

## Exhibition Title

*Olympic Games 1896*

*The photographic album of Albert Meyer*

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In 1896, Albert Meyer (Dresden 1857-1924), one of the best-known German art photographers, accompanied his country's delegation to Athens, as emissary of the German Committee, in order to photograph the Olympic Games. His purpose was to document the Olympic Games and put together a commemorative album, intended for the German Royal Court and the International Olympic Committee. Meyer's photographs, printed using the platinotype process, which provided a broad tonal range, offer a rather austere documentation of the event. They mostly depict athletes in rather severe poses in the Panathenaic Stadium, shot as if they were in a photographer's studio, just before or immediately after their event. Because Meyer's archives were totally destroyed during the bombing of Berlin in the Second World War, the documentation of Meyer which we have today is very sparse and, consequently, the existence of this particular album takes on special importance. The album contains 25 loose photographs pasted on to a frame. Apart from their value as documentation of a historic world event, they can undoubtedly be described as 'art' photographs, from the point of view of their photography technique and from that of the quality of the reproduction. This particular album belonged to one of the most distinguished members of the Athenian society of the time, Georgios Streit (1868-1948), who acquired it in his capacity as Secretary of the Olympic Games Committee (1896). The album subsequently passed into the Yeroulanos family, who donated it to the Historical Archives of the Benaki Museum.

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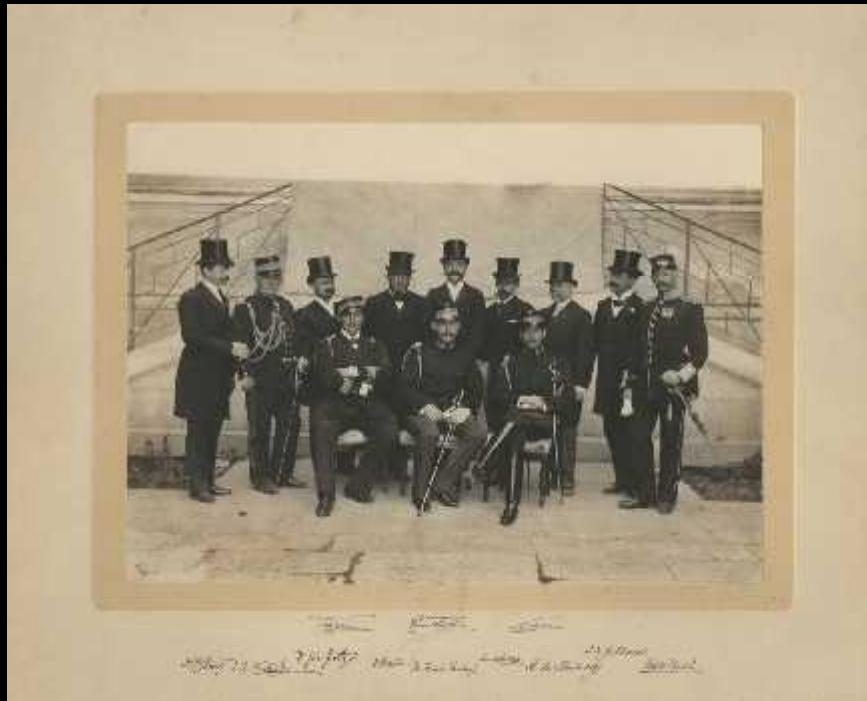
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Albert Meyer.  
Members of the first International Committee.  
Pictured seated in the first row are: in the centre, the President of the International Olympic Committee, Dimitrios Vikelas (Greece), left the Secretary Pierre de Coubertin (France) and right A. de Boutowsky (Russia). Standing, from left to right, are Willibald Gebhardt (Germany), Jiri Guth-Jarkofsky (Bohemia), Ferenc Kemeny (Hungary) and Viktor Balck (Sweden).

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Albert Meyer.  
Members of the first International Committee.  
Seated from left to right: Prince George, Prince  
Constantine, Prince Nicholas. Standing from the  
left to right: Georgios Streit, If. Kokkidis, Jiri Guth-  
Jarkofsky, Dimitrios Vikelas, Ferenc Kemeny, Pierre  
de Coubertin, A. de Boutowsky, Willibald  
Gebhardt, Viktor Balck.

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Albert Mayer.  
The statue of Georgios Averof, to the right  
of the entrance to the Panathenaic  
Stadium

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Albert Meyer.  
The Panathenaic Stadium, looking towards  
the horseshoe end

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Albert Meyer.  
The Philharmonic Orchestra entering the  
Stadium

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Albert Meyer.  
The Greek athlete Panayiotis Paraskevopoulos , 2<sup>nd</sup> place in  
the discus

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Albert Meyer.  
The Greek athlete Panayiotis Paraskevopoulos,  
preparing to throw the sphere

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Albert Meyer.  
The German athlete Hermann Weingärtner performing  
exercises on the rings

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Albert Meyer.  
The German athlete Alfred Flatow (1<sup>st</sup> place) performing  
exercises on the parallel bars

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Albert Meyer.  
The Greek athlete, marathon-winner Spyros  
Louis in national costume

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Albert Meyer.  
The Greek athlete George Tsitas and the German  
Karl Schuhmann shaking before the final  
match in wrestling

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Albert Meyer.  
The start of the 12-hour cycle race

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Albert Meyer.  
The athletes Friedrich Traun and John P. Boland  
during the tennis match

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Exhibition specifications

- Content: 1 album, 23 enlarged and framed photos (The dimensions of the wooden frames are: 65cmX84cm, 11 of which are vertical and 12 horizontal)
- Catalogue Title: *The First Modern Olympics, Athens 1896*
- Language: **English**
- Benaki Museum Department: **Historical Archives**