

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

## **Remarks on the original sketches by Edward Law Durand in the British Library**

On 10 and 11 October 2013, thanks to the courtesy of Mr John Falconer, I had the opportunity to go through the original sketches of E. L. Durand in the British Library, which he had drawn during the Afghan Boundary Commission of 1884-1886.

Apart from very few exceptions the collection consists of monochrome *wash sketches* (washed pen-and-ink drawings) on watercolour paper or on thicker watercolour cardboard.

The sheets are entirely painted; no margin is left blank as on the photolithographs. The impressions of drawing pins in the corners suggest that the sheets have not been cropped subsequently. However, some of the large-format sheets are not strictly rectangular, which might explain the fact that also the photolithographs which always display the entire uncropped sheet, show some irregularities.

The shade of colour varies between grey, bluish, brownish, sepia, and purple – though it could not be clearly discerned under the artificial lighting of the ‘Print Room’ of the British Library. This is why the colour is not mentioned in the descriptions.

In addition to the sketches reproduced as photolithographs there are a further 26 watercolour sketches, pencil drawings and pen-and-ink drawings in the collection, which have not been reproduced. Some are not fully finished.

The BL signature has been put overleaf by pencil, often encircled. Moreover most sketches carry an original (sometimes subsequently corrected) numbering on the back side, about 2-5 cm in size, and mostly in brackets: ( 35 ). However, this numbering does not accurately match with the one or the other used in the three lists.

On the verso of most sketches there is a description (in the handwriting of ELD) that is to a large extent identical to the one found on the handwritten list in the ‘Lumsden Album’. Only a few contain additional information or a more precise date. Almost all are signed ‘ELD’.

Two sketches carry a very detailed colour description of the landscape on the verso (which have not been transcribed due to a lack of time). The notes on the sketches displaying Herat are often somewhat more comprehensive as well; all of these were fully copied, transcribed and added to the descriptions.

Most of the original sketches are mounted on sheets without passe-partouts or protective intermediate sheets. Occasionally there are brown spots where they have been glued. Every 20-40 sketches are kept in a large folded sheet of strong paper.

In more recent times about 10-12 sketches have been carefully put in thick passe-partouts. Most of them show particularly impressive sceneries and may well have been used for exhibitions.

A previous owner seems to have glued the sketches in an album out of which the pages were later removed without care and not without damage. Some sketches are missing parts of the corners or are torn at an edge.

London, 11 October 2013  
Paul Bucherer-Dietschi