



Lagos Municipal Photo Library

“Recovering Visual Memories”

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picking figs - c. 1910

77 Lagos.
Apanhando os figos



The Main Functions of the Municipal Photo Library

1. To manage the photographic archives
2. To photograph patrimonial/heritage and events
3. To recover memories from antique photos
4. To return to the community collective memories

These are the most important aspects of our work which comprises of 54 thousand paper photos – 62 thousand photograms – 160 thousand digital photos (2.000 antique photos).
Let's have a glance to the third item.

3. Recovering lost memories in antique photos



salling cockles - c. 1940

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century photos began to replace the written word and the image frees itself from the artistic feud and from the control of the elite. Photography is universalized.

Photography creates new artistic opportunities and this allows everyone the possibility of building icons and to express themselves through these icons. It fixes permanently and freezes people's faces from far and near, setting standards or revealing exotic features, broadening the acceptance of the human variety.

This is the great revolution that Photography operates. Allowing the recording of features of each person, of all persons without distinction, rich or poor. With Photography, man approaches his own world and that of his fellow man.

However, after several decades, and in some cases even more than a century, many of the photos which did not count with the addition of metadata, at the time, are today enigmatic images. It's this interpretation of the contents of the photos that we seek to achieve. This is our goal.



António Barbosa Lobo Viana

Comerciante

VIANA DO CASTELO, 1792 – LAGOS, 1873

'imago mortis' of a local merchant - 1873

Photography perpetuates the memory of those who have left us and recalls how ephemeral our existence is.

The forgotten people from two or three generations ago, their faces forgotten, have, in the evocation of photography an ally to minimize this forgetfulness. For every human being living today there are 15 that have passed away. Man cannot afford to forget its ancestors and the knowledge gained by them. The contribution of Photography to this end is precious.



79 Lagos - Um aguadeiro.
waterseller- c. 1920

A photo can show us the appearance of a waterseller from the early twentieth century, the clothing and the utensils used, his constitution and the apparent condition of his health; or a place, a building, a village, showing details that the written description often omits. And this is the essential information for understanding the path to present times.



locals in a Lagos central square - c. 1915

«Here everyone knows each other and know each other's life. These qualities and defects are simultaneously the fascination of a small town turning into a cosmopolitan urbe.»

This is a visual memory and a statement of what Lagos was like one hundred years ago.

Such pictures of which little or nothing is known beyond what it shows, the challenge is to discover its true content.

Where is this place?

Who is she?

What does she do?

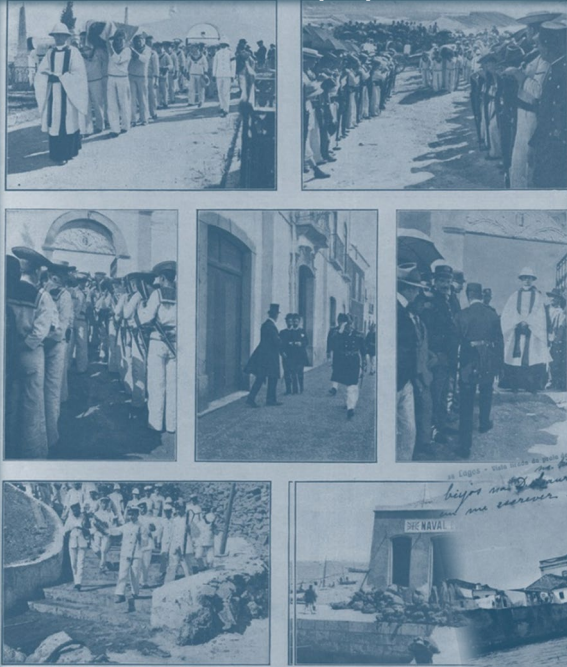


Portugal-Lagos-Vendedeira.

- I know her! She's just descended from the Andes. - *Mrs. D. (housewife)*
- The Lama looks funny! - *Jorge (taxi-driver)*
- They don't look very happy. - *Nina (hairdresser)*

Submitted to the public in a social network, with the caption "sellerwoman", the character was identified by multiple users as a washerwoman, a peasant, and even as someone's grandmother or great-great-grandmother of somebody else. This is not the place to elaborate on social anthropology but this episode may well illustrate the occurrence of the projection of personal experiences on an icon that it evokes. However, using arithmetic, this somebody's great-great-grandmother would have died at the age of hundred fifty.

Newspapers



Lagos A visita do almirante Barrozo a Câmara Municipal e o funeral d'um marinheiro inglês.
 O presidente Andrade com a esposa e Deane - Estado de saúde - A grande de Loure de D. Francisco ao convalescer - O almirante estado de saúde de
 o governador de Lagos a partir de setembro - A festa de aniversário de D. Francisco - O almirante estado de saúde de
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Incidental chats



Institutional files

Official records



Postcards



Interviews



The interpretation of the contents of a photo may involve research in newspapers, postcards, institutional archives, interviews, or simply finding the answers in accidental conversations. It's not an easy work and frequently, it's not a finished work. There is always more to discover.

The present is the memory of things passed

The duty of not forgetting is extendible to the entire historical legacy. The memory of what preceded us must be preserved. The memory is an intangible heritage. A photograph is also a memory.



gathering fishing nets – late 40'

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