization the scope of work has increased with video and photography being used for various purposes. This provided an authentic picture of events and activities of the CNB at a particular moment or period of time. Only one camera was used at the beginning, while today there is complete equipment for taking indoor and outdoor photographs and video recordings, as well as for photography processing and video editing.

Notwithstanding the relatively short period of systematic recording of official and important as well as informal events, the collection has grown slowly and now includes more than 100,000 digital photographs, some fifty videos, as well as around fifty analogue photographs. Most photographs taken in the last twenty years are the property of the Bank. In addition, other photographs were purchased from specific photographers or institutions, such as national museums and archives, in order to preserve the Bank's history.

Unfortunately, the collection contains only a small number of photographs from the pre-1990s period. A photo album from the 1945–1963 period was found in the CNB's central archives, created by an anonymous author and containing black and white photographs of the buildings of the branch offices of the Head Office for the People's Republic of Croatia. The album, entitled 'People's Bank of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia—Head Office for the People's Republic of Croatia with branch offices', is a visual legacy of banking from the period when Croatia was a federal

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1. Croatian kuna banknotes, 2017



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- 2. Commemorative gold and silver coins, 2017
- 3. Last session of the Croatian National Bank Council, 2012
- 4. Vicegovernor Bojan Fras delivers a lecture on consumer protection during the Consumer Rights Week, 2018
- 5. Opening of the restaurant in the CNB building in Jurišićeva Street, 2009
- 6. Breakfast with journalists, 2014
- 7. Painting the walls and ceiling of the Former Arbitration Tribunal Hall ('Horseshoe Hall'), 2017



- 8. Lecture for pupils entitled 'Let's go back to school', 2019
- 9. Departure of CNB athletes for the Bankers Games, 2004
- 10. Stability ball, 2007
- 11. Blood donation, 2005
- 12. Moving documentation from the warehouse in Račkoga Street to the warehouse in Jurišićeva Street, 2004



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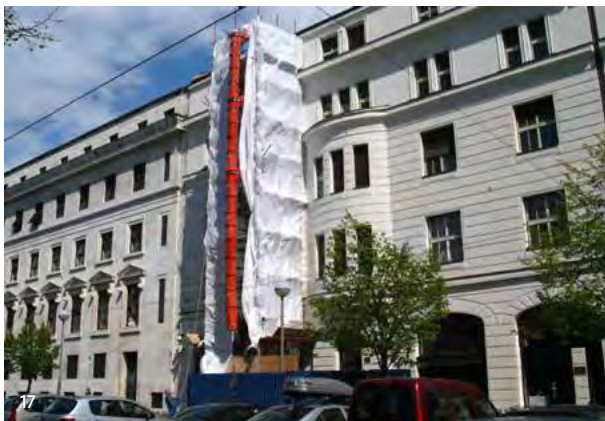
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- 13. Banknote authentication at the National Counterfeit Centre, 2004
- 14. Lecture at the Former Arbitration Tribunal Hall ('Horseshoe Hall'), 2005
- 15. Christmas party, 2019
- 16. Opening of the renovated halls in the CNB building in Jurišićeva Street, 2008
- 17. Renovation of the façade of the CNB building in Račkoga Street, 2008
- 18. Redecoration of the Round Hall in the main CNB building, 2001



- 19. Press conference of the IMF, 2001
- 20. Student debate entitled 'Financial Literacy Test as the Foundation for Borrowing', 2019
- 21. Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the kuna, 2019
- 22. Open days at the Croatian National Bank, tour of the Round Hall, 2018





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23. Press conference entitled 'Comparison of bank fees', 2018

24. Introducing the kuna into the Croatian Danube region. Head of the Working Group, Mr Adolf Matejka, and other participants in the project, 1997

25. Minting of kuna coins. Croatian Monetary Institute, 2014

26. Filming a documentary entitled 'KUNA – Creation of the Croatian National Currency', Čakovec, 2014

27. Round Hall, CNB, 2014

A comprehensive series of photographs documenting commemorative coins, banknotes and coins of the national currency, as well as the photographs of former Croatian currencies are frequently used in various projects.

state of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and, as such, is certainly worthy of attention.

The series of photographs are catalogued according to date and subject. The collection from the CNB's history includes photographs of all its governors and of the main building, which is a listed building, as well as photographs of furniture and other equipment and details of interior of great value. Photographs of professional conferences, gatherings, workshops, educational activities and other occasional events associated with CNB activities have been preserved, as have the participation of Bank officials and employees in gatherings and events organised by other domestic and foreign institutions. Periodic celebrations of anniversaries and events important for the Bank's history and operations, informal gatherings and Christmas parties and plays for children, and even events for donating blood have also been captured on camera.

It is worth mentioning the photographs taken in 1994 when the modern kuna (lit. 'marten', a reference to the historical use of the pelt of the marten as a unit of value in medieval trade) replaced the Croatian dinar as the national currency. As Governor Boris Vujčić pointed out in his speech on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of the kuna in 2014: 'Bearing in mind the time and circumstances of the kuna adoption and the fact that the cash changeover is an important event for any country and its monetary system, this may be noted as one of the most complex projects of the CNB, realised through joint efforts of many CNB employees as well as many institutions and persons outside the central bank'. As Croatia entered the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II) in July 2020—thus taking a huge step towards joining the euro area—the CNB will soon face new historical moments worthy of being captured in both photographic and video form.

A comprehensive series of photographs documenting commemorative coins, banknotes and coins of the

national currency, as well as the photographs of former Croatian currencies are frequently used in various projects. A new sub-series comprised of photographs of banknotes and coins is intended to be used for various educational activities, articles, website publications, and so on. As an element

of the CNB's visual communication, photography is integral to communication at the CNB, with photographs being used both for external and internal purposes, on the website, in publications and social networks. Although the archival documentation of the photography collection of the CNB has yet to be completed, it is a good starting point for future research because photographs

are like a time machine—they provide the opportunity to both present and future generations to look back on past times and feel that they are part of their country's history.

@ All photographs are part of the collection of the Croatian National Bank

#### Author's profile

Ena Kurolt was born in 1986 in Nova Gradiška, Croatia. Ms Kurolt is a Senior Associate at the Library and Documentation Centre of the Croatian National Bank (CNB) and has been working for the CNB since 2018. She graduated in Information Sciences and Russian Language and Literature from the University of Zagreb.

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1 [http://aaronshuman.com/misrach\\_interview.html](http://aaronshuman.com/misrach_interview.html) accessed on 31 July 2020

# Lutz Kleinhans

## The Deutsche Bank photo collection

### Reinhard Frost

In 2009, the Historical Institute of Deutsche Bank acquired the photo collection *Deutsche Bank* comprising around 18,000 image negatives and their rights of use from Lutz Kleinhans (1926–2011), a busy Frankfurt photographer. In addition to his full-time work as an editorial photographer for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), Kleinhans also worked as a ‘house photographer’ for Deutsche Bank from 1967 to 1989.

Who was Lutz Kleinhans, what did he photograph for his client Deutsche Bank, and how is his photo collection being used by the Historical Institute of the Deutsche Bank? Kleinhans came from near Frankfurt and was the son of a tax official. After school, in 1946 he began studying physics at the University of Frankfurt. He began an interest in photography, which he pursued first as a hobby, then to finance his studies, before

deciding to give them up in order to make photography his main profession. From 1949 Kleinhans worked as a photographer for various daily newspapers in the Rhine-Main area. In addition to training at a photography school, he continued to educate himself about potential areas for working as professional photographer. From 1953 to 1957 he worked as a photographer for the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, after which he switched to its competitor—the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ)—first as a contract employee, then as a permanent photographer from 1973 to 1993.

For more than four decades Kleinhans created a photographic record of the development of the Frankfurt

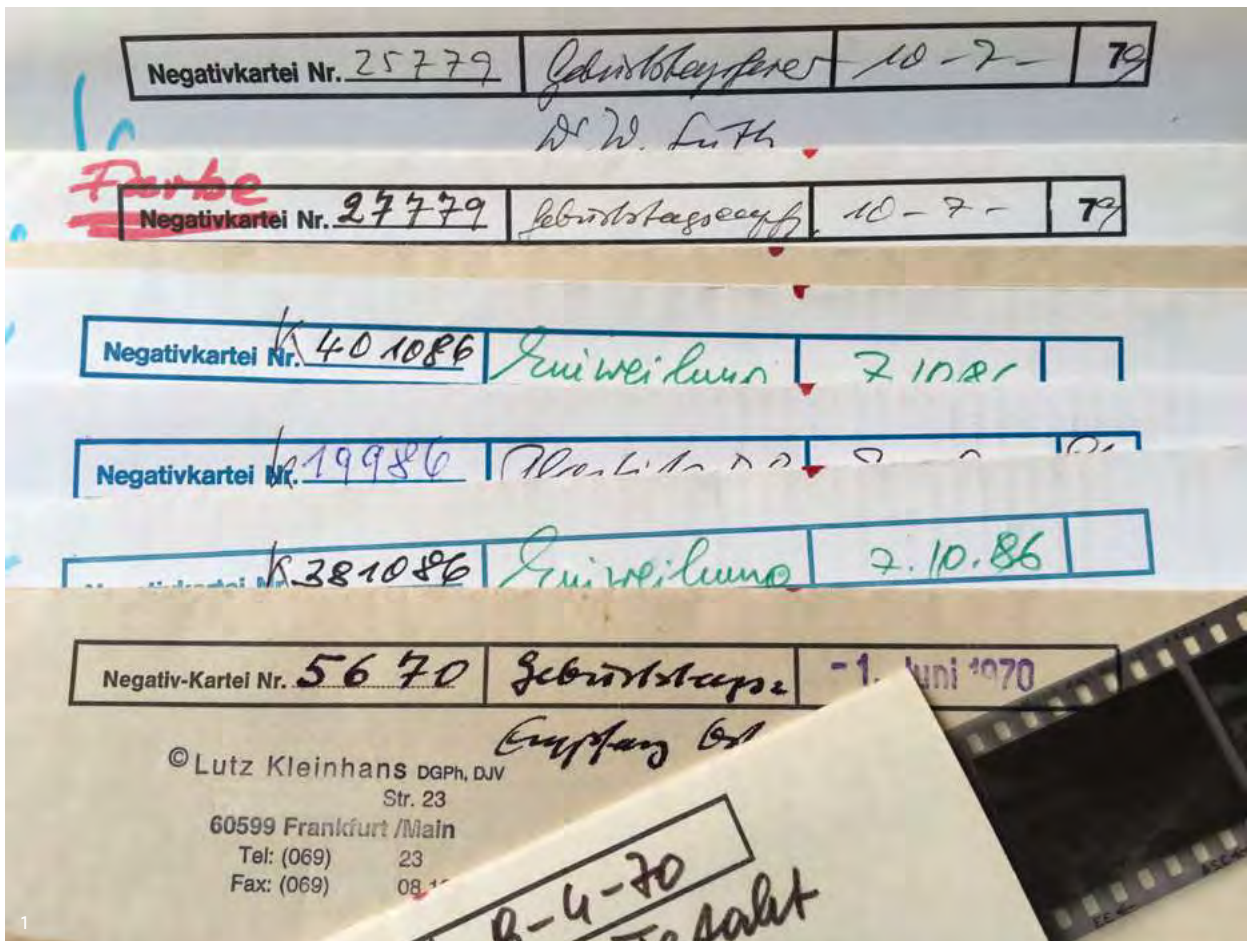
urban environment, as well as documenting the city’s social life. Outside the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region, on the other hand, he rarely took photographs. In 1971, he published a highly acclaimed illustrated city portrait—*Frankfurt*—which presented a visually exploration of the town’s new skyscrapers. The multimedia presentation directed by Kleinhans in 1973 portrayed the radical renewal of the cityscape after the Second World War and was used to promote Frankfurt in several North American cities; it was followed by another illustrated book in 1986 which traced the city’s efforts to regain urbanity in the period of postmodernism.

The idea of establishing a working collaboration between Kleinhans and Deutsche Bank grew spontaneously from the day to day interactions between the press photographer and the top public relations officers of

large Frankfurt companies. While continuing to work full-time for the FAZ, Deutsche Bank became Kleinhans most important private client. The contact was established through Walther Weber, Deutsche Bank’s press spokesman at the time, and Kleinhans soon became the ‘in-house photographer’ of Germany’s largest credit institution. The design of the Deutsche Bank customer magazine *Geld*—which was released from 1970 to the late 1980s—was also mainly in his hands.

In addition to its artistic significance, the special attraction of Lutz Kleinhans’ photo collection *Deutsche Bank* lies in the long-term perspective with which the

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edbn bulletin

1. The source material: 18,000 images on negative strips



- 2. Lutz Kleinhans (1926–2011) in action for Deutsche Bank in 1986
- 3. Signing of a loan for the city of Kobe in 1968
- 4. Helicopter view 1982 – the Deutsche Bank towers enriched the Frankfurt skyline significantly



5. Deutsche Bank's first high-rise in downtown Frankfurt, 1971



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6. Celebrating 100 years of Deutsche Bank on the River Rhine, April 1970



edbn bulletin

7. Private clients at Frankfurt city branch, 1970





8. Vote count at Deutsche Bank's annual general meeting in Düsseldorf, 1968

9. Last board meeting with Deutsche Bank's legendary spokesman Hermann J. Abs, 1967



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edbh bulletin

10. At the centennial celebration of Deutsche Bank in April 1970, the audience was homogeneous: one age, one sex, and uniform clothing.



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- 11. At the evening banquet and ball in Frankfurt's Palmengarten, on the other hand, society was more mixed.
- 12. At a press conference in October 1974, the Management Board and the foreign representatives of Deutsche Bank were ready to answer questions. The pennants with the respective national flags gave the event the appearance of an international summit conference.
- 13. Data processing with large computers brought a whole new type of employee into the bank, 1971
- 14. A builder during a consultation at Deutsche Bank branch in Frankfurt. Since the introduction of small loans, the major German banks have opened up to new customer groups. But this photo, taken in 1979, is undoubtedly posed.
- 15. Visit of a delegation of Universal Oil Products at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, 1974. In the 1970s Lutz Kleinhans liked to experiment with unusual camera angles.

photographer—or picture editor, as he preferred to call himself—documents the changes in Deutsche Bank's public appearance and inner life.

Several themes can be identified in the photographs made between 1967 and 1989.

### Architectural photography

Architectural photography occupies a special position among the commissions for Deutsche Bank and is limited to a few buildings. When Lutz Kleinhans began photographing Deutsche Bank at the end of the 1960s, the Frankfurt cityscape was shifting from the horizontal to the vertical, with more and more office towers growing into the sky. Kleinhans is one of the first photographers to address this change in his illustrated books. Large series of photographs exist of the construction of Deutsche Bank's first high-rise building in downtown Frankfurt around 1970, today's corporate headquarters—the Deutsche Bank-Towers—a former training centre in the Taunus region and the bank's technical centre in Eschborn near Frankfurt.

### Festivities

At the centennial celebration of Deutsche Bank in April 1970, which took place over several days, Lutz Kleinhans and his team were permanently in action. The crowd of guests who gathered for the Deutsche Bank centenary offers a Who's Who of German business and politics.

### Banking business

In contrast to industry, banks can't come up with spectacular motifs from production —no factory halls, no aspirational consumer goods, instead they offer bond signings, press conferences, specialist departments, meetings of executives, and the tellers at work in local branches. But in addition to banking business, Kleinhans focused on everyday life. And here it is above all the mechanization of banking that catches the eye. At the beginning of the 1970s, conventional office technology continued to dominate both customer and back-office areas, with terminals at the workstations only becoming visible at the end of the decade. During this time, teams of staff began to be more mixed.

### Annual general meetings

This annual event forms the largest segment among Lutz Kleinhans' orders for Deutsche Bank. Here, the long-term evolution of this annual event is particularly striking. One sees the development of this occasion into a mass event, which attracted several hundred shareholders by the end of the 1960s, and several thousand at the end of the 1980s. Since Deutsche Bank's annual general meetings used to take place not only at the bank's headquarters in

Frankfurt, these were the only assignments Kleinhans carried out for Deutsche Bank in other major German cities.

### Management Board

Lutz Kleinhans had several opportunities to take photographs during board meetings between 1967 and 1970. When a new board member was appointed, Kleinhans usually took a series of portraits. While Kleinhans initially takes pictures of board members and other executives in their offices, he later invited them to his home to work in a relaxed atmosphere.

The photo collection Deutsche Bank with its approximately 18,000 photographs by Lutz Kleinhans physically exists in the form of negative strips in the formats 6x6 and 3x2 cm. Although the number of black-and-white photographs far outweighs the number of colour photographs, the collection began to feature a series of colour photographs after 1969, which became more frequent in the mid-1980s. After the acquisition of the negatives in October 2009, the complete stock of photographs was digitized on the basis of the original negatives and was archived soon after. All image files were integrated into the database of the Historical Institute and provided with metadata. Thus, the date and place of recording are known throughout. In many cases, it has been possible to identify the persons depicted in the photographs, which involved a great deal of detective work, especially in the case of group photographs. On the occasion of Deutsche Bank's 150th anniversary, an illustrated book with 150 photographs by Lutz Kleinhans from his photo collection Deutsche Bank has been published in 2020 (in German), offering a representative cross-section of his work for Deutsche Bank covering three decades.

© All images courtesy of Historical Institute of Deutsche Bank

### Author's profile

Reinhard Frost studied German philology and history at Frankfurt University. Since 1996, he has been historian at Historical Institute of Deutsche Bank. He has published several publications on banking history, including Deutsche Bank and its Retail Banking (2009), Deutsche Bank in the Rhine-Ruhr Region (2014), Hermann Wallich. A Banker in Paris, Shanghai and Berlin (2017)

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# Creating the European Central Bank's audiovisual collection

## Introduction and background

Isabella Asaro

Until 2010, the Division Official Publications and Library (PAL) of the Communications Directorate was responsible for the management of audiovisual records, given that the Communications Directorate had made most of the audiovisual records of the European Central Bank (ECB). In 2010, the decision was made to set up an audiovisual collection as part of the ECB Archives. At the time when the majority of the audiovisual records was handed over to the Communication Directorate they were not systematically arranged, adequately described, labeled, or properly stored.

When the ECB Archives received the audiovisual records from the Communications Directorate, considerable effort was needed to re-arrange, catalogue and re-house the audiovisual material, including: negatives, slides, Compact Discs (CD), Digital Versatile Discs (DVD), magnetic tapes and photographic prints. Some of the photographic prints were partially stuck to each other, thereby running the risk of colour deterioration and other potential damage.

Most of the CDs and DVDs (containing both digital images and audiovisual footage) deposited with the ECB Archives did not need to be rehoused as their packaging allowed for proper handling and preservation. Some CDs were delivered stacked, or packaged in groups. If no action had been taken, the accumulated pressure may have resulted in warping or deformation of the CD/DVD, increasing the risk of content loss. These CDs/DVDs

needed to be rearranged in any case, processed and properly preserved. Some CDs/DVDs protective cases were broken, and these were replaced with new ones.

The majority of the magnetic or analogue video tapes sent to the ECB Archives had not been properly stored, periodically (re)wound or described or labeled. Consequently, a considerable effort had to be employed in re-arranging these tapes. Due to a lack of proper preservation the quality of recordings had sometimes deteriorated. The ECB's biggest risk was that these tapes held irreplaceable video material, e.g. the only original videotape of a speech. If this material is not maintained adequately, it could be lost, meaning that the original tape cannot be viewed anymore.

**The content of the photographic prints and still digital images includes portraits, group events, objects, landscapes and interiors.**

Based on the available information regarding the individual items, the ECB Archives was able to group all the photographic prints, negatives, slides, still digital images and the audiovisual footage according to series (e.g., 'Former Board Members', 'Cultural days', 'Opening o ECB Vernis-

sage') as well as the itemization of individual items (e.g., single photographic print). These series contain a great variety of photographic prints formats, still digital photographs of various sizes, and audiovisual footages files.

The content of the photographic prints and still digital images includes portraits, group events, objects (e.g. a picture or a banknote) landscapes and interiors (e.g., interior or exterior of a building). The audiovisual footage files content varies from press conferences, general



1. ECB Press Conference held in 2000





3. & 4. ECB Inauguration Ceremony held at the Alte Oper, 30 June 1998



## The digital domain creates exciting opportunities for our researchers and learning opportunities for the professional archivist.

council meetings, governing council meetings, executive board meetings, Euro awareness campaign, etc. The negatives and slides content varies from farewell receptions, presidential portraits, 'DesignEuro' Banknotes, governing council meetings, general council meetings, executive board meetings, etc.

### The start of the ECB digitization project for audiovisual items

The ECB Archives needed to consider the impact of the continual increase in the use of digital formats for the recording of audio or video. Analogue standards and formats are continuously evolving, and there is a considerable volume of analogue material that needs to be digitized urgently. Some early digital video formats (DVCAM or DVCPRO) have been superseded, so they need to be made compliant with updated digital formats.

This diverse collection shares a common challenge: sustainability.<sup>1</sup> Old audio-visual recordings can only be played on specific equipment, once that has become obsolete the window of opportunity for digitization and migration will have closed. Failure to complete digitization and migration of these recordings will have resulted in the loss of valuable and often irreplaceable content as well as the investment the ECB had made in it to date. Therefore in 2017, the ECB Archives decided to launch a digitization project to increase accessibility and to ensure long-term preservation of the ECB analogue audio-visual archival collections. The contract was awarded in July 2017 to a European company to perform the digitization of the ECB audio-visual recordings.

### Audio-visual works and copyright rules

For audio-visual works, copyright clearance poses difficulties. A large number of different copyrights may be involved in a single production, as each contributor may own certain copyrights (or parts thereof) related to his/her contribution.

Regarding audio-visual material, a comprehensive contractual arrangement covering all copyrights and all copyright owners for a given audio-visual work is preferable in order to secure the necessary legal certainty for envisaged future use. If such a comprehensive

arrangement does not exist, the copyright situation needs to be clarified with every copyright owner to identify any particular risk of infringement.

### Assessing copyright for the ECB's audio-visual collection

The copyrights of the analogue items were assessed during the first phase of the project. The evaluation of the analogue audio-visual items was carried out with the support and involvement of the ECB legal services.

The ECB Archives assessed: 1,568 video tapes, 1,054 audio tapes, 508 series of photographic prints (9,857 single photographic prints), 311 slides, 194 series of negatives (11,906 single negatives). It was established that for 275 series (107 video tapes, 6,694 photographic prints and negatives and 17 audio tapes) copyright issues required clarification. For the majority of items digitized, the ECB either holds the copyright or has sufficient rights to proceed with the digitization and envisaged future use.

In order to ensure compliance with German copyright legislation, it was decided to digitize the audio-visual items in two separate batches:

- The first batch includes all items which have been assessed to be of public interest (and hence for which no copyright issue exists) and/or for which the ECB holds the copyright. Their digitization was completed in November 2018.
- The second batch includes the remaining items (275 analogue audio-visual series of items), for which the copyright authorisation needs to be reviewed before any digitization process can be undertaken; these were assessed against two key criteria:
  - Historical value
  - Effort and feasibility of obtaining copyright authorisation, if needed.

The second batch (material with initial no ECB copyright) was handed over in April 2019 (1,405 items & series) and was completed in January 2020.

### Moving into the file-based world

Digital audio-visual archives need to have viewing proxies, usually of two sorts: 1) medium quality for internal professional access; and 2) low quality for web access. As bandwidth increases, the definition of low and medium quality will change, leading to the need to periodically upgrade these proxies. An efficient approach to proxy generation has three component levels: 1.) master (the ECB Archives have used an uncompressed format), 2.) mezzanine (the most efficient coding for generating new proxies); and 3.) viewing ('access') proxies (of one or more quality levels). Three different formats for each kind of item (with the exception of audio files) have been used:

- **Video files:** Preservation format: MXF, Mezzanine format: MOV and Access format: MP4
- **Digital images:** Preservation format: TIFF, Access format: JPEG, Thumbnail format: JPEG
- **Audio recordings:** Preservation format: Broadcast WAVE, Access format: MP3

Currently the volume of ECB's digital content stands at: 6,965 slides/images (per format); 1,167 videos (per format); and 1,100 audio recordings (per format). The next steps will involve the continuing ingest of this digitized content to our institutional Digital Preservation (DP) Repository to secure its long term preservation.

The audio-visual items of the collection are described and captured based on an agreed, common set of metadata.<sup>2</sup> This schema was developed, implemented and is continuously maintained based on an agreed set of archival best practice, and provides the base to capture and to describe different audio-visual materials in one common metadata schema. This schema enables the identification and to retrieval of any audio-visual item as required.

Digitizing audio-visual content, as well as the ongoing management of new digital content is, of course, not a simple 'one off' process. Many factors have to be considered, notably copyright and intellectual property, the choosing of file formats, codecs, storage systems, the development of metadata standards and frameworks, developing new workflows, staff skill sets, migration strategies, to name but a few factors. But, as with most challenges, the digital domain creates exciting opportunities for our researchers and learning opportunities for the professional archivist.

All photographs: © ECB

### Author's profile

Isabella Asaro joined the European Monetary Institute in 1997. She is responsible for the audio visual collection of the European Central Bank and has guided the digitization project of audio visual records. One of her keys objectives is to facilitate access to these items and preserve their institutional memory.

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- 1 Analogue videotape and audiotape deteriorate over time. Video and audio tapes are considered to be high risk materials due to potential chemical deterioration of the tapes, mechanical damage, equipment obsolescence, mould, and poor handling. Videotape/ audiotape's longevity may also be shortened by damage through use, especially if viewed on the wrong appliances.
- 2 The ECB Archives has referred for the description of the audio-visual items to some international recognised institutions and programmes, e.g., SEPIA (Safeguarding European Photographic Images for Access), (ISAD-(G)), General International Standard Archival Description, IASA, (International Association of Sound and Audio-visual Archives), Dublin Core.

# From the Historical Archive of the Compagnia di San Paolo

## The photographic collections of the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin

Mariastella Circosta

The Historical Archive of the Compagnia di San Paolo, managed by Fondazione 1563 per l'Arte e la Cultura, conserves a photographic collection that traces the history of the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin, providing documentation of its credit activities, as well as its philanthropic, editorial and cultural initiatives.

Fondazione 1563 considers digital historical images a fundamental resource for the study and advancement of research in humanities, as well as the primary tool for knowledge dissemination through narrative forms and digital media. In order to provide first hand access to historical resources and to their inventories to broad (scholar) audiences, Fondazione has systematically developed its own digital photo library project, thus giving rise to an important access point to over 13,500 images.

### The history of Compagnia di San Paolo and of the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin

Founded by seven citizens from Turin in 1563, the Compagnia di San Paolo was established to assist the poor and to contain the spread of Protestantism. It oversaw the creation of various institutions: first, the Monte di Pietà (pawnshop, 1579), to provide those in desperate need of cash with an alternative to usury; second, the educational and charitable institutes for women, Casa del Soccorso<sup>1</sup> (1589) and Casa del Deposito<sup>2</sup> (1683), that evolved into the Educatorio Duchessa Isabella;<sup>3</sup> and third, the Ufficio Pio<sup>4</sup>

(1595), that provided financial and religious assistance. The Compagnia's assets increased through bequests, leading to the rapid development of a range of financial activities, that reached a peak in the mid-1700s.

With the advent of the liberal state in 1853, King Vittorio Emanuele II circumscribed the activity of the Compagnia to the religious sphere, entrusting all assistance

and financial activities to a publicly appointed council, the Opere Pie di San Paolo, which became a public-law credit institution in 1932; it would later evolve into San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin. The role of the institute in the post-World War II reconstruction period, the extent of its territorial presence, the diversification of its

banking activities and its leading position in the European Currency Unit (ECU) market, laid the foundations for its expansion in Italy and further afield. After decades of growth, the privatization of 1992 (part of the implementation of banking privatization due to the passage of the Amato-Carli Law in 1991) sundered the Institute's activities. Henceforth banking activities were entrusted to a newly set up joint-stock company San Paolo S.p.A. (which would go onto become Intesa Sanpaolo), while its philanthropic activities were managed by the Compagnia di San Paolo, a non-profit foundation that revived the historical name.

Compagnia di San Paolo is now one of the most important private foundations in Europe. Its mission

In order to provide first hand access to historical resources and to their inventories to broad (scholar) audiences, Fondazione has systematically developed its own digital photo library project.



1. Giovanni Battista Berra, Educatorio Duchessa Isabella. Internal front of the building, around 1898, albumen print

is to foster civil, cultural and economic development in the communities it operates in, pursuing goals of public interest and social usefulness. The foundation is active in research and higher education, social policies, health, artistic heritage and cultural activities. It is a member of the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and the Italian Association of Foundations of Banking Origin and Saving Banks (ACRI).

### **Fondazione 1563 per l'Arte e la Cultura and its activities**

As noted above, Fondazione 1563 is an independent body overseen by Compagnia di San Paolo, and it is responsible for the conservation, management and promotion of the historical archive of the Compagnia. Its mission is to preserve, enrich and promote the artistic, cultural, archival and documentary heritage and to support research and advanced training programs in the humanities.<sup>5</sup> It also supports a research programme on the 'Age and the Culture of Baroque', offering an annual award for research grants. The historical archive preserves material covering 450-year history (two linear kilometres of documentation) spanning from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The documents come from the Compagnia itself as well as from the Monte di Pietà, the Opere Pie of San Paolo and the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin.

The heritage preserved by the archive is an important resource for the social, economic and cultural history of Piedmont and Italy; it is connected to a number of other Italian archives, and it is open not only to scholars and researchers but also to the general public. Its holdings have been augmented through the purchase of other important private archives and libraries: such as the professional archive of the engineers Giuseppe and Bartolomeo Gallo, Gallo's Fond—an important resource for studying the history of ecclesiastical architecture in Piedmont in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century—and Jolanda and Angelo Dragone's Fond for modern and contemporary art, which preserves the books and papers of the art critic and scholar from Turin.

From 1989 to 2015 the archive was housed at the Vigna di Madama Reale, on Turin hillside; today the Educatorio Duchessa Isabella Palace has been turned into a modern facility where the historical documentation has been organized in wide storage spaces equipped with advanced conservation technologies.

Fondazione 1563 is committed to the classification, study, digitization and dissemination of its historical documents. The documentation can be accessed and consulted easily in the virtual reading room Digital Archives and Collections (D.A.C.).<sup>6</sup> Innovative tools allow

researchers and the interested public, whether in Italy or abroad, to free online access: a simple login is required in order to see the images. The online archive comprises a total of 60,000 items (or 400,000 digitized pages) that can be consulted and downloaded. In total 430 years of history are online, together with 5 libraries and a total of 10,000 volumes and 8 biographical collections.

The library serves as a support for the activities of the Historical Archive of Compagnia di San Paolo and its users. And it is still growing—thanks to recent purchases and exchanges with foundations and Italian and foreign banks, archives, universities, cultural institutes, companies. There are large collections of inventories and other publications edited by historical archives and works of historical, cultural and economic nature published by banks and companies; furthermore the library includes the fond of the Historical Archive of the Compagnia di San Paolo. The book collections consist largely of modern printed monographs and a small collection of old periodicals and degree theses; in total, there are about 10,000 documents, which include the bank's publications, and the artistic monographs it commissioned. Many books and magazines have been digitized and are freely available online in the digital library. The library is part of the University Library System Polo SBA-Unito, managed by the University of Turin.

Fondazione 1563 has organized exhibitions of its documents at its headquarters as well as exhibitions online to facilitate public engagement. Exhibitions can be part of a bigger event, such as Archivissima (the Archives festival), or international days devoted to cultural dissemination, such as the International Archives Week promoted by the International Council on Archives (ICA). It coordinates and publishes a series of volumes based on archival research. The themes of the publications cover a broad range of subjects, such as the history of art and architecture, literature, philosophy, music, as well as social and political history from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The aim is to make research and other contributions available for scholars, universities and cultural institutions.

### **Digital photo library<sup>7</sup>**

The digital photo library project of Fondazione 1563 was born out of the desire to enrich online research tools and is supported by Digital Archives and Collections (DAC).<sup>8</sup> This initiative seeks to respond to problems of sustainability and access, by making assets and information available to a larger number of people, and by facilitating interoperability. The digital photo library promotes access to over 13,500 images covering the history of the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin. Its archival fonds document the history of the institute in Turin, in Piedmont, Italy and

internationally. These materials are available on the website as digital galleries. The photo library project is also an important resource for history telling and public history projects.

Photographs are sorted by collections, but other thematic paths have been identified. Groups of images are linked to metadata and relevant documents; information about the photographers, and photographic techniques and relevant publications are recorded as well. Through the 'explore the collections' search function each user is able to apply search filters to find the collection, monograph, typology, author, technique, and subject of each digital object. Thus a photograph's inventory/cataloguing card may be properly contextualized being linked to a broader documentary context. The goal is to allow a wide range of users, whether familiar with this material or not, to access information in a way that allows them to tailor their own research path so as to assign content and context to the digitized archival material of their own choosing. The search tool then allows the user to retrieve the metadata in addition to identifying a descriptive summary in downloadable and printable formats.<sup>9</sup> All images and data are subject to the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license.<sup>10</sup>

The digital photo library is currently divided into the following collections:

- The Educatorio Duchessa Isabella
- The Monte di Pietà
- Headquarters of the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin - Palazzo Turinetti di Pertengo
- The San Paolo: agencies and branches in the area
- Art photography: the artistic monographs by San Paolo
- Giuseppe and Bartolomeo Gallo: architectural drawings and projects

Two of these collections, *The San Paolo: agencies and branches in the area*, and *Giuseppe and Bartolomeo Gallo: architectural drawings and projects*, have been geo-referenced so that one can search for photographs by using a map.

### The Educatorio Duchessa Isabella

The protection of young women through the provision of dowries and the offer of housing at the Casa del Soccorso (1589) and in the Casa del Deposito (1683) has been part of the Compagnia di San Paolo mission since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Over time, the two bodies were transformed into

educational institutions for girls, who could access them by taking advantage of the free places or paying the tuition.

The purpose of the Educatorio Duchessa Isabella (the name the institution adopted in 1883) was to train expert teachers and educated mothers of a family, by providing them with a good religious, moral, intellectual and physical education without neglecting women's work. In 1893, the new building of the Educatorio was inaugurated. It was located in Barriera di Francia, an area with a healthy climate, away from the disturbing noise of the city, in premises designed according to the new school building models. For the inauguration of the building, a large photographic campaign was launched in order to illustrate the modern premises of the boarding school, the classrooms, the equipped laboratories, the large garden, and also to provide students with souve-

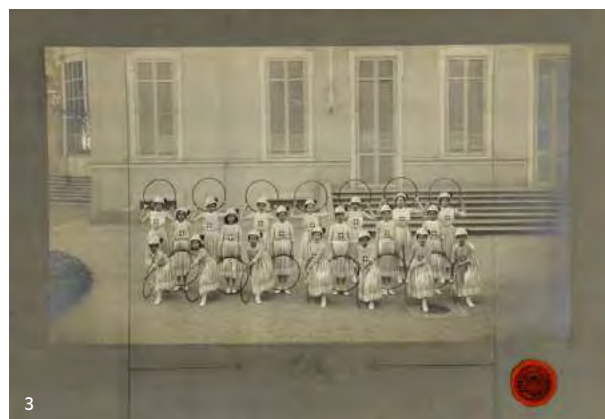
nir photos of their class and institution. Four photographic campaigns were carried out between 1898 and 1935 by the photographic studios Giovanni Battista Berra, owner of Fotografia Subalpina; Bernardo Pasta then G. Ambrosetti; Jean David-Edmond Vallois successeur; Gibelli Reproductive Art.

The Educatorio participated both in the Italian General Exposition held in Turin in 1898 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Albertine Statute,<sup>11</sup> and in the International Exposition in 1911, promoted for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italian unification: on these two occasions photographic campaigns were carried out for propaganda purposes. In 1921, after the First World War, the administrators of the Educatorio, concerned about the decline in the number of students, decided to print a new illustrated brochure with nineteen images. Then there is an album of photographic portraits of the students and teachers of all school courses, made for the school year 1911/1912. The last photographic campaign dates back to 1935 on the occasion of the publication of an advertising booklet relating to the Educatorio and the annexed Regio Istituto Magistrale Domenico Berti (Photographs 1–4).

### The Monte di Pietà

The Monte di Pietà has been located in the ancient centre of Turin since the 18<sup>th</sup> century; its premises give on to a street that assumed the name of via Monte di Pietà. The institute was restructured and redesigned by Giuseppe Pastore and re-inaugurated in October 1902, in the presence of King Vittorio Emanuele III, of Princess Letizia Bonaparte and Duke of Aosta Emanuele Filiberto. In 1909, the painter Paolo Gaidano was commissioned to make frescoes and ornamental friezes for the walls and ceiling to

The digital photo library promotes access to over 13,500 images.



- 2. Bernardo Pasta, Educatorio Duchessa Isabella. Party uniform, 1911, gelatin silver print
- 3. Bernardo Pasta, Educatorio Duchessa Isabella. Group of students of the Complementary Course who took part in the international gymnastic competition held in Turin in May 1911, 1911, gelatin silver print
- 4. Bernardo Pasta, Educatorio Duchessa Isabella. Physics school, 1911, gelatin silver print

the central hall. The premises were expanded in the 1930s in order to provide the Monte with larger and more functional spaces. Using the photographic archive we can piece together the evolution of the building's architecture and design. For instance, the construction of an auction room for pawned goods (which was later demolished for the construction of the central hall) is attested by two 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs. The modernization works still continued in the council hall, designed by the architect Carlo Ceppi, who in 1909 suggested entrusting the making of the frescoes and ornamental friezes of the walls and ceiling to the painter Paolo Gaidano.

Numerous photographic campaigns were carried out between 1902 and 1940 by the photographic studios Giovanni Battista Berra; Edoardo di Sambuy; Bernardo Pasta then G. Ambrosetti; La Zincoelere F.lli Confalonieri; Comm. Gherlone; Augusto Pedrini. For instance, on the occasion of the 1913 publication,<sup>12</sup> published for the 350<sup>th</sup> year of the foundation of Compagnia di San Paolo, the photographer Bernardo Pasta portrayed the facade of the building and various rooms including the central hall with its elegant balcony and its large skylight, the safe deposit boxes kept in the basement, and the boardroom on the first floor. A photographer was commissioned to record the modernization of the pawnshop in the 1960s. Photographs of pawned goods stored on the shelves—a jewel, a fan or a washing machine—reveal a slice of life of Turin in the 60s (Photographs 5–8).

### **Headquarters of the San Paolo Banking Institute in Turin - Palazzo Turinetti di Pertengo**

The Palazzo Turinetti di Pertengo was part of a major project in the city's design that, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, shaped architectural configuration to Turin, which became the capital city of the Savoy state in 1563. Located in the historic block of San Giorgio, on the corner between Piazza San Carlo and Via Santa Teresa, the palazzo was built during the regency of Cristina of France Duchess of Savoy as part of a project by Carlo di Castelletto. It was enlarged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and had a succession of owners belonging to the Turinese nobility. In 1942 and 1943 the aerial bombings of Turin severely damaged the square, and the Palazzo Turinetti suffered serious damage. In 1951 the building became the headquarters of the San Paolo Banking Institute with the approval of the Bank of Italy. In addition to acquiring suitable headquarters the institute needed space for a new bank, conference rooms, cultural spaces, offices and shops. In 1955 the architect Arturo Midana worked on the renovation of the building and the adjacent Caffè San Carlo; he oversaw the restoration of the Baroque facades as well as the palazzo's

interior, which required the purchase of the appropriate decorative mouldings. The architect Mario Dezzutti became involved, and in 1961 he completed the new and modern bank headquarters, which were built in the internal courtyard of the building, with a very modern glass and steel wing. The renovation of the old courtly offices was carried out in tandem with the modernization of the banks services: the counter works were mechanized; a drive-in bank and continuous cash service was set up; internal closed circuit televisions, the pneumatic mail service and a safe system were installed; an exhibition gallery to display the bank's historical documents was put in place, and a congress hall and a sorting area for cars were designed. All this is well-documented by photographic campaigns carried out by various studios such as Moisis; Augusto Pedrini; Publifoto; Rampazzi; Ferruzzi; while the destruction caused by war-time bombing and the work of post-war reconstruction is attested by the photographs probably commissioned by the Institute's Technical Service in support of the restructuring activities (Photographs 9–12).

### **The San Paolo: agencies and branches in the area**

The international economic crisis of the 1920s led to the collapse of some Piedmontese industrial groups and the banks that financed them; but for the San Paolo bank this ushered in a period of territorial expansion. In 1931 the San Paolo bank was able to take over the deposits of the Banca Agricola Italiana in Piedmont and Liguria; and the San Paolo bank which hitherto, in 1928, had only three agencies in Turin and three branches outside the city, grew to ten agencies in the city and 110 branches spread in the north-western regions. In 1950, the institute strengthened its territorial organisation with the modernization of numerous operating points and with the opening of new branches and two representative offices in Piedmont. At the beginning of the 1960s, the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors record the decisions regarding the strengthening of the territorial network, showing that ten new branches had begun operating and another eighteen had been settled in newly acquired premises, while renovations were in progress for sixty-one new branches. Next to be incorporated was Banca Grasso, which had gone into liquidation 1965-1969; subsequent incorporations during the seventies enabled the expansion of the network of branches in the north of the peninsula, as well as in the south. By 1975 the institute comprised 260 branches and within a few years it had established itself as an international banking group operating across Europe and across the world. The historical archive preserves a rich photographic collection, as yet only partially digitized, of the institute's branches and agencies located in Piedmont,





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- 5. Costi, Luigi, Auction room of the Monte di Pietà: exterior, last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, albumen print
- 6. Safe-deposit box room at the Institute's headquarters in via Monte di Pietà, after 1902, gelatin silver print
- 7. Central hall of the Institute headquarters in via Monte di Pietà, between 1902 and 1927, celloidin print
- 8. Edoardo di Sambuy, Headquarters in via Monte di Pietà: main entrance, before 1902, celloidin print



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9. San Carlo Square, view of the Renaud di Falçon Palace and the monument to Emanuele Filiberto, second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gelatin silver print  
10. San Carlo Square, interiors of the Caffè San Carlo after the aerial raids of July 1943, second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gelatin silver print  
11. Laboratorio Fotografico Rampazzi, San Carlo building after renovation: external courtyard with glass and steel sleeve  
12. Laboratorio Fotografico Rampazzi, San Carlo building after renovation: drive-in bank, post 1963, gelatin silver print

Liguria, Lombardy, Puglia and in Rome from the mid-1940s to the 1960s. On the occasion of inaugurations and renovations, the bank's technical service commissioned photographs to record work undertaken (Photographs 13–16).

### **Art photography: the artistic monographs of the San Paolo 1951–2006**

One of the many cultural initiatives promoted by the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin to enhance artistic heritage, was undertaken between 1951–2006. This was the publication of fifty-seven illustrated volumes, which would make a mark in the history of publishing and artistic photography in Italy, due to the collaboration of famous photographers such as Augusto Pedrini, Ferruccio Rampazzi, Mario Carrieri. The series documents the bank's role, its strategies and cultural investments, taking on the function of representing the economic and social relations that explained the choice of such themes.

The series of art books promoted by the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin has made a contribution to art historical research and the protection of the Italian heritage more generally, by ensuring that the type of book traditionally offered as a gift, is of scholarly value. In 1951 the first monograph was commissioned by the then president of the Institute Anton Dante Coda; a further fifty-six volumes were published between then and 2006. The first fourteen were edited by the art critic Marziano Bernardi; art historians, archaeologists, architects, superintendents, museum directors, university professors would go on to edit the others. The books were intended to have broad public appeal and to address topics relating to the region; but as the bank's territory expanded so did the ambit of material covered.

The focus of the initial volumes was the preservation and restoration of Piedmont's art historical heritage. They were published at a time when Italy was emerging from the devastation of war, the economy was on the up, and the large-scale work of urban reconstruction was underway, and preserving of cultural heritage was low on the agenda. Over the next thirty years the vast majority of volumes would be largely devoted to Piedmont. But during the 1980s, when Gianni Zandano was president, the San Paolo Banking Institute chose to publish volumes that demonstrated its expansion in Italy and abroad. The art historian Gianni Carlo Sciolla edited three volumes on drawing, published between 1991–94, and subsequently four volumes on mural painting in Italy were edited by the art historian Mina Gregori between 1995–98.

The process of enhancing the photographic material accumulated for these publications, comprising roughly 8,000 art photographs in total, has involved restoration, cataloguing, inventorying. Many photographs

are now featured in a digital gallery. More recently, Fondazione 1563 has made all the volumes available online, and it is now possible to browse a dedicated repository,<sup>13</sup> which is freely available to all (Photographs 17–20).

### **Giuseppe and Bartolomeo Gallo: drawings and architectural projects**

In order to complete the overview of the collections making up the digital photo library, it is important to mention Giuseppe and Bartolomeo Gallo's documentary fond, which holds over 6,000 drawings documenting professional work carried out by one of the main architectural firms in Piedmont specializing in religious architecture, during the past century. This fond does not belong to the history of the San Paolo Banking Institute, but was purchased from Gallo's heirs. It consists of two separate but closely linked fonds: the archive of the engineer Giuseppe Gallo (1860–1927) and that of his son Bartolomeo Gallo (1897–1970), who was an engineer. He took over numerous sites under construction and began, ex novo, the construction of other churches, often on the basis of plans sketched out by his father. Gallo's fond obtained the declaration of historical interest from the Archival Superintendence for Piedmont and the Aosta Valley.

The first acquisition, relating to the private archive of Giuseppe Gallo (1860–1927), consisting of drawings, files relating to the construction sites, four volumes of copy letter books and photographic and printed material, was supplemented in 2006 by a second one, focused on the drawings of his son Bartolomeo (1897–1970), together with numerous photographic prints from the 1960s. More than 4,700 drawings have been digitized to improve storage and consultation. Inventories and studies merged into the 'Quaderni della Fondazione per l'Arte', no.4, curated by Mauro Volpiano, *Il Fondo Giuseppe e Bartolomeo Gallo. Fonti e documenti per l'architettura dell'Ottocento in Piemonte*. The drawings and photographic prints can be consulted within the collection, while the entire inventory can be consulted on DAC. Giuseppe e Bartolomeo Gallo's fond is part of the portal of the architects' archives of the National Archival System (SAN),<sup>14</sup> which serves as an access point to thousands of documents held by the historical archives. The portal collects and enhances the documentation coming from the archives of the professional firms of architects and engineers and offers an important resource for research into the history of architecture, landscape, cities and infrastructure in the region (Photographs 21–24).

In addition, Fondazione 1563 has been engaged with the national project run by the Ministry of Cultural



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13. City bank agency no. 15. Turin. External facade, around 1959  
 14. Villanova d'Asti bank branch. Interior with counter. Portrait, around 1958  
 15. Foto - Ottica G. Ronco, Caramagna bank agency. External facade, around 1960  
 16. Savona bank branch. External facade, November 1958



17. Guarino Guarini, Church of San Lorenzo (detail of the dome), Turin, around 1664, gelatin silver print

18. Francesco Ladatte, Decorative sculpture in gilded bronze for the furniture of Pietro Piffetti (detail), around 1664, gelatin silver print

19. Mario Carrieri, Roman theater of Turin: detail of the auditorium seen from the east, around 1968, gelatin silver print

20. Giovanni Paolo e Giovanni Antonio Recchi, "Diana the huntress", Central compartment of the ceiling of the Hunting Room, Valentino Castle, Turin, around 1661, gelatin silver print



- 21. Church of Nazarene Jesus, Turin, 1913
- 22. Giovanni Bonda, Church of Saints Paul and Elizabeth, Biella
- 23. Giustino Rampazzi, Sanctuary of the Madonna dei Fiori, Bra, 1964
- 24. F. Testa, Bell tower of the church of Sant'Andrea, Savigliano

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**Fondazione 1563 plans to enrich the digital photo library with the digitization of inventory books and paper catalogues and with subsequent cataloguing and digitization of further images.**

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Heritage and Activities and Tourism: the Censimento delle raccolte e degli archivi fotografici in Italia,<sup>15</sup> coordinated by the Central Institute for the Catalog and the Documentation in collaboration with Camera – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia in Turin and with the support of the Directorate-General for contemporary art and architecture and urban suburbs. Accurate documentation underpins national policies for the protection and enhancement of photographic heritage. It will serve to identify links between different photographic fonds and the possibilities of co-operation between institutions at a national level.

#### **Future challenges**

The photographic heritage of the Historical Archive of Compagnia di San Paolo, covering pupils, teachers, faces, classrooms, halls, buildings, squares, churches, monuments, works of art is constantly being augmented with new digitization projects that are feeding into a resource of exceptional historical value. Fondazione 1563 plans to enrich the digital photo library with the digitization of inventory books and paper catalogues and with subsequent cataloguing and digitization of further images. Online exhibitions and the improvement of the portal of the digital photo library and of the historical archive are further steps aimed to making the visual history of Compagnia di San Paolo, the San Paolo Banking Institute of Turin and other acquired funds available to a broader public.

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#### **Author's profile**

Mariastella Circosta is an art historian and an archivist. She worked as a freelancer specializing in the management, conservation and enhancement of both public and private, contemporary and historical archives. In 2016 she entered the Fondazione 1563 per l'Arte e la Cultura where she manages the digital photo library carrying out projects and activities to enhance the photographic collections and while overseeing the library.

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## Websites

<http://www.fondazione1563.it/>

<http://archiviostorico.fondazione1563.it/>

<http://fototeca.fondazione1563.it/>

- 1 Casa del Soccorso, established in 1589 by Compagnia di San Paolo in Turin, intended to 'receive and educate young daughters born in Turin, without their father, therefore more easily exposed to the dangers of life'. In addition to girls in difficult situations, the house hosted female relatives of the members of the Compagnia, but also boarders against payment of a fee.
- 2 Casa del Deposito, established in 1683 by Compagnia di San Paolo in Turin which provided hospitality to women victims of exploitation and violence.
- 3 Educatorio Duchessa Isabella, name assumed by Casa del Soccorso and Casa del Deposito in 1883, gave young girls a complete education, from elementary to high school, in the purpose-built site in today's Piazza Bernini in Turin.
- 4 Established in 1595, Ufficio Pio is the oldest instrumental body of Compagnia di San Paolo. It has operational autonomy within the areas of intervention established by Compagnia and has the objective of supporting people and families in situations of vulnerability or social and economic hardship within the Piedmont region, with particular reference to the Turin area. Ufficio Pio operates thanks to the action of about 150 volunteer delegates and a staff of operators. Its areas of intervention are: fight against poverty; poverty prevention; inclusion and reintegration; European projects.
- 5 Fondazione 1563 has been increasingly focusing on Digital Humanities as a tool to conduct advanced research and it is currently undertaking digital projects to enhance accessibility of the Historical Archive of Compagnia di San Paolo as well as keeping track of the past exhibitions curated by Fondazione 1563. It also organizes conferences and seminars focused on digital humanities.
- 6 <https://archiviostorico.fondazione1563.it/il-progetto/>
- 7 <http://fototeca.fondazione1563.it>
- 8 Digital Archives and Collections (DAC) is the information system that makes the preserved historical heritage accessible on the web, through the online publication of all available inventories.
- 9 It is possible to download the photographs in jpeg and png format (1422x793 pixels) and the complete card of the image.
- 10 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>
- 11 The Albertine Statute was the constitution adopted by the Kingdom of Sardinia on 4 March 1848 in Turin. This document remained in force from March 1848 until the two-year period 1944-1946, when Italy, with a referendum, chose the republican form of government, abandoning the monarchical form of government.
- 12 *L'Istituto delle Opere Pie di San Paolo nel 350° anno di sua esistenza*, Torino, 1913 (published by the Istituto itself).
- 13 <http://www.byterfly.eu/islandora/object/f1563:monart>
- 14 <http://san.beniculturali.it/web/san/home>
- 15 The Census of photographic collections and archives in Italy aims to identify, in a participatory way, the subjects who for various reasons hold photographic collections or archives, reporting information on the type, consistency and characteristics of the photographic materials stored; systematic knowledge of this important sector of cultural heritage will be the key element on which to set the policies for its protection and enhancement.



# Image collections on finance and banking history at the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU)

Juan Alonso Fernandez

In this article, we will present the history and mission of the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) and what type of documentation they manage. We will delve into the photographic collections as well as the workflow used by the HAEU's staff to manage images professionally, and explain why respect for the principle of provenance and the context promotes a more complete, objective, democratic and transparent way of accessing and analyzing images.

We analyse the photographic collection of the development projects carried out by the European Investment Bank in Europe in its initial years of operation 1959–1971. This set of high-quality photographs is a good visual record of European industrial development in the 60s. Finally, in comparison to the analogue photography collection of the EIB, we will present the challenges posed by digital photography using the *eabh* collection.

## The Historical Archives of the European Union

The Historical Archives of the European Union was established in 1983 by a decision of the Council of the European Economic Community and Euratom Council (No 354/83) and the decision of the Commission of the European Communities to open up the Historical Archives of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) which had been functional since 1952.<sup>1</sup>

The newly founded Archives were affiliated with the European University Institute (EUI), a European research institution, created by the European Communities' member states in 1975 and set up in Florence (Italy). The researchers of the EUI's Department of History and Civilization were the first to explore the historical archives of the ECSC and subsequently transferred archival material

from the European institutions to assist the study of European integration history after WWII.

Further agreements and Council regulations consolidated the legal framework stipulating the functions and features of the HAEU. Its remit is: to preserve the archives deposited by EU institutions; to make them accessible for research in accordance with the thirty-year rule; to facilitate research on the history of the European Union; to promote public interest in European integration; and to enhance transparency in the functioning of EU Institutions.

Since it opened to the public in 1986, the HAEU has steadily increased its institutional deposits. It now holds approximately 11,000 metres of archival material produced by the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Auditors, the European Investment Bank—to name but a few. Besides these institutional holdings, the HAEU has collected deposits from individuals who contributed to European integration, non-EU Organisations, pro-European movements, political groups of the European Parliament, as well as extracts from private collections, foundations and institutions. Presently, the HAEU stores 258 fonds in the deposits of its prestigious premises in the ancient Florentine Villa Salviati.

The HAEU runs an educational program for primary and secondary schools, organizes conferences and seminars in collaboration with the EUI as well as many other European Universities, manages the Alcide De Gasperi Research Centre and assigns research grants. Having an online presence was a priority for the HAEU from the start; in 1990 its first database was created and its web presence was launched in 1994. The 522,050 database descriptive items register 449,965 archival files, 60,578



1. Overhead camera digitisation of the HAEU

photographs, 1,143 posters, 7,630 audio recordings, 291 video recordings and 698 oral history interviews (figures for 2019).<sup>2</sup>

### The photographic collections of the HAEU

The photographic collections are an integral part of the institutional and private archives preserved at the HAEU. More than 60,000 photographs trace the establishment of European institutions by documenting conferences, meetings, institutional visits around the world, key personalities, as well as a plethora of educational and scientific projects throughout Europe. For instance, international co-operation projects financed by the European Communities are well documented in photographic collections within the archival fonds of the European Commission and of the other EU Institutions. Campaigns and events of pro-European movements are illustrated in the fonds of the European Movement, the *Union des fédéralistes européens* (UEF) and that of the German federalist writer and journalist Claus Schön-dube. The papers of Klaus Meyer, Director general for development at the European Economic Community commission, contain photographs of projects in various African countries financed by the European Economic Community in the framework of the Lomé II convention (1978–1982)<sup>3</sup> and of the Community's Euro-Arab dialogue (1975). The fonds of the European Space Agency and of the European Free Trade Association include various audio-visual materials keeping track of its programmes and activities. These visual records are crucial to recounting the history of the European integration process and offer additional insights into the personal and professional activities of key actors in contemporary European history. Photographs do not simply complement the textual documents available; they are a historical resource of their own.

In order to guarantee preservation and facilitate access, the HAEU is working on digitizing its photographic collections. This aims to avoid excessive handling of analogue originals, as users only consult the photographs if

they are not digitized yet or if they are particularly interested in them. The digitization is carried out with a system based on an overhead camera. This system allows digitizing in higher resolution, with a higher level of detail and at greater speed than a flatbed scanner.<sup>4</sup> It is captured in RAW format that is later converted to JPEG for consultation and to TIF for long digital preservation. Additionally, the analogue images are placed in acid-free plastic sleeves (polyester or polypropylene) that have passed the PAT test for long-term preservation—except where plastic is not recommended, such as is the case with albumin prints.<sup>5</sup> Once they are stored individually, the images are

kept in preservation boxes in deposits with controlled temperature and humidity.

In 2018, the HAEU implemented a new system to better describe and visualize its audio-visual material with a focus on user-experience. The photographs are described at dossier level following the ISAD-G archival regulations<sup>6</sup> and, also, at item level. For this, new description fields based on the IPTC,<sup>7</sup> Dublin Core<sup>8</sup> and Sepiades international standards<sup>9</sup> were incor-

porated and structured according to the ISAD-G description areas. This means that we provide the most detailed information possible to explain the origin and context of the images in our collections; for example, by including the image's identification code, where possible the precise date that the picture was taken, its author, the contributing institution, the location, the title, the description, any notes providing further clarification, the type of photograph (i.e. whether it is a positive, a negative or indeed a slide), support as relates to the material upon which it was produced, its size and amongst other components, its format.

Additionally, the images managed by the HAEU are contextualized according to archival classification systems that respect the principle of provenance. Whereas libraries, museums and communications departments tend to isolate items and study them in isolation, we place more value on situating our material within its wider context. We make sure we capture this background within our

More than 60,000 photographs trace the establishment of European institutions by documenting conferences, meetings, institutional visits around the world, key personalities, as well as a plethora of educational and scientific projects throughout Europe.

In order to guarantee preservation and facilitate access, the HAEU is working on digitizing its photographic collections.

classification scheme, allowing for a richer appreciation and more critical analysis of a photograph's historical significance.<sup>10</sup> This respect for the context promotes a more democratic, critical and transparent reading of the photographs, since textual documents related to the photograph's origin can be accessed. Therefore more information is available to understand the intent of the images.<sup>11</sup>

### **Images and industrial development: the collection of the European Investment Bank**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is an autonomous financial body within the European Union that was created by the Treaty of Rome, signed on 25 March 1957. Its primary mission is to contribute to the development, economic and social cohesion and integration of EU Member States through investments in regional projects and the infrastructure sector. The EIB also supports EU development co-operation worldwide.

Its historical archives were deposited at the HAEU, under the terms of a convention signed on the first of July 2005. Since 2015, the EIB has been part of the new Framework Partnership Agreement, which set the terms for enhanced co-operation and partnership between the HAEU and EU institutions.

The EIB's activity in its early years is illustrated by the sub-fonds relating to loans granted by the Bank between 1959 and 1971. The sub-fonds include 25 projects carried out in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy, as well as one in the Ivory Coast carried out by the African Associated States and Madagascar (AASM). Each project is extensively documented by files detailing all of the stages of the loan contracts. This includes preliminary proposals, legal documents and contracts, loan contracts, control/monitoring documentation to assess the project's progress as well as financial files on loan transfers and repayment.

These development projects are well documented by photographs. The first transfer of original photographs from projects financed by the European Investment Bank to HAEU was received in 2019. This collection consists of 252 paper positives and features projects carried out in Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Germany between 1959 and 1971.

The images were commissioned to record the projects' impact and to communicate its achievements. The fact that the positives are high-quality photographic copies, sized 18x24 cm or larger, suggests that they were taken both for documentary and for publicity purposes.

Many of the images were published in glossy corporate brochures to flag up the key achievements of the bank in its first years of operation.

The authorship of these images is diverse since the EIB hired different photographers in each country. In some cases, they opted for photographers who were highly specialized in industrial photography, a type of photography in high demand at the time. This was the case for Baranger & Cie, a company headed by Henri Baranger, who did an excellent job documenting the EIB funded Oraison hydro-electric project carried out in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region and which included taking oblique photographs.<sup>12</sup> On other occasions, the EIB hired well-known photographers, who were not specialized in industrial photography. One of these artists was Dino Jarach, a Venetian photo-journalist involved in the world of fashion, cinema and art who documented the Alfa Romeo project carried out in Naples.<sup>13</sup> Other relevant photographers were Giulio and Fabrizio Parisio<sup>14</sup> and Helmut Först.<sup>15</sup> Finally, there are quite a few images of unknown authorship.

Most of the photographs are in black and white, but in some cases, there is a combination of black and white and colour photography. This is interesting because in the 50s and 60s, colour photography was a rarity since it was still very expensive and its use was not widespread until the 70s.

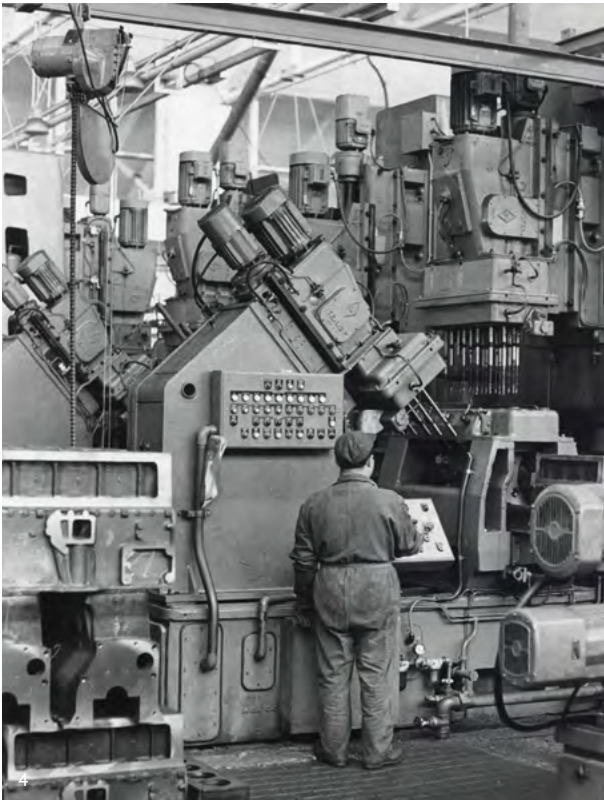
The photographs always show contextual elements of each project, be it machinery, interiors, construction processes or facilities. Human figures are featured too but they serve as a secondary element that contributes to the main theme, which is the development project. People are not looking directly at the camera and are engaged with work on the project. The photographer also remains invisible. This was most probably done to prevent any distraction from the project itself and to ensure its objective documentation, as was common for photo-essays<sup>16</sup> in photo-journalism during this time period.

There are only two portraits in the collection, but both are taken in a project setting. Most of the images are taken outdoors and during the day, except a few which are taken indoors to document facilities or factories in operation. There is virtually no use of wide angle lenses and many photographs taken with the classic 50mm lens or posterior focal lengths are included. This is likely with the intention of avoiding the distortion caused by angle brackets. Likewise, the depth of field is high and open-medium or closed diaphragms are not used. Therefore most of the

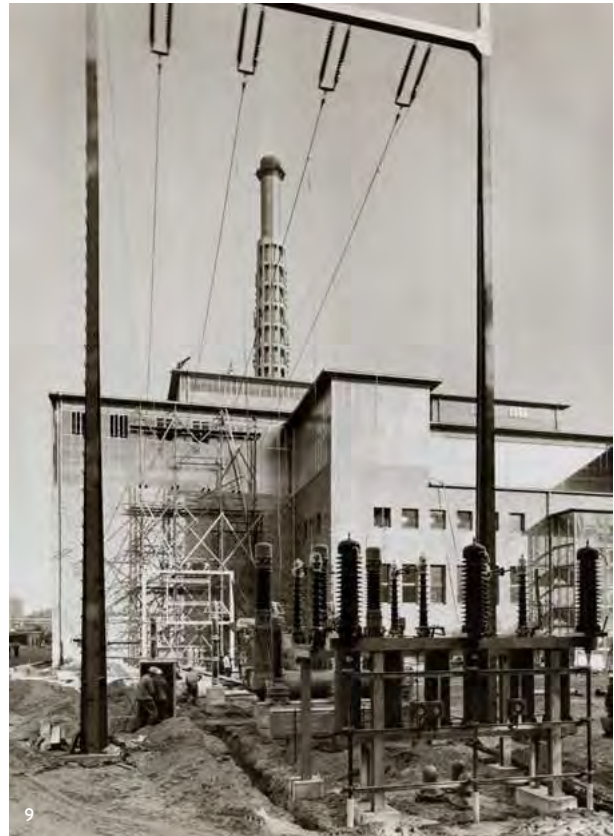
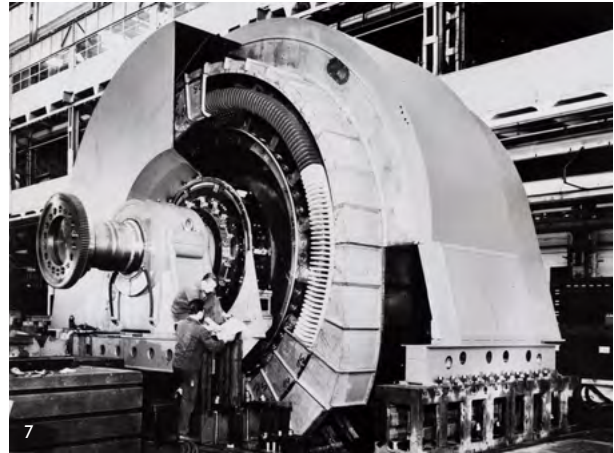
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**The photographs always show contextual elements of each project, be it machinery, interiors, construction processes or facilities.**

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2. Loan to Électricité de France (EDF) for the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in the south of the country, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. First project funded by the Bank in France. Photo: H. Baranger & Cie – HAEU, BEI 2143
3. Loan to the construction of a hydro-electric power plant exploiting waters of the Taloro River in Sardinia. Photo: Unknown author - HAEU, BEI 2154
4. In 1960 the EIB granted a loan of 5 million u.a. (unit of account) for the production of diesel engines at Alfa Romeo in Pomigliano d'Arco (Naples). Photo: Dino Jarach – HAEU, BEI 2155
5. Financing of agricultural schemes and improvement of waste management in the forest areas of South-West France. Photo: Unknown - HAEU, BEI 2148



6. Loan to Société Aquitaine-Chimie for the construction of an acetylene, a chemical compound, factory in the Basses-Pyrénées department, today known as Pyrénées-Atlantiques, South-West France. Photo: Unknown author - HAEU, BEI 2144
7. Loan for a construction of a hydroelectric power plant by the river Our in Vianden, Northern Luxembourg. First project funded in Luxembourg. Photo: Unknown author - HAEU, BEI 2163
8. EIB also granted loans to companies specializing in wood pulp, like in the Belgian company Cellulose des Ardennes which received funds in 1961. This project occurred in a context of regional industrial renewal. In fact, this region has been hard hit by the closures of coal mines. The loan subsidized the construction of a paper pulp factory in Harnoncourt, closed to Virton, Wallonia, Belgium, and was the first project funded by the Bank in Belgium. Photo: Unknown author - HAEU, BEI 2142
9. Loan for a construction of a thermal power station in West Berlin. This was the first project funded in Germany, in the 'Land' of Berlin. Because of the unique status of the territory, it had been a long procedure to obtain the agreement of the governors to a loan from the bank. Photo: Bewag, Berlin - HAEU, BEI 2164



10. Loan to the Deutsche Bundesbahn for the electrification of the North-South axis' rail, strategic infrastructure linking the northern ports with the south of the country.  
Photo: Unknown author - HAEU, BEI 2165



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11. Manfred Pohl, Deputy Chairman of the European Association for Banking and Financial History (*eabh*) participating at the conference 'Banking and Finance in the Mediterranean: A Historical Perspective' held in Valletta, Malta, 01-02/06/2007. Photo: Unknown author, HAEU EABH-103

12. Presentation of the 2009 *eabh* Annual Conference 'The Critical Function of History in Banking and Finance' held in Nicosia, Cyprus, 15-16 May 2009. Photo: Unknown author, HAEU EABH-109



elements that appear in the image are in focus and there is also no selective blurring of the elements.

Although their intention was to give the audience an objective view, without using artistic license, the analysis of the images shows that the photographers are professionals with a high respect for photographic composition. The images are perfectly composed and the photographers played with perspective and formal composition. They are technically accomplished photographs. The large variety of authors, countries, styles and the fact that the photographs are well-contextualized and linked to documentary evidence, make this photographic collection a fantastic visual record of the industrial development that took place in parts of Europe during the 50s, 60s and 70s.

The history of photography in the 60s and 70s focuses on specific authors and photographic techniques; there is no literature on the trends in (European) industrial photography in those years. Hence, we hope that this first attempt to systematize the EIB photographic collection will be useful towards a better understanding of the visual culture of European industrial development in this period.

### **The challenges of born-digital photos: the *eabh* collection**

We will now examine how some of the aspects of photographic analysis and management that we discussed change when archiving the digital image. The management of digital images in photographic archives is complicated by the large quantity of images and the need for a new type of preservation, not associated with the traditional physical object but with the digital file.

In this sense, the case study of the photographs found in the *eabh* collection is paradigmatic. The images in this collection document numerous research and workshop events organised by the *eabh* and some of their statutory meetings held between 1990 and 2013. The photographs illustrate workshops, openings, meetings and conferences in the field of finance and banking history. The images are an excellent sample of the activity of the *eabh*. Contrary to analogue photography found in the EIB fonds, these images have often not gone through a previous selection process. Even if they have, they usually still contain a very high number of photographs, a common aspect in digital production.

The collection is composed of a total of 244 paper positives and more than 900 digitally born images. Each dossier or event contains a large number of images that show how digital technology has inflated the production of photographs. An event that was previously illustrated with 25 photographs now consists of more than 120 images. Archival appraisal is used as a general method, but its application in photography needs to take into

consideration particular aspects, such as individual depositor contracts or the inherent polysemic nature of photos. Some of the debates regarding the large number of digital images are on whether or not to formalize the evaluation policies for the transferred photographs that base their selection on two criteria: aesthetics and content. In this way, you would avoid having repetitive or technically incorrect images (out of focus, dark...) or images that are of no documentary or evidential value. Likewise, the conservation cost of these images would be reduced and the images consulted would be relevant and there would be no duplicates. However, this would imply the application of criteria that modify the report and the original narrative. Furthermore, selection involves more management time. It seems that the best scenario would be to apply selection policies in the producing unit, be it the photographer or the institution.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding digital preservation, most of the digital images were received mainly on optical media (CD or DVD) and in sequential JPEG format. The master files for the preservation of photographic images should be TIF. However since many photographs do not exist in RAW or TIF format, it was decided to preserve the original JPEG format. Both in the events where amateur cameras were used and in those where professional cameras were used, the JPEGs are first generation so that they have not undergone any modifications beyond those made by the camera during capture. Sometimes, we only have access to the digital files in JPEG format. Although the quality is not ideal for long-term digital preservation, the format is a de facto standard in the photographic sector and the files are usually first generation (no further compression was applied) and therefore we can be more flexible in adopting this format.

### **Conclusion**

The HAEU has adapted its professional workflow to the management that photographs require. To do this, they have incorporated specific digitization, access, preservation and description policies. One of the strengths of the Historical Archives of the European Union, is the respect for the principle of provenance. This allows the photographs to be contextualized according to the activity of the institution or person producing those documents. The fact that the images are not isolated from their production, allows for a more complete, objective and democratic analysis.

A good example of this type of archival treatment is the photographs produced by the European Investment Bank (EIB) with the intention of documenting the development projects it carried out in Europe during the 1960s and 1970s. The photographs are accompanied by the production files of these projects so that, apart from the

images, you can consult the contracts, the instructions for the project and its different phases, the legal files and the payments made. The image, therefore, is not isolated as a mere object. Instead it is contextualized and its analysis can go beyond its aesthetic or content that can be gleaned from the mere observation of the image. The EIB photographic collection is also a wonderful graphic testimony of documentary photography applied to the monitoring of industrial projects, so common in European developmental work in the 1960s. You can see compelling snapshots of the industrial landscape, workers, vehicles of the time, portraits and even aerial photography.

Finally, digital production poses new challenges for photographic archives due to the enormous quantity of images and their preservation. One of the HAEU's digital photographic collections is in the *eabh* fonds. This collection, like other digital collections, is marked by the huge quantity of pictures per event and the fact that the pictures were taken in JPEG, a good format for dissemination but not ideal for long-term digital preservation. The archive has to be pragmatic and adapt its methodologies and workflows to guarantee good access and preservation of these born-digital pictures.

Photographs: 1 © HAEU / 2–10 © EIB / 11–12 © *eabh*

### Author's profile

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<https://www.eui.eu/Research/HistoricalArchivesOfEU>

- 1 Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 354/83 of 1 February 1983 concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community [online] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31983R0354&qid=1427281881827&from=EN> Accessed 20 June 2020.
- 2 Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU). "About the Archives" [online] <https://www.eui.eu/Research/HistoricalArchivesOfEU/AbouttheHistoricalArchives>. Accessed 30 June 2020.
- 3 On 31 October 1979, the second Convention of economic cooperation between the nine Member States of the European Economic Community (EEC) and 57 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries was signed in Lomé (Togo).
- 4 Relevant institutions in the sector, such as Photo Consortium, recommend a digitisation station based only on an overhead camera as the quality is superior to scanners. Mitjà, Carles; Martínez, Bea. "General Recommendations For Digitization" [online] Europeana Photography Facsheet - WP3, 2017. [https://www.photoconsortium.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/003\\_general\\_reccomendations.pdf](https://www.photoconsortium.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/003_general_reccomendations.pdf). Accessed 20 June 2020.
- 5 Image Permanence Institute. "Photographic Activity Test" [online] <https://www.imagepermanenceminstitute.org/tests/pat.html>. Accessed 24 June 2020.
- 6 ISAD (G): general international standard archival description: adopted by the Committee on Descriptive Standards, Stockholm, Sweden, 19-22 September 1999.
- 7 IPTC. IPTC Photo Metadata [online] <https://iptc.org/standards/photo-metadata/> Accessed 24 June 2020.
- 8 Dublin Core [online] <https://www.dublincore.org/> Accessed 24 June 2020.
- 9 Klijn, Edwin; Lusenet, Yola de. SEPIADES: Cataloging photographic collections [online] [https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/WG\\_2004\\_PAAG\\_SEPIADES-Cataloguing-photographic-collections\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/WG_2004_PAAG_SEPIADES-Cataloguing-photographic-collections_EN.pdf) Accessed 24 June 2020.
- 10 "[...] archives have many potential uses and an archivist cannot know exactly what these uses may be in the future. Rather than rearranging records in a way that might be 'useful' to an audience, archivists preserve the original order so that records can be understood in their original context, giving room for users to interpret and analyse the records in a multitude of ways." Bettington, Jackie, Kim Eberhard, Roweena Loo, and Clive Smith (eds.). 2008. Keeping archives. Canberra: Australian Society of Archivists, p. 18.
- 11 "What first distinguishes archives from libraries and museums are the records that they house. In addition to the information contained in archival records, they also have value as evidence of actions. The evidential value of archival records gives them greater power—as legal documents, as evidence in court, and as agents of accountability". Duff, Wendy M.; Flinn, Andrew; Suurtamm, Karen Emily; Wallace, David A. 2013. 'Social justice impact of archives: a preliminary investigation'. p. 332 Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht [online] <https://link.springer.com.eui.idm.oclc.org/article/10.1007%2Fs10502-012-9198-x> Accessed 15 June 2020.
- 12 'A type of aerial photography in which the camera axis is deliberately kept tilted from the vertical by a specified angle.' oblique photography. (n.d.) *An Illustrated Dictionary of Aviation*. (2005). Retrieved October 14 2020 from <https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/oblique+photography>
- 13 EIB financed the plant of the Alfa Romeo company, which produced diesel motors in conjunction with the French company Renault. The project was an example of European industrial cooperation.
- 14 They documented the exploitation of a lignite field for the construction of a thermoelectric power plant in Lucania, Southern Italy
- 15 He documented the electrification of the North-South railway axis' rail linking Germany's northern ports with the south of the country
- 16 In this sense one of the most pioneering works at the photo essay level applied to industrial development is the obsessive and epic report on the city of Pittsburgh by the American photographer Eugene Smith in the 1950s and which, after much tension, was published in *Popular Photography Annual 1959*. New York: Ziff-Davis.
- 17 Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn, and Diane Vogt-O'Connor. 2006. Photographs. *Archival Care & Management*. Chicago: Society of American Archivist, p.117.

# The Intesa Sanpaolo photographic archives

Serena Berno

Intesa Sanpaolo was established on 1 January 2007 from the merger of two Italian banks originally founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century: Banca Intesa and Sanpaolo IMI. With 90,000 employees and 19 million customers, it is the leading banking group in Italy.

The institute's Historical Archive is one of the first banking archives created in Italy. Inaugurated in Milan in 1984 as the Historical Archive of the Banca Commerciale Italiana—an institution that merged with Banca Intesa in 2001—it serves to protect and promote its holdings of documentary heritage. However, the mergers that have affected the Italian banking system in the last twenty years have had significant repercussions on the work of the Historical Archive, which has shifted from supervising the Banca Commerciale Italiana's documents of historical interest to managing an entire 'system of archives'—namely those belonging to the credit institutions that have joined the new banking group.<sup>1</sup> This includes not only directly managed assets from Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde (founded in 1823), Banco Ambrosiano Veneto (1892), Banca Commerciale Italiana (1894) and Istituto Mobiliare Italiano-IMI (1931),<sup>2</sup> but also numerous archives scattered throughout Italy (to date there are 17 conservation bodies) which the Historical Archive oversees. A dedicated site registers and provides an overview of over 320 banks that have merged

with Intesa Sanpaolo over the course of a process of incorporations, mergers and acquisitions of bank shareholdings dating back to 1808.<sup>3</sup>

Featuring 12 kilometres of documentation, the photographic collection is notable for its size, historical time span, number of named photographers and range of subjects. It comprises over 300,000 images, dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, and provides examples of diverse photographic techniques (from ambrotype to digital photography) taken in almost every continent by more than 1,500 different photographers, both professionals and amateurs. Subjects include major events linked to the history of banking institutions, large offices in Italy and abroad, branches in remote locations, portraits of notable figures, personnel portrayed in the workplace or at ease, environmental disasters, artwork reproductions, and advertising images. Such an extensive photographic collection is bound to include images of varied quality. This is not only due to the photographer's professionalism and skill but hinges on the purpose of the shoot and the nature of the client's commission.

The collection is evolving because acquisitions made by the Historical Archive as a result of its surveys of offices, branches and archival repositories are ongoing. There are also the photographic collections from the various banking institutions incorporated into Intesa Sanpaolo.

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1. The Montecarlo Casino in an album from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Banca Commerciale Italiana working men's club. Photo by Jean Giletta, Nice.  
© Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo



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2. Portrait of friends from the Bazzi Galli family archive, Corleone, 30 May 1864. Unknown photographer. © Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo



3. David Rockefeller on a Lambretta during a visit to the Innocenti factory, Milan, 1957. Photo by Publifoto, Milan. © Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo



4. The Buthier Electric Consortium building site for the construction of a dam in the Valle d'Aosta, Italy, 1962. Photo by Aldo Moisis, Turin.  
5. Villaricca branch of the Banco Paraguayo de Comercio Sudameris S.A., Paraguay, post 1967. Unknown photographer. © Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo



6. Milan, Piazza della Scala on the evening of the inauguration of the Teatro alla Scala opera season, 7 December 1959. Photo by Publifoto, Milan.  
© Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo





edbh bulletin

7. The director Federico Fellini with actors Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni at the premiere of the film *La dolce vita* in Milan, February 5, 1960.  
Photo by Publifoto, Milan. © Archivio Publifoto Intesa Sanpaolo

The method that the Historical Archive applies to the heritage under its protection is rigorous: it aims to facilitate use and promote the reputation of the collection, and to prompt individuals linked to the history of the banks amalgamated with the group to donate their family archives. This initiative has been a success: yielding unexpected or exceptional photos, which at times have provided missing pieces to historical puzzles, as well as contributing to the history of photography in general.<sup>4</sup>

How did we come to have curatorial control of this collection, and what has it yielded? The first step towards initiating the internal management of the collection took place in 2008 with a survey of the entire photographic patrimony. Adopting the model introduced by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in collaboration with the Weissman Preservation Center of Harvard University Library,<sup>5</sup> an assessment was made of the size, content and conservation status of each collection, as well as its potential uses. In this way, it was possible to establish priorities and plan work for the coming years that would respond to conservation and promotional urgencies, as well as the bank's initiatives to communicate the documentary heritage of the group and develop other innovations, such as websites, new online archival files,<sup>6</sup> educational materials, publications and exhibitions.<sup>7</sup>

This systematic approach enables us to respond to requests from the bank, and demonstrate that archival photography can make an active contribution to developing an awareness of business culture, whether it be within the banking institution, or beyond. To date, the Historical Archive has been asked to assist in a number of initiatives, ranging from internal communication to commercial agreements or even sponsorships.

The archive's fundamental activities of heritage conservation are supported by the use of new technologies and periodic online publications. These currently feature 50,000 registered photographs. They have broadened awareness of the photographic collection, particularly in the academic community, but also among the interested

public, not to mention other archives and public or private entities operating in the field of photography and culture. In 2016, the Historical Archive was asked to join the Network for the Promotion of Photography,<sup>8</sup> an association of organisations, linked to the world of photography. These initiatives have made the bank recognize the value of historical photography, and have prompted it to think about purchasing photographic archives as one of its economic investments. Although investments in the art market have been well-established for over a century in Italy, investment in photographic archives is comparatively new: in a

country where state resources are scarce, banking institutions can play an important role in safeguarding a valuable cultural asset for the whole community.<sup>9</sup> Such was the case with Intesa Sanpaolo's 2015 purchase of the Publifoto photojournalist agency archive (1937–1997), a patrimony of approximately seven million

analogue photographs covering news, politics, customs, society, culture, sport, landscape and architecture, taken in Italy and abroad by the agency's own photographers, or by other professionals or Italian and foreign agencies for whom Publifoto acted as distributor. Since the end of 2017 the archive has been managed by the Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archive.

The dual role of managing the photographic collections of the banks that merged with the group, together with the broader photographic archive disconnected from the bank, has necessitated profound internal reflection. Our work has involved striking a balance between heritage

management of an archive of this size, and meeting the bank's needs for an immediate return on investment through large-scale promotional initiatives. An example are the public and private partnerships. In 2019 Camera-Centro Italiano per la Fotografia in Turin<sup>10</sup> partnered the first photographic exhibition dedicated to the Publifoto Archive.

Teaching workshops were launched, sponsorship of the international visual narrative festival Cortona on The Move<sup>11</sup> involved the creation of an exhibition of photos taken from the Publifoto as well

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**Archival photography can make an active contribution to developing an awareness of business culture, whether it be within the banking institution, or beyond.**

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8 & 9. Inside the Intesa Sanpaolo Publifoto Archive, Milan, 2019. Photo by Pino Musi. © Pino Musi and the Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo

as the bank archives and an exhibition on Italian music,<sup>12</sup> *NOI. Non erano solo canzonette*, drew from both archives. Furthermore, the Historical Archive reached an agreement with La Venaria Reale Conservation and Restoration Centre in Turin<sup>13</sup> for the restoration and digitization of photographic plates from the Publifoto Archive and photographic prints from the IMI patrimony. The bank's own photo collections were included and benefitted from their diffusion and visibility among the general public.

Inventorying and archival study, identifying conservation priorities and conducting restoration work, cataloguing and digitization, should remain the primary activities for sustaining the continuous long-term promotion of the Publifoto Archive.<sup>14</sup> However, the bank receives numerous internal and external requests for the use of its photographs and short response times have led us to question the 'traditional' approach to our work. We need to seek innovative solutions that will produce satisfactory, high quality results that optimize time, budget and professionalism in the field.

To this end, we are developing a new, in-house process that will encompass conservation, restoration, digitization and long-term preservation, thereby streamlining management procedures and the risks and cost associated with the transfer of photographs. This project aims to the most advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to relieve archivists of activities that can be automated and currently under-exploit their professionalism.<sup>15</sup> Specialized staff will therefore become a fully-employed resource due to their training, professionalism, and the scientific contribution they can offer.

### Author's profile

Serena Berno earned a Masters in Archival Studies from the University of Milan while working as a photographer's assistant. She subsequently specialized in the preservation and management of photographic archives at CFP Bauer, a professional training institute in Milan. She is currently the curator of the photographic collections of the Intesa Sanpaolo Group Historical Archives and Publifoto Archive, and she is the Editor of the Photographic Notebooks series and the online catalogues of the photo collections.

### Contact

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[serena.berno@intesasnpaolo.com](mailto:serena.berno@intesasnpaolo.com)  
<https://asisp.intesasnpaolo.com>

- 1 The organisational structure of the Art, Culture and Historical Heritage Department, which includes the Historical Archive, specifies that the responsibilities of the Historical Archive include the management and protection of all the documentation (including digital) under permanent conservation, whether it originates from the central sections of Banca Intesa Sanpaolo or from the group's other banks.
- 2 Mignone, A. and Pino, F. (2016), *Memorie di Valore. Guida ai patrimoni dell'Archivio storico di Intesa Sanpaolo*. Milan: Hoepli. See The Historical Heritage of the Istituto Mobiliare Italiano (Milan: Intesa Sanpaolo, Monografie, n. 14, 2019) downloadable at <https://progettocultura.intesasnpaolo.com/archivio-storico/pubblicazioni/monografie/the-historical-heritage-of-the-istituto-mobiliare-italiano/>
- 3 Intesa Sanpaolo is the product of the amalgamation of over 300 institutions—savings banks, pawnbrokers, rural banks, co-operative banks, ordinary credit companies, Catholic banks, public law entities and banks of national interest—which have joined the group over the centuries. To provide information on the history and heritage of pre-existing banking documentation, the Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archive has created the 'Historical Map' project, a 'genealogical' guide to the group, available at <https://mappastorica.intesasnpaolo.com>
- 4 One such example are the photos from the Bazzi and Galli Archives, explored in two monographs by Laura Casone and downloadable at <https://progettocultura.intesasnpaolo.com/archivio-storico/pubblicazioni/monografie/L'album-fotografico-di-Luigi-Canzi-Ritratti-tra-famiglia-e-storica-1855-1918>, published in 2016, and *Fotografie della Prima guerra mondiale dall'Archivio di Giulio Bazzi* (2019). It has also just been released the third volume of the series of photographic notebooks (available in English): Berno S. and Cassanelli R. (2020), *Photographs from the Ottoman Empire. Bernardino Nogara and mines in the "Near East" (1900-1915)*, Milan: Edizioni Gallerie d'Italia - Skira. <https://progettocultura.intesasnpaolo.com/archivio-storico/pubblicazioni/quaderni-fotografici/>
- 5 Regarding the project promoted by Harvard University Library, see the 2012 Preservation White Paper entitled *A Methodology for Surveying Photograph Collections*, written by Melissa Banta with Paul Messier, Andrew Robb, Brenda Bernier and Robert Burton, available at <https://preservation.library.harvard.edu/white-paper-methodology-surveying-photograph-collections>
- 6 <https://asisp.intesasnpaolo.com>
- 7 <https://progettocultura.intesasnpaolo.com/archivio-storico/pubblicazioni/>
- 8 <http://www.retetografia.it/>. Founded in 2011 by a group of organisations and institutions engaged in the common goal of promoting and disseminating photographic culture, the network organizes conferences, internal training and opportunities for disseminating the photographic heritage of its members' archives on an annual basis. This includes the Week of Open Archives, an annual event held at the end of October that offers special openings and guided visits of its members' important photographic collections, held by their respective curators.
- 9 The bank has in fact recently designed a photographic museum in Turin, in which the Publifoto Archive will play a leading role.
- 10 <http://camera.to/>
- 11 <https://www.cortonaonthemove.com/>
- 12 <http://www.mostranoi.it/>
- 13 <https://www.centrorestaurovenaria.it/>
- 14 In addition to the activities listed, others include: teaching at the Historical Archive; producing publications, such as articles and exhibition catalogues; and communicating via social media and the Historical Archive website: <https://asisp.intesasnpaolo.com/publifoto/>. An exhibition on the bombing of Milan during the Second World War was hosted by the Gallerie d'Italia in Milan in October and November 2020.
- 15 For example, the elimination of activities such as the manual transcription of information from the original agency registers or from the backs of prints (a fundamental source for locating and interpreting the photographs).

# *Polytheama*

## A pioneer multi-image spectacle and its photographic collection

Chrysalena Antonopoulou

‘... a new word emerged from the Greek vocabulary to name a modern activity: *Polytheama*. (...) a dynamic, cultural project by the National Bank of Greece that truly ‘creates history’. Inspired, with fantasy and the most recent, up-to-date audio-visual technology, these multi-image screenings are able to transform into image and sound even a word, the simplest circumstance, as well as the most sophisticated story.’<sup>1</sup> Thessaloniki International Fair, 1977. The National Bank of Greece, in collaboration with a small private company, creates and presents a multi-image presentation about the history of the bank for the first time. Nikos Kapsampelis, a member of the bank’s public relations division, as well as an artist and a student of the famous Greek painter Spyros Vasileiou, is using modern audio-visual technology at the bank’s pavilion. Together with Kostas Panayiotopoulos, a writer, journalist and radio producer, then at the beginning of his writing career, they have come up with the scenario for the first production. The term *Polytheama*<sup>2</sup> was chosen to describe a multi-projection or multi-screen slideshow set to words and audio effects, which until then had remained unknown in Greece.

Visual and audio elements are combined and electronically co-ordinated by computers. Through multiple projectors, photographs appear on a screen in various combinations accompanied by music and a voice-over narration, in a multi-level spectacle that captures the public’s attention. Incorporating photography, elements from

cinematography, together with well-written narrative script and music by famous Greek composers, each *Polytheama* is informative and has artistic merit. ‘Every word in a *Polytheama* is drawn, it speaks and it sings.’<sup>3</sup>

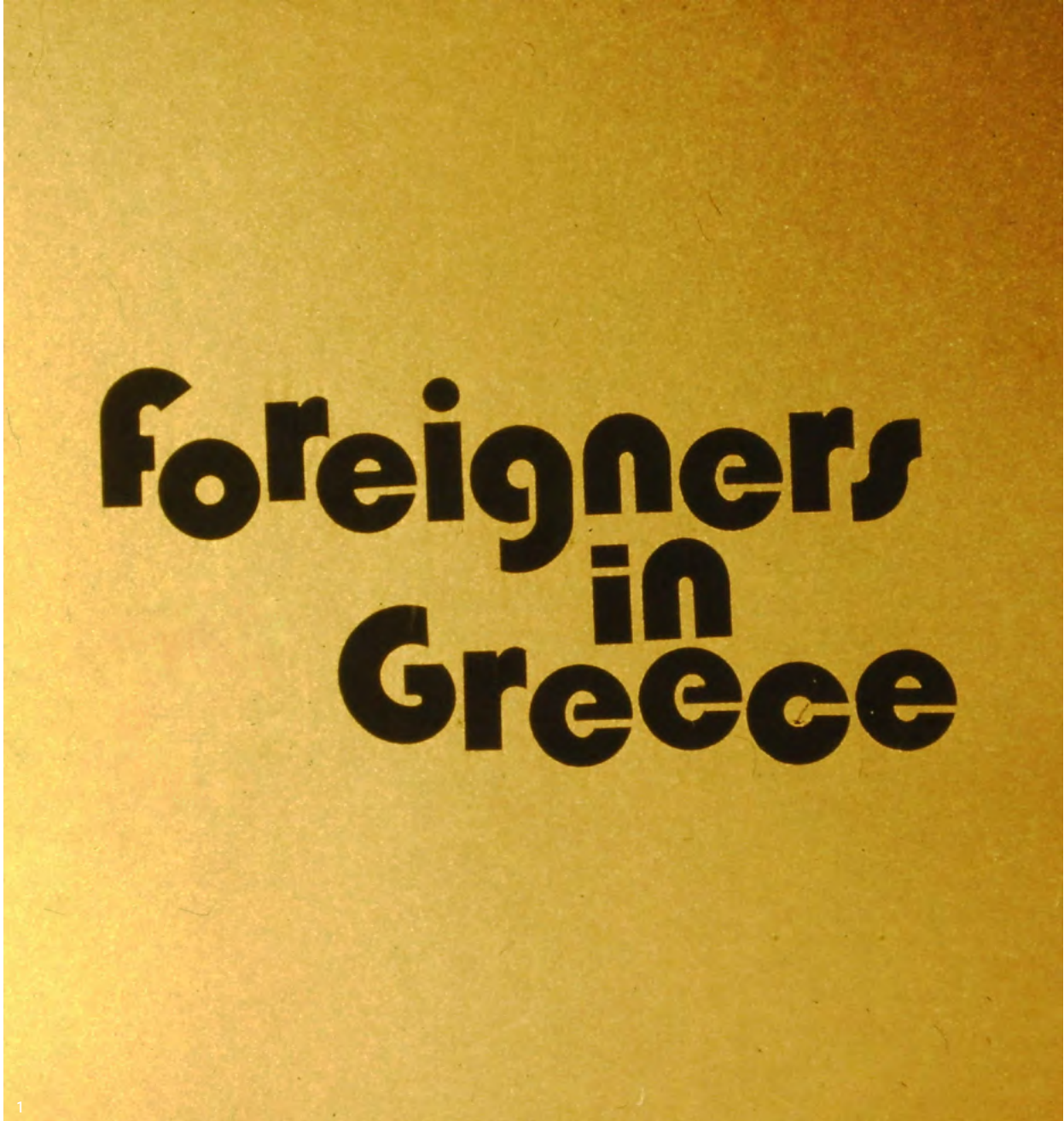
### **A 20-year history of *Polytheama* productions by the National Bank of Greece**

Before their appearance in Greece in 1977, multi-projection presentations had already been used by museums in London and New York to present their history, as well as by other renowned museums, theatres and cultural institutions across the world. Nikos Kapsampelis was tracking these developments and the first *Polytheama* screening in the pavilion of the National Bank of Greece (NBG) at the Thessaloniki International Fair

**The term *Polytheama*<sup>2</sup> was chosen to describe a multi-projection or multi-screen slideshow set to words and audio effects, which until then had remained unknown in Greece.**

in 1977 went so well that *Polytheama* went on to be used by the NBG for the years to come.

In 1978, technical equipment was acquired and a team of talented people was brought together to work on the productions. They were responsible for the creation of the shows, working on the subjects and content as well as the electronic programming of the screenings. They travelled all over Greece to take photographs, wrote the scenarios and decided on the style and rhythm of the presentations, directing and synchronizing all the visual and audio effects. They collaborated with artists, composers, actors and others to enhance the aesthetic value of each *Polytheama* production. Over the next decade, new



1. Slide from the Polytheama 'Foreigners in Greece', produced in 1978.

projects were completed and presented—largely at commercial fairs and exhibitions inside and outside Greece. ‘Foreigners in Greece’, ‘The History of Cyprus’, ‘Salesmen in Greece’ and ‘The History of Thessaloniki’ were among the first shows. By the 1980s, *Polytheama* had not only become a regular feature of the bank’s Division of Public Relations activities but the screenings had become so popular that *Polytheama* productions were being shown in schools and universities, professional and other unions, scientific conferences, cultural exhibitions and festivals across the country. The new spectacle impressed its viewers with its pioneer technology and gained enthusiastic reviews for its artistic quality and informative value.

*Polytheama* presentations focused on Greek history, the local history of different cities and parts of the country, the environment, culture, artistic movements and the life and work of artists, modernization and the evolution of science and technology (Photographs 1–4).

In 1983, the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sciences together with the Committee for the Preservation of the Acropolis Monuments organized an exhibition in the National Gallery in Athens about the Acropolis and the research involved in its restoration. They invited the National Bank of Greece to create and present a *Polytheama* on the Acropolis and its history to accompany the exhibition. Under the title ‘The Acropolis from Middle Ages to Our Day’ a 42-minute-long multi-image presentation was produced, and in September 1983 the exhibition opened its doors attracting thousands of visitors. The next year, the organizing committee requested that the *Polytheama* be translated into three languages, English, French and Russian, to cater to an international audience as well as international conferences about the Acropolis. The tour took place in the years 1985 and 1986 and even though it wasn’t the first time a *Polytheama* had been presented outside Greece,<sup>4</sup> it made an impression. Screenings took place in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, the British Museum in London and the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, among other places (Photograph 5).

The Department of *Polytheama* and Photographic Media was officially formed in February 1986, under the jurisdiction of the public relations division. Following the death of Nikos Kapsampelis, Spyros Kyriakis,

one of his closest collaborators, was made head of the new unit. The administration of NBG recognized the importance and value of *Polytheama* productions as part of its corporate social responsibility policy and strongly supported the creative team in its new projects. More than thirty different shows were completed until the end of the 1990s, when the department ceased its operations. They covered a wide range of topics, aimed at informing, educating, entertaining and inspiring their audience. They managed to reach viewers of all ages, not only in the big cities but across the country, who were curious and enthusiastic about this new spectacle. Documentation from the department’s archive reveals that an estimated audience of 46,000 attended *Polytheama* screenings in Greece in 1987. The great demand for *Polytheama* shows led to the opening of a special space in the Mela building, one of the central sites of the NBG in Athens, where screenings could take place on a permanent basis, making it possible for more people to visit the shows (Photographs 6–15).

*Polytheama* displays were presented at commercial fairs, festivals and other events held in the cultural centres serving the Greek diaspora in Australia, Canada and the US. The National Bank of Greece was always interested in maintaining the links between Greek diaspora communities around the world and their homeland and the reception of the shows was enthusiastic. In the Greek pavilion for the World EXPO of 1988 in Australia, the ‘Aegean’ *Polytheama* was shown for four months, hosting 24 screenings per day, attracting more than 250,000 visitors; it was followed by a tour of the Australian continent so that many Greek communities across the country could get a chance to see it. In 1992 two shows toured in the US and Canada: ‘Macedonia. An Epic Journey’ and ‘Thrace. A Panorama in Space and Time’ were presented in museums, commercial and cultural institutions, as well as schooling and educational establishments of both countries. Indicative of the importance of the shows for the Greek communities was the attendance of representatives of all Greek associations and societies and the diplomatic corps. Both shows made ‘a mythological, historic, and geographic reference’<sup>5</sup> to northern Greece, bringing the communities closer to the beauty, history and tradition

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**Incorporating photography,  
elements from cinematography,  
together with well-written  
narrative script and music by  
famous Greek composers, each  
*Polytheama* is informative and  
has artistic merit.**

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A NATIONAL BANK OF GREECE  
(Public Relations Department) production  
Greek Text: C. P. Panayotopoulos  
Translated and read by: K. Cicellis  
Lay - out : N. Kapsampelis  
Photography: S. Kyriakis  
Music by: S. Michalitsi

2


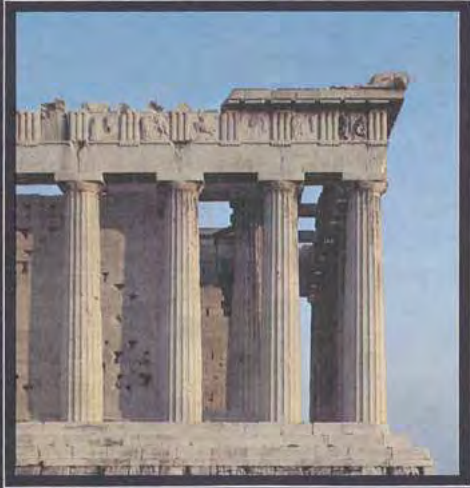


3



4

DE AKROPOLIS  
VAN ATHENE  
ONDERZOEK, BEHOUD  
EN HERSTEL 1975-1983



DE NIEUWE KERK

5

2-4. Slides from the *Polytheama* 'Foreigners in Greece', produced in 1978.

5. Brochure for the exhibition on the Acropolis and the presentation of the *Polytheama* 'The Acropolis from Middle Ages to Our Day', in Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam.



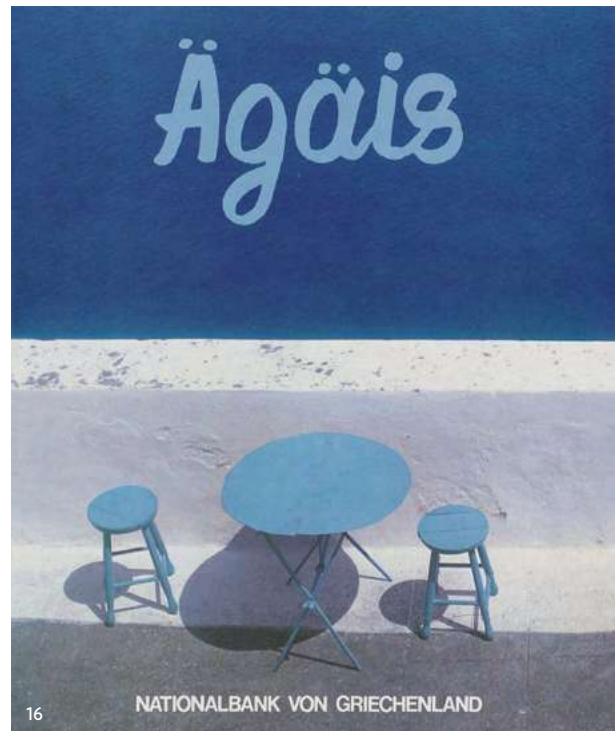


6-9. Slides from the *Polytheama* 'We and our tradition', produced in 1980.



10-12. Slides from the *Polytheama* 'We and our tradition', produced in 1980.

13. Slide from the *Polytheama* 'Young men of today, pilots of tomorrow', produced in 1987.



14-15. Slides from the *Polytheama 'Athens'*, about everyday life in the capital of Greece.  
16. Brochure in German for the *Polytheama 'Aegean'*.



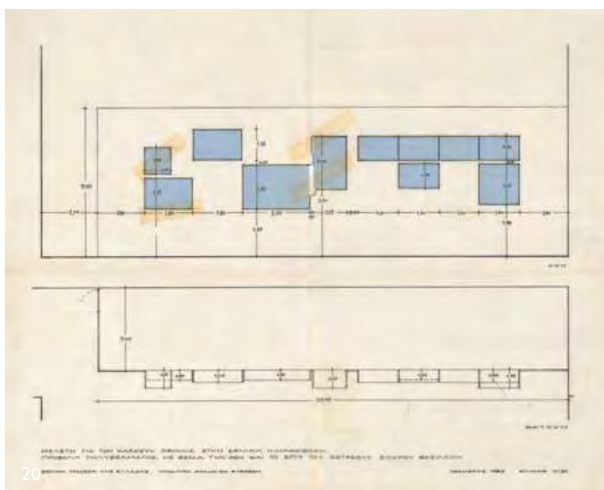
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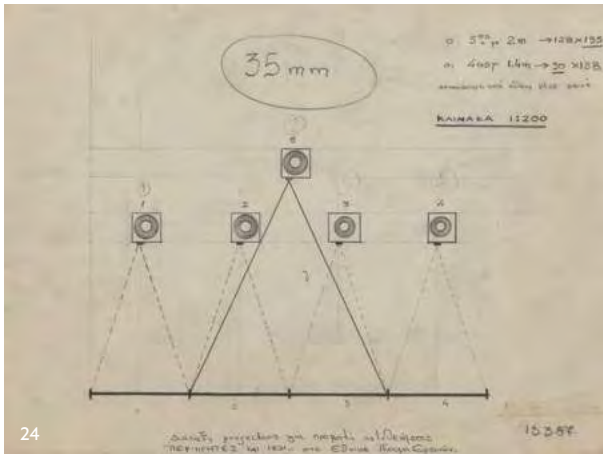


21

17-18. The Greek pavilion in World EXPO 1988, in Brisbane, Australia, where the *Polytheama* 'Aegean' was presented.  
 19. Greek students in Canada attending a *Polytheama* presentation.  
 20. Design by Nikos Kapsampelis for the setting of the 11 screens for the *Polytheama* about the famous Greek painter Spyros Vasiliou (November 1982).  
 21. Moments before the screening of the *Polytheama* 'Spyros Vasiliou' at the National Gallery in 1983.



22



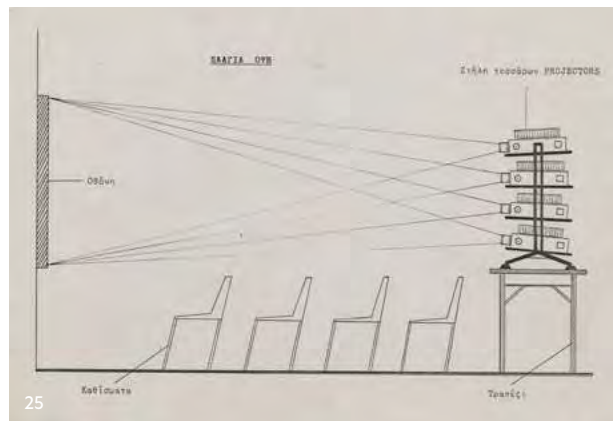
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26



25

22-23. The amphitheater at the pavilion of National Bank of Greece for the Thessaloniki International Fair.

24-25. Designs for the setting of projectors for Polytheama productions.

26. From the screening of Polytheama 'Thrace. A panorama in space and time' at the Greek Embassy in Luxemburg in 1991.

The numerous photographic images collected through the years of *Polytheama* productions, present great documentary value. They capture aspects of life in Greece, from the big cities to the country, and they address different themes of interest for the society of the time.

of their homeland. These are but a few examples of *Polytheama* productions that were displayed outside Greece, introducing international audiences to the Greek landscape, history and culture (Photographs 16–19).

### The creation process

The first step for each new *Polytheama* production was to come up with the idea for the subject of the presentation. Usually the members of the Department of Polytheama and Photographic Media submitted the proposal for the new production, but there were also cases when the topic was decided in collaboration with a third party who contributed to the production. Once the subject was chosen, the working team conducted research and took photographs that would visualize the narration. Very often the director and photographers had to travel through the country, visit different cities, meet people and capture nature, in their effort to collect all those visual elements that gave *Polytheama* part of its informative and artistic power. The direction and the writing of the text that would accompany the images in the form of voice-over narration, were two of the most vital stages of the creative process of a *Polytheama* production.

However, the direction didn't end there. The number of projectors and screens used varied from one production to the next. Some of the shows used only four screens, while in others twelve or more were needed. The format of the presentation was designed from scratch for every *Polytheama* and played a decisive role in creating the final impression of the show. The National Bank of Greece's pavilion in the International Thessaloniki Fair was redesigned to host the new spectacle's screenings, with a small amphitheatre built in front of the main area. For

every screen, two projectors were used to switch from one picture to the other, using fade transition effects (Photographs 20–26).

A core element of the creation of the shows was, of course, the synchronization of the slideshow to sound and music. This was achieved through electronic programming of the exact timing of image switching by the projectors. The visual part of the presentation was, in that way, perfectly synchronized with the voice-over narration and the music. Since National Bank of Greece was the first to present these multi-image productions in Greece, there were cases in which the creators of *Polytheama* offered technical support to other organisations, who later tried to build their own productions. Finally, the establishment of digital technology led to the cessation of *Polytheama* productions.

### The *Polytheama* collection

In January 2011, the archive and collection of the Department of *Polytheama* and Photographic Media was acquired by the Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece. For a few years after the last *Polytheama* production, the members of the Department kept organizing shows of the already existing productions, but ever since its archive was kept by the Public Relations Division, mostly inactive. A valuable source of information about the activities of the creators of *Polytheama* presentations, this archive consists mostly of documents concerning the production and presentation of these shows including drafts of scripts written in different languages, notes on the productions, letters between the department and the bank or other parties, flyers and information brochures, articles in the press and much more.



eadbh bulletin

27-29. Panoramic transparencies from the shooting for the *Polytheama* 'Epirus. A big journey'.



edbh bulletin

30

30. Four-channel sound system from the Department of Polytheama and Photographic Mediums' equipment.





31

31. A projector with its lens from the Department of *Polytheama* and Photographic Mediums' equipment.



32-33. 'Aegean...

Mystical as a lament, triumphal as a war dance, you reflect the images of heroes, you send messages by flute and harp, you guard ancient temples, citadels and statues.

Then it is that the sun descends low to kiss you; then it is that the sky with its stars embraces you; and we, dazzled tell your story...

Very long ago – it could be a hundred thousand years ago – in Thessaly, between the heights of Pelion, Ossa and Kissavos, was a lake as wide as a sea, where today lies the lake of Voiviida, or Karla. This lake covered much more than 120 square kilometers.

When the great flood came, the earth also shook, and the vale of Tempe was cut in half. Then the whole lake passed through the fissures and thundered down to cover the area of the Aegeis. Thus was formed the sea we call the Aegean.

It's a name lost in legends. One of these tells how the sea was named the Aegean after Aegeus of Pandion, King of Attica and father of Theseus. This tragic father threw himself into the sea when his son forgot to hoist the white sail on his ship, to signify victory in his fight with the Minotaur.'

Abstract from the text and slides of the 'Aegean' *Polytheama*, produced in 1982.



34



35



36



37

eadbh bulletin

34-37. 'Aegean...

Mystical as a lament, triumphal as a war dance, you reflect the images of heroes, you send messages by flute and harp, you guard ancient temples, citadels and statues.

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Abstract from the text and slides of the 'Aegean' *Polytheama*, produced in 1982.

The highlight is the impressive collection of more than 23 thousand slides, kept in their projector carousels. Apart from the final slides, used for the multi-image presentations, the photographic collection of *Polytheama* includes draft or rejected slides, panoramic transparencies, negatives and photographs taken, over the years, at the shows around the world. The collection of photographic records has been organized, arranged and catalogued. Digital copies have been created from the slides, offering researchers the chance to easily access the images from the pioneer *Polytheama* presentations. The work of talented and inspired photographers who worked on these shows has left a perfectly preserved collection of great documentary and aesthetic value (Photographs 27–29).

The collection includes magnetic tapes and audio cassettes, where the sound, as well as the electronically encoded programme for the projectors' synchronization, were recorded. Part of the technical equipment (Photographs 30–31) has been acquired, containing slide projectors, lenses, two-channel and four-channel sound systems and the metal parts of the special construction for the setting of the projectors. Altogether, they form a rich source of visual and historical information. The numerous photographic images collected through the years of *Polytheama* productions, present great documentary value. They capture aspects of life in Greece, from the big cities to the country, and they address different themes of interest for the society of the time. The next step for the NBG Historical Archive, regarding the collection, would be to digitally reconstruct some of the screenings and present them again to a new audience, this time not only as part of the NBG's but also the country's cultural heritage (Photographs 32–37).

All photographs: © National Bank of Greece

### Author's profile

Chrysalena Antonopoulou was born in 1983 in Athens, Greece. She studied Economics and holds a MSc in Finance and Banking. She started working for the National Bank of Greece in 2006. In September 2010, she became a member of the Department for Archive Management of the NBG Historical Archive and since October 2017 she is Head of the Photographic Archive Service.

### Contact

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<https://www.nbg.gr/en>

- 1 Emeis, periodic publication for the NBG personnel, issue 9, September 1986 (translated by the author)
- 2 The exact translation of the term would be 'Multivision'
- 3 Emeis, periodic publication for the NBG personnel, edited by: Nikos Karolas, Vassilis Kougeas, Nikos P. Panagiotopoulos, issue 9, September 1986 (translated by the author)
- 4 The first time a *Polytheama* travelled abroad was in 1979, for the Cyprus International Fair. In 1983, among other places, a *Polytheama* about the Aegean Sea was shown in the European Parliament in Strasburg. (Archive of the Department of *Polytheama* and Photographic Mediums, Historical Archive NBG)
- 5 The Greek Sunday News (USA), 21 April 1992

# Marko Stojanović

## Jurist, banker and photographer

Sonja Jerković  
Saša Ilić

Marko Stojanović (Serbian: Марко Стојановић) was the most influential legal representative of the Privileged National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbia (now the National Bank of Serbia) and its Vice Governor. He was a renowned Belgrade lawyer, public official, philanthropist, as well as a passionate amateur photographer whose photographs bear witnesses to his time. They paint a broad social picture of Serbia after several decades of armed strife and fraught diplomacy in a country that had recently been liberated from the Ottoman Empire, having regained its independence at the Berlin Congress on 13 July 1878. Stojanović's camera captured the magnificent palaces in the capital, modelled on those in Vienna and Pest and built by the wealthy merchant elite, as well as mud and straw hovels in poor and undeveloped boroughs on the outskirts of the city, erected by poverty-stricken residents, or by even poorer newcomers from rural areas and neighbouring countries. With an ethnological and anthropological zeal and an equal measure of interest, Stojanović took photographs of urban gentlemen in expensive tailcoats, ladies in gowns tailored in the latest European fashion, successful businessmen, political and military officials, but he also photographed market sellers, destitute beggars and tattered vagabonds. His photographs feature elegant coaches as well as rickety ox carts. His lens is witness to grandiose public celebrations and small, family festivities. By an interplay of circumstances together with the growing number of photography *aficionados* and researchers keen to study early Serbian photography, his substantial photographic opus is now held by the digital archives at the National Bank of Serbia.

### Biography

Marko Stojanović was born in April 1844<sup>1</sup> in Šabac, a small town on the River Sava, in the northwest of the

Principality of Serbia, on the border with the Austrian Empire. In his hometown, he acquired a primary school education, and later graduated from the grammar school in Belgrade. While at school, he supported himself by serving in the houses of Uzun Mirko, a renowned leader of the First Serbian Uprising (1804–1813), and General Kosta Protić, the future regent to the under-age Serbian Prince Milan Obrenović (Prince: 1868–1882, and later King: 1882–1889). After finishing at the grammar school, he graduated with honours in Law at the Higher School of Belgrade, the forerunner of Belgrade University.<sup>2</sup>

He worked briefly in public administration. He was a clerk at the Office of Budgetary Supervision (*Glavna kontrola*) in Belgrade, the highest institution for supervising government accounts and budget spending, as well as a court clerk in Loznica, western Serbia. Soon, he was hired as an intern with the lawyer Josif Mijović, and from 1870 he established a legal practice on his own—remaining true to this profession until his death on 21 September 1923.<sup>3</sup> At the time when Stojanović chose to become a lawyer, there were only twenty-five lawyers in the Principality of Serbia, and of those only ten in Belgrade (1868).<sup>4</sup>

Having shown himself to be an excellent jurist, Stojanović became a legal advisor and proxy to King Milan. However, since he could be critical of the ruling dynasty (and rightfully so, given the absolutist tendencies of the dynasty's rulers), Milan's son King Aleksandar (1889–1903) revoked his right to legal representation.<sup>5</sup> Stojanović revealed his patriotism, and courage, through his attitude to the dynasties. Serbia's domestic politics had been wracked by dynastic struggles throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The conflict between the progenitors of two national dynasties, Karađorđe Petrović (the Karađorđević dynasty)



1. Marko Stojanović (1844–1923), photo by Isaak Levi

and Miloš Obrenović (the Obrenović dynasty), who had been the leaders of the Serbian revolution (1804–1815), had resulted in crude and violent changes for the throne. The last coup, in which King Aleksandar was dethroned and brutally murdered (the May Coup, 1903), put an end to the Obrenović dynasty, and a new dynasty assumed the throne—the Karađorđevićs—who sought to erase the memory of their predecessors. In these circumstances, and with national reconciliation in mind, Stojanović proposed that a joint monument be erected to commemorate both Miloš and Karađorđe in a brochure entitled *Data and reasons for a monument to Đorđe and Miloš* dated 1904.<sup>6</sup>

A masterful orator and an outstanding lawyer, Stojanović was one of the lawyer in the most famous probate proceedings in Serbian history to date. One of the most renowned and richest Serbian tradesmen, Ilija M. Kolarac (1800–1878), had left all of his possessions to his country and the Serbian people for education purposes and social progress in his last will and testament. However, his indirect heirs (he had no direct ones) launched a court case in an attempt to dispute Kolarac's last will. In the court proceedings, that ran between 1879 and 1880, Stojanović succeeded in defending the testator's intention to establish a foundation for the benefit of the Serbian people, and his success in defending this legacy earned him special renown among lawyers and the respect of not only his contemporaries, but of later generations as well.<sup>7</sup>

Over decades, Stojanović served as a legal advisor to the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Serbia and represented the real estate-related interests of its citizens. There are newspaper records of him acting as a legal representative of a Pest-based *Šilka* company in a litigation from 1888 over debts of the Serbian Agricultural Society. A year earlier, Stojanović represented a Mr Klajn, an entrepreneur who offered to the Belgrade municipality a concession for the construction of the first tramcar in Belgrade (which was declined).<sup>8</sup>

In addition to being a lawyer, a profession that allowed him to earn enough to cover his basic existential needs, Stojanović did not shy away from activities in the public sphere. From October 1878 onwards, he was on the board of the legal commission tasked with composing a draft law on legal representatives.<sup>9</sup> He joined the Progressive Party at its formation in 1881<sup>10</sup> and, as its member, he later became one of the core members of the Constitutional Board, which was tasked with drafting a democratic constitution in 1888 (as of 2 January 1889). While on the Board, Stojanović worked commendably, and his contribution to the draft election law stands out.<sup>11</sup>

Some of Stojanović's engagements can be characterised as 'national work', in accordance with the social

ethics that contributed to the development of the national state in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among many other initiatives, he was a founder of the St Sava Society and a member of its Governing Board. The Society was established in 1886 to support and protect the Serbian people in areas under the Ottoman rule, notably in South Serbia (Old Serbia, i.e. the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, and Macedonia along the River Vardar), as well as to support the efforts to unify these parts within the Kingdom of Serbia.<sup>12</sup>

Locally, Stojanović performed a number of duties and functions. For many years he was a councillor in the assembly of the Belgrade municipality, where he conducted many activities, including the drafting of the municipal budget proposal, and in 1882 he was elected as a member of the court of the Belgrade municipality. He was a member of several expert committees which the municipality hired to analyse the consequences of unfavourable contracts about electrification, street paving and introduction of tramcars.<sup>13</sup>

Stojanović was also either a member, or a board member, of several public organisations. Worthy of note is his engagement in the management of the sports organisation called the Society for Gymnastics and Fighting, but he also served on the boards of the Kolarac Foundation and the Foundation of Nikola Spasić, on the Supreme Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and on the Council of the Foundations with the Ministry of Education, to name but a few.<sup>14</sup>

Through his engagement with the National Bank, Stojanović gave his most important contribution to the world of business. As a legal advisor, he participated in the preparations and the establishment of the Privileged National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1884, the first central bank in the modern Serbian state, and served in its management until the end of his life. Along with the most significant representatives of the Belgrade and Serbian business and financial elite, he was a member of the National Bank's Governing Board for almost four decades, as well as acting as the Bank's legal representative. He was twice elected as Vice Governor (1890–1902 and 1912–1923), at the time when his close friend and associate George Weifert was the Governor, a man widely held to have been the most renowned governor of the Serbian and Yugoslav central bank (1890–1902, 1912–1926).<sup>15</sup>

Together with Weifert, members of the management and other experts, Stojanović helped to establish the legal foundations of the National Bank, and composed a number of proposals for statutes, rulebooks and other internal acts. His versatility left a deep trace and a copious collection of his handwritten documents are held in the

archive funds of the National Bank: minutes from management meetings, points of action from shareholder conferences, as well as everyday correspondence. To quote his contemporaries: ‘every relevant letter, every law, every amendment, every Statute and regulation could not be written or issued without Mr Marko composing them himself or taking an active part in the drafting’.<sup>16</sup>

With such an approach, Stojanović gave an immeasurable contribution to the efforts to sever Serbia from the ‘oriental way of banking’<sup>17</sup> by introducing paper banknotes and defining acceptable interest rates to prevent usury. He was one of the key persons involved in rescuing the property of the National Bank in World War I, when it had to be transported via Niš, Kruševac, Skopje and Thessalonica to Marseille in France, where it was kept for three years. Mata Jovanović, a member of the Supervisory Board, wrote in his memoirs that upon hearing about the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, which preceded the war (28 July 1914), members of the Governing Board realised that the contents of the vault had to be moved, and they all ‘turned their eyes to Marko Stojanović’, silently asking him what to do in these difficult circumstances. After the war, and although in his seventies, he was engaged in expanding the central bank’s activities throughout the entire Yugoslav territory, liquidating the operations of the Austro-Hungarian bank, exchanging the currencies and aligning the monetary system.<sup>18</sup>

At Stojanović’s initiative, the National Bank set up a fund for supporting agricultural literature, the aim of which was to educate farmers to switch from extensive to intensive production. This was particularly important for a country where farmers accounted for more than 80% of its population.<sup>19</sup>

A report by the Governing Board, composed soon after Stojanović’s demise, shows how great was the contribution which Stojanović gave to the development of the National Bank. The report says: ‘It is safe to say that the life of the National Bank is the life of Mr Marko, because no one spent more time at the bank, and no one worked harder at the bank’s affairs and did more for the Bank than Mr Marko.’<sup>20</sup>

Besides his work at the National Bank, Stojanović also participated in the establishment or activities of other financial institutions, such as the Monopoly Administration, Belgrade Credit Bureau and the Belgrade Cooperative.<sup>21</sup>

Marko Stojanović wrote and published at least twenty papers, including debates, articles, interpretations of regulations, papers on judicial practice, etc., which he regarded very highly.<sup>22</sup> He had a pronounced philanthropic *trait* and a sense of what the community needed. He carried out activities to help others with financial contributions,

gifts and engagement in various charity organisations. He was a member of the Association for Assistance and Education of Orphans in Belgrade, and he frequently gave alms to the Belgrade poor.<sup>23</sup> He was a member of the Maternity Association, a society that provided assistance to mothers.<sup>24</sup> In 1913, he initiated the formation of the St George Serbian National Disability Fund, a humanitarian organisation for aiding veterans of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and their families, widows and orphans.<sup>25</sup> Sadly, the Fund’s activities, which were endorsed by renowned businessmen, as well as scientific and cultural personages, were abruptly stopped the very next year by the outbreak of World War I. Meanwhile, Stojanović gave financial assistance to the Main Board for helping debtors and victims of the war in 1915.<sup>26</sup> When the fighting ended, and Stojanović returned to the liberated country, he invested a good deal of energy in renewing the activities of the Disability Fund and organising wider humanitarian campaigns; in early 1920, he presented 500 pairs of socks to the disabled in Belgrade. Some of the socks were made, and some were collected by his wife and daughters. Such a gesture was commended not only by the House of the Disabled, but also by the ministers of social policy, defence and the navy.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to aiding the needy and the poor, Stojanović also sought to promote education. In 1903, he gave a financial contribution to the Metropolitanate of Raška and Prizren, seated in Priština, for the purpose of constructing a school in the Gračanica Monastery, which at the time was part of the Ottoman Empire. He also gave books to many libraries, such as the National Library and the Library of St Sava’s boarding school.<sup>28</sup> Being a great *connoisseur* of his native tongue and an advocate for the preservation of language culture and style, in 1914 he set up a fund at the University of Belgrade, for awarding works in the Serbian language and the private international law, and after his death the National Bank allocated assets for this foundation.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, when extending aid, Stojanović did not look to his local or even national surroundings only, but beyond that as well. Thus, after the devastating earthquake in Constantinople on 10 July 1894, Stojanović was appointed to the Mediation Board for collecting aid for the residents of the inflicted city; he worked hard and was very dedicated to his duties on the Board.<sup>30</sup>

For his activities and devotion, Marko Stojanović earned some forms of gratitude of his home country. On the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Serbian Kingdom, on 6 March 1898, by King Aleksandar’s decree, Stojanović received the Order of the White Eagle, 4<sup>th</sup> class, which was at the time the highest state order, presented to not more than 150 persons.<sup>31</sup>



A very interesting anecdote is associated with Stojanović. As a very busy lawyer, he had abundant international correspondence. On one occasion, most probably in 1879, he received a letter from Trieste, which was not handwritten but typed out on the typewriter, an invention that was modernized only ten years earlier, and whose industrial production by Remington had been launched in 1873. Stojanović was curious about this device and he soon ordered a Cyrillic typewriter from Italy, requesting a specific distribution of letters. However, when he typed out the first petitions in early 1880 and submitted them to the court, clerks did not know how to handle the petitions because the law prescribed that they should be submitted 'in writing'.<sup>32</sup>

Stojanović was a typical representative of the Belgrade commercial elite whose members often established family ties with their business partners. With his wife Aspazija, who was the daughter of Panagiotis Papakostopoulos, a Greek emigrant, doctor, grammar school teacher and the translator of Homer's *Odyssey* into the Serbian language, Stojanović had six daughters. Five of them, who lived to maturity, were married to members of prestigious Belgrade families. One daughter married the son of Jovan Ristić, a renowned statesman and diplomat who represented Serbia at the Berlin Congress of 1878. He confirmed his status as a wealthy representative of the upper class by building a house in Knez Mihailova St. which, then as now, was the central and most representative part of the Serbian capital.<sup>33</sup>

Marko Stojanović was also significant for the National Bank and its history because he preserved the earliest archives of the bank. The oldest archives of the National Bank have obviously not been preserved in their original order and volume as they were in all likelihood destroyed in World War I. What has been preserved to date are in fact Stojanović's business archives containing some of the oldest and most significant documents and artefacts. For that reason, the reading room of the National Bank of Serbia's Archives was named after Marko Stojanović in 2009.

### Photographical opus

In 1977 Professor Branibor Debeljković (1916–2003), photographer-artist, pedagogue, researcher and historian of photography, portrayed the development of photography

in Serbia in the catalogue to the exhibition, *Old Serbian Photography*.<sup>34</sup> In it, he drew attention to the work of amateur photographer, Marko Stojanović. Debeljković came into possession of Stojanović's photographs in 1973 thanks to Marko's devoted daughter, Olga Marinković, who had arranged her father's photographs into photo albums. Impressed by the author's work, Professor Debeljković felt that they would merit publishing in a monograph, but this idea would not be realised until 2008 through co-operation of the Professor's son, Dušan Debeljković and the National Bank of Serbia (B. Debeljković, *Belgrade and Belgradians at the End of 19<sup>th</sup> Century as Seen by Marko Stojanović*). As a sign of gratitude for financial assistance, the editor of the monograph presented around 500 digital copies of Marko Stojanović's photographs to the National Bank's Archives.<sup>35</sup>

It seems probable that Stojanović began experimenting with photography in the 1890s guided by Anastas Jovanović, the father of Serbian photography;<sup>36</sup> he would prove to be a master photographer. On 1 June 1901, the first Serbian exhibition of amateur photographers was held in the *Građanska kasina* club in Belgrade, where around 140 amateurs exhibited their works. Stojanović's photographs were exhibited under a summary catalogue title: *Various Photographs from the*

*Lives of People, Groups and Animals*. In the review published in the prestigious journal *Srpski književni glasnik* (*Serbian Literary Herald*) by the renowned critic Pavle Popović (under the pseudonym Rhacusinus), Stojanović's studies of the head, portraits and figures were ranked among the best: 'Stojanović presents a rich collection of portraits and figures of Belgrade personalities, interesting types, humorous faces and groups', and his shots often represent 'frozen moments' of movement and action. The author skilfully chooses the time of photographing, his subjects are not artificial or posed, and some of his portraits are genuine masterpieces.<sup>37</sup> As later scientific critique will confirm, Stojanović's work stood out because it was true to life and without the restraint typical of artificial or 'arranged' poses.<sup>38</sup>

The photographs of Marko Stojanović not only drew the attention of his contemporaries, when they were occasionally published in illustrated Serbian journals,<sup>39</sup> but have stood the test of time. Over recent decades his works have either featured in or have been the

Stojanović's work stood out because it was true to life and without the restraint typical of artificial or 'arranged' poses.

sole subject of exhibitions (B. Debeljković 1977; Jerković and S. Ilić 2009). The latest exhibition, dedicated entirely to the work of Marko Stojanović, presented the author as a natural and relaxed photographer, much like the characters he photographed, whose photographs offer a good record of the transformation of Belgrade at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the people who lived and worked in it.<sup>40</sup>

The National Bank and its people are one of the several themes that gained Stojanović's attention. Thus Stojanović photographed the house of Hrisante Kumanudi where the Privileged National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbia was set up in 1884, and the magnificent neo-renaissance palace of the National Bank constructed in 1890. This often serves as the vantage point to record events in the street. His subjects are diverse: the blacksmith whose portrait was the basis for the design of the 1905 20-dinar banknote in gold; Governor Weifert on different occasions; Mata Jovanović, a colleague from the National Bank's Supervisory Board, together with whom he made a key contribution to saving the property of the National Bank in World War I.

His work includes panoramic cityscapes, and photographs of streets and buildings, but people were more important still, and portrait photography in particular.

He had a good sense of the opportune moment to capture significant personalities at certain events, especially when photographing senior foreign and domestic state dignitaries. He photographed the Austro-Hungarian Archduke, Franz Ferdinand, during his incognito visit to Belgrade, and the Serbian King Aleksandar Obrenović and his father Milan, then commander of the active army at a ceremony, and he photographed a visit of the Montenegrin Prince Nikola Petrović to Belgrade in 1896, and the procession at the wedding of Draga Mašin and Aleksandar Obrenović in 1900. After the change of dynasty, he immortalised the coming of King Petar Karađorđević to Serbia in 1903 and his coronation in 1904.

Being socially engaged, educated and recognized among his contemporaries, Stojanović captured a range of personalities taking active part in public, political and cultural life of Belgrade and Serbia. A particular attraction comes from the fact that they were often photographed unofficially and at ease, on a promenade, at a tavern table, or in private conversations. Prime ministers (Jovan Ristić,

Nikola Hristić, Nikola Pašić, Sava Grujić, Vladan Đorđević, Ljubomir Stojanović), ministers, domestic and foreign members of parliament, generals, state counsellors are pictured both at work and at leisure. Stojanović's characters convey the tragic dynastic division of the Serbian society—his eye focuses on General Dimitrije Cincar-Marković, Aleksandar Obrenović's last prime minister and commander of the royal guard, General Aleksandar Konstantinović, as well as politician Đorđe Genčić, one of the key organisers of the plot and assassination of this King.

His lens capture some of the most important names of the Serbian scientific, artistic and cultural elite: professors of the Belgrade University, the geographer Jovan Cvijić, the historian Ljubomir Kovačević, the chemist Marko T. Leko, the doctor and founder of the Belgrade Faculty of Medicine Milan Jovanović Batut, the sculptor Đorđe Jovanović (who poses with the just completed bust of prime minister V. Đorđević), the painters Sava Todorović and Nikola

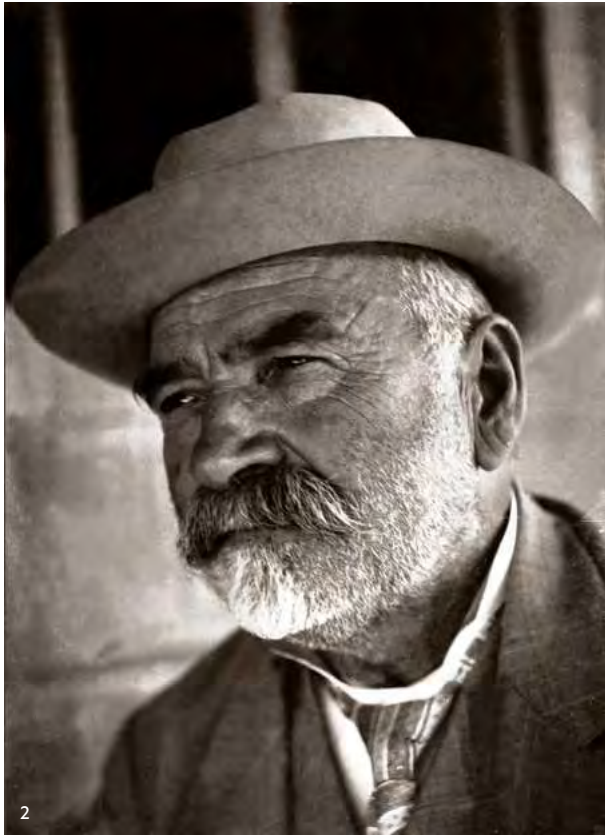
Milojević, the first Serbian photographer Anastas Jovanović and his son, the renowned Viennese architect Konstantin Jovanović, the architect Mile Atonović, the historian, politician and 'man of the court' Čedomilj Mijatović, the writers Milan Đ. Milićević and Milovan Glišić, the National Museum manager Mihailo Valtrović, the writer and National Library manager Dragiša Stanojević,

the minister, diplomat and literary critic Živojin Balugdžić, and many others.

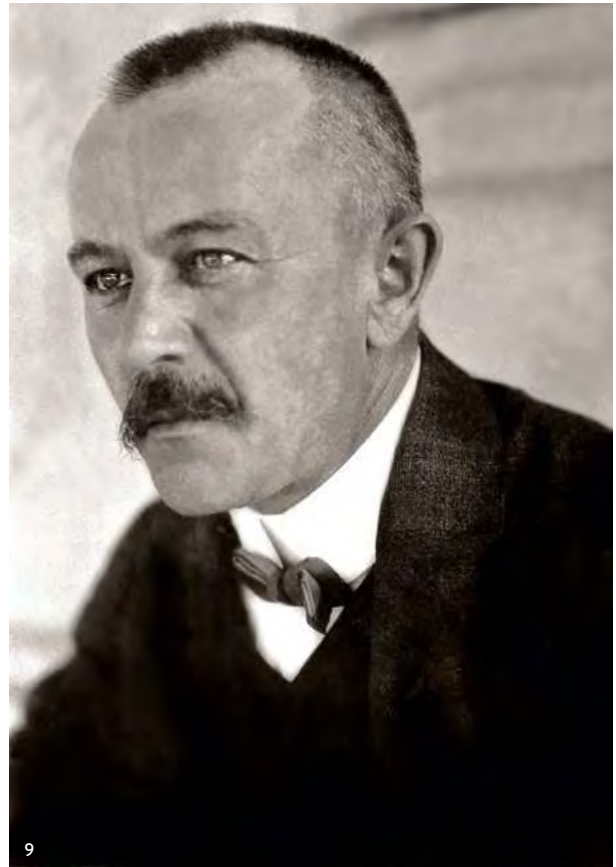
Being close to Belgrade business circles and supportive of the concept of endowments, he also immortalised people, mostly merchants and early industrialists, who bequeathed their wealth to the Kingdom of Serbia: Luka Čelović, the greatest benefactor of the Belgrade University, Aleksa Krsmanović, who bequeathed his entire property to the state for patriotic goals, Rista Milenković, a Belgrade merchant and man of private means whose wife Persida built the Vavedenje Monastery on Topčider Hill, after his death, Nikola Spasić, a great benefactor whose legacy was used, among other things, to build the Zvezdara City Hospital.

Stojanović had particular respect towards the city where he lived and whose development he witnessed and felt. The process of Europeanisation of Belgrade civil society began in 1841, when the city became the capital of the Principality of Serbia. Belgrade started to grow and change its urban appearance. From a small

**Marko Stojanović photographs  
offer a good record of the  
transformation of Belgrade at the  
end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of  
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who lived and worked in it.**



- 2. Mata Jovanović (1848–1933), member of the National Bank's Supervisory Board
- 3. Blacksmith whose portrait was the basis for the design of the 20-dinar banknote from 1905
- 4. Franz Ferdinand, heir presumptive to the throne of Austria-Hungary, in Belgrade
- 5. King Aleksandar Obrenović and former King Milan Obrenović



- 6. Coronation of King Petar Karadorđević, Cathedral Church, Belgrade, 1904
- 7. A city wedding
- 8. City ladies
- 9. Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927), the most renowned Serbian geographer

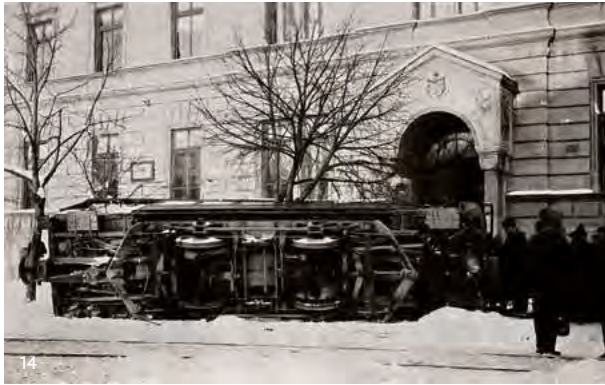


- 10. Boza seller
- 11. Pepper vendors at the market
- 12. A police scribe buying eggs

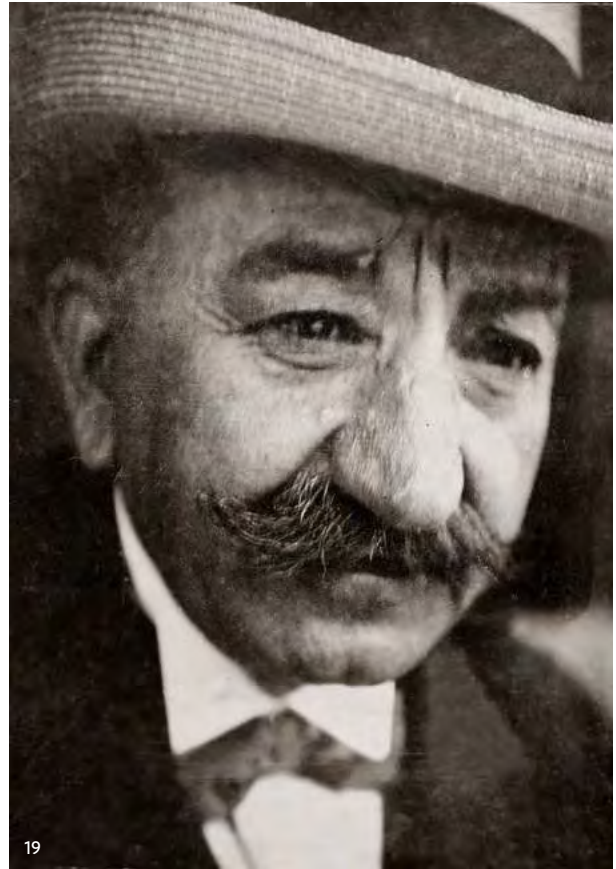


13

13. A girl on the pavement



- 14. A tramcar accident
- 15. M. Stojanović's daughters and wife on the balcony
- 16. Knez Mihailova Street
- 17. George Weifert (right), Governor of the National Bank



18. A Belgrade merchant with his wife

19. Luka Čelović (1854-1929), a well-known Serbian merchant and endower

20. Belgrade's commercial elite





21. The Romani selling geese  
22. Firewood transport

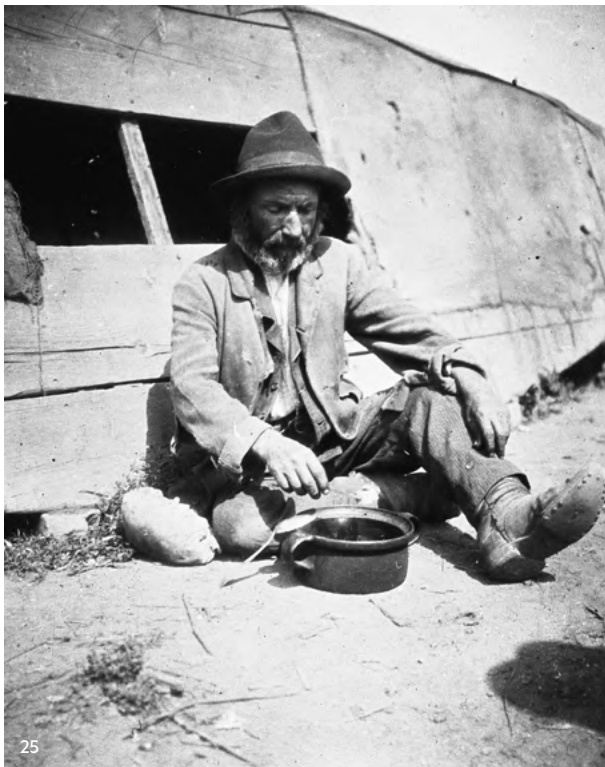


23

23. Boys from a poor Romani suburb



24. A makeshift seesaw



- 25. A Danube fisherman having lunch
- 26. Opening of the Military Museum, Kalemegdan, 1904
- 27. The River Sava flooding the Karadordeva Street



28

28. M. Stojanović's grandchildren



29. M. Stojanović's daughter Olga with her friend, holding a spit with a roasted lamb on it



30

30. Olga, daughter of M. Stojanović

Stojanović's opus reveals a modest artist who photographed out of pleasure, without aspiring to create pieces of art. It is precisely in this way that he created not only exceptional photographs but also genuine documents offering a glimpse into the general character of an epoch, often invisible to the eye of a contemporary.

Balkan-Oriental town, by end-19<sup>th</sup> century it had grown into a middle-sized European city with buildings and palaces built in the neo-classical, neo-renaissance and other eclectic styles. City infrastructure was regulated through the expansion of the water supply network and introduction of the sewage system, regulation, marking and paving of streets, start of electrification of the city (1893), introduction of tramcars (electric tramcars as of 1894), etc. Through his lens, Stojanović follows the changes and transformations of the city and its inhabitants. He chronicled the new city dynamics embodied in a moving tramcar, but also a new type of accidents, such as a tramcar overturned in Cara Dušana St. He photographs railway tracks, well-paved streets, electrical street light, and even a truck refurbished as a means of transport for holiday-goers. He captures changes in clothing, and in the rhythm and manner of life. Perceiving the European in Belgrade, he chronicled ladies in refined clothes, elegant high-collared long dresses, often adorned with lace and embroidery, with voluminous hats rich in feathers or floral ornaments, and elegant parasols; a bride in a modern wedding dress; city gentlemen in formal tailcoats and shiny top hats, holding ever more indispensable walking sticks with richly ornamented handles and furled umbrellas.

Though an advocate of modernization and Europeanization, Marko Stojanović does not flee reality, but also captures the different side of Belgrade and other towns he visited. With equal passion, he records ordinary, 'small' people and people of the *mahala* (poor city quarters). A few streets away from modern Belgrade edifices and elegantly clad ladies, he photographs people who worked hard to earn their bread, labourers, sellers of *boza* (a drink made from boiled extract of corn flour) or vendors at the Grand

Market. Stojanović's eye catches haulers in horse-drawn carts and porters, newspaper carriers, street vendors of geese, eggs and peppers, fishermen, woodcutters awaiting orders to cut wood with hand saws, the Roma with bundles hung over their shoulders, gold washers...

Stojanović does not refrain from photographing the 'darker' side of the city either—its homeless, poor, thin and ragged children photographed in front of a ramshackle hut made of rickety planks, with a caved-in roof—the newest arrivals to the city, whose faces reflect uncertainty. He captures a prisoner in heavy shackles (King Milan's attempted assassin), but also the police clerk with gendarmes, and he is also the first to take photographs inside of a prison (1909). He notices a beggar near the *Srpska krana* tavern, and children on an improvised see-saw and playing leapfrog. Stojanović's attention is drawn by a transport of imprisoned Turkish soldiers and Turkish weapons after the First Balkan War in 1912, a Serbian army camp, a military kitchen and the parade of newly procured military trucks, a third-class reservist standing guard.

Stojanović enjoyed taking photos of his close friends and in particular family members. His lens captures his wife and all six daughters on a beautiful glass-panelled balcony, his daughter Mara going off to her first ball, his youngest and dearest daughter Olga as a little girl before leaving to a fancy-dress party with her friends, and a roasting spit with freshly roasted mutton on it. His dedication to family continues with his grandchildren as well, children of his daughter Mara who was married to Mihailo, the son of Jovan Ristić, whom he photographs while playing in a woven basket, without knowing that it would be this grandson, Marko Ristić, who would become the father of Serbian surrealism.



Particularly significant are those of Stojanović's photographs which show buildings that are now gone. This is the case with the photo of the first building of the Military Museum in Kalemegdan, destroyed in World War I, which he took on the day of its opening, 22 September 1904.

In addition to photographs authored by Marko Stojanović, photographs of him have also been preserved. They were probably taken by a close friend, also a passionate photographer, the Belgrade merchant Isaak Levi. The two of them most probably acquired their cameras at the same time and their friendship continued until the end of their lives. According to available data, Stojanović used several types of camera—a stereo camera (9x13 cm), a plate camera (13x18 cm) and a detective camera, i.e. box-form plate camera which contained 12 plates (for 12 shots). This detective camera was his favourite and he held on to it throughout his life; his friend Levi frequently used it to take photos. Finally, Stojanović and Levi were among the precursors of Serbian collage photographs, some of which represent genuine studies in psychology.<sup>41</sup>

Stojanović's opus reveals a modest artist who photographed out of pleasure, without aspiring to create pieces of art. It is precisely in this way that he created not only exceptional photographs but also genuine documents offering a glimpse into the general character of an epoch, often invisible to the eye of a contemporary.

All photographs: @ National Bank of Serbia Archives, Digital Archive (24)

### Authors' profiles

Sonja Jerković graduated in history from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, where she took her PhD (2019) with a thesis on the National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia 1918-1931. Between 1995–2005, she worked as an archivist in the Historical Archives of Belgrade, and from 2005 until present date she has been employed in the Archives of the National Bank of Serbia.

Saša Ilić graduated in history from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, where he also took his PhD (2018) with a thesis on foreign experts in the economy of Yugoslavia 1945–1950. Between 1996–2005 he worked as an archivist in the Archives of Yugoslavia and from 2005 until present date he has been employed in the Archives of the National Bank of Serbia (2006–2013 as Director). He is engaged in researching the social and economic history of Serbia, Yugoslavia and Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He has published a substantial number of scientific papers.

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- 1 As for the exact date of his birth, printed records mention 4 and 15 April 1844. It is possible that this discrepancy is due to the fact that the Julian calendar was in use in Serbia at the time (it was replaced by the Gregorian calendar in January 1919) and that the date was later changed because of this. Even so, it is evident that an error was made in one of the sources, because in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the two calendars differed by 12 days, and at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by 13 days. This paper uses dates according to the new, Gregorian calendar in the main text, while citations from newspapers and documents include the original dates, that are used in those sources.
- 2 *Politika*, 22. 9. 1923, 4; *Vreme*, 22. 9. 1923, 5; *Pravda*, 22. 9. 1923, 1; Sonja Jerković, Saša Ilić, A Reflection of Reality: Exhibition of Photographs by Marko Stojanović, two-time Vice Governor of the National Bank (Exhibition Catalogue), Belgrade: National Bank of Serbia, 2009, 2, 4.
- 3 *Politika*, 22. 9. 1923, 4; *Vreme*, 22. 9. 1923, 5; *Pravda*, 22. 9. 1923, 1.
- 4 Kosta N. Hristić, *Zapisi starog Beograđanina* [Records of an Old Belgrader], Belgrade, 1989, 347.
- 5 S. Turlakov (ed.), *Memoari Vukašina J. Petrovića* [Memoirs of Vukašin J. Petrović], Belgrade, 2009, 19.
- 6 The monument (by sculptor Đorđe Jovanović), which Stojanović not only proposed, but also provided finances for, was placed on the square at the entrance to the most famous Belgrade park Kalemegdan in 1929, six years after Stojanović passed away. Meanwhile, the sculpture stood in his house for more than 20 years, because the municipality of Belgrade did not consent to publicly displaying it. *Vreme*, 24–25. 6. 1929, 9.
- It so happened that after World War II, the monument was removed from the square to the Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Radoš Ljušić, *Angažovana istoriografija* [Engaged Historiography], Belgrade, 2004, 152–154.
- 7 *Pravda*, 27. 2. 1934, 5; Jelena Perać, „Kuća Marka Stojanovića: identitet zgrade kao odraz vlasnikovog sopstva”, *Zgrada Fakulteta likovnih umetnosti u Beogradu istorija nasleđe budućnost* [House of Marko Stojanović: identity of the building as a reflection of the owner's self; The Building of the Faculty of Arts in Belgrade: history, heritage, future], Belgrade, 2019, 13.
- 8 Branič, XII, No. 5-6/1906, 406–407; *Težak*, XIX, 1888, 593–594; *Beogradske opštinske novine* [Belgrade Municipal Newspaper] (in further text: BON), VI, No. 24/1887, 262.
- 9 Branič, XIV, No. 1-6, January–June 1929, 23.
- 10 Vasilije Krestić, Radoš Ljušić, *Programi i statuti srpskih političkih stranaka do 1918* [Programmes and Statutes of Serbian Political Parties until 1918], Belgrade, 1991, 109.
- 11 Branič, II, No. 20/1888, 706–707; *ibid.*, III, 1890, 205; *Male novine*, II, 21. 2. 1889, 3, 7; *Otadžbina*, 26/1890, 465; *ibid.*, 30/1892, 92; *Vreme*, 22. 9. 1923, 5; *Pravda*, 22. 9. 1923, 1.
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# The photograph collection of the Archives of Národná banka Slovenska

Andrea Leková

Photographs as archival documents bring a unique, vivid image of the past—a moment of time captured in a tangible form. The Archives of Národná banka Slovenska (NBS Archives) hold several thousand photographs in their Photograph Collection, established in 1996.

Originally, the photographs were mostly part of individual files; they were attached to texts in the files and did not form separate collections. Now, however, under the legislation governing archives in Slovakia, it is required to store photographic materials separately in order to protect them against acidic degradation products.

The records of the Photograph Collection are maintained in electronic form in the eArchive information system. For each archival fond and collection, they provide the main data on origin, scope, primary scheme (classifying documents into groups), physical condition, composition, and so on. The system makes it possible to create finding aids for registered fonds and collections. For the Photograph Collection, two catalogues have been created. Recorded in each finding aid are inventory units and individual items for each inventory unit (which is where individual photographs can be found). A scan of the document can be attached to each item, which in this case, would be a scan of a photograph with its description.

The eArchive information system is connected to NBS's Research Archive Portal, which is available to the public via the NBS website (<https://archiv.nbs.sk>). So anyone interested can view the available finding aids for the

NBS Archives' fonds and collections. At present, however, finding aids can only be viewed via a search of inventory units. As part of the system's development, it is planned to expand this option in order to enable, among other things, the viewing of individual items and their stored scans.

The conservation of photographs in archive depots requires special packaging material: archive boxes and polyester bags for photographs, and archive paper envelopes for film and negatives. The boxes are made of a material called Prolux, which is produced in an alkaline environment, has an alkaline reserve, is colour-fast and less absorbent, and allows archiving for at least 50 years. The envelopes are made of 90g/m<sup>2</sup> photo paper, which has a composition of 50% cellulose

and 50% cotton, and a pH of 7.5–9.5.

The Photograph Collection consists of two parts: a historical part containing photographs, films and slides made before 1993, and a modern part with photographs from after 1 January 1993, when Národná banka Slovenska was established. Each part has its own catalogue, whose structure is determined by the contents of the preserved materials; one catalogue is entitled 'The collection of historical photographs' and the other is entitled 'The collection of photographs related to NBS activities'.

## Historical section of the Photograph Collection

The historical part holds materials obtained from the archives of NBS's legal predecessors and other donations, especially items donated by employees of Štátna banka

Photographs as archival documents bring a unique, vivid image of the past—a moment of time captured in a tangible form.



1. The building of Bratislavská všeobecná banka/Bratislava General Bank on Michalská Street in Bratislava

československá (State Bank of Czechoslovakia), the immediate predecessor of NBS. Through the gradual processing of archival fonds, as well as the revision of fonds that were processed over the past 50 years, additional items are added to the historical collection. The photographs are mostly black and white, but vary in size and their state of preservation. In the 1950s and 1960s, the archival fonds were stored in unsuitable premises, where the photographic materials suffered from moisture and light damage.

The catalogue for the historical part is divided into four main groups: Banks' buildings and group photographs of banks' employees; Personages; Real estate of banks' clients, and Uncategorised. Created within the groups are inventory units arranged mainly on the basis of legal or natural persons, or thematically. Each inventory unit includes registered items: specifically photographs, negatives, films, postcards.

The historical part of the collection currently contains 1,092 photographs (dating 1917–1992), four slides (1978), one negative (1943) and a postcard (1977).

The most used photographs are those of buildings of former central banks operating in what is now Slovakia, including photographs of the following: the headquarters of Slovenská národná banka (the Slovak National Bank) on Štúrova Street in Bratislava; branches of Rakúsko-uhorská banka (the Austro-Hungarian Bank), later becoming branches of Národná banka Československá (the National Bank of Czechoslovakia); the construction of the new building of Slovenská národná banka (the Slovak National Bank) during World War II. Also popular are photographs of former commercial banks (Photographs 1 and 2) and people's financial institutions. For example, there is a photo of one of the first exchange offices to open in Bratislava after the 1989 Velvet

Revolution (Photograph 3) and photos of the first ATMs in Slovakia (Photograph 4). The communist era (1948–1989) is captured mainly by photographs from the inventory unit of Štátna banka československá (the State Bank of Czechoslovakia (1950–1989) which includes photographs of the following: openings of new bank branches; meetings and conferences of bank management; workplaces; bank employees attending May Day parades (Photograph 5); sporting events organised for bank employees (Photographs 6 and 7).

Of interest are photographs of industrial enterprises and farmsteads which received various types of loans largely from commercial banks that were legal predecessors of Národná banka Slovenska, and photographs of properties included in loan files. There are also photographs of buildings (Photograph 8), large farms, sawmills, distilleries (Photograph 9), mills, firms and shops, homes of people from different parts of Slovakia (Photograph 10), guesthouses and health resorts in the High Tatras (Photograph 11), and also small houses belonging to ordinary loan applicants.

The collection also includes photos by Rudolf Návrat, an employee of Slovenská banka, taken in 1945 after the bombing of Bratislava (Photographs 12 and 13). Photographs by Alexander Dubček (a leading figure of the 1968 Prague Spring) who visited Čierna nad Tisou were probably donated to the collection by an employee (Photograph 14). Of particular interest is an album of photographs documenting the bomb damage inflicted during World War II on the towns of Komárno, Nové Zámky (whose historic centres were destroyed in 1945) and Levice.

The group entitled Personages features portrait photographs of leading figures in the Slovak financial sector, and these are used as to illustrate their profiles on the Research Archive Portal.

**The Photograph Collection consists of two parts: a historical part containing photographs, films and slides made before 1993, and a modern part with photographs from after 1 January 1993, when Národná banka Slovenska was established.**

**The most used photographs are those of buildings of former central banks operating in what is now Slovakia.**

**Of interest are photographs of industrial enterprises and farmsteads which received various types of loans largely from commercial banks that were legal predecessors of Národná banka Slovenska.**



2. The interior of Tatra banka in Martin
3. The exchange office on Špitálska Street in Bratislava
4. The first ATM of Všeobecná úverová banka/General Credit Bank in Bratislava, 1991
5. May Day parade, employees of Štátna banka československá in front of its buildings on Štúrova Street in Bratislava



6. Shooting competition for employees of Štátna banka československá, Bratislava Petržalka, 1953



7. Morning exercises of employees of Štátna banka československá, Bratislava-vidiek branch, 1960





8. Construction of Stavebné družstvo Legiodomy on Račišdorfská Street in Bratislava, 1923  
9. Liehovar Spišské Tomášovce, 1919



10. House with pub in Lučenec, 1942



- 11. Pension Boda, Nová Lesná, 1935
- 12. Bombing of Bratislava, 1945
- 13. Bombing of Bratislava, 1945
- 14. Alexander Dubček with delegation at Čierna nad Tisou, August 1968



15. Juraj Spusta, member of the management board of Malacká ľudová banka in Malacky  
16. Back of the photo of Juraj Spusta



- 17. Appointment of the first Governor of Národná banka Slovenska, Vladimír Masár, by the Slovak President, Michal Kováč, 1993
- 18. Participants of the *eabh* conference in Bratislava, 2003
- 19. New Year's Eve celebrations in Bratislava marking also the changeover to the euro, 2008
- 20. Laying of the foundation stone of the NBS's headquarters on 16 June 1997
- 21. State of construction of the NBS's headquarters in April 1998
- 22. State of construction of the NBS's headquarters in September 2000

The oldest photograph in the Photograph Collection is a 1917 photograph of Juraj Spusta, a member of the administrative body of Malacká ľudová banka (Malacky People's Bank) (Photograph 15 and Photograph 16), which was taken in Bratislava at the studio of Körper Károly at 31 Špitálská Street (Korház utca) and at 8 Mariánska Street (Maria utca). Historical photographs were also made by several other once prestigious photo studios in Bratislava, for example the Mindszenty studio on Ružová Street and the Marguerite studio on Laurinská Street.

### Contemporary section of the Photograph Collection

The second part of the Photograph Collection is dedicated to NBS activities. It is constantly being added to both with the files that the NBS Registry Centre gradually processes and submits to the NBS Archives, as well as with donations from NBS employees. It currently contains 1,806 inventory units and approximately 20,000 photographs.

The catalogue for this part captures the history of Slovakia's central bank from 1993, when the bank and the independent Slovak Republic were established, and runs up to 2016. The photos are divided into groups chronologically, according to their years of origin, and then on a thematic basis. They were taken at major events in the bank's life (Photograph 17) and at meetings of the bank's bodies; they feature representatives of the bank, foreign visits, conferences (Photograph 18), working life, staff social activities, and sports activities. One particularly significant event was the changeover from the Slovak koruna to the euro in 2009 (Photograph 19).

A large share of the photographs show different stages in the construction of the bank's headquarters—including the laying of the foundation stone and the opening ceremony in 2002 (Photographs 20–22). Some of these photos were used to decorate the room on the 30th floor of the headquarters building, where the NBS Bank Board meets.

The photographs covering activities in the history of NBS's are in colour. The overwhelming majority of films of these events are also preserved, as individual items in the collection. The collection also includes CDs and DVDs; the photographs dating from 2007 are solely digital.

Over the past few years, the bank has been adding photographs to its collection through acquisitions. Most of them are pictures of buildings that belong (or belonged) to the bank, taken by renowned Slovak photographers.

### Usage of the Photograph Collection

The Photograph Collection belongs to the Slovak archival heritage under the management of NBS Archives and, along with the Securities Collection, it is the part of the collection that sees most use. It is primarily used for the internal needs of the NBS (especially the Archives and Registry Section), when organising thematic exhibitions, NBS Open Days, conferences, and publishing activities. However, the photographs are also requested for public use by television and radio media, print media, municipalities, interest groups and associations, and private individuals. A number of photographs were used for the web presentation of the NBS Archives on the Research Archive Portal.

Over the past few years, the bank has been adding photographs to its collection through acquisitions.

All photographs: @ Národná banka Slovenska, Bratislava

### Author's profile

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# Photo collection of NN Group

## About managing and the gems...

Ingrid Elferink

This article consists of two parts, the first part is about the photo collection itself, its origin, management and use, and the second part is about the photography of people present in the collection, the gems.

### The photo collection of NN Group

Financial services company NN Group N.V.'s history department, formed in 1992, is responsible for NN's historical collection. Over the years, employees have contributed documents, objects and photos intended for a company museum. First the records department looked after this collection. The employees were not professional archivists, but thanks to them we now have a great collection. The photographic collection was used for anniversaries, publications and exhibitions, but its management was not a priority. Everything was kept in the same way: in boxes. Consequently the photographs were not properly conserved. When a professional photo registrar was hired, the photographs received the attention they deserved and the beauty of the collection was realized.

The photo collection consists of thousands of photos, negatives, photographic slides and photo albums. Taken by amateur and professional photographers, the

photographs feature people of note, events, buildings and company rituals. They reflect the company's culture and give us an insight into a changing office life across the centuries. From the 1890s, prominent Dutch photographers such as Jaap d'Oliveira, Philip Mechanicus and Pieter Molkenboer were commissioned to document the offices (Photograph 1). We hold the collections of predecessors of NN, such as De Nederlanden van 1845, Rotterdamse Verzekering

Sociëteit (RVS), Nationale Levensverzekering-Bank, Delta Lloyd and others. Many of these companies had activities abroad, and therefore we also have pictures of life outside the Netherlands.

The photo collection in numbers: 10,000 photos, 40,000 negatives, 1,000 slides and 225 photo albums. The whole historical collection is catalogued in The Museum System (TMS), a database used by many international museums. More than 7,500 photographs are accessible in TMS. Every photographic object is digitized by the registrar, or by a digitization company. In 2019 more than 60 photo albums were digitized and then packed in custom-made, acid-free boxes.

The more accessible the collection becomes, the more it is used. In 2019, for example, the restaurant in the Amsterdam office was decorated with photos of staff

The photographs feature people of note, events, buildings and company rituals. They reflect the company's culture and give us an insight into a changing office life across the centuries.

The photo collection in numbers: 10,000 photos, 40,000 negatives, 1,000 slides and 225 photo albums.



1. Lunchbreak at head office in The Hague, 1971. Color slide. Photo: Philip Mechanicus (Amsterdam). TMS 8393/HA NN Group





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2. Entrance at NN Group Office Amsterdam, 2019. Digital photo. Photo: Peter Tjihuis (Amsterdam). HA NN Group

3. Agent in France, 1890. Albumen print. Photo: J. Fabre (Marseille). TMS 11795/HA NN Group

4. F.A.J. Ross, carrier of RVS in photo album, 1867. Albumen print. TMS 5394-11/HA NN Group

members from the 1970s. For the entrance of the same building, we created a mosaic using 450 passport photographs of employees in the 1940s (Photograph 2).

To strengthen internal ties within the company and develop their interest in the organisation and its identity, we tell our colleagues stories illustrated with images from the photo collection. Presentations are given where many photos are shown.

You can read about NN's history and collection on the NN Group website. On the Nationale-Nederlanden Instagram account (*nn\_nederland*) it is Throwback Thursday (#TBT) every Thursday, with a post of a historical photo in line with a current event. And even though the collection cannot be consulted online, people know where to find us. For example, a large number of photos from the collection has been on display at the exhibition 'Rotterdam works' in the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam from 18 September 2020 until 17 January 2021.

In 2020, the depot moved from Ede to Arnhem, where the historical collection was re-housed in a well-conditioned place, with a special area for the photo collection. In 2020, Nationale-Nederlanden celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of our predecessors, De Nederlanden van 1845, which was established as a fire insurance company. Unfortunately, many activities were cancelled due to the coronavirus, but a special online magazine was made for all the staff members, in which many photos were used.

This shows that the photo collection not only matters but is in full swing.

### The employees in the picture

In NN's 175 years, the people who worked in the company have been frequently captured on camera creating a photographic heritage that is very valuable. 175 years of working, company outings, farewell parties and being together! Something that seems quite distant in the midst of the coronavirus. This makes the photos of the former NN employees in the office twice as important.

### Portraits

Portraits of board members feature prominently in the collections; in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century these were painted on canvas but from 1850 photographic portraits came into play. Employees were less frequently captured, although they are present in the collection. In addition to the many official portraits of board members and supervisory

directors, photos were used as an administrative tool. For example, the insurance agents working outside of the Netherlands were often appointed by correspondence. To introduce themselves they sent their *carte de visite* to the head office in the Netherlands. We have portraits of French, German, Swedish and other gentlemen who ran agencies for the company (Photograph 3).

In a special photo album from 1867, a wedding gift from staff to the director of the RVS, we find 28 portrait photos of all staff members. This is unusual, because in 1867 making a *carte de visite* could cost almost a week's wages! The portraits give a good impression of the office clerk and insurance carrier in 1867 (Photograph 4).

A later photo album of the Hollandsche Societeit provides an insight into its employees in the 1960s. This so-called *smoelenboek's* (yearbook) administrative goal was to document all employees, and the alphabetical name register is full of deletions and additions. In total, the album has nearly 700 photos that were taken in-house. Based on this album, we can estimate that women made up about 20% of employees in the Hollandsche Societeit in those days (Photographs 5 and 6).

### Department photos

Another special photo album was made in 1894 as a gift from staff to founder and director Christiaan Henny on his retirement from De Nederlanden van 1845 after almost 50 years of service. This richly decorated leather album with gilt edging contains portraits of all employees, with their name and the year in which they started, and seven photos of the office in Zutphen. These office photos were taken by the local photographer and show the boardroom of son and successor Carel Henny and the employees in the Reinsurance, Accounting, Foreign affairs and Policies departments. Thanks to one of the employees, Dijkerman, who annotated the album 50 years later in 1945, we know a lot about the men in the pictures. Dijkerman started at the insurance company in 1891, aged only 15 he was then the youngest employee. He annotated each photo, describing not only the name and position of his former colleagues, but also interesting and sometimes quite personal background information! Some of his former colleagues were not always nice, others drank (and not only at home), still others chewed tobacco wads—a practice which was not universally appreciated. In short,

The more accessible the collection becomes, the more it is used.

The photo collection not only matters but is in full swing.



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- 5. Page from photo album staff members, ca. 1960. Gelatin silver print. TMS 13818-0014/HA NN Group
- 6. Cutout from photo album staff members, ca. 1960. Gelatin silver print. TMS 13818-0014/HA NN Group
- 7. J.C. Dijkerman in photo album, 1894. Daylight collodion silver print. TMS 5319-28/HA NN Group
- 8. Policy Department in photo album, 1894. Daylight collodion silver print. Photo: J.C. Reesinck (Zutphen). TMS 5319-35/HA NN Group



9. Office of RVS in Rotterdam, 1931. Daylight gelatin silver print. TMS 6105-13/HA NN Group

10. Telephone operators of RVS in Rotterdam, 1931. Daylight gelatin silver print. TMS 6105-25/HA NN Group

11. Punch room with Hollerith machines, 1966. Negative. Photo: Gerrit Schilp (Den Haag). TMS 8004/HA NN Group

12. Employees leaving the office in Rotterdam, 1966. Negative. Photo: Gerrit Schilp (Den Haag). TMS 8016/HA NN Group



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- 13. Staff of Nationale Levensverzekering-Bank, 1903. Gelatin silver print. TMS 7727/HA NN Group
- 14. Directors and staff of Hollandsche Societeit, 1907. Gelatin silver print. TMS 13723/HA NN Group
- 15. Onboarding in 1958. Gelatin silver print. Photo: A.S. van den Hoek (Voorburg). TMS 7253/HA NN Group
- 16. Onboarding in 1976. Gelatin silver print. Photo: Fotobureau Thuring (Den Haag). TMS 8846/ HA NN Group
- 17. Onboarding in 1987. Gelatin silver print. Photo: Fotobureau Thuring (Den Haag). TMS 10109/ HA NN Group

his notes provide a source of information about office life at the turn of the century that we could never learn from the photos alone (Photographs 7 and 8).

Sometimes we have no information about a photo or even an entire photo album. Nevertheless, due to the curators' expertise, something can often be tracked down. In one untitled album of office photos, we can identify that the photos are of the head office of the RVS in Rotterdam, and we also know the name of the director. On the calendars on the walls we can see the dates 14 and 15 May 1931. Therefore we know that the photographer visited over two days to capture the company's interior on camera. In 28 pictures, the album shows the doorman, the director, the conference room, the canteen, the warehouse, the telephone operators, and other offices.

But who the photographer was, and why this beautiful album was created, is still unknown (Photographs 9 and 10).

Spanning more than 150 years, the photo collection captures moments in time, creating a record of changes to the furnishing of the offices and the clothing of the people. Over the years, photographers have taken different approaches to looking through the lens. Photographer Gerrit Schilp took an innovative approach to corporate photography. In 1966 he was commissioned to make a photo series for the staff magazine of the Nationale Levensverzekering-Bank. The occasion was the opening of the refurbished head office in Rotterdam. In 38 negatives we see dream-like images of the modern office taken from an unusual angle. Employees are depicted at work, in motion and blurred, and sometimes we see only a fragment of a leg (Photographs 11 and 12).

### Group portraits

The collection contains many group portraits, many of which feature the entire staff. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the companies were still small enough to record all staff on a single photographic plate. It is interesting to see how the photographers chose the location and composition. For example, at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nationale in 1903, the entire staff was portrayed in a very traditional way, with people sitting and standing in line. What is special about this portrait is that there are no directors in it, and we can see one woman, a Miss Huizer. In another group portrait, from 1907, we see a completely different group of people. Here, the Hollandsche Societeit

celebrates their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we see the entire staff, with directors, agents and employees in the meeting room of the head office. The photo is staged, with the employees arranged around a table that they probably never sat at (Photographs 13 and 14).

New employees were captured in the so-called introduction photos. Beginning in 1958, onboarding days were organized for new employees at De Nederlanden van 1845. A day in which the newcomers were introduced to

the company and the office building was also common at other NN predecessors. At the end of the day, a photo was taken and published in the staff magazine with the title 'Welcome to us' or 'Newbies'. The photo showed the newcomers, along with their names and the department they were to work for. Photographers were hired, and later the in-house photo service was used. What makes these photos so interesting is the changing fashion styles; from the standard attire of a suit and tie to T-shirt and jeans, the skirts get shorter, men's hair goes from short to long, and women's hair from long to short, and in the 1980s everyone has a perm. The insurance employees followed the latest fashions. In the photo collection more than 700 original prints have been preserved, from 1958–1997. Current employees still regularly use these photos. The staff magazine is online and for a farewell or anniversary there are still colleagues to be found in the introduction photos (Photographs 15–17).

In this way, the historical photo collection captures the people of our history.

All photographs: @ NN Group

### Author's profile

Ingrid Elferink is responsible for the history and the historical collection of NN Group. She started as head of the History Department at ING in 1993. She is an archivist and has recently completed a number of masterclasses in photographic processes.

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<https://www.nn-group.com/our-company/our-history/historical-collection.htm>

Spanning more than 150 years,  
the photo collection captures  
moments in time, creating  
a record of changes to the  
furnishing of the offices and the  
clothing of the people.

# Agricultural export banking in the Russian Empire

## Photo album of the Oryol Commercial Bank of 1899

Dmitrii S. Parfirev  
Sofya A. Salomatina

The exteriors and interiors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century banking buildings are recorded in a large number of visual sources, including in photographs, because these buildings tended to dominate the urban environment, and the banking institutions, even private ones, were of public importance. Images of bank buildings are mainly used for studying the history of architecture and urban planning, as well as the interior design of public spaces (*eabh* 2016; *eabh* 2017; *eabh* 2019–20; Kirikov 2001; Datieva 2001), however, these visual documents are rarely used for banking history studies (Lamoreaux 1994). This paper is of the latter type. It focuses on an amateur album of photographs of the Oryol Commercial Bank made in 1899, now kept in the collection of the Russian State Library. This bank was deeply involved in agricultural exports from Central Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Our paper deals with the representation of Russian regional commercial banking at the time.

The album contains only seven photographs; they show the interiors of the head office of the Oryol Commercial Bank, as well as employees and the bank's leaders in this workspace. The photographs, taken in 1899, record the bank's increased business and growing public status, facilitated by the economic upsurge of the 1890s, stable

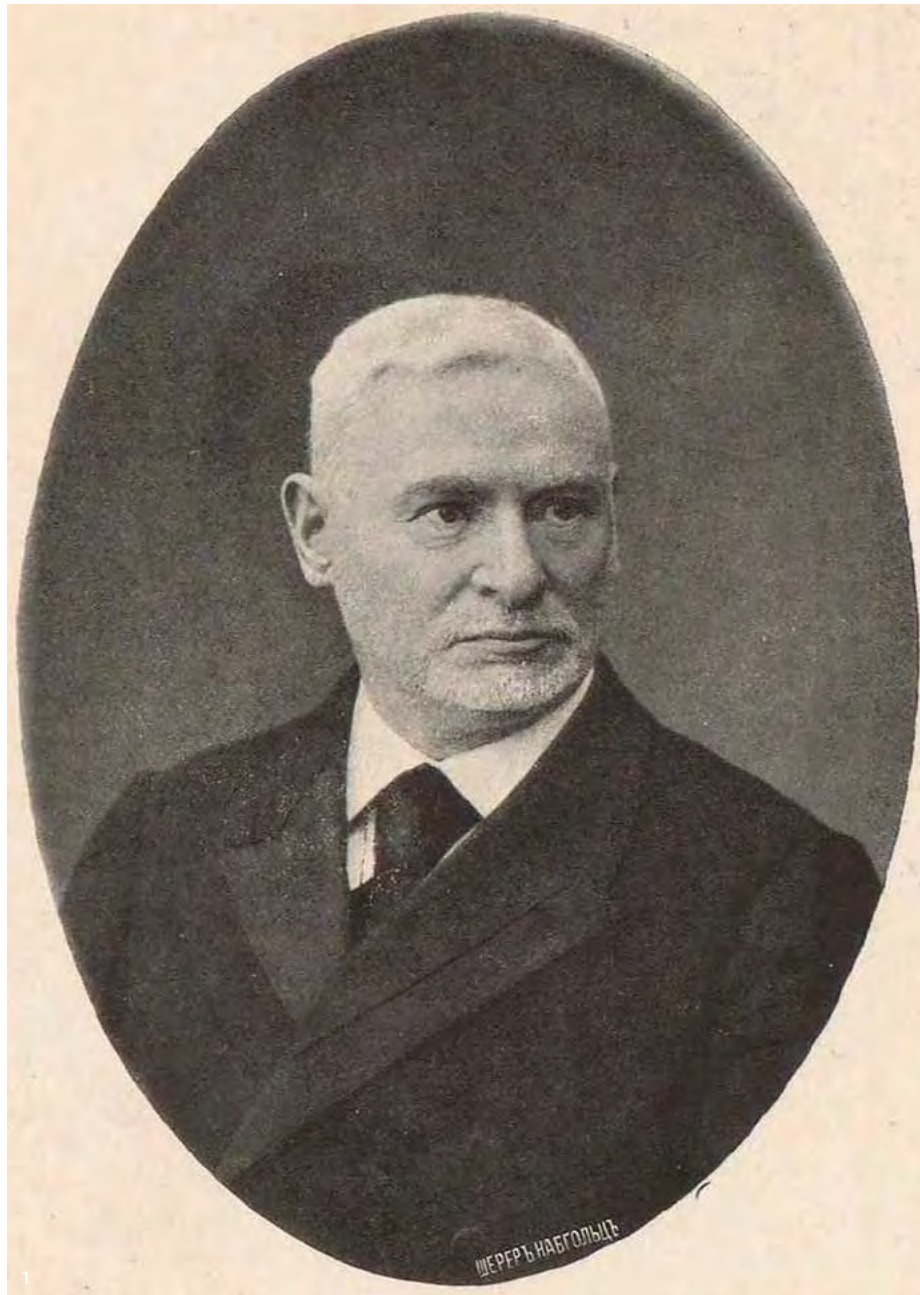
leadership traditions, and close ties with the regional elite (largely merchants, landowners, senior officials and leaders of the local self-government, or *zemstvo*). To attribute photographs and clarify the context, we used various data about the bank and its senior personnel and made a comparative study of the interiors and exteriors of bank buildings in the Russian Empire of the time (Salomatina et al. 2019; Salomatina et al. 2020).

### About the Oryol Commercial Bank

The Oryol Commercial Bank started operations in 1872, at the very end of the economic boom of the early 1870s. The founders were the well-known Jewish railway contractor Samuel Solomonovich Polyakov (1837–1888), the leading Russian guild merchant, and the mayor of Yelets in Oryol Governorate, Dmitry Sergeevich Rusanov (?–1891); the St. Petersburg international banking house with an Austrian background, 'Georg Wyneken & Co', as well as another banking house from St. Petersburg dealing with grain export 'Vasily Obolonsky and Co', were also involved.

In 1872–1873 five joint-stock commercial banks were created in the Central Black Earth Region,<sup>1</sup> an area of agricultural export, with the participation of the Polyakovs,

**The album contains only seven photographs; they show the interiors of the head office of the Oryol Commercial Bank, as well as employees and the bank's leaders in this workspace. The photographs, taken in 1899, record the bank's increased business and growing public status, facilitated by the economic upsurge of the 1890s, stable leadership traditions, and close ties with the regional elite.**



1. Lazar Polyakov, board chair of the Oryol Commercial Bank in 1876–1903, photo from the 1900s (presumably) (The Russian commercial and industrial circles. 191–, 275)



Wyneken and Obolonsky. Only three out of these five banks were able to start operating, and the Oryol Commercial Bank was the most successful. Until the 1890s the bank only operated in Oryol Governorate, along the Riga-Tsaritsyn trunk railway, the principal route from Central Russia to the west borders and Baltic ports (Image 1). Services for the trade in agricultural products (credit and payments) played a particularly important role in the bank's operations. The bank was medium-sized, it was worth one million rubles since 1874 and five million rubles since 1895, and it was actively attracting deposits.

The economic situation was unfavourable in Central Russia during the global 'long depression' (approximately 1873–1892): the fall in agrarian prices exacerbated the protracted banking depression. The Oryol Commercial Bank was able to survive, however, and from the beginning of the 1890s its branch network gradually spread to other agrarian regions in the centre, south and west of European Russia (Image 1). By 1908 the bank had 23 branches in 12 governorates.

Judging by the number of managers and stockholders, the Oryol Commercial Bank was a hermetic institution. Eleven shareholders represented 81% of the capital at the first meeting on 22 May 1874. In the 1890s the list of stockholders expanded, apparently due to the inclusion of new regions where branches were opened, however, the list of investors stayed short: 41 stockholders participated in the meeting on 17 April 1907 (61.4% of the capital). According to the charter, there were only a few elected and appointed posts in the bank: three board members, including the chair, one director who could be a member of the board, three candidates to the board and three supervisory council members (deputats, or deputies). By comparison, the large banks of St. Petersburg and Moscow usually had five board members and 10–15 council members.

The first governing board consisted of Samuel Polyakov (chair), Dmitry Rusanov, and the former chief manager of the Oryol branch of the State Bank of the Russian Empire, Alexander Golyashkin. In 1876 the post of chair was taken over by Samuel's younger brother—Lazar Polyakov (1842–1914), an entrepreneur, railway contractor, banker, and a prominent figure in the Moscow Jewish

community, who developed a network of banks and financial companies over the next 20 years (Photograph 1). Lazar Polyakov was not directly involved in Oryol affairs; the core of his business group was in Moscow. The key figure in Oryol was Rusanov until his death in 1891, and then his role was taken over by professional banker Vladimir Romer (Photograph 2).

Looking at the list of the bank's senior personnel (members of governing board, candidates to this board, directors and deputy directors, council members), we can see that the bank was a coalition of large traders in agricultural products, large landowners, high provincial officials and leaders of local self-government (zemstvo). Members of the merchant families participated in the governing board. The officials and zemstvo activists sat in council and were candidates for the governing board. The officials were recruited from the regional bodies of the Ministry of Finance (branches of the state commercial and mortgage banks, tax chamber and treasury) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (vice-governors, governorate chancellery). In the crisis of 1899–1901, Polyakov's banks appeared to be in a difficult situation. At the end of 1901 representatives of the Ministry of Finance were introduced into the governing boards of all these banks. It

turned out that the banks' problems were caused mainly by the bankruptcy of Polyakov personally, and of his principal banking house in Moscow. However, the Oryol Commercial Bank was considered relatively sound in the Polyakov group. In 1903, Polyakov resigned the chair and the board of the Oryol Commercial Bank, and the chair's position was taken over by Vladimir Romer, becoming vacant after his death in 1907. At this stage, an active local coalition was able to keep the bank's assets as a part of the new United Bank with the head office in Moscow, established from the surviving Polyakov banks in 1909.

### **The Oryol Commercial Bank in photos**

The success of the 1890s presented the opportunity to build a new head office for the bank. This group of buildings in the Russian Revival style is depicted in numerous photographs and postcards of Oryol in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These buildings have survived and a branch of the Bank of Russia is now located in them (Photographs 3–6).

**The success of the 1890s presented the opportunity to build a new head office for the bank. This group of buildings in the Russian Revival style is depicted in numerous photographs and postcards of Oryol in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

The Russian Revival style used elements of pre-Petrine Russian architecture married to new building technologies available in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The style allowed the bank's leaders to express the national context of their institution. It is noteworthy that banking buildings in St. Petersburg and Moscow were not created in the Russian Revival style in this period. Other historical styles dominated in both capitals, primarily neo-Renaissance, as a way of marking continuity with the Italian bankers of the late Middle Ages. Nevertheless, there were many examples of businesses and public buildings designed in the Russian Revival style.

Architect Sergey Konstantinovich Rodionov (1859–1925) received a commission to the new head office. He often worked in the Moscow region: both the Orthodox Church and the Moscow Jewish community—including Lazar Polyakov had been numbered among his customers. A block was purchased for these buildings in Oryol, between Gostinaya Square and the Orlik River (now Gostinaya, 6 and the Right Bank of the Orlik River, 22–24). The building at Gostinaya, on Oryol street, built in 1897–1899 housed the operating hall (Photographs 3 and 4), the second building, where the apartments of employees were located, was completed on the Orlik River embankment in 1900 (Photographs 5 and 6).

The photographs of the bank's interiors appear to have been taken to mark the completion of the head office building in 1899. It is interesting to note that, unlike the Russian Revival façade, the interiors were designed in an eclectic manner, retaining elements of the classical style—an approach to workspace design that was apparently perceived as a norm at that time. Some photographs depict employees and senior managers at their workplaces; these were not staged scenes of everyday banking, but group photographs in which people were posed seated in front of the camera. It was an attempt to capture novelty and originality, but not a daily routine.

This photographic session is recorded in the seven photographs in the album, which has cardboard pages, white moiré (watered silk) fly-leaves and an embossed cover inscription 'Oryol Commercial Bank. 1899', and which was made by request (Photograph 7). These photographs are of amateur quality, some are blurred, many are shot against the light, whereas there were more than

a dozen professional photographers in Oryol in the 1890s. The photographs are not original prints, but copies of damaged photographs with creases, scratches and stains. They were not retouched for the album (in our paper the photos have been retouched and cropped), which suggests that these copies may have been made after 1899, possibly as a gift to someone for whom the memory of the bank and the people in the photographs were important. There is no mention of how the album came into the possession of the Russian State Library, but it is probable that it was kept in Moscow (rather than in Oryol), until the advent of the 1917 October Revolution. This is the subject of the next section.

The first two photos in the album show the entrance hall (Photographs 8 and 9). Photograph 9 shows a staircase leading to the main hall. There is the door with an inscription above it, marked 'Archive', to the right of the stairs. Unfortunately, this is the only evidence that the bank's archive once existed. Currently, there are no archival bank documents in either Oryol or in Moscow. The inscription on the tablet above the person standing on the stairs is almost illegible, but most likely this is the 'Governing Board' (Pravlenie). This conclusion can be inferred if we compare the rooms depicted in all the photographs with the published plan of the ground floor. This staircase led to the room of the governing board shown in photograph 14.

Photograph 10 is a view of the main hall from the top of the stairs shown in photograph 9. Employee desks are located on the right, behind the counter and on the balcony. On the counter are the customer service windows with inscriptions on top (from right to left): 'Transfers' (presumably), 'Deposits', and 'Current accounts' (presumably). In photograph 11 this hall is shown from the opposite side of the view in photograph 10. The customer service windows there are on the left and one visible inscription on top reads 'Special Current Accounts' (customer credit accounts). On the right, on the opposite wall, there is a plaque with the inscription 'It was built in 1897–1899 under the board chair L. S. Polyakov, director V. E. Romer, by design and supervision of architect S. K. Rodionov'. In the main hall, designed for numerous customers, a customer had to sit in order to communicate with a bank employee via a window at the counter, whereas the more familiar option was a customer standing before a counter. This suggests that speed of service was not a priority.

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### The Russian Revival style used elements of pre pre-Petrine Russian architecture married to new building technologies available in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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2



3



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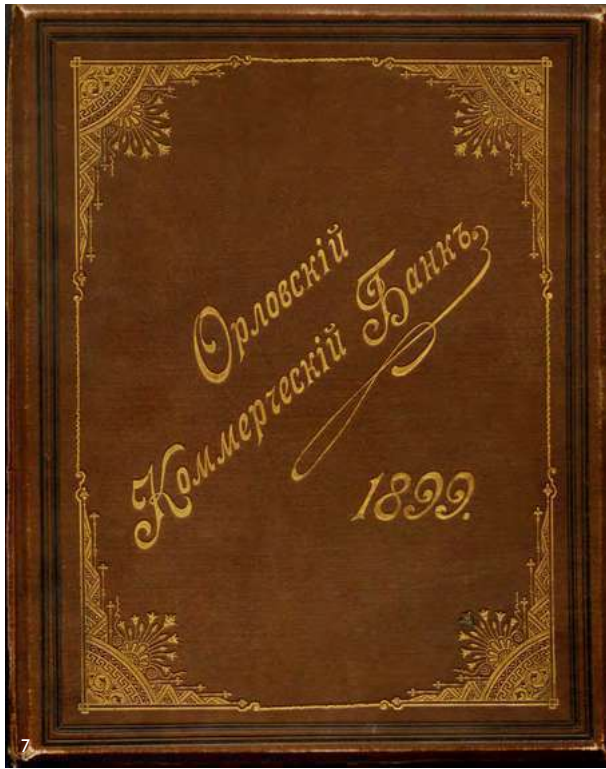


5



6

- 2. Vladimir Romer, director 1877–1899, board member 1878–1907, board chair 1903–1907 of the Oryol Commercial Bank, photo from the 1900s (presumably) (The State Council: Historical essay. 1907, 154)
- 3. The Oryol Commercial Bank, view from the central street (now Gostinaya St., 6), the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Collection of the Oryol Regional Museum
- 4. The Oryol Commercial Bank, view from the central street (Gostinaya St., 6), 2020, photo taken by the authors
- 5. The Oryol Commercial Bank, view from the riverbank (now Right Bank of the Orlik River, 22–24), early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Collection of the Oryol Regional Museum
- 6. The Oryol Commercial Bank, view from the riverbank, 2020, photo taken by the authors



7. Cover of the photo album of the Oryol Commercial Bank. 1899. Collection of the Russian State Library

8. Entrance lobby. 1899. Photo album, sheet 1. Collection of the Russian State Library

9. A staircase to the operating hall. 1899. Photo album, sheet 2. Collection of the Russian State Library



10



11

10. The operating hall from the top of the stairs shown in photograph 9. Photo album, sheet 3. Collection of the Russian State Library

11. The operating hall from the opposite side relative to the perspective in photograph 10. Photo album, sheet 4. Collection of the Russian State Library



12. Bank employees, presumably middle managers. Photo album, sheet 6. Collection of the Russian State Library



13. The balcony of the operating hall. Employees' desks. Photo album, sheet 7. Collection of the Russian State Library



14



Image 1

14. The leaders of the Oryol Commercial Bank. Vladimir Romer, a board member and director, sits on the right. 1899. Photo album, sheet 5. Collection of the Russian State Library

Image 1. Railways and waterways in European Russia in 1901. The localities with branches of the Oryol Commercial Bank are marked in red. The map was prepared by Timur Valetov. © Timur Valetov & Sofya Salomatina

Photograph 12 shows a separated space in the operating hall, opposite the main entrance. In the background, on the left, there is the same counter as in photograph 11. The inscriptions at the top are ‘Securities Department’ (presumably), ‘Commission Department’, ‘Special Current Accounts’. In the centre, four bank employees are sitting at the desk. These are probably middle managers and specialists (heads of departments, accountants and cashiers in senior positions, legal adviser), whose names are sometimes found in published sources, but it is impossible to identify them in this photo.

There is a coal-fired portable heater in the foreground. This suggests that the photograph was taken in the cold season, when furnace heating would have warmed such a large hall unevenly. It could have been a date close to the stockholders meeting held on 9 April 1899 (28 March according to the Julian calendar adopted in Russia): it often snows at this time of year. The arrival of the supervisory council members to the bank, one of whom probably came from Moscow (Photograph 14, commentary in the next section), may be indicative of the forthcoming meeting.

The desk, at which these employees are sitting, was probably the workplace of a middle manager. The workplaces of ordinary employees were located in the main hall behind the counters (Photographs 10–12) and on the balcony (Photograph 13). It is noteworthy that all desks were in the open space: banking had to be open to the public. In addition, it is obvious that there were few employees in the bank, so there was no need for separate rooms for departments.

A hall became the central space for customer services in most banks during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The hall indexed the impersonal nature of the relationships between customers and banking personnel (Lamoreaux 1994). The number of customers determined the public status of a bank, even a private one, and particularly a joint-stock bank, and served to maintain trust in its operations. This was the case in the Oryol Commercial Bank, where the customers were served in the large open hall. However, another reason for the bank’s high public status was integration within the governorate through a system of personal ties with the local elite.

### The leaders of the Oryol Commercial Bank in the photographs

In photograph 14 we see the bank’s leaders: three older men and a younger man of about thirty. It is not an easy task to identify people in historical photographs, because visual materials for comparison are scant. So, in this case we collected the names and available biographical information

of board and council members, including the few rare photographs we could find, and then worked on the premise that the people itemized in the list could be similar to the people in the photograph. While not an exact attribution, some important conclusions can be drawn this way.

Lazar Polyakov, the chair of the board, is not in this photograph: his appearance is well known (Photograph 1). It is thus unlikely that the album was a gift to him. Moreover, due to the poor quality of the photographs this photographic session does not appear to be an important event, such as an official opening ceremony of the building.

Vladimir Emilievich Romer (1840–1907), member of the board and director, is sitting at the desk on the right. His photographs are in other publications too (Photograph 2). Romer was the son of an Austrian subject who was not of noble descent, but who managed large estates in Russia and frequently moved from one place to another. Vladimir Romer was born in Smolensk Governorate, graduated from a gymnasium in Novhorod-Siverskyi (Chernigov Governorate), and started as a deputy director in the Oryol commercial bank in 1872. From this modest position at the beginning of his career Romer gradually became a member of the Oryol elite: councillor of commerce (*kommertsii sovetnik*—the title that gave the status of hereditary nobility to merchants), a large landowner, a public figure, member of various local charitable organisations, cavalier of the orders of the Russian Empire, and a member of the State Council from the self-government (*zemstvo*) of Oryol Governorate since 1906.

As for the young man in the background, only one of Romer’s sons and two of Polyakov’s sons were in top posts in the bank. Unambiguously identified photographs of these three people are not known, however, portraits of other Romer’s and Polyakov’s family members are found in publications, such as the elder brother of Vladimir Romer, and the adult children of Lazar Polyakov. By comparing these images with the young man in the Oryol photograph, it is evident that he resembles a Romer rather than a Polyakov. Fyodor Romer (1870–after 1917), the son of Vladimir Romer, was an inspector of branches and an acting deputy director in 1899. He became a fully-fledged deputy director in 1901, a board member in 1907, and he took over the same position in the United Bank in Moscow, the universal bank with a large network of branches which took over the Oryol Commercial Bank in 1909. In the 1910s Fyodor Romer lived with his family in Moscow. The widow of Vladimir Romer and several of his other children also moved to Moscow, so the album was probably kept by someone from this family.

The visual impression is that the two older people in the photograph are not of lower status than



Vladimir Romer. They appear to be Romer's distinguished guests. They are probably council members (deputies), who would not have appeared very often at the bank, but were involved in preparation for the annual stockholders meeting.

Looking closely at the details shows that at Vladimir Romer's left there is a man in the uniform of a retired official, civilian or military, of a rank equal to general, indicating a high status in the Russian Empire. Among the council members there was only one retired general in 1898–1900: Alexander Andreevich Behrs (1845–1918), brother of Sophia Tolstaya, wife of the writer Leo Tolstoy. Unfortunately, the latest known photographs of Alexander Behrs are from the 1880s, and it is impossible to use them to confirm his identity in

the photograph of 1899. Behrs began his military career, then switched to civilian service and served as vice-governor of Oryol 1883–1893. Retired from government service, he lived in Moscow and worked in the Lazar Polyakov's Commercial Insurance Society, and in the Moscow Land Bank in the 1900s (the joint stock mortgage bank, controlled by Polyakov, whose agent in Oryol Governorate was the Oryol Commercial Bank). If Behrs, as a council member, had come to the meeting from Moscow, he was a connection between Oryol and the Moscow centre of the banking group in the absence of Lazar Polyakov.

It is not easy to identify the elderly grey-haired man in the foreground at the retired general's left. Nikolai Petrovich Rimsky-Korsakov (?–1909) is the bank leader most associated with this image, although his photographs have not survived either. He was well-known in Oryol Governorate: a noble and a landowner, he was single, rarely visited his estate and was deeply involved in local self-government as a member of the city council (*duma*) and executive board of the governorate council (*zemsкая управа*). In addition to being a council member in the Oryol Commercial Bank, Rimsky-Korsakov was a member of the bank discount and loan committee as an expert in assessing the credit-worthiness of landowners. Moreover, he was a member of a similar committee in the Oryol branch of the State Bank, as well as a representative of the nobility in the State Noble Land Bank. Rimsky-Korsakov thus personified one of the channels of communication between the bank and the nobility in Oryol Governorate.

The successful identification of people in photographs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is not guaranteed because there are too few positively identified portraits for comparison, even of the elite, not to mention commoners. There are many more written sources than visual ones. A comparison of the photographs with biographical information about people associated with the Oryol Commercial

Bank can give rise to interesting hypotheses and guesswork, however, and even in such an imperfect form, the result reveals the coalition of forces around the bank, in which the regional people occupied leading positions, despite the bank's close ties with the core of the Polyakov group in Moscow.

### Conclusion

The amateur photo album of 1899 is a rare surviving artefact

associated with the Oryol Commercial Bank, which operated in the agrarian region of Central Russia. This is one of the few direct sources for the bank's perception of its new building. By 1899, 27 years had passed since the bank's foundation, the difficult years were behind it, and the 1890s were generally successful for the bank. The photo album proves the bank's aspiration to record its high public status, rooted in national traditions, and its service to numerous customers. At the same time, this amateur photographic session in the new premises appeared to have been an extraordinary event for the employees. Later, these photographs became a part of family memory, kept by the family of one of the bank's former top managers.

The Moscow leaders of the banking group, which included the Oryol Commercial Bank, took part in the Oryol construction project, however, the photographic session appears to record an event that emphasized the role of Oryol residents in the bank's activities.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century bank buildings stress stability through the language of architecture, yet the banks were fragile institutions. Indeed, Oryol Commercial Bank entered a period of crisis at the turn of the century, together with the entire Lazar Polyakov group. The Ministry of Finance and the State Bank bailed the group out, fearing the negative effects of major bankruptcy. As a result, the financial problems of Polyakov's banks remained largely hidden from a large section of the public, and the Oryol bank continued operating in the same building, albeit as part of the United Bank from 1909.

**The amateur photo album of 1899 is a rare surviving artefact associated with the Oryol Commercial Bank, which operated in the agrarian region of Central Russia. This is one of the few direct sources for the bank's perception of its new building.**

### Authors' profiles

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Sofya Salomatina is an Associate Professor of the Historical Information Science Department, Faculty of History, Lomonosov Moscow State University (Moscow, Russia). Her research interests deal with the financial and banking history in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her latest research project focused on joint-stock commercial banks in the Central Black Earth Region in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with an emphasis on banking services to agricultural export via railways, and on the social networks of regional bankers.

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1 The Central Black Earth Region is an agrarian area in the centre of European Russia, its borders were defined differently, but it most often included the Voronezh, Kursk, Oryol, Ryazan, Tambov, and Tula governorates.

# UniCredit's photographic archives

Francesca Malvezzi

The photographic archive of UniCredit in Italy constitutes a rich and varied source of information about the bank's history.

The UniCredit Historical Archives, established in 1951 in order to preserve documents acquired since the company's foundation in 1870 (Banca di Genova, renamed Credito Italiano in 1895), are one of the most important business archival collections in Italy. The archives contain the historical records of UniCredit/Credito Italiano, as well as many of the Italian banks which have been acquired by the Group. Many of these had roots in the late Mediaeval period or early Modern such as: Rolo Banca 1473, Cassa di Risparmio di Verona Vicenza Belluno e Ancona, Cassamarca, Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, Cassa di Risparmio di Trento e Rovereto, Cassa di Risparmio di Trieste, along with Capitalia SpA, which took over Banca di Roma, Banco di Sicilia and Bipop-Carire. The archives' primary mission is to conserve, protect, promote and facilitate the study of this important heritage.

For the description of the photographic materials, as for the paper documentations, preference was given to the description of the file, like an album, complete with: title, chronological dates, photography studios, number and type of documentation, and

notes. For photo albums, in addition to the elements just mentioned, it was considered appropriate to highlight, where available, the captions accompanying the individual images.

The photographic section is estimated to comprise 600 photo albums, 130,000 positives, 28,000 prints, matrices and negatives. They date from the early 1900s to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by the photographic archive of Giuseppe Rampolla, photographer already in service of Banca di

Roma SpA, with about 12,000 pieces (negatives, slides, positives and CD-ROMs) and Ferruccio Torboli, photographer already in service of the Credito Italiano Audiovisual Centre, with about 40,000 pieces (negatives, slides, positives and CD-ROMs). In addition there is now a digital archive.

The subject matter extends beyond the business of the bank, though that in itself encompasses an extensive range of material, covering education, employment and leisure, the evolution of real estate assets like offices and agencies in Italy and

abroad and the most significant moments of corporate life such as institutional events, recreational activities and promotional campaigns. The collections feature many

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1. Credito Italiano, WWI Victory Celebration in front of the Milan Headquarters, 1918

photographs depicting the staff (top management and employees) and showing the expansion of banks abroad.

The series of photographs dedicated to foreign branches is of great historical value. The destruction of materials in some areas due to conflict and war means that accessible photographic records are often lacking. Just as most people living and working abroad, the Italian bank staff took many photographs of overseas branches and surroundings as well as of daily work and recreational activities, which are helping researchers to reconstruct different aspects of past life abroad. Many thousands of our photographs arrived in our repositories through the internal real estate offices. Part of the filming was also entrusted to external professional photographers.

Amongst the most significant photographs in the collection are the three dedicated archives of Credito Italiano/UniCredit S.p.A. (1870), Banco di Roma S.p.A. (1880) and Banco di Santo Spirito S.p.A. (1924).

### **The Credito Italiano/UniCredit photographic section**

The Credito Italiano/UniCredit photographic section covers the chronological period from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the early 2000s. Amongst the earliest noteworthy photographs in the archives are the series dedicated to the advertising campaign carried out in the main Italian cities to promote war loans during the First World War<sup>1</sup> and the series dedicated to foreign branches, especially the one in China.

The photographic images were produced mainly from the 1950s to the 1980s and for exclusively corporate purposes, in order to document the architecture of the bank's branches, the evolution of the workplace and life at the company. Most of the photo shoots record the opening or renovation of city agencies and branch offices, but there are also numerous photos that document conferences, opening ceremonies and exhibitions. Furthermore, there is a large number of photographs of the bank's presidents and employees. Other important works from the period include over 100 prints by Mario Mulas recording training courses, the data processing center, recreational activities and the company canteens. The material dating back to the 70s is mainly composed of loose photos;

there are also images collected into albums and on slides, but fewer negatives. Currently, over 1,400 dossiers have been inventoried.

The most recent photographic documentation mainly consists of the core collection made by Ferruccio Torboli, a photographer who worked at the Credito Italiano Audiovisual Centre before coming to UniCredit. Composed of about 5,000 colour negatives, 25,000 slides, 10,000 loose positives and about 350 CD-ROMS, this collection covers sporting events, press conferences, branch openings, the interior and exterior of buildings, conferences, conventions, meetings, events, gala lunches/dinners and portraits of employees and managers. A section is dedicated to the color slides, created for two publications

of Credito Italiano, *Antica Madre* and *Civitas Europea*, which cover the main Italian masterpieces and archaeological sites, from the prehistory to the middle ages. Since 2003, the photographer worked mainly digitally, delivering approx. 80,000 photo files (2003–2011).

### **The Banco di Roma photographic section**

The photographic section of the Banco di Roma S.p.A. has been subject to numerous transfers over time prior to its new arrangement and a related inventory in 2002. Among the most important materials there are the series of photo albums made to document the evolution of the real estate assets of the Roman bank both in Italy and abroad. These photo albums (Banco di Roma S.p.A. and Felice Guarneri archive) have been reproduced and the related metadata have been associated by the company GAP Srl. Among the printing matrices there are about 6,000 negatives on glass plates. The section is divided into two groups, the collection of photo albums (1912–1977) comprising 141 albums, in 100 folders, and the collection of positives and the loose photographic matrices (1900ca.–1992), comprising 188 folders.

For the most part the albums hold three types of photographs. There are those that illustrate the progress in banking: the opening of new branches, the restructuring of the old ones, the introduction of new technologies for professional equipment. Other albums document the events organized by the branches or at which the branches participated, as well as meetings with

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**The series of photographs dedicated to foreign branches is of great historical value. The destruction of materials in some areas due to conflict and war means that accessible photographic records are often lacking.**

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2. Banco di Roma, Damasco Branch, 1920



- 3. Banco di Roma, Istanbul-Pera Branch, 1923
- 4. Banco di Roma, Rodi Branch, 1925
- 5. Banca Italiana per la Cina, Loongwha Temple, Shanghai, 1925



6. Banco Italo-Egiziano, Alexandria, the Minet el Bassal Cotton Exchange, 1930





7. Credito Romagnolo, Ravenna Branch Team's Trip to Verona, 1936  
8. Banco di Santo Spirito, XI International Congress of Radiology, 1965



9. Credito Italiano, Alaska Mountaneering Expedition, 1971



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10. Credito Italiano, 1972 Rome Expo - Distribution of brochures, 1972

political and economic personalities. These events intensified in the second half of the 1930s when the banking system (and especially Banco di Roma) assumed a more prominent role in society and economy. Finally, the albums attest the presence of Banco di Roma S.p.A. in the eastern Mediterranean and Africa between 1930s and 1940s; as do other visual materials such as drawings and sketches. These images are not limited to banking but convey features of everyday life and the nature of the territory itself.

### The Banco di Santo Spirito photographic section

The Banco di Santo Spirito photographic section is made up of black and white photographs and negatives between the mid-30s and 1988. The photographs illustrated the changes in the branches across the decades documenting construction or renovation works and the acquisition of new offices. Events promoted by Banco, such as the inauguration of agencies and executive offices (especially in Rome) and participation in trade fairs and conferences of national importance. The section is described in three series for more than 220 folders and albums.

After the merger between Banco di Roma and Banco di Santo Spirito in 1992 and the resulting creation of Banca di Roma, the photographic archives were increased by Rampolla's archives. The archival fonds are composed of materials of different size and type, with an important part as digital documents. The photographic services were partly carried out by the Audiovisual Office (where the photographer worked for a few years) and relate to commercials, billboards, posters, press conferences, branch inaugurations, interiors and exteriors of buildings and locations, conferences, conventions, project presentations, meetings, events, talk shows, gala dinners, and portraits by Pino Rampolla, during the last thirty years of his activity.

### Conclusion

While portions of all the collections have been used extensively, most of them have never been exhibited. This is because descriptive information about photographs is difficult to access. Many photographs collections were never re-catalogued by the people who used them, photographs used for projects in the heat of the moment were often not re-filed in the original series and the subject or the event portrayed in the shoot was often overlooked. An on-going cataloguing and digitization program of this heritage is in progress at present.

To improve the accuracy of the descriptions, UniCredit Historical Archives holds related materials to

facilitate interpretation: corporate books, institutional documents, letters, diaries, administrative and accounting documents, as well as documentation relating to legal, financial and credit operations; posters, brochures for customers and prints relating to branches, advertising for banking products etc. (1916–2000); audiovisuals created for training staff, for marketing bank products or for events deemed significant for the bank's life history (inaugurations, conferences, presentations, etc.). Among these materials, the series of advertising posters relating to war loans during the First World War and the period between the Second World War and the immediate post-war period have a considerable visual impact.

The photographic archives are housed in our Lampugnano building in Milan and can be accessed by appointment through the UniCredit Historical Archives ([archiviostorico@unicredit.eu](mailto:archiviostorico@unicredit.eu)).

All photographs: © UniCredit S.p.A.

### Author's profile

Francesca Malvezzi has a degree in Humanities and works at the UniCredit Historical Archives, where for several years she has been planning and managing the cataloguing and digitization programs and contributing to the ongoing research on the history of the Group.

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1 Credito Italiano during the war is well represented in the archives with different materials relating to WWI, in a wide array of formats, from photographic prints and negatives to posters and drawings. Most of them were created during the war (1914–1918), but a portion also deals with post-war topics such as photos for the commemoration of employees, fallen as soldiers.

# Picturing development

## The World Bank Group Archives photographic collection

Shiri Alon

The World Bank Group (WBG) Archives stores over 217,000 feet of records created—or received—by the WBG since its establishment in 1944, making it one of the largest collections of development-related records in the world. Its holdings consist of a variety of media such as textual documents, photographs, maps, moving image and audio records. Within its mission to protect the institutional memory of the WBG and to provide public access to its records, the archives offers online access to a variety of information via the World Bank external website.<sup>1</sup> This paper will focus on the WBG Archives' photographic collection, and the ongoing efforts to make the photographs publicly available online. The collection holds over half a million images documenting field operations in member countries (projects funded through loans or grants), official loan signings, as well as other historic events and personalities. In addition to providing a brief overview of the photographic collection and its uses, this paper will address the challenges the archives encounters in managing and digitizing our still images.

### Current uses of the collection

Historical photographs are in high demand, requested both by Bank staff and external clients for use in

communications, commemorations, presentations, and publications. The WBG Archives, with the long-term goal of providing access to the photographic collection through a self-service online platform, launched the online

Photo Catalog<sup>2</sup> in 2018. It was decided that the first series to be digitized and made available would be the historical project-related images, since this series provides documentary evidence of project sites, workers, local communities, and progress of economic

development in WBG member countries—those images that are most frequently requested. Mostly comprised of black and white images, this series offers a record of the World Bank's work in countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, between the 1950s to the 1980s. The images record the impact of World Bank projects on people in different countries around the world. Most were taken by photographers hired by the Bank; many were commissioned for promotional purposes to be used

in internal newsletters or reports prepared by the External Affairs Department. The External Affairs department was charged with maintaining relations with external groups and shareholders, such as the media, the public, the development community and member countries in order to broaden appreciation of the mission and work of the World Bank Group. Because these images were provided

Historical photographs are in high demand, requested both by Bank staff and external clients.

The images record the impact of World Bank projects on people in different countries around the world.



1. 'Tranquilino Flori and Felix Moreno, Ecuador, 1957' by World Bank Group/Paul Sanche is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

with captions and contextual information from the External Affairs Department prior to their transfer to the WBG Archives this series has offered a good starting point for digitization and cataloguing because it can be useful for metadata cataloguing and filtered searches.

To date, approximately 8,000 images—spanning 79 countries from Afghanistan to Peru—are available online for public access and download. On the site, photos are searchable by keyword, country, project number, topics, region, and decade. In addition to the WBG Archives' Photo Catalog, photographs are also linked to the Bank's Projects & Operations site,<sup>3</sup> which provides information on the Bank's operational work: listing and providing contextual information about every development project in all member countries dating back to 1946. By linking the historical photos<sup>4</sup> to the Projects & Operations site, project-related photographs can be viewed with the corresponding textual records and other financial information about the loan, or grant, providing a better picture of the project and its impact.

For the photographs, we use the Creative Commons NonCommercial ShareAlike (CC-BY-NC-SA) license<sup>5</sup> in the spirit of the Bank's Open Archives<sup>6</sup> and Open Development Agendas (Access to Information,<sup>7</sup> Open Access<sup>8</sup> and Open Data<sup>9</sup>). It is important to note that, although the majority of our photographic holdings include images taken by photographers hired by the Bank, a number of images may have been taken by other photographers, or other organisations and institutions, and we have not added a Creative Commons license to those. These photographs are found within our holdings and are included on the site for reference and research. Client requests for these photographs are referred to the creating or issuing institution. As the Photo Catalog is a work in progress, anyone searching for images not yet available on the site can contact the WBG Archives.<sup>10</sup> The most recently digitized series of photographs, ranging from the 1950s to the 1980s, which are currently in the cataloguing queue but not published yet, feature images of annual meetings, staff activities, as well as portraits of former senior staff and executive directors.

### Practicality of managing a collection

As the WBG Archives photographic holdings have never been catalogued and described in their entirety the strategic planning and budgeting for this initiative has posed

challenges. The total number of prints, slides, negatives, and albums is estimated to be over a half a million, accounting for the possibility of duplication. Examples of duplication are the print versions created from negatives, plus the negative strips themselves, which include near-identical shots, either of a sitter or of a scene. The strategic planning for a collection of this scope and size considered: the frequency of request; the conservation of vulnerable

formats such as the negatives; and resource requirements (human, financial, and technical). Beginning with the project-related photographs, since they are most in demand and available as negatives, was an obvious choice for the first selection. As we do not have in-house capability to digitize

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**To date, approximately 8,000 images—spanning 79 countries from Afghanistan to Peru—are available online for public access and download.**

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negatives in large volumes, a strategic partner aligned with our off-site records center services and who is an expert in digitizing older media formats was contracted to perform the digitization. They undertook this task within the secure space of the WBG Records Center and full custody of the materials by WBG staff has been maintained. The digitized versions were returned to us on hard drives, and were uploaded onto the network and the Archives' content management system (CMS), which links to the external site through an application program interface (API). Initially the metadata cataloguing was conducted by various contractors and staff when time permitted, but we soon realized that scaling-up this process with a defined workflow would increase the volume of catalogued material and improve consistency and quality through a built-in quality control step. Leveraging the data entry skills of our colleagues in the off-site WBG Records Center, further training was provided for cataloguing images. A four-day training session was delivered for five cataloguers to ensure they would be up-to-speed to work on this series. In addition, a cataloguing manual was created, which is regularly updated.

Once the digitized images are loaded into the CMS, the cataloguers can add the metadata via free text fields and drop-down menus. The International Press Telecommunications Council (IPTC) standard fields are already available in the CMS; however, customized fields were added to reflect the WBG taxonomy and a more robust keyword search and discovery capability. Cataloguing images related to the Bank and its development projects requires good knowledge of the institution's activities and the people who work there, as well as the vocabulary of the institution and the types of images in the collection.



2. 'Man working on bridge, Gabon, 1961' by World Bank Group/John Moss is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.





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3. Metal cylinder and worker, Austria' by World Bank Group is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



4. 'Meter reading course, Busan, Korea, 1980' by World Bank Group/Keum Yong Choi is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.  
5. 'Learning how to weave, Bangladesh, 1978' by World Bank Group/Kay Chernush is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



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6. 'Acacia market, Colombia, 1974' by World Bank Group/Edwin G. Huffman is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



7. 'Woman carrying wheat, Damota, Ethiopia, 1975' by World Bank Group/Ray Witlin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



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8. 'Train, Australia' by World Bank Group is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



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edbn bulletin

9. 'Loan Signing for Belgium Industry Project, March 1, 1949' by World Bank Group/Gretchen Van Tassel is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



10. 'Man pumping water, Lilongwe, Malawi, 1972' by World Bank Group/James Pickerell is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



11. 'New bridge construction, Mikongo, Gabon, 1967' by World Bank Group/Alain Prott/CIRIC is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.  
12. 'Automobile manufacturing plant, Italy' by World Bank Group is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



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We continue to explore ways in which this incredible collection, together with public access to the Bank's archival holdings, can boost knowledge and research in development.

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A considerable amount of time was spent on developing a thesaurus which would be helpful for the cataloguers to describe the photos when adding metadata and keywords. Although the taxonomy is still a work in progress, a basic set of terms has been added to the CMS which allows for more accurate and consistent description and search capability. The language inherent in the photograph captions is always considered when cataloguing, as well as the time and context in which the image was taken and originally captioned. The approach we use for the captions is to type them verbatim into the caption field, while creating a new title paraphrasing the information from the caption. Since most of the photos in the collection are untitled, we can create new titles using defined language, while allowing for the original caption to describe the photograph. Fortunately, it is not often that we come across terms or descriptions that would be deemed inappropriate today, considering that this series was described through the 1950s to the 1980s. But it is something that we are very mindful of in the cataloguing process within the context of an international organisation and the issues of equality, justice, diversity and inclusion. As we continue to develop the website, we are considering the addition of an explanation for the origin of the captions to clarify that they have not been written by the Archives team, but by External Affairs Department at the time the photograph was taken and processed.

#### **Future uses and goals**

The success of this ongoing digitization and cataloguing project has prompted us to consider further digitizing and cataloguing the significant audio and moving image holdings of the WBG Archives. This would include keyword search and downloading of sound clips and moving image for both Bank staff and the public via the site as well as internally through the CMS. Artificial intelligence and machine learning tools are currently being investigated in various use cases as well: metadata tagging via image recognition; auto-transcription; etc. As we continue to explore these use cases, we are also considering several questions such as: what out of the box tools are available for this purpose and how accurate and reliable are they? Can such tools be easily customized to meet our requirements and integrate with the CMS? What is required from subject matter experts to customize and train the application? Other considerations are understanding the need for human quality control to catch erroneous tagging, and what is needed to maintain and customize the tool in the future to address different series of materials and new categories of images.

We are also thinking about how to add metadata to photographs lacking contextual information and are considering a crowdsourcing approach. This would be an engaging way to add information to unidentified images; and could encourage public participation with

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We have an incredible and unique opportunity to open this documentary evidence to the world and offer a full picture of the Bank's work to eliminate poverty and promote shared prosperity worldwide.

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photograph-related projects and with the WBG Archives. We recently took part in two social media activities on Instagram<sup>11</sup> and Flickr<sup>12</sup> for International Archives Week<sup>13</sup>, and we hope to promote social media engagement to boost awareness and sharing, especially in promoting WBG historical milestones and events.

### How can the collection help member countries and the public at large in the future?

We continue to explore ways in which this incredible collection, together with public access to the Bank's archival holdings,<sup>14</sup> can boost knowledge and research in development. Many of these images portray extreme poverty and hardship, but also economic development, community engagement and improvement to peoples' lives; they offer a reminder of the people and places that were (and perhaps still are) ultimately affected by the Bank's work. Providing online access to this collection can inform research on gender,<sup>15</sup> social development<sup>16</sup> and climate change:<sup>17</sup> key themes and challenges being faced world-wide that are captured through images of people, communities and their land, and provide the visual language of the Bank's history and its contribution to the story of economic development. As archivists at the World Bank Group, we have an incredible and unique opportunity to open this documentary evidence to the world and offer a full picture of the Bank's work to eliminate poverty and promote shared prosperity worldwide.

### Author's profile

Shiri Alon, a Canadian national, has an MLIS from McGill University (Montréal, Québec, Canada) and currently works as an Archivist in the World Bank Group Archives in Washington DC, USA. Shiri is part of the Access to Information team and manages the historical photo collection project.

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