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A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting

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APPENDIX 1: PHOTO-CHRONOLOGY

General Photo-chronology *Iranian Photo-chronology*⁴⁰⁵

- 1835** *Publication of the first litographic newspaper in Iran by Mirza Salih Shirazi.*
- 1839** Daguerre's process for achieving images by the action of light on silver-coated copper plate is announced. The french government purchases rights to the process and makes it available to the French people.
- Talbot announces to the British Royal academy his process for achieving images on paper by the action of light.
- 1841** Talbot patents calotype process.
- 1842** *Introduction of photography in Iran.*
- 1844** *Jules Richard (1816-1891) becomes the first Western photographer to work in the Persian Court.*
- 1847** Claude Félix Abel Niepce de Saint-Victor proposes using as a negative a glass plate coated with albumen and silver halides.
- 1848** *Luigi Pesce (active 1848-1861), an Italian colonel and master of the calotype process, arrived in Iran.*
- 1849** Gustave Le Gray introduces waxed-paper process in France.
- 1850** Frederick Scott Archer, British sculptor, invents the wet-plate process.
- Blanquart-Evrard announces process for making photographic prints on paper coated with albumen.
- 1851** *A special department for photography was opened in 1851 at Dar al-Funun (Academy), Iran's first institution of higher learning based on Western models.*
- Fochetti arrived in Iran, a master in wet collodion process.*
- August Karl Kriz (1814-1886) experimented in Iran with photography on paper.*
- 1853** Tintype process is invented in France.
- 1854** Collodion positive images ("Ambrotypes") are introduced.

⁴⁰⁵ To elaborate this Iranian photo-chronology, the article "Some Remarks on the Early History of Photography in Iran" by Iraj Afshar has been fundamental.

French photographer A.A.E. Disdéri patents small-format “carte-de-visite”.

1857 *Francois Carlhièe and Henry de Coulibeouf Blocqueville arrived with the French Mission.*

1860 *While photographing the Turcoman revolt in Khurasan, the equipment of Carlhièe and Blocqueville was smashed and Blocqueville was taken prisoner.*

1862 French physicist Louis Ducos du Hauron describes methods of producing photographic images in color.

Luigi Montabone (d. 18779 came with the Italian mission. He introduced the hand-coloring of photograps technique in Iran.

Angelo Piamontese’s article “The Photograph Album of the Italian Mission to Persia (Summer 1862)” is published.

1863 *The eldest treatise describing the act of photography and how to develop pictures and make copies was written by Muhammad Kazim B. Ahmad Mahallati by order of Naser od-Din Shah.*

Publishing of the earliest information known to date about the introduction of photography in Iran: the third volume of the “Mir’at al-buldan-I Nasiri”, written by I’timad al-Saltana (Sani al-Dawla).

1864 Walter B. Woodbury, in England, patents Woodburytype.

Reza Akkasbashi (1843-1889) was granted the title Akkasbashi (Chief Photographer) in recognition of his mastery of photography.

1869 *Nasser od-Din Shah started taking pictures and learnt the technique with Jules Richard and Francois Carlhièe.*

Abdullah Mirza Qajar (1849-1908) traveled to Europe to study photography.

1870 *Mirza Hassan Akkasbashi (1854-1916) started working as photographer in his hometown Shiraz.*

1871 Dry-plate silver bromide process is announced by Richard Leach Maddox; it is not perfected until 1878.

The German ingenieur Ernst Hoeltzer started taking photographs in Isfahan, where he lived for 30 years.

1873 Platinum printing method is invented in England.

1878 *“Fann-I ‘akkasi”, “The Art of Photography” was published in Tehran (translation made by Antovan Khan for Muzzaffar od-Din Shah).*

- 1880** First halftone reproduction of a photograph appears in a NY newspaper.
- Antoin Sevruguin starts working in Iran.*
“Qava'id-I aks va tiligraf”, “Principles of Photography and Telegraphy” was written by Hassan B. 'Ali Rida Lahiji Najafi.
- 1881** Frederic E. Ives invents halftone photoengraving process, making possible reproduction of photographic and other images in same operation as printing of text.
- 1884** *Abdullah Mirza Qajar starts his carrer as profesional photographer after coming back from Europe.*
- 1886** *Mirza Mohammad Reza Akhs (1869-1903) starts working as photographer in Shiraz.*
- 1888** Introduction of George Eastman's Kodak camera.
- “Al-Ma'athir wa l-athari” by I'timad al-Saltana was published (this is the second source of information written about the introduction of photography in Iran, as stated by Afshar).*
- 1889** George eastman applies for patent on transparent roll film.
- 1890** *The Dutch amateur photographer and bussinesmen Albert Hotz took photographs in Iran during a trip of several months in the country. He was also collector of photographs of other photographers like Hoeltzer and Sevruguin.*
- 1895** *Another treatise on photography was written by Nawwab Mushin Mirza.*
- 1896** *Mr Iqbal Yaghma'i's article “The beginnings of the craft of photography and stereotyping in Iran” was published (it is the best source of information about Abdullah Mirza Qajar).*
- 1904** *Mirza Fatollah Chehernegar (1878-1942), starts taking photographs in Shiraz.*
- 1918** *Mirza Habibollah Chehernegar (1897-1943) starts taking photographs in Shiraz.*

APPENDIX 2: LIST AND BIOGRAPHIES OF IRANIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

Reza Akkasbashi (1843-1889)

Court photographer

Tehran

Reza Akkasbashi was the first professional Iranian photographer. He was son of Ismail Jadid Al-eslami, a well-known court servant and brother of Naser o-Din Shah's private doctor, Hakkim Ma-amale. Being still a child also became a court servant.⁴⁰⁶ In 1863, while he was still a servant, the Shah decided that he would be trained as a photographer under the guidance of the French photographer Carlhiée who was working at court. It was Farrouk Khan Aminol-Mool⁴⁰⁷ while he was on a diplomatic trip to Europe, which got in touch with the French photographer and offered him to go to Iran to teach photography at the court of Naser od-Din Shah. He taught the Collodion process³ to Nasser od-Din Shah and to Reza Akkasbashi who was granted with the title *Akkasbashi* (Court Photographer) in 1864. Many photographs taken by Carlhiée were bought by Victor Francois Brongiart, head of the French mission in Persia (1859-1861) and then arranged in an album hosted now at the Gimeè Museum in Paris.⁴⁰⁸ In 1873 Reza Akkasbashi went to Vienna in a trip together with Naser od-Din Shah. A book about the life and work of Reza Akkasbashi has been recently published in Iran with an interesting selection of his work.⁴⁰⁹

The influence of Victorian portraiture is very evident in his work. He uses mostly the sitting pose, frontal and hieratic like the Victorian photographs of that time. One interesting element in his work is the use of a background with a Victorian house and landscape painted on it which makes the final image quite absurd due to the decontextualization of the subject (the person depicted, always Iranians) with the Western atmosphere produced by the background.

Abdullah Mirza Qajar (1849-1908)

Court photographer

Tehran

Abdullah Mirza Qajar who had attended the Dar al-Funun and, in 1869, traveled to Europe to study photography. He lived for one and a half years in Paris and for three years in Salzburg. In 1884 he started his career as a professional photographer immediately on his return from Europe.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ Zoka 1979, pp. 47-56.

⁴⁰⁷ When the Shah of Persia first opened an Embassy in Paris in January 1857, Farroukh Khan was appointed Ambassador.

⁴⁰⁸ This album that has recently undergone restoration and displays an interesting collections of photographs by Carlhiée, Pesce and Gianuzzi, and some paintings. For information about this highly interesting album, see: Sheik, Reza, "Brongiart Album", in *Akhsnameh*, (In Persian).

⁴⁰⁹ Tahmasbpour, Mohammad Reza, *Agha Reza Akkasbashi*, Tehran, 2007. (In Persian).

⁴¹⁰ Zoka 1997, pp. 98-108.

Naser od-Din Shah (reigned 1848-1896)

Tehran

Muhammad Shah who reigned from 1834-1848 had experimented with photography and his court was the recipient of the first daguerreotype camera. But it was under Naser od-Din Shah that photography was really promoted and different techniques learned and mastered. Naser od-Din Shah's reign was from 1848-1896, during the Qajar Dynasty 1785-1925, and his interest in photography began when he was very young when he learned quite quickly the photographic technique and produced his own prints. He started taking pictures in 1869 and learned the technique mainly with Jules Richard (1816-1891) and Francois Carlihi  .⁴¹¹ He also bought photographs from other photographers, Iranian and Western. His main subject was the women and children of his family, taken mostly indoors and his favorite models can be recognized by the number of times they were depicted. Since his photography was only meant to be seen by himself it is of great interest, from both historical and aesthetic points of view. His albums eventually comprised more than twenty thousand photographs. In them we can see the very clear influence of Nadar (1820-1910) and also that of French orientalist paintings, such as those by Delacroix (1798-1863) or Ingress (1780-1867).

It took a lot of effort for the Shah to bring this new invention close to his servants at court where several rooms were reserved for photography, as well as at the Dar al-Funun (Academy), Iran's first institution of higher learning based on Western models. A special department for photography was opened there as early as 1851. This academy was envisioned by Naser od-Din Shah's prime minister, Amir Kabir, as a training ground for future civil servants and military men. Instruction was conducted in a similar pattern to the European academies of fine arts, where art was regarded as a scientific and scholarly discipline. Although the Dar al-Funun ultimately altered art education, the age-old master-apprentice system continued to exist and was also important in the field of photography.⁴¹² The Shah's encouragement of photography in Iran inspired his courtiers, as well as Dar al-Funun students, to take up the art; some, such as Abdullah Mirza Qajar (1849-1908), were even given the opportunity to refine their skills in government-sponsored training in Europe, in workshops or on courses. European professionals were brought to the court and to the Dar al-Funun to work as teachers.

Mohammad Abdoll Ghassem Nuri

Tehran

His father was working at the court of Naser od-Din Shah and he learned the photographic technique when he was quite young. There are several of his photographs hosted in albums at Golestan Palace Library. His work is especially interesting for my research, since he was fond of using inscriptions within the photographic space and he placed his signature within cartouches and in the same way

⁴¹¹ Zoka, 1997, pp 26-40.

⁴¹² Maryam Ekhtian and Marika Sardar, 'Nineteenth-Century Iran: Art and the Advent of Modernity' in *The Time of Art History* at http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/irmd/hd_irmd.htm.
For Dar al-Funun see: Maryam Ekhtiar, *Modern Science, Education and Reform in Qajar Iran: The Dar al-Funun*, New York, Routledge Curzon, 2003.

as the with the illuminators did. Most of the sitters depicted in his photographs are kneeling on the traditional Iranian pose and hold objects borrowed from the Persian painting iconography.

Mirza Hassan Akkasbashi (1854-1916)

Shiraz

When he was 16 years old, he emigrated to Bahrain where he met an English photographer who taught him the photographic technique. Four years after that, he traveled to India and settled in Bombay for 20 years. There he kept on improving the his photographic skills with other English photographer, who was also his student of Persian. He started working as a professional photographer in 1870 when he was 24 years old. During the last eight years of his stay in Bombay, he worked as professional photographer and then returned to Shiraz. In 1894 he opened a studio in Busheir, the first one opened in Fars province. Later on he opened a studio in Kazerum and in 1895 he goes back to Shiraz where he did the biggest part of his production as photographer.⁴¹³

His work, and also that of his family, is interesting for my research, specially due to the use of text within the photographic space, pots of flowers and understanding of the photographic space in general.

Mirza Mohammad Reza Akkasbashi (1862-1902)

Shiraz

He was brother of Mirza Hassan Akkasbashi and started taking photographs in 1886. He traveled, like his brother, to Bombay and learned the retouch technique with the English photographer T.B. Steward. He was running his brother's studio while he was traveling in Irak or in India, where he also worked as professional photographer.⁴¹⁴

Mirza Fatollah Chehernegar (1877-1932)

Shiraz

He was the grand-son of Mirza Hassan Akkasbashi. He also traveled to India and settled in Bombay for a while. He started working as photographer in 1890.

Mirza Habibollah Chehernegar (1896-1942)

Shiraz

Also member of Mirza Hassan Akkasbashi family's, he started his career as photographer around 1918. He lived in India two years.

Mirza Mehdi Khan Chehre-nahma (1891-1979)

Isfahan

He was a pioneer photographer in Isfahan. He became well known as photographer and as *retoucher*. When he was 12 years old, became student of a painter and a couple of years later he traveled to Tehran to learn the photographic technique. When he was

⁴¹³ Translated from Persian from the book: Manssur, Sane, *Emerging of Photography in Shiraz*, 1990, pp 9-12.

⁴¹⁴ Translated Persian from the book: Sane, 1990, pp 13-14.

20 years old, he opened his first studio in Tehran. Some years later, he went back to Isfahan and opened a studio in that city.

**Aghayan
Tabriz**

He was an Armenian photographer active in the last years of the reign of Naser od-Din Shah and the first years of Muzafar od-Din Shah (around 1890-1910). He opened a photo studio together with the Iranian photographer Amishu and other colleagues. There are several of his photographs hosted at the Palace Golestan Library (albums 285 and 292) and also there is an album with forty-eight photographs in the Zoka private collection. His work follows the aesthetics of pictorialist photography, better represented in the West by Margaret Cameron and in Iran by Antoin Sevruguin. One of his favorite topics was portraits of dervishes and used on them the light, atmosphere, composition and pose of the pictorial tradition in photography.

**Ali Khan Hakkem Vali (ca. 1845-1902)
Tehran**

He was a member of a distinguished Qajar family, his father having had a long career as diplomat and governor. When Ali Khan Hakkem Vali was 10 years old, he accompanied his father to St. Petersburg in 1855 and stayed there for several years. During that time, he studied and learned photography.

Around 1860, his father left his post, and father and son traveled throughout Europe. A year later his father was posted to the northern (Caspian) province of Gilan as governor. His father was released from that post in 1869, at a time when Ali Khan was a special attendant at a royal tour of the northern provinces. In 1870, Ali Khan was one of the courtiers who accompanied Naser od-Din Shah on a tour of the Shi'ite shrines in Ottoman-governed Iraq (Najaf, Karbala, al-Kadhimiyya, etc).

He produced an amazing album both from an historical and aesthetical point of view. Although the earliest photographs in the album are portraits of Naser od-Din Shah, taken in 1863, it would appear that the rest of the photographs date from Ali Khan's 1879 posting to Maragha, and the following years. The last date in the text is 1896; however, photographs far from the end of the sequence show a coffin for a Christian with the death date of 1897, and it would appear that the album continues up to 1899 or 1900. Ali Khan Vali's photograph album documenting his career as governor at various places in Azerbaijan (Northwest Persia) between 1879 and 1896, is of virtually unprecedented quality and character. It contains more than 1,400 photographs on 439 pages (including a couple of blank pages within the series), commencing with photos of devotional representations of Shi'ite saints, and of Naser al-Din Shah, the reigning monarch. It then proceeds to document Ali Khan, his family, and all those persons and places he encountered during his career as governor. The photographs are captioned in almost all cases. Moreover, page after page is covered with a continuous narrative of his career, written around the photographs.

WOMAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

Asraf al-Soltane (1901-1953)

Asraf al-Soltane was one of the Iranian pioneer women photographers. She was born in Kermanshah but moved to Tehran when she married her husband Mohammad Hasan Khan Eh-temadol Soltane, one of Naser od-Din Shah's ministers. In the family of Moirel al-Mamahlek, there were also some women photographers. She did not have children and used her time mostly to learn history, medicine, French and the technique of photography with Shahzadeh Soltan Mohammad Mirza Wallet. After the death of her husband, she married again and moved to Mashad.⁴¹⁵ She was a very unusual woman for that time, who lead a life devoted to learn and experience things that were not the norm among Iranian women at the turn of the twentieth century. Eight years after her death, the Iranian historian Soltan Ahmade Doulatshai Yomhan-Douleh wrote about her life and work and that constitutes the best known source of information about this pioneer woman photographer.⁴¹⁶

Fatima Soltan Khanum Tehran

She was the wife of the photographer Mirza Hasan Ali Akkas. There are six photographs taken by Fatima Soltan Khanum that have survived and belong to one of the descendants of these two women.

Osrat Khanum Tehran

She was the wife of the photographer Agha Yusef Akasbashi. She was also sister of Fatima Soltan Khanum. Unfortunately there is no material found this photographer.

Azizé Yahan and Habibé Zaman Shiraz

They were daughters of the photographer Mirza Hassan Chehernegar. They were well-known photographers in their hometown Shiraz and opened the first studio in this city specialized in portraits of women. They became serious professional photographers.

⁴¹⁵ See, Zoka, 1997, pp 178-79, translated by the author from the original in Persian.

⁴¹⁶ See, Tahmasbpour 2005.

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PHOTO-ARCHIVES OF IRANIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

List of photo-archives of nineteenth century photography in Iran (selection)

In Tehran, there are the following photo-archives:

- The Golestan Palace Library, Tehran, there are more than 43.000 photographs and 10.000 glass plates;
- The Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies holds about 200.000 photographs from the Qajar and Pahlavi Era;
- Majlis Library: around 1.500 photographs;
- Tehran University Documentation Centre: around 35.000 photographs;
- National Documentation Centre: around 41.000 photographs;
- National Library;
- Documentation Centre of the Cultural Heritage Organization: around 10.000 photographs;

In Mashad the most important photo-archive is Astane-Qods Library and Documentation Centre holds around 30.000 photographs. There are also important photo-archives in other cities like Isfahan, Tabriz and Shiraz.:

Next to these institutions, there are several important private collections in Iran:

- Dr. Iraj Afsar's collection: around 2.000 photographs
- Arman Stepanian's collection: 2.000 photographs
- Bayani's collection: 800 photographs
- Rana and Bahman Jalali's collection
- Mr. Iliat Kashani: 2.000 photographs and postcards.
- Kamran collection: 15.000 photographs
- Mr. Sahlviri's collection

List of photo-archives of nineteenth century photography outside of Iran (Western photography)

In Holland (around 2.650 photographs):

- Leiden University Library
- National Ethnological Museum in Leiden
- Rijksprentenkabinet in Amsterdam
- Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam
- World Museum in Rotterdam

In France:

- Musée Guimet
- Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris
- Ecole National Supérieure de Beaux-Arts in Paris

In England:

- British Library in London
- Royal Geographical Society in London
- Middle East Centre in Oxford
- Cambridge University Library

In Germany:

- Museum of Ethnology in Berlin
- Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg
- Sevruguin's private photo-collection in Heidelberg (grand-father)

In Austria:

- Herzog Foundation in Basel

In USA:

- Freer and Sackler Gallery from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington
- Fine Arts Library, Harvard University Library
- The Metropolitan Museum, NY