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# Swiss Literary Archives



Between Montgomery and Columbus – 'Sharecroppers' in the cotton fields of Georgia



Eslam Qala – Jat (gypsies) without tents, without burden – homeless people



'River Mongala', July 1941 – Ferry (made of several pirogues joined together) – and natives' pirogues on the Mongala River

Photos by Annemarie Schwarzenbach are the first collection available online in the database *HelveticArchives*. – *Bulletin Starobinski* provides the SLA with a platform for information concerning the work of this scholar and critic from Geneva. – *Quarto Bergell* explores the topography of a valley from the perspective of the literature of the four languages of Switzerland and through the holdings of the SLA.

## Collection

In 2008 eleven new literary estates were acquired, including those of Anna Felder, Franz Hohler and Grisélidis Réal. Eleven inventories are newly available online including those of Georges Borgeaud, Alice Ceresa and Annemarie Schwarzenbach.

The most important milestone for the cataloguing of the collection was the launch of online access to the archive database *HelveticArchives* in May 2008, in time to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Annemarie Schwarzenbach's birth. Approximately 2'500 of her photos were made available online for the first time. By the end of the year the total archive plan of the SLA as well as individual inventories were represented in *HelveticArchives*.

Work on the integration of the Robert Walser Archive in the SLA continued. During 2009 the Robert Walser Centre in Bern will be opened and the Robert Walser Archive will be integrated in the SLA providing it with a new focal point in exile literature.

Thanks to grants from the SLA Support Association the archives and estates of Jean Starobinski, Hugo Loetscher, Peter Bichsel, William Ritter and Anne-Lise Grobety were acquired.

In the framework of the project *Imvocs*, which is supported by *Memoria<sup>v11</sup>*, approximately 500 sound files were digitised. These are described in the inventory [www.imvocs.ch](http://www.imvocs.ch).

## User Services

The SLA was visited by 1'157 persons for research purposes (2007: 888). In addition, there were 1'867 responses to telephone, written and electronic enquiries (2007: 1'653). The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Annemarie Schwarzenbach was clearly noticeable in the usage. Researchers, exhibition creators and embassies from Lisbon to Istanbul approached the SLA with the most varied of requests.

In addition to launching online access to the photos in *HelveticArchives* the SLA honoured Schwarzenbach with an interactive presentation on the Internet of three of her trips – Persia, North America and Africa<sup>12</sup> – as well as a testimonial lecture by Klara Obermüller.

With events for a broad public the SLA was not only present in Bern, but also in other parts of the country. These were often developed in cooperation with partners, e.g., a series of events related to Gertrud Leutenegger was produced together with the Cultural Commission of the Schwyz Canton. In cooperation with the Garbald Foundation *Quarto Bergell* was presented in Castasegna. The files of the symposium *Lecturas da La Müdada da Cla Biert<sup>13</sup>* of 2006 in Scuol were published together with the University of Zurich. In cooperation with the Calvignac Foundation the publication *Georges Borgeaud* was released on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

Since 2008 the *Cercle Starobinski* has its own publication forum through the *Bulletin Starobinski*. The work of Andri Peer was honoured by a scientific symposium in Lavin that was co-produced by the SLA. There an audiovisual edition with historical radio and TV programs by and about Andri Peer was presented. This year at the biannual Summer Academy for students that takes place in the *Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel* experts from throughout Europe gave lectures about the topic 'Theatre and Society'.

<sup>11</sup> Association for the Preservation of Swiss Audiovisual Heritage

<sup>12</sup> [www.nb.admin.ch/schwarzenbach](http://www.nb.admin.ch/schwarzenbach)

<sup>13</sup> Readings from the novel *Die Wende* by Cla Biert