

Conservation Treatment of Photographs

Iraqi Jewish Archive Preservation Project National Archives and Records Administration

There are many photographs in the IJA materials. By far the most common occurrences are in school materials where several papers, some with photographs, are inserted into folders, either loosely or paper-clipped. Though not extensively moldy, these materials did get wet and photographs have blocked onto neighboring pages. If these photographs were originally adhered to their supports, the original adhesive has failed entirely. Many of the photographs have handwritten names, numbers, or the printed name of the photographer's studio on the verso. There are other types of photographs in the collection and these protocols are intended to apply to them as well.

Photographs appear in the archival materials in several broad categories:

- Completely detached from surrounding pages.
- Completely fused on the emulsion side to the verso of the opposing page(s).
- Partially fused on the emulsion side to the verso of the opposing page(s).

Photographs in all of those categories appear either with emulsion and baryta layers mostly intact, or with the layers of the photograph severely deteriorated and unsalvageable.

All IJA materials will be mold remediated before they can be handled outside of the fume hood or imaged. During cleaning, strength of the fusing and the condition of the emulsion and baryta layers will be examined. If an item with photographs cannot be adequately cleaned due to extensive fusing of pages, it will not be imaged.

Detached Photographs:

- In cases where the photographs have already detached or where gentle page turning during mold remediation causes them to spontaneously separate from their surrounding pages, the photographs will be sleeved.

Lightly Fused Photographs with visibly intact emulsion and baryta layers:

- For lightly fused photographs, an attempt will be made to mechanically separate the photograph from the opposing page(s).
- If the emulsion and baryta layers are intact or mostly intact and the fused paper separates with gentle pressure, the photograph will be separated. It will not be separated if doing so would cause significant damage to the image.

Firmly Fused Photographs:

- Photographs completely fused on the emulsion side will be lightly tested at the corners to determine if there is the possibility of recovering the image or if the emulsion/baryta layers are too damaged to recover. If there is no angle of purchase or the photograph layers are compromised, the photograph will not be separated. The fused photograph and any supporting pages will be sleeved together and a “Photograph cannot be separated for imaging” slug will be inserted.

Re-Attaching Photographs:

- When the original position is clear, paper-backed photographs will be tipped in place with four dots of wheat starch paste at the corners. If any photographs are found with unique information on the verso, they will be either sleeved in polyester film or hinged in place with long-fiber tissue and wheat starch paste to allow access to that information, and both the recto and the verso be imaged. For the school materials, unique information does not include:
 - Student’s name (when repeated on surrounding papers)
 - Photography studio name
 - Numbers
- When the original position is not clear, the photograph will be placed in a corner of a Mylar L-sleeve.
- RC photographs will be hinged in place with heat-activated Lascaux 498hv on long-fiber tissue.

Other Treatment:

- Treatments that are out of scope for this project include consolidating damaged photographs or using wet treatment methods.
- Exhibit items may receive more detailed treatment.

Imaging Photographs:

- Photograph offset is prevalent in the IJA. The school photographs will generally be imaged in their original folder presentation (see definition below). This will allow offset from the photographs on neighboring pages to be seen. The conservators will indicate with flags and on the work ticket if the entire IJA item or just a subfolder should be imaged using this method.
 - *folio presentation*: two single pages are photographed together in the position in which they are found. This is the usual presentation in the project for archival materials, even when there is no photograph offset.

- *original folder presentation*: two pages in each image, i.e. *folio presentation*, but with previous and later pages in a stack underneath the imaged pages.
- If the photographs are reattached and have no unique information on the verso, only the image on the recto will be imaged. If the photographs are in sleeves, or if reattached photographs have unique information on the verso, conservators will request that the photograph be shot first recto, then verso.