

## **LATE 19th–EARLY 20th CENTURY PAPER TYPES AND USES AT THE BRERA ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS.**

As part of a PhD course at Brera Academy of Fine Arts—and other projects related to the reorganization, conservation, and digitization of photographs and administrative documents stored at the Historical Library and Archive—an initial survey is being conducted on watermarks found on correspondence, invoices, albums, registers, and volumes dating from the period 1880–1920.

This investigation aims to reconstruct the local and international paper production and trade connected with the Academy's activities, including teaching, collecting, and documenting students' work and teaching materials, as well as preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

Focusing on the characteristics of watermarks and the type of information they convey within this chronological range, which has traditionally received little attention, can provide valuable insights across various aspects.

First, it serves as a starting point for tracing significant changes in manufacturing processes—including the Fourdrinier and cylinder machines, as well as studies on dandy rolls and watermark applications—across Italian and foreign paper mills and companies identified in Brera Academy documents and works on paper.

Additionally, during this period, watermarks increasingly functioned as indicators of a paper's intended use—such as for drawing, printing, typewriting, or correspondence—in different qualities, formats and weights (e.g., extra strong, linen, imperial). This can be linked to price lists and commercial documents found in the archives of identified paper companies, which often reveal gaps in 19-century watermark databases.

Finally, this project will facilitate the digitization of watermarks, linking Brera Academy collections through the lens of papermaking, including the Historical Library and Archive, as well as its photographs, album, drawing and print collections.

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