Finding Aid for Album fotografico della Persia, 1860

Beth Ann Guynn
Descriptive Summary

Title: Album fotografico della Persia
Date (inclusive): 1860
Number: 2012.R.18
Creator/Collector: Pesce, Luigi, 1827-1864
Physical Description: 2 Linear Feet (2 boxes)
Repository: The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles 90049-1688
reference@getty.edu
URL: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/askref
(310) 440-7390

Abstract: The album of photographs taken by Luigi Pesce contains 21 views of Tehran and environs, followed by 21 views of ancient Persian sites including the Achaemenid ruins of Persepolis, the Achaemenid tombs and Sasanian reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam near Persepolis, and the Sasanian reliefs at Tāq-e Bostân. Pesce took the earliest documented photographs of Persepolis and some of the earliest photographs of Tehran.

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.

Language: Collection material is in Italian

Biographical/Historical Note

Luigi Pesce (1827-1864) a Neapolitan lieutenant colonel and amateur photographer, was employed by Nasir al-Din Shah, beginning in 1848, to modernize the Persian army, and eventually became commander-in-chief of its infantry. Pesce took the earliest documented photographs of Persepolis (and some of the earliest photographs of Tehran), for which he was awarded an Honorable Mention at the 1862 International Exhibition in London.

Photography was introduced into Persia (modern Iran) in 1844 by the Frenchman Jules Richard, whom the Shah had charged with the task of recording the ancient Achaemenid site of Persepolis. When Richard failed to carry out the task, Pesce took the initiative, as is recorded in his own words in an album housed in the Golestan Palace collection, Tehran, that he presented to the Shah in 1858, "There has yet been no one from the West who has captured the images of the ruins by photography. Therefore, it is for the first time that your servant took photographs of the reliefs and ruined edifices of Takht-e-Jamshid and presented them to His Majesty."

Luigi Pesce also presented an album of his photographs to Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (1810-1895) at the conclusion of Rawlinson's brief tenure as British ambassador to the Qajar court (1859-1860). Rawlinson was a British East India Company army officer, diplomat, Orientalist and philologist who has been called the father of Assyriology. He was posted first in India and then to the Persian court, beginning in 1835. There he transcribed and translated the trilingual cuneiform texts that Darius the Great caused to be inscribed on the rock of Behistun at Tāq-e Bostân. His "Memoir on the Babylonian and Assyrian Inscriptions," published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, volume 14 (1851), which comprises a copy of the Babylonian inscriptions at Behistun in the original characters along with an interlined transliteration and a Latin translation, is considered to be his most important work.

Access
Open for use by qualified researchers.

Publication Rights
Contact Library Reproductions and Permissions.

Preferred Citation
http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa2012r18

Acquisition Information

Processing History
The collection was cataloged by Beth Ann Guynn in 2012. Additional material integrated in 2016.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The album of salted paper and albumen photographic prints contains 21 views of Tehran and environs, followed by 21 views of ancient Persian sites, all of which Pesce made for his employer, Nasir al-Din Shah. Although Pesce first presented his photographs to the Shah, in this album he has “repurposed” a set of prints as a personal gift to Sir Henry Rawlinson. Just as the monuments, edifices and subjects of the bas-reliefs Pesce depicted for the Shah can be seen to relate to the Qajar court, so can specific images included in the present album be seen to allude to Rawlinson’s achievements. Thus, the inclusion of a cuneiform inscription acknowledges Rawlinson’s scholarly interests and achievements, while bas-reliefs of soldiers and of Darius’s army flanking the great staircase at Persepolis can be seen as allusions to his vital military role in Persia, including his mustering and training of the Guran Kurds, a difficult-to-rein-in mountain tribe.

The views of Tehran and environs include historic monuments such as the Mogul mausoleum of Ilkahan Uljäytü Khudâbandâh, known as the Dome of Soltaniyeh; views of the city’s gates; and Qajar buildings such as Golestan Palace and the military school, headquarters, and residence. Many of these structures have either been radically altered or no longer exist, such as the three city gates documented in the album. Several views of the Golestan Palace record buildings and architectural and decorative details that were destroyed or modified in the course of subsequent restorations. Other photographs, such as the view of the military school, appear to be the only visual documentations of Qajar buildings that are no longer extant.

Ancient Persian sites depicted in the album include the Achaemenid ruins of Persepolis, the Achaemenid tombs and Sasanian reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam near Persepolis, and the Sasanian reliefs at Tâq-e Bostân in Kirmânshâhân province. These photographs are not only the earliest photographs of these sites, but the specific subjects of the reliefs chosen for inclusion can be seen as illustrating the symbolic relationship between the mid-nineteenth century Qajar court and the glories of the Persian Empire.

Included with the album is a brief handwritten note regarding H. C. Rawlinson written on the letterhead of the Commander-in-Chief in India and signed: Cin in C India 1921 (i.e. General Henry Seymour Rawlinson, 1st Baron Rawlinson, and son of H. C. Rawlinson).

The album is quarter-bound in leather with floral Qajar-style lacquer covers. The front and back paste-downs, also in the Qajar style, have central cartouches depicting a bird among flowers.

The free front endpaper contains a handwritten title: Album Fotografico / della / Persia / Compilato dal Sig.r Luigi Pesce, Tenente Colonello / Instruttore d’Infanteria al servizio dello Shah / Teheran.

The dedication on the flyleaf reads: A Sua Eccellenza / Il Signor Generale Enrico Rawlinson / Ministro Plenipotenziario di Sua Maestà la Regina / d’Inghilterra / et. et. et. / presso / La corte dello Shah di Persia / Teheran 12 Maggio 1860 / In omaggio.

Captions are handwritten on the mounts in Italian. The photographs are signed in the negative: L. Pesce.

Also included in the collection is a lithograph portrait of Rawlinson by an unknown artist.

**Arrangement**

In original order.

**Subjects - Names**

Rawlinson, Henry Creswicke, Sir (Portraits)

**Subjects - Corporate Bodies**

Kâkh-i Gulistân (Tehran, Iran)

**Subjects - Topics**

Sculpture, Achaemenid -- Iran -- Persepolis
Relief (Sculpture), Ancient -- Iran -- Persepolis
Achaemenian inscriptions
Relief (Sculpture), Ancient -- Iran -- Naqsh-i Rustam
Cuneiform inscriptions
Art, Sassanid

**Subjects - Places**

Iran -- Antiquities
Tâq-e Bostân site (Iran) -- Antiquities
Bisutun Site (Iran) -- Antiquities
Sulâţñiâyâh (Zanjân, Iran)
Finding Aid for Album fotografico della Persia, 1860

Luigi Pesce Album fotografico della Persia, 1860

2012.R.18-fp Front paste-down
Scope and Content Note
Decorated in Persian style, with a central floral cartouche.

2012.R.18-ffe Title page
Scope and Content Note
Handwritten title: Album fotografico della Persia: / Compilato dal Sig.r Luigi Pesce, Tenente Colonello / Instruttore d’Infanteria al servizio dello Shah / Teheran.

2012.R.18-fl Dedication
Scope and Content Note
The handwritten dedication reads: A Sua Eccellenza / Il Signor Generale Enrico Rawlinson / Ministro Plenipotenziario di Sua Maestà la Regina / d’Inghilterra / et. et. et. / presso / La corte dello Shah di Persia / Teheran 12 Maggio 1860 / In omaggio.

2012.R.18-1r Porta del governo a Teheran
Scope and Content Note
A view into the royal Qajar palace complex during the Nowruz or New Year’s celebrations shows the Shah seated on a throne with crowds of officials and two elephants in attendance.

2012.R.18-2r Entrata del Palazzo Reale a Teheran

2012.R.18-3r Trono d’alabastro a Teheran

2012.R.18-4r Prima corte del Palazzo Reale a Teheran

2012.R.18-5r 2da corte, e Salone d’inverno dello Shah

2012.R.18-6r Trono detto de Pavone a Teheran

2012.R.18-7r 3a corte del Palazzo Reale a Teheran

2012.R.18-8r Gran salone di ricezione nella 3a corte a Teheran

2012.R.18-9r Grande cerimonia del salam al 10 dell’Anno
Scope and Content Note

2012.R.18-10r Porta della cittadella a Teheran

2012.R.18-11r Bazar Emr a Teheran

2012.R.18-12r Tomba del Kan di Kiva a Teheran

2012.R.18-13r Scuola militare a Teheran

2012.R.18-14r Nizamia presso Teheran

2012.R.18-15r Davuddie presso Teheran

2012.R.18-16r Quartiere delle donne a Davuddie

2012.R.18-17r Montagne Alburz prese dal villaggio di Gulack, Teheran

2012.R.18-18r Casa di campagna dell’ ambasciata russa a Teheran

2012.R.18-19r Porta nuova a Teheran

2012.R.18-20r Grande moschea in ruina a Sultanie
Page 21 recto 2012.R.18-21r Piccola moschea in ruina a Sultanie
Page 22 recto 2012.R.18-22r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Depicts a relief of a lion attacking a gazelle.

Page 23 recto 2012.R.18-23r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Shows a bas-relief on an inner wall depicting two Achmaemenid soldiers holding lances.

Page 24 recto 2012.R.18-24r Inscrizione cuneiforme a Persepolis
Page 25 recto 2012.R.18-25r Ruine a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
View of walls, one with bas-reliefs.

Page 26 recto 2012.R.18-26r Ruine a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Ruins with four columns.

Page 27 recto 2012.R.18-27r Tomba sulla rocca a Persepolis
Page 28 recto 2012.R.18-28r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Two registers of processions (and part of a third showing legs only) moving from left to right: a tree followed by men bearing gifts and men with horses and donkeys.

Page 29 recto 2012.R.18-29r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
One and a half registers of processions moving from left to right.

Page 30 recto 2012.R.18-30r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Two registers of processions (and part of a third showing legs only) moving from right to left with trees, men bearing gifts and men with rams.

Page 31 recto 2012.R.18-31r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Two registers of processions (and part of a third showing legs only) carved along a stairway and moving from right to left with trees and men bearing gifts.

Page 32 recto 2012.R.18-32r Ruine a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Shows the pair of Lamassus sporting human heads on the western entrance of the Gate of All Nations with two columns and the back side of the western entrance in the background.

Page 33 recto 2012.R.18-33r Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Bas-relief on a column depicting a man killing a rampant griffin.

Page 34 recto 2012.R.18-34r Entrata principale a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Shows the pair of Lamassus sporting wings and Persian beards on the eastern entrance of the Gate of All Nations.
**2012.R.18-35r** Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Two registers of processions (and part of a third showing legs only) moving from right to left with trees, men bearing gifts and men with pony carts and with oxen.

**2012.R.18-36r** Bassi-relievi a Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Two registers of processions (and part of a third showing legs only) moving from right to left with trees, men bearing gifts and men with camels and oxen.

**2012.R.18-37r** Bassi-relievi a Naksu-Rustem, Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
View of the equestrian combat bas-relief at Naqsh-i Rustam probably from the time of Shapur II.

**2012.R.18-38r** Tomba di Darius a Naksu-Rustem, Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Rock-cut tomb of Darius I (Darius the Great) at Naqsh-i Rustam.

**2012.R.18-39r** Bassi-relievi a Naksu-Rustem, Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Cliff relief near the tombs of Darius I and Xerxes depicting Ardashir I receiving a diadem, symbolizing sovereignty, from the god Hormzid. Both figures are on horseback.

**2012.R.18-40r** Bassi-relievi a Naksu-Rustem, Persepolis
Scope and Content Note
Pre-Achaemenid cliff relief depicting Bahram II and his court.

**2012.R.18-41r** Bassi-relievi a Takti-i-bustan, Kirmoskiah
Scope and Content Note
Rock relief at Tāq-e Bostān depicting Ardashir II receiving the beribboned ring, symbol of royal investiture, from his Ahura Mazda. Mithra stands to the left holding a barsom, a ritual bundle of stiff, straight rods, to sanctify the investiture, while the body of the defeated Roman Emperor, Justian II, lies beneath Ardashir II's feet.

**2012.R.18-42r** Bassi-relievi a Takti-i-bustan, Kirmoskiah
Scope and Content Note
Relief to the left of the central relief of the large iwan at Tāq-e Bostān depicting a hunt scene featuring King Khosrow II of Persia standing in a boat and shooting at two wild boars. The relief also suggests the span of Khosrow II's empire by moving from depictions of Indian elephants on its left side to the inclusion of the marshes and reeds of the Nile on the right.

**2012.R.18-bp** Back paste-down
Scope and Content Note
Decorated in Persian style, with a central floral cartouche.

**2012.R.18-s1** Biographical note regarding Major General Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, 1921
Scope and Content Note
Brief handwritten note regarding H. C. Rawlinson written on the letterhead of the Commander-in-Chief in India and signed: Cin in C India 1921 (i.e. General Henry Seymour Rawlinson, 1st Baron Rawlinson, and son of H. C. Rawlinson).
box 2

**Portrait of Sir Henry Rawlinson, undated**

*Scope and Content Note*

Lithograph of a portrait of Rawlinson by an unidentified artist.