

Textual and Photographic Representations of Persia in Ella Durand's *An Autumn Tour to Western Persia* (1902)

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the representations of Persia and the Persians in Ella Durand's *An Autumn Tour to Western Persia* (1902). Although the travelogues on Iran have been the subject of numerous analyses from diverse standpoints, Ella Durand's narrative has been marginalized and overlooked by scholars of the field. Drawing on Orientalism, Exoticism, travel theories, and specifically Ali Behdad's insights on the photographic depiction of the East, this article aims to offer a two-layered study of Durand's travel book to unravel the ways *An Autumn Tour to Western Persia* is informed by Orientalist attitudes in the depictions of the Persia and the Persians. Accordingly, this study attempts to provide a nuanced analysis of both textual and photographic representations in Durand's travelogue to tease out the construction of the self and the other and her relationship to the hegemonic Orientalist tradition. I argue that Durand adopts an ambivalent, relativistic attitude towards the encountered differences in Persia. Alternatively, by taking both objective and affected attitudes in her narrative, she often attributes to and sometimes rejects the general monolithic stereotypical Western notions of the East.

Keywords: Ella Durand; Orientalism; Persia; Photography; Stereotypes; Travel Writing