Photograph album of antiquities of Egypt, 1887?

Processed by Jane Carpenter with assistance from Simon Elliott; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Photograph album of antiquities of Egypt
Date (inclusive): 1887?
Collection number: 94/186
Creator: Beato, Antonio, d. 1903?, photographer.
Physical Description: 2 albums (285 photographic prints) : b&w, albumen, 37 x 52 cm (albums)
Photographs in v. 1 (26.3 x 38.8 cm) are mounted individually to rectos and versos of 49 leaves of heavy white cardstock; those in v. 2 (21 x 26 cm) are mounted two to a page on 49 leaves; almost all photographs signed "A. Beato" (some in negative), with identifying captions in French written in brown ink below; one of the photographs, no. 46, is dated 1881: "Prise en 1881."
Half-bound in dark brown cloth over dark brown leather boards; spine repaired with a strip of black grained cloth; large ornate circular centerpiece stamped in gold, featuring a lotus flower between two serpents, above an eagle, with wings outstretched, and a panel of hieroglyphics; red marbled endpapers. Armorial bookplate on front pastedown of Oliver Perry, with his motto "Sans crainte."
Each album housed in modern custom beige cloth clamshell box; spine label has title "Beato. Egypt. Vol. I[-II]." Ms. note on endpaper in v. 1 indicates that the albums were originally purchased on Jan. 5, 1925 from Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles for $12.50 each.

Abstract: Two albums of photographs of Egypt by Antonio Beato, probably assembled in 1887 for the Vanderbilt family trip to Egypt, using photographs taken by Beato between 1862 and 1887, during the years he worked from his studio in Luxor.

Language: Finding aid is written in English.

Language of the Material: Materials are in English.

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90095-1575
Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact UCLA Library Special Collections for paging information.

Restrictions on Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Photograph album of antiquities of Egypt (Collection 94/186). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
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Biography/History
British and Italian photographer, famous for his architectural photographs of Egypt. Antonio, often known by the French form of his name, Antoine Beato, worked with his brother, Felice, also a photographer, in Malta, Greece, India and the Holy Land. In 1860 Antonio moved to Cairo, where he lived for two years before finally settling in Luxor. There he established a studio, and spent the remaining years of his life photographing the antiquities, architecture, landscapes, and people of Egypt. His photographs are an extremely valuable record of monuments that have since been defaced or destroyed. He died in 1906.

Scope and Content
Beato's albumen prints document the great temples, tombs, pyramids, and other archaeological sites of Egypt, especially in Luxor, Aswan, Abu Simbel, and Giza, outside Cairo. The Giza pyramids of Cheops and Chefren loom above the great Sphinx, unexcavated, his paws and body still buried in the sand. The album contains views of many of the antiquities sites, such as Dandara, the temples of Luxor viewed from the Nile, the massive columns of the temple at Karnak, the temple of Ramses III at Medina Habu, the colossal statues of Memnon near Valley of the Kings, and the temple pylons at Idfu and Philae near Aswan. Numerous shots record the splendor of the massive statues of Ramses at the Temple of Abu Simbel near the southern border with Sudan. Traditional Egyptian sailboats--both "dahabiyas" and the more humble "feluccas"--used to
ferry passengers up and down the Nile, line the riverbank at Aswan; there are also several photographs of the large tourist steamboats that cruise the Nile, as well as many views of nearby Elephantine Island. Portraits of Bicharin tribesmen, and Nubians offer the viewer a glimpse into the lives of these peoples who roamed the desert, and farmed and raised livestock along the Nile in southern Egypt and the Sudan. The figures Beato often included in his architectural photographs lend a human touch to the impersonal constructions of granite and limestone; and dwarfed as they were in many cases by the massive proportions of the pyramids, temples, and obelisks, convey the colossal scale of these sites. The first two photographs in v. 2 record members of the Vanderbilt party on a trip down the Nile in 1887, probably taken aboard their dahabiya. Ms. captions identify Consuelo Vanderbilt in her early teens—she later became the Duchess of Marlborough in a forced marriage in 1895 to the Duke, Charles Spencer-Churchill; her brother Harold S. Vanderbilt; and her mother, Alva Vanderbilt, whose second husband, Oliver H.P. Belmont, was the owner of the album. Also included are several newspaper clippings from 1933, containing follow-up stories about people in the photographs: the honeymoon voyage of Harold Vanderbilt and his new wife Gertrude Lewis Conaway; a large spread on Consuelo Vanderbilt’s difficult married life with the Duke of Marlborough; and Alva Vanderbilt Belmont’s obituary.

The photographs were probably taken between 1862 and 1887, when Beato was first active in Egypt, although the albums may have been assembled later, probably in 1887 as a travel souvenir of the Vanderbilts’ tour of Egypt.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Subjects
Balsan, Consuelo Vanderbilt --Photographs.
Belmont, Alva, 1853-1933 --Photographs.
Temple of Ramses III (Medinet Habu Site, Egypt)
Ramesseum (Thebes, Egypt) --Photographs.
Great Temple (Abû Sunbul, Egypt) --Photographs.
Great Sphinx (Egypt) --Photographs.
Pyramids of Giza (Egypt) --Photographs.
Temples, Egyptian --Egypt --Photographs.
Tombs --Egypt --Photographs.
Obelisks --Egypt --Photographs.
Columns --Egypt --Photographs.
Pyramids --Egypt --Photographs.
Inscriptions, Egyptian --Egypt --Photographs.
Sailboats --Egypt --Photographs.
Steamboats --Egypt --Photographs.
Nubians --Egypt --Photographs.
Sudanese --Photographs.
Camels --Egypt --Photographs.
Water buffalo --Egypt --Photographs.
Palms --Egypt --Photographs.
Egypt --Photographs.
Cairo (Egypt) --Photographs.
Alexandria (Egypt) --Photographs.
Karnak (Egypt) --Photographs.
Luxor (Egypt) --Photographs.
Valley of the Kings (Egypt) --Photographs.
Aswān (Egypt) --Photographs.
Elephantine (Egypt)
Nile River --Photographs.
Philae (Egypt) --Photographs.
Idfū (Egypt) --Photographs.
Sāqqârah (Egypt) --Photographs.
Dandara (Egypt) --Photographs.
Asyūt (Egypt) --Photographs.
Egypt --Antiquities --Photographs.

Genres and Forms of Material
Photographic prints.
Photograph albums.

Other Index Terms Related to this Collection
Belmont, Oliver H. P. (Oliver Hazard Perry), 1858-1908, former owner.

Related Material
Part of the Photograph Album Collection (Collection 94) in UCLA Library Special Collections.