

Photographs of Egyptian Antiquities for Art Studies: A Selection by Gaetano Lodi in the Wladimiro Dorigo Archive

Abstract

This paper focuses on a precious *corpus* of 19th century photographs with Egyptian subjects, kept in the Photo Library of the art historian Wladimiro Dorigo at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The research traces the production context and the acquisition origin of this *corpus*. Since no reference documents were available, the analysis was based on the photo-objects and a wide-ranging bibliography. The study shows that the *corpus* was acquired in Cairo by the painter Gaetano Lodi in the 1870s, and found by Dorigo more than a century later, following the path of his 'master', Sergio Bettini.

Keywords

BETTINI, SERGIO; DORIGO, WLADIMIRO; EGYPTIAN MUSEUM IN BOULAQ (CAIRO); DÉLIÉ & BÉCHARD; LODI, GAETANO; ORIENTALIST PHOTOGRAPHY; SÉBAH, PASCAL; SÉBAH & JOAILLIER

Photography is remarkably present in the scientific archives of many twentieth century art historians. They either include photographs taken by the scholars themselves or commissioned to professional photographers, photographs acquired on the antique market, or reproductions of art works from public and private collections. On the one hand, for their owners, these photographs were essential tools to study works of art and carry out philological research. On the other hand, for us, they are key documents to broaden our knowledge of art history and critique, and to promote research on the history of photography⁻¹.

In this regard, a relevant case in Italy concerns the work by art historians Wladimiro Dorigo (1927-2006) and his 'master' Sergio Bettini (1905-1986). In their academic paths, they would not only share a deep

interest in medieval art, but also the way they would use photography as a research tool⁻². In particular, they had both developed a strong interest in oriental contaminations in Venetian art and architecture in the Middle Ages. This is demonstrated not only by Dorigo's and Bettini's publications, but also by their photographic collections that are complementary to their respective archives and libraries and are kept at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where Dorigo was professor of Medieval Art History, from 1983 to 1997⁻³. Conversely, his 'master' Bettini had taught at the University of Padua until 1975, where he had established a real 'school' on this subject.

Dorigo's interest in oriental influences in Venetian art and architecture in the Middle Ages can be found, in particular, in his studies on: the origins of Venice; the mosaics of San Marco Basilica; and the 'Jerusalemite form' of the first *fabbrica* of San Marco, which was designed according to the Christian temples in Jerusalem, but soon replaced by subsequent reconstructions.

Bettini, instead, had mostly investigated byzantine art between East and West. He had deepened his knowledge through numerous and repeated trips in Italy, Europe, and the Near East. In particular, he frequently travelled to Eastern Mediterranean countries between 1934 and 1938. In this period, he collected a lot of material for his studies in Greece, Bulgaria, Crete, and especially Istanbul⁻⁴. A substantial part of his archive derives from these travels.

Bettini wrote several diaries where he would note his observations and thoughts that he would later use for his publications, to draw architectural plans, and record works of art. Besides, he used to take photographs, aimed at systematically documenting monuments, paintings, details of sculptures, and mosaics. Bettini's gaze was not so much that of the formalist photographer intent on dominating lights, contrasts, and volumes, but rather of the scholar dedicated to recording and classifying the subjects of his studies, even visually. When back from his travels, he would mount the photographs on cardboards, where he would also add captions and descriptions of the portrayed subjects (fig. 1). The notes in his diaries often refer to the photographs, so much so that the combination of text and images could be used as scholarly and unconventional 'guides' of the sites he had visited.

The Sergio Bettini Photo Library has been preserved by the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, since 1987. It consists of about fifteen thousand photographs⁻⁵, mostly reproductions of works of art, organized by type (architecture, painting, sculpture), period (late antique, medieval, and byzantine art), and geographical or cultural area, according to Bettini's original classification. The photographs also come from photographic cabinets of museums and Fine Arts Services, as well as from professional studios, such as those of the Fratelli Alinari, Osvaldo Böhm, and Sébah & Joaillier.

Many photographs personally taken by Bettini can be traced back to their author based on stamps and inscriptions, and above all, because



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Sergio Bettini,

Meteore. Catholicon del convento della Grande Meteora, ante 1937.

Gelatin silver bromide print, 12,9×17,8 cm (secondary support 18,1×24,3 cm).

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, Sergio Bettini Archive, Photo Library, unit 50, inv. 2050008

they are found in his publications. The manuals of byzantine art history, published between 1937 and 1944 by *Novissima Enciclopedia Monografica Illustrata* (NEMI), are among the richest sources of Bettini's photographs. In the book dedicated to byzantine architecture, for example, there are numerous photographs described as "Foto dell'A." –⁶.

Since the Bettini Photo Library has already been extensively investigated –⁷, this paper focuses on Wladimiro Dorigo Photo Library –⁸, which includes the older and more valuable *corpus* of photographs. The Dorigo Photo Library was donated to Ca' Foscari University in 2008, together with the art historian's archive. Kept in the Humanistic Area Library (BAUM) of the same university, it consists mainly of transparencies used for teaching purposes (30 boxes) –⁹. At present, however, its analytical inventory is yet to be taken, with the exception of 235 nineteenth century photographs with Egyptian and Turkish subjects from different photographic series and authors –¹⁰.

The research on the nineteenth century *corpus* of the Dorigo Photo Library (hereinafter referred to as '*corpus Dorigo*' –¹¹) has demonstrated the importance of its items in terms of antiquity and value. These photographs have also drawn particular interest since they had no evident links with Dorigo's studies and with the rest of his Photo Library.

It should be noted that no supporting documents were found to the '*corpus Dorigo*', therefore this paper is the result of in-depth examination of the photo-objects, and their matching with other specimens preserved in the Bettini Photo Library and in foreign collections –¹². This method proved to be especially useful to identify the subjects of the photographs and their authors, i.e. Pierre Calamita, Délié & Béchard, and Pascal Sébah. For example, the work of Pascal Sébah's studio in

Cairo was retraced, which is less extensively reported in the literature, than his other longer-standing studio in Constantinople (now Istanbul).

These investigations were combined with wide-ranging bibliographic research, also on an international level, which proved to be particularly useful to shed light on the production context and on authorship issues regarding some photographs.

The analytical study of the photographic documents, namely images and their supports, derives from the now common recognition that photographs – whether or not they are art reproductions – are not referential images of the portrayed items, but rather material objects full of clues hinting at their production and circulation context, and subject to numerous reinterpretations ⁻¹³.

Photographic campaigns on the Egyptian Museum in Boulaq

The ‘*corpus* Dorigo’ includes a substantial series of photographs showing the setting up of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo ⁻¹⁴, in its first venue in Boulaq. Located on the river Nile banks, opposite to Gezira Island, the Museum was placed in the former headquarters of a river navigation company. The foundation of this Museum can be considered as the direct result of a government institution – the Service des Antiquités ⁻¹⁵ –, established in 1858, in charge of protecting Egyptian antiquities. Preserving and showing Ancient Egypt heritage and artifacts to the public was also a way to prevent there illegal trade abroad, which was very common at the time.

The Boulaq Museum became the first exhibition space dedicated to Egyptian antiquities and the French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette was appointed as its director. In those years, Mariette coordinated concurrent excavations in about twenty different archaeological sites ⁻¹⁶, so as to quickly collect as much material as possible to set up the Museum. The most precious items were exhibited in four rooms, while all the others were stored away ⁻¹⁷. The Boulaq Museum was then officially opened in 1863 with Pasha Ismail, the first Khedivè (Viceroy) of Egypt, personally attending.

According to Mohammad Hassan Abdul Rahman, one of the twentieth century directors of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the exhibition criteria applied at Boulaq were extremely attractive, and also the lighting was functional. All items were classified in such a way as to encourage visitors to carefully examine and look at every single detail. The Boulaq Museum outperformed European museums in highlighting the items on show in the best possible way, so as visitors would often come back and develop a passion for Egyptian antiquities ⁻¹⁸. The Museum was thus very much appreciated and became quite popular in Europe as well.

Abdul Rahman’s description is confirmed by a series of 67 photographs in the ‘*corpus* Dorigo’ that show the museum’s layout and its garden. In the rooms, embellished with majolica tiles and curtains, numerous finds were on display: smaller ones – such as statuettes,

jewellery, pottery, and furnishings – were crammed into glass cases (fig. 2), while bigger items – such as statues, sphinxes, sarcophagi, and funerary stelae – were separately arranged in the rooms. Similar other finds were exhibited also in the garden.

The photographs in this series are all unsigned albumen prints. They are mounted on cardboard with homogeneous size, probably from a dismembered album. They all cover the setting up of the Boulaq Museum. These prints could therefore date back to the period between 1863 – when the Museum was opened – and 1891, when the collection was moved to the Khedivè Ismail Palace in Giza, on the opposite bank of the Nile. This Palace, however, did not prove to be suitable for a museum and, in 1902, the collections were transferred to the much larger premises in Tahrir Square, where they are still located today.

These photographs might have been taken either by a professional photographer or by a technician of the Boulaq Museum, in charge of making a photographic map of the collections, as is still done today in several museums. In any case, this is just an assumption, because there are no signatures, no stamps, nor any other supporting documents that can help us to identify the author of this series of photographs.

However, in the Dorigo Archive, not all the photographs of the Boulaq Museum come from the same photographic campaign and are by the same author. Actually, four more loose⁻¹⁹ albumen prints in the ‘*corpus* Dorigo’ were found to cover the Boulaq Museum.

Three of them are by a different author – also not identified – from the one of the first series of 67 photographs⁻²⁰. They feature three statues on display in the Boulaq museum’s garden. They are similar in terms of quality and format to other prints in the ‘*corpus* Dorigo’ that are signed by Pascal Sébah, a photographer born in Constantinople of Syrian Armenian descent as will be discussed below.

Pascal Sébah is known to have photographed the Boulaq Museum, as demonstrated in his 1887 catalogue⁻²¹. In any case, the subjects of these three loose albumen prints do not seem to coincide with those described in Sébah’s catalogue, nor do the pictures match those currently found in some online catalogues. For example, some of Sébah pictures on Boulaq Museum are available in the prestigious Ken and Jenny Jacobson Orientalist Photography Collection at Getty Research Institute, which includes over four thousand photographs of the Middle East and North Africa, from the period between 1843 and 1920. In particular, in the Jacobson collection, there are three Sébah’s photographs on the Boulaq Museum representing *Osiris*, *Hathor et Isis*, *La Statue de Ché-fren*, and *Les Sphynx de Thoulemes III*⁻²².

Conversely, the fourth loose albumen print can be attributed to Délié & Béchard (fig. 3), since a similar photograph was found in the *Album du Musée de Boulaq*⁻²³.

This album was published in several copies in the early 1870s, as an illustrated catalogue of the Museum. It consists of 40 photographic

**Unidentified
photographer,**

“Boulaq Museum
exhibition”, 1863-1877.

Albumen print,
10,8×12,9 cm

(secondary support
24,8×32,9 cm).

Ca' Foscari University
of Venice, Humanistic
Area Library (BAUM),
Wladimiro Dorigo
Archive, Photo Library,
unit 16, inv. 26



plates by Délié & Béchard with a text written by Mariette ⁻²⁴. However, these photographs fail to match the 67 plates of the ‘*corpus Dorigo*’, both for the selected subjects and the quality of the prints.

The first photographic plates in the *Album du Musée de Boulaq* show the Museum’s exterior and interior spaces. After that, the album sections coincide with each of the different types of monuments – religious, funerary, civil, historical, Greek and Roman – kept in the Museum. As stated by Mariette in his Foreword, the album could serve not only as souvenir for travellers, but, owing to its outstandingly sharp images, also as a tool for scholars to read hieroglyphic texts, as well as a model for artists:

—
Due to the excellent execution of the plates, we can recommend the Album of Mr Délié and Mr Béchard to everyone. Travellers will take it with them as a souvenir of the Boulaq Museum. Scholars will find there the hieroglyphic texts reproduced with clarity comparable to the monuments themselves. Finally, artists will no longer study Egyptian art history from Egyptology books, but rather from the fine prints originating from the cameras of Mr Délié and Mr Béchard ⁻²⁵.

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Nothing of the kind, in my view, can be maintained for the photographic series on the Boulaq Museum in the ‘*corpus Dorigo*’. As a matter of fact, in these pictures, no clear details of the photographed subjects are visible, also due to reflections from glass display cases, perspective distortions, and uneven light (fig. 2). Conversely, the finds photographed by Délié and Béchard were taken mostly frontally in small assemblies, arranged *ad hoc* against proper backdrops, set up



03

[Hippolyte Délié & Émile Béchar],

"Planche 22. Monuments civils", 1871 ca.

Albumen print,
24×17,8 cm.

Venice, Ca' Foscari
University of Venice,
Humanistic Area Library
(BAUM), Wladimiro
Dorigo Archive, Photo
Library, unit 16, inv. 165

and lighting, without any hindrances of display cases, which had clearly been taken away for the photographic campaign (fig. 3).

Délié and Béchar were professional photographers working in Cairo who had asked the director of the Boulaq Museum, Auguste Mariette, for permission to reproduce the exhibit. Their project had been highly welcome, as reported by Mariette in his Foreword. To facilitate the work of these two excellent photographers, the Director himself had chosen the items worth being photographed and published in the Album. Délié and Béchar, on the other hand, arranged the sequence of plates in the Album according to the order adopted in the *Notice sommaire* sold at the Museum entrance ⁻²⁶.

Mariette also mentioned the photographers "Hippolyte Délié et Béchar" ⁻²⁷, without specifying the second photographer's first name.

However, it was Émile Béchar, who is described in the literature as a French photographer, who “worked in Egypt during the 1870s-1890s and produced [...] monumental albums of archaeological sites and antiquities”⁻²⁸. Actually, Émile Béchar was also the “artist photographer”⁻²⁹ who, in 1887, made the album *L'Égypte et la Nubie: Grand Album Monumental, Historique, Architectural*, with texts by André Palmieri⁻³⁰. Further, his collaboration with Hippolyte Délié is confirmed by the brand name on the *verso* of the *cartes de visite* which they had produced together⁻³¹.

Therefore, the photographs of the ‘*corpus Dorigo*’ are overall particularly significant, since they document part of the items on display and the exhibition methods in the Boulaq Museum, currently the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, which hosts one of the most complete collections of Ancient Egyptian artifacts in the world.

Photographs from Pascal Sébah’s branch studio in Cairo

Another significant photographic series in the ‘*corpus Dorigo*’, also with Egyptian themes, features 41 albumen prints⁻³² signed by Pascal Sébah. He is a well-known photographer, who in 1857 opened his studio in Constantinople, initially in Rue Tom-Tom and then in Grande Rue de Péra⁻³³ (now İstiklal Caddesi, in Beyoğlu, Istanbul).

Scholars nicknamed it ‘The Street of Photographers’ for its high number – eleven in 1912⁻³⁴ – of even international photographic studios. Indeed, also two Italian brothers, Carlo and Giovanni Naya, had opened a studio on Rue de Péra. The two arrived in Constantinople at the beginning of 1845, and they would run their business there for eleven years, thus becoming the longest-lived studio of daguerreotype portraits in the city⁻³⁵.

Nevertheless, the photographs in ‘*corpus Dorigo*’ do not come from Sébah Studio in Constantinople, but from the branch that Sébah opened in Cairo on the Great Square of the Ezbekieh in 1873. In these photographs, the most important Egyptian archaeological sites play a prominent role, such as the famous Statues of Memnon in Thebes, the Great Temple of Abu Simbel, the Temple of Karnak, the Temple of Hathor (fig. 4), the Obelisk of Heliopolis, the Pyramids of Chefred and Giza. In addition to these views, there are also portraits of natives – farmers, camel drivers in the Sinai, dancers –, as well as images of monuments, urban scenes, and landscapes. More specifically, these pictures show: a peasant girl and her family; a group of men at an outdoor café; camel drivers; a straw-cutting machine pulled by oxen; the *Dahabieh*, a tourist boat on the Nile; the Rue de la Citadelle in Cairo; the Qaytbay mosque and tomb; the inner and outer pavilions of the Gézyret Palace; and then landscapes, such as those of the Cataracts of the Nile, near Aswan⁻³⁶.

Generally, in these photographs, the monuments show keystone corrections and, where the subjects are not posing, there are sometimes blurred figures that confirm long shooting times with the view camera.



04

Pascal Sébah,

N.° 55. Temple

de la deesse Hathor à

Denderah. Hte Egypte,

1873-1877 ca.

Albumen print,

20,1 × 26 cm.

Ca' Foscari University

of Venice, Humanistic

Area Library (BAUM),

Wladimiro Dorigo

Archive, Photo Library,

unit 16, inv. 177

Besides, captions on the *recto* of these photographs describe the topic, serial number in the author's catalogue, and the signature "P. Sébah, phot.". As highlighted by Özendes:

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During his time in Egypt, Pascal Sébah sometimes included his father's name, in the form Jean, in his own signature. After his death his son Jean (Joannes), who was to take over his father's business, used the same signature, and so became known as J. P. Sébah ⁻³⁷.

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This quote shows that it might be difficult to distinguish between the Egyptian photographs signed by Pascal Sébah and those subsequently taken by his son Jean Pascal. The latter took over the studio in Cairo in 1888, after his father's death and the 'interregnum' of his uncle Cosmi ⁻³⁸.

On the occasion of this handover, and also because of his young age, Jean Pascal started to collaborate with the French photographer Polycarpe Joaillier ⁻³⁹, setting up the 'Sébah & Joaillier' Studio both in Constantinople and Cairo. The two worked together until the early twentieth century, when Joaillier returned to France, which almost coincided with the closure of Sébah's business in Cairo, around 1905.

The studio in Constantinople (later Istanbul) continued working until 1952. Here, Jean Pascal collaborated with other photographers – Hagop Iskender and Leo Perpignani in 1910, and Bedros Iskender and Ismail Insel in 1934 – until its final closure ⁻⁴⁰.

The complex authorship of Sébah's photographs ⁻⁴¹, however, is not only due to the frequent turnover in the studio management, but also to the work of assistants. After his initial trips for the first shooting campaigns and to establish the studio in Cairo, Pascal Sébah allegedly

appointed some assistants to run it. It is indeed most unlikely that the owner of a large studio in Constantinople would actually spend so much time in Egypt, and in remote desert areas to boot, for photographic shooting campaigns. Actually, the French technician Antoine Laroche was documented to have worked also in Cairo's studio. He had been the mastermind of the excellent printing quality of the photographs produced in Sébah's Studio in Constantinople, since 1860. He would later follow Sébah to Cairo until 1877, when he left him to partner up with another local photographer. Laroche is thus to be credited with the excellent quality of Studio Sébah's photographs on Egypt and the Nubian desert, also recognized and awarded at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1878.

It is worth highlighting that in those days, apart from employing several photographers, studios used to collaborate with each other and exchange negatives to fill any gaps in their catalogues. In this regard, Özendes recalls that Pascal Sébah, while in Egypt, exchanged negatives with "H. Bécharde, who had been working in Cairo since 1870 and also had a studio in Paris" ⁻⁴².

According to some authors, this 'H.' stands for 'Henri' Bécharde ⁻⁴³, a professional photographer, who opened his studio in the Garden of Ezbekieh, between 1869 and 1880. This description coincides with the biography of the above mentioned Émile Bécharde, who had worked with Hippolyte Délié on the *Album du Musée de Boulaq*. As documented by Thomas Cazentre, Hippolyte Délié and Émile Bécharde were probably siblings, which may have given Hippolyte the opportunity to sign prints, from the negatives of his brother Émile Bécharde, using his first name initial and his brother's last name, in other words signing as 'H. Bécharde' ⁻⁴⁴. As a consequence, and even in the absence of any primary sources attesting to Henri's existence, the latter assumption leads to the solution of this case.

Sébah and 'Bécharde' continued their collaboration until 1880, allowing Sébah to offer his clients a wide range of photographs of Egypt – from portraits to landscapes, genre scenes, and architecture – in prints of different formats ⁻⁴⁵. This collaboration between the two could also demonstrate that photographs produced by Bécharde could also be offered to Studio Sébah's clients and vice versa. The photographs by both authors, included in the 'corpus Dorigo', could therefore derive from a single acquisition.

Undoubtedly, the variety of subjects offered by Studio Sébah is above all evident in the most updated catalogue of views of Egypt, published in 1887, one year after Pascal's death. *The Catalogue Général de la Nouvelle Collection des Vues de la Haute et de la Basse-Égypte et de la Nubie* ⁻⁴⁶ features more than 750 subjects and is divided topographically into 'Upper' and 'Lower' Egypt. In addition, a supplement to the Lower Egypt catalogue is dedicated to the Arab Museum (at the El-Hakim Mosque, Cairo) and, as already mentioned, to the Boulaq Museum.



a.



b.



c.

Pascal Sébah's production was meant both for locals and the tourist market, already flourishing in Egypt at the time, thanks to mostly Western travellers. The great fascination that Europe felt for the exotic Middle East made the fortune of photograph sellers, who had to meet the tastes of their international clientele interested in genre items, folk scenes, picturesque landscapes, and oriental curiosities of all kinds. These photographs, together with engravings, paintings, diaries, reports and travel literature, contributed to the widespread attraction for the Middle East.

However, panoramic city photographs, more than awards, proved instrumental to the fame of Sébah's Studio⁻⁴⁷. For example, well known are his panoramas of Constantinople, consisting of ten different photographs that make up a single two-and-a-half meter long view, and the panorama of Cairo made up of five photographs. These views are much valued for their exceptional composition, skillful choice of light, sharpness and rendering of the analytical details of the monuments.

There is also a full Cairo panorama in the '*corpus Dorigo*'. It consists of five prints, which, if joined together, make up an about one-and-a-half meter long panoramic view (5 prints of about 26×31 cm each). In the archive, these five prints are kept loose. Most probably, not all of them have been preserved in the same way, since some are more severely faded and frayed than others. The image, however, is always clear (fig. 5).

Finally, apart from the Boulaq Museum series and the series signed by Sébah, almost all the other photographs of the '*corpus Dorigo*' are albumen prints with Egyptian subjects. However, based on research conducted so far, these photographs cannot yet be attributed to any particular series or author. Noteworthy among them is the oldest series made up of 4 albumenized salted paper prints with a view of Constantinople, Turkish houses, a cemetery (fig. 6), and a castle by the sea, respectively.

Gaetano Lodi and the origin of the acquisition of "*corpus Dorigo*"

Due to the lack of reference documents for the photographs in the '*corpus Dorigo*', inferring where Dorigo's interest in these photographs came from is quite challenging, since they do not show any direct link



d.



e.

05

Pascal Sébah,

[N. 4 ABCDE Vues]

Panoramiques du Caire,

1873-1877 ca.

Albumen prints,

26 × 31 cm ca.

Ca' Foscari University
of Venice, Humanistic Area
Library (BAUM), Wladimiro
Dorigo Archive, Photo
Library, unit 16, inv. 219

06

**Unidentified
photographer,**

"Cemetery in
Constantinople",
1855-1860 ca.

Albumenized salted
paper print, 20,2 × 26,1 cm.

Ca' Foscari University
of Venice, Humanistic
Area Library (BAUM),
Wladimiro Dorigo
Archive, Photo Library,
unit 16, inv. 233



with his main research fields, but rather a general curiosity about Egyptian antiquities.

However, significant information can be gained by examining these photo-objects more carefully. The 'corpus Dorigo' was originally kept in a single folder with the inscription *Photographs: perspectives, countries, decorations*, on its spine. Inside this folder, there is also a *carte de visite* with a portrait of a man wearing a fez (fig. 7) ⁻⁴⁸. On its verso, there is the brand name of Pierre Calamita, Otto Schoefft's successor with the Pasha's court in Cairo ⁻⁴⁹, and the following handwritten inscription "Prof. Gaetano Lodi, Decoratore" ⁻⁵⁰.

By comparing this *carte de visite* with other photographic portraits ⁻⁵¹, the man with the fez can be identified with Gaetano Lodi himself, the painter and decorator born in Crevalcore (Bologna) in 1830. Lodi began his artistic work decorating a number of theatres, and then the arcades of the Bank of Italy. His career was later boosted by a series of increasingly prestigious commissions, including the decorations of the Salone dei Corazzieri in the Quirinale in Rome, where, to celebrate the Italian Unification, in 1872 he painted the coats-of-arms of all major Italian municipalities.

Having gained fame throughout Italy, in the same year ⁻⁵² Lodi was invited to Egypt by the Khedivè Ismail Pasha, who had attracted the most renowned European artists of the time to enrich his residences. Lodi accepted the appointment and stayed in Cairo until January 1877, returning to Italy only occasionally ⁻⁵³. On his return, his work continued to be productive and, in 1878, Lodi was appointed professor of ornament at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna.

During his stay in Cairo, Lodi was commissioned by the Khedivè with the design of an imposing Egyptian-style table service and with the decoration of the *harem* and *salamelech* rooms in his Giza Palace. That was the same Palace that would be hosting the collection of the Boulaq Museum in the last decade of the nineteenth century ⁻⁵⁴. Hence, the photographic series on the Boulaq Museum might have been acquired also thanks to his professional relationship with Ismail Pasha, who had promoted the setting up of the Boulaq Museum and then had temporarily hosted that collection in his own palace. The rooms of the Khedivè's palace, used as a museum, were photographed by Jean Pascal Sébah and a series of these photographs are now kept in the Egyptology archives of the University of Milan ⁻⁵⁵.

It was thus to create the table service for the Khedivè, manufactured by Richard Ginori, the famous Italian porcelain maker, that Lodi would often travel to Italy and stay in Florence for short periods. Further, Lodi studied Egyptian monuments and, in a large series of drawings, he reproduced Arabic, Persian, and ancient Egyptian works of art, which he would later use both in his ornamental painting and ceramic decorations ⁻⁵⁶. Some of the drawings of the Egyptian works of art might have been taken directly from the photographs, since some of those preserved in the 'corpus Dorigo' show details of paintings and sculptural

Pierre Calamita,*Prof. Gaetano Lodi,*

1872-1877.

Albumen print,

9,6×5,7 cm

(secondary support

10,4×6,2 cm).

Ca' Foscari University

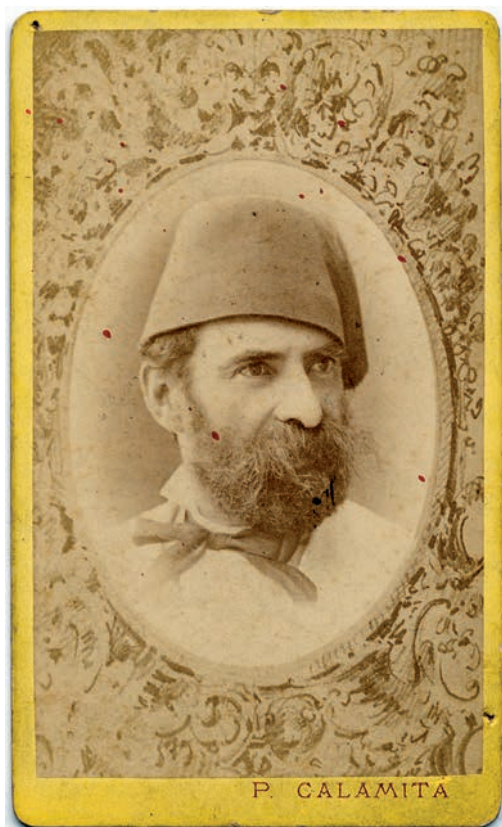
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reliefs. A series of casts of bas-reliefs and stelae, Egyptian style plates and, above all, the 'Egyptian room' in the Palazzo Sanguinetti in Bologna – one of his most successful creations ⁻⁵⁷ – are some of the works resulting from his studies.

Moreover, on the *verso* of several photographs in the 'corpus Dorigo', there is the inscription "Prof. Lodi", thus further confirming that, most probably, all of them had been owned by Lodi. Conversely, we do not know how and when these photographs were acquired by Dorigo. As a matter of fact, the 'corpus Dorigo' is completely different from the transparencies used for his classes that are typical of the rest of the archive. Perhaps, he had just bought this *corpus* on the antique market pursuing his interest in photography and in Egyptian antiquities.

It should not be forgotten that Dorigo used to work with photography and much appreciated its iconographic and documentary importance. From 1973 to 1983, before starting his academic career, he was a conservator at Biennale's Historical Archive of Contemporary Arts in Venice, which – in addition to books, documentaries, and films – used to contain, and still contains, thousands of photographs.

Moreover, Dorigo might have already known and appreciated Sébah studio's photographs, that were part of the collection of his 'master'

Sergio Bettini. As a matter of fact, Bettini Archive contains 59 late nineteenth century photographs of the Mosquée Kahrié –⁵⁸ mosaics, in Constantinople, by Sébah & Joaillier –⁵⁹. These photographs come from the work of their Turkish studio and are gelatin silver bromide prints. On some of them (fig. 8), next to the signature of the author, there is a much faded date – 1892 –, which coincides with the one attributed to similar albumen prints in the Library of Congress –⁶⁰. An attempt was most probably made to erase ‘1892’ from the negatives, so that they could be reprinted by Studio Sébah a few decades after the shooting. In this way the photographic campaign would look as new –⁶¹. Bettini probably purchased this series of photographs by Sébah & Joaillier either during his trip to Istanbul in 1935, when the studio was still operating, or on another occasion –⁶².

It should also be added that, as mentioned in the introduction to this paper, apart from purchasing photographs from prestigious studios, Bettini himself took photographs or commissioned photographic services to other photographers. One of them was Perikles Papachatzidachis, a Greek photographer whose collection is now kept at the Art History Institute of the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice.

The Cini Foundation also holds a Sergio Bettini photographic collection, with 350 negatives taken by Bettini during his travels – funded by the Foundation – to Istanbul and other areas of the former Ottoman Empire, from 1934 to 1940 –⁶³.

As a member of the Scientific Committee that promoted the setting up of Cini Foundation’s Institute of Art History, Bettini actively participated in its projects. This is also evident in a 1955 letter, where Bettini tells the archaeologist Carlo Anti about the campaign of photographic purchases in Turkey and Greece launched to expand the collections of the newly established Institute:

—

As for photographs, of course, I will do my best [...]. But in Constantinople, unfortunately, in this regard, the situation is rather disappointing. Sebah, after the plates he published in the past (I already have the catalogue, which I will give to San Giorgio), has not done anything more, [...] I will try and see if any good local photographer has arrived. [...] In any case, I am going to take a Rolleiflex and an 8/8 Bolex with me, and a sufficient number of films, also colour ones. [...] I have always believed that one of the purposes of the Saint George Institute should indeed be to collect not only current, but original illustrative material [...]. By this I mean not only photographs, but also, especially, film documentaries [...]. In Greece [...], the photographic market is more flourishing. Papahgidakis’ photographic work is practically a must; but the old friend also has almost as many ‘unofficial’ photos, which I believe he is going to give me, as he has always done in the past. And, in the north of the country, I know an excellent photographer from Thessaloniki –⁶⁴.

—

Sébah & Joaillier**Cons'ple,**

N. 1 bis. Mosque K[ah]rié,

1892 / print 1935 ca.

Gelatin silver bromide
print, 12,1×18 cm.

Ca' Foscari University
of Venice, Department
of Philosophy and
Cultural Heritage,
Sergio Bettini Archive,
Photo Library, unit 63,
inv. 2063017



This letter shows that Bettini was not only committed to taking photographs himself, but also to finding foreign professional photographers – Sébah, Perikles Papachatzidachis and “an excellent photographer in Thessaloniki” – who could have further enriched the photographic collections of the Cini Foundation’s Institute of Art History. It is not common for art historians to be also the authors of the photographs held in their archives. This is why the Bettini Photo Library at Ca’ Foscari University and the complementary collection kept at the Cini Foundation are particularly interesting: the works reproduced in these photographs can also be looked at from the art historian’s gaze.

From this study it can be inferred that the photographs contained in the ‘*corpus* Dorigo’ were at the centre of a dense network of relations. In particular, according to the evidence found so far, this series of photographs is more likely to originate from Bettini’s work, who was familiar with foreign photographic studios and would often work with them. While Bettini’s ability to scout photographs, even abroad, is well attested, and his relations with the Studio Sébah and other Turkish and Greek photographers are well documented, the same cannot be said for Dorigo. Maybe, these photographs were personally acquired by Bettini and then given to his pupil; maybe, Dorigo himself acquired them, thus demonstrating his ability to treasure the teachings of his ‘master’. If this were the case, it would need no further evidence.

–¹ For more general detailed information about photographic archives as art history sources, see Caraffa 2011.

–² See Agazzi 2009.

–³ See Agazzi 2006 and Barral i Altet 2005.

–⁴ For a more detailed reconstruction of Bettini's travels, see Agazzi 2011.

–⁵ See the web page dedicated to Sergio Bettini Archive and Photo Library on Ca' Foscari University's website, in <<https://www.unive.it/pag/18038/>> (30.04.2020), and Dorigo 1988.

–⁶ Photograph by the Author. For example, the photograph in fig. 1 is published in Bettini 1932 (p. 50) with many others.

–⁷ See Agazzi / Romanelli 2011, Peressutti 2017, Romanelli 2011, and Zucchi 2017. The inventory of the Bettini Photo Library (Agazzi / Romanelli 2011) is also available online in <<https://www.unive.it/pag/18038/>> (30.04.2020). Please note that in 2012, a scientific catalogue of 350 photographs of the Bettini Photo Library was completed with my supervision. Photograph information sheets are currently available in the Cultural Heritage Catalogue of the Veneto Region, in <<http://beniculturali.regione.veneto.it/xway-front/application/crv/engine/crv.jsp>> (30.04.2020). This first cataloguing campaign was followed by others, for a total of more than 500 information sheets now available online.

–⁸ I presented a first part of this research at the International Conference on *19th-century Photo-*

Archaeology, held at the University of Haifa (Israel) on 2nd April 2019. The Conference was coordinated by Dr. Emma Maayan-Fanar (Senior Lecturer, Art History Department) and hosted by the Nofei Yeda (Landscapes of Knowledge) programme, School of Humanities and the Hecht Museum.

–⁹ For more information, see the web page dedicated to the Wladimiro Dorigo Archive on the Veneto Region website, in <<https://musei.regione.veneto.it/web/cultura/archivio-wladimiro-dorigo>> (30.11.2020).

–¹⁰ In 2011, a first study and the scientific cataloguing of this *corpus* of photographs was coordinated by myself. The 235 photograph information sheets have been catalogued and are available in the Cultural Heritage Catalogue of the Veneto Region (cfr. note 7).

–¹¹ This is the name I chose to facilitate the reading of this essay.

–¹² As to foreign collections, this research covered reproductions of photographic documents and albums published in online catalogues.

–¹³ For updated, in-depth information on the issue of "material turn" in photography, see Bärnighausen *et al.* 2019 and Bärnighausen *et al.* 2020.

–¹⁴ Piacentini 2010.

–¹⁵ Later known as the Supreme Council of the Antiquities, and today's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

–¹⁶ See Nannicini 1982 [1969], p. 11.

–¹⁷ *Ibidem.*

–¹⁸ See Nannicini 1982 [1969], p. 12.

–¹⁹ Not mounted on a secondary support.

–²⁰ Inventory numbers 162-164.

–²¹ See #Sébah 1887, p. 36.

–²² See <http://www.getty.edu/research/special_collections/highlights/middle_east/> (30.04.2020). The Getty also holds the Pierre de Gigord collection with over 6.000 photographs of the nineteenth and early twentieth century of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, recently digitized (see Poggi 2018). This collection includes numerous photographs by Pascal Sébah and Sébah & Joaillier, with Turkish subjects.

–²³ "Planche 22 | Monuments civils" (#Marianne 1872).

–²⁴ #Marianne 1872.

Copies of the album are currently kept in various institutions, such as the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art in Paris, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Library of Congress, and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. An anastatic reprint was also published in 2015 (Album du Musée 2015 [1872]).

–²⁵ #Marianne 1872, s.p. (Foreword). My translation.

–²⁶ *Ibidem.*

–²⁷ *Ibidem.*

–²⁸ Behdad 2016, p. 172, note 18.

–²⁹ #Palmieri 1887, front cover.

–³⁰ #Palmieri 1887.

–³¹ "Au Jardin | de l'Esbekieh | Caire | (Egypte) | H. Délié & E. Bécharde | nov. 72 | photographes | Branch of de | la Maison Pierson | de | Paris", in

Gallica <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84501728>> (30.04.2020).

– ³² They are mostly loose photographs, only some of them are mounted on a secondary support.

– ³³ See Özendes 1999, p. 175.

– ³⁴ See Çelik / Eldem 2015, pp. 18-19; Millozzi 2005, pp. 233-236.

– ³⁵ See Ivi, p. 72.

– ³⁶ Photograph No. 96 of the Aswan Waterfalls is also published in Özendes 1999, p. 199.

– ³⁷ Ivi, pp. 203-205.

– ³⁸ In 1883, Pascal Sébah began to report serious health problems which led to his death in 1886. During these years, and until 1888, his brother Cosmi was in charge of the studio.

– ³⁹ See Akcan 2013, pp. 113-114, No. 31; Özendes 1999, pp. 209-215.

– ⁴⁰ See Özendes 1999, pp. 245-246.

– ⁴¹ For further details on acquisitions and collaborations of Studio Sébah see: Apostolou 2013 and Özendes 1999.

– ⁴² Özendes 1999, p. 203.

– ⁴³ See Apostolou 2013; Behdad 2016; Mészáros 2016; Perez 1988. Jacobson too quotes 'H. Béchard', however he is not fully sure about his identity (Jacobson 2007, pp. 210-212).

– ⁴⁴ Cazentre 2013.

– ⁴⁵ See Apostolou 2013; Hannoosh 2016; Foliard 2016; Özendes 1999.

– ⁴⁶ #Sébah 1887. Prior to this catalogue, in 1875 Pascal Sébah published the *Catalogue des vues d'Égypte, Nubie, Athènes, Constantinople et Brousse*, which included over a hundred views of Egypt (Cazentre 2013).

– ⁴⁷ See Akcan 2013.

– ⁴⁸ Inventory number 1.

– ⁴⁹ "O. Schoefft | Photographe de la Cour | P. Calamita | Successeur | au Caire". This is also mentioned by Mészáros 2016, pp. 200-201. Calamita was a Greek photographer, living in Cairo by 1871, who had his studio in the Jardin Rosetti (see Perez 1988, p. 146).

– ⁵⁰ Professor Gaetano Lodi, Decorator.

– ⁵¹ Several portraits by Lodi are reproduced in Ricci 1932.

– ⁵² In July 1872, Lodi wrote to the Milanese Egyptologist Luigi Vassalli, who worked for the Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, to inform him of his forthcoming arrival to Cairo (see Piacentini 2011, p. 90).

– ⁵³ See Ivi, p. 94.

– ⁵⁴ See Ivi, p. 90.

– ⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

– ⁵⁶ Ravanelli Guidotti 1981.

– ⁵⁷ See Ugolini 2004.

– ⁵⁸ Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora.

– ⁵⁹ The photographs by Studio Sébah & Joaillier in the Bettini Archive carry the inscription "Sebah&Joaillier | Cons'ple".

– ⁶⁰ See the Sébah & Joaillier's photographic series on Chora Church, in "Prints & Photographs Online Catalog": <<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>> (30.04.2020).

– ⁶¹ See Peressutti 2017, p. 761.

– ⁶² Some of these photographs were displayed in the exhibition *Sergio Bettini 1935: un viaggio a Istanbul*, curated by Michela Agazzi, Barbara Lunazzi and Silvia Peressutti, and held at the

Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage of Ca' Foscari University, from June 2015 through July 2016.

– ⁶³ See the page dedicated to Bettini photographic collection in Fondazione Cini's website, in <<https://www.cini.it/fototeca/fondifotografici/fondo-bettini>> (30.04.2020). It has not been verified yet whether the negatives stored at the Cini Foundation are complementary to the photographs kept at Ca' Foscari University.

– ⁶⁴ My translation. The letter, dated 31st August 1955, is kept at the Cini Foundation (Bettini folder) and reproduced in Agazzi 2011, pp. 70-71, note 83.

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