

*Collection* : **AFGHAN BOUNDARY COMMISSION, 1884 – 1886**  
*Series* : **SKETCHES BY MAJOR EDWARD L. DURAND**

### **Some remarks on the ‘Additional Sketches’ by ELD**

In the collection of original sketches by E.L. Durand, kept at the British Library, there are 23 sheets of strong watercolour paper with additional drawings of the Afghan Boundary Commission, which were not photo-lithographed. Some of them have watercolours on the rectos and pencil or wash sketches on the versos. The total amount of additional sketches is:

Watercolours	15
Wash sketches	5
Pencil drawings	7
Unfinished sketches	<u>2</u>
Total	29

7 of these sketches show almost the same scenery as one of the 107 lithographs.

20 sketches show different views, not present among the photo-lithographs.

2 sketches were not drawn by E.L. Durand, but were done by William Simpson.

Comparing Durand’s and Simpson’s drawings, it seems that they were sometimes taken from the same spot – maybe also at the same time. In the album with the original sketches by William Simpson, kept at Hatfield House, there are also some few original pencil sketches by E.L. Durand (for example ELD 058). These sketches are on rather thin paper of the same size as the later wash sketches, but giving only the contours of the scenery. Remarks on the colours are added in writing on the sketch (similar to the notes in the lower part of ELD 118).

On the verso of ELD 048 we find the following note: “*Impossible to work on this paper in the heat & dust.*” This is a hint on the ‘technical’ problems of painting a watercolour or wash sketch under Central Asian climatic conditions: extreme low humidity of maybe 10 % at around 40 °C, with a constant strong and dry wind, raising clouds of dust. Under such conditions the paint is drying up in the brush or immediately when it gets in contact with the paper, which is also as dry as a bone. In mid-May 1885 Dr. Charles Owen writes in a letter to his wife: “*Durand is out still going round the Afghan frontier posts and he is cursing at the heat.*” [p. 202]. In the hot season painting in watercolours would only have been possible in the early morning or late afternoon.

The process of the creation of most drawings may have been as follows:

1. A pencil drawing on the spot with identification of main colour shades.
2. The wash sketch may have been drawn later in the leisure time of an evening or early morning in the wind shadow of a tent. This could also explain why most wash sketches are without an exact date.
3. It seems that the larger watercolour sketches were for the most part produced after ELD’s return to England, as all the photo-lithographs, printed in India (Dehra Dun), were taken from wash sketches.

Some of the small and unfinished watercolours, as well as the sketches by coloured pencil, among the ‘Additional Sketches’ may have been experiments on the spot. Especially those marked with an exact date (ELD 110, 116, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125 and 127).