

Article

# Authenticity and Restoration: The Benefits of Historical Studies on Re-Examining the Implemented Restorations in Persepolis

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**Abstract:** Preserving the authenticity of historical monuments is an inseparable part of restoration activities that has always been asserted by the international principles of historical preservation. However, the local condition of historical sites may influence such a primitive intention of restorers. While historical documents are appropriate sources which can provide restorers with the real condition of ancient structures in the course of time, investigation through these precious materials is a time-consuming process and the reliability of these old evidences is, itself, a challenging issue. The Italian Institute for Middle and Far East (IsMEO) missioned long-term restoration activities in Persepolis between 1964 and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Generally, this institute is praised for this series of projects. In this paper, the author questions the historical authenticity of restoration activities missioned by this institute in a structure so-called The Gate of All Nations. Indeed, the restoration of this structure was influenced by the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Persian Empire, which was held in Persepolis in 1971. By tracing the context of historical evidences and presenting a method for obtaining the authenticity of these documents, this paper demonstrates a new perspective towards the arrangement of a stone-made capital, which ornaments the uppermost part of a re-erected ancient column.

**Keywords:** The Gate of All Nations; IsMEO; travelers account; historical survey; zoophorous capital

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural heritages encompass both history and the process of civilization in different nations. They demonstrate the inter-related chains of sociocultural, political, and economic factors that governed the life of our ancestors. Consequently, they are considered evidence for illustrating the roots of human beings' identity. Today, new fields of science like archaeology, restoration, civil engineering, *etc.* have provided ancient buildings with new opportunities for a more healthy and effective rehabilitation. However, preservation of historic monuments should not limit itself to procedures for a better conservation of materials and forms. Alternately, historic preservation should develop its domain for finding out appropriate criteria that could transfer both intellectual and nonintellectual merits. Meanwhile, loyalty to the historical identity of cultural heritages and the authenticity of conservation activities is of crucial importance and is traditionally emphasized by the charters of preservation.

Historical surveys (travelers' memoirs, historical pictorial materials, *etc.*) can provide restorers with an appropriate background for obtaining such authenticity. Nevertheless, the reliability of these historical documents is a challenging topic that demands more consideration. In this paper, the author provides an example of how the usage of such historical documents can shed some light on the quality of implemented restorations. Meanwhile, methods would be introduced which can increase

the reliability of historical evidences. This paper demonstrates how the history of art can get related to the science of scientific preservation and augments its quality.

By scrutinizing some of the contemporary restoration projects in Persepolis, this paper re-examines the preserving missions that were headed by IsMEO, one of the forerunner institutes in the realm of conservation of ancient buildings in Asia. Despite the fact that leading members of the Institute paid considerable attention towards the applied methodology for the preservation and reconstruction of these ancient monuments, and even in some cases they modified some previously-implemented restorations (for instance those prior interventions made by Herzfeld, Schmidt, and Iranian organizations), today scholars criticize some of the employed procedures. Most of these critiques challenge the IsMEO's use of new materials (e.g., cement and steel) for the reconstruction or assemblage of ancient structures, which do not operate appropriately with historical materials. It is demonstrated that such heterogeneity has caused further damages to ancient materials [1]. In comparison to some limestone, cement absorbs more water and humidity. This intensifies chemical (soluble mineral salts), physical (condensation), and biological (lichens) problems which water can impose on stone. Consequently, the integrity of stone materials and the physical (material) authenticity of these masterpieces of art and technique are in hazard [1].

This paper has an alternative approach in its review of the implemented restorations. Here, the author questions whether the institute paid any proper attention towards historical surveys for obtaining the original state of ancient monuments. This hypothesis is based on the fact that historical study is a time-consuming process, but the so-far-discussed restoring mission was under pressure to prepare the historical site ready for the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of monarchy in Iran. This might have influenced their primary attention. Here, the Gate of All Nations, which is among the first structures on the terrace that experienced a considerable restoration, will be investigated. Specifically, the re-erection of a column and the orientation of its uppermost element, a zoophorous capital, will be studied.

The methodology of this research is historical study. By investigating the context of travelers' accounts who visited the site from the seventeenth century onward, the author surveys traces of the Gate and, specifically, the orientation of a protome that once had stood above the northern column of this structure. Considering various drawings that are made from the ruins by different artists, this paper investigates the authenticity and reliability of these pictorial evidences and, subsequently, it will refer to the most reliable ones. Photographic evidences are discussed briefly as the last part of this survey.

## 2. Material and Method

### 2.1. Authenticity and Conservation

Maintaining the authenticity of heritage properties forms a reservoir of history and memory for future generations; thus, the notion of authenticity has been long considered a key-factor in the domain of preservation of historical monuments and sites. Nevertheless, considering the existing static and dynamic values of cultural properties (cultural and traditional connections), there has always been an inherent ambiguity and complexity in the definition of this concept.

Authenticity can be defined as "something that sustains and proves itself, as well as having credit and authority from itself", Jokilehto asserts [2] (p. 32). In this definition, authenticity is a relative concept that refers to the original creative source as well as the continuity and integrity of interventions in the whole life of historical entities. A historical-critical process can establish the relative significance of each period and forms the basis for further treatments. Jokilehto considers three different dimensions of authenticity that encompasses artistic, historical, and cultural aspects. These scopes are in relation to aesthetic, structural, and functional forms of the historical entity, or in relation to its material, technology, as well as physical and socio-cultural aspects [2].

Authenticity in preservation was first affirmed in the Charter of Venice in 1964. This charter speaks of delivering the historical monuments to future generations "in the full richness of their authenticity".

In later years, “the test of authenticity” which was included in “Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Committee” in the late 1970s, constituted the four areas of design, material, workmanship, and setting as the crucial principles of authenticity [3]. Meeting this test was the “essential criterion” for including the cultural properties in the world heritage list. This was stressed in later editions of the operational guidelines for the implementation of the world heritage convention (published in 1980s and 1990s) asserting that “Reconstruction will be only acceptable if it will be carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and no extent on conjecture” [3].

In 1994, experts’ efforts for defining a more flexible definition of authenticity that could reflect the diverse values of cultural properties cultivated in Nara Conference. The proceedings of this conference present a proper basis for understanding the concept of authenticity from the standpoint of different cultures and scholars. Ultimately, the “Nara Document on Authenticity” defines authenticity as “the essential qualifying factor concerning values. [Due to] the nature of cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgments maybe linked to the worth of great variety of sources [including] form and design, materials and substance, use and function, tradition and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors” [4]. Meanwhile, defining the different aspects of mentioned authenticities is a fundamental basis for obtaining permissible levels of restoration or reconstruction. This includes the reevaluation of past experiences and independent studies for the resultant outcomes [5]. In this paper, the author studies the authenticity of reconstructions in regard to design and function. Here it will be demonstrated that how the local condition of historical sites can impact the traditional primary interest for authenticity.

## 2.2. *The Italian Mission at Persepolis and the 2500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Persian Empire*

The Italian Institute for Middle and Far East, generally known as IsMEO [6], was founded in the 1930s, but its main activities started after the Second World War. During the 1960s, the Institute’s archaeological activities led to a new paradigm, mainly focusing on the restoration and conservation of cultural heritages of various countries [7]. IsMEO have had a successful and productive relationship with Iran. From the late 1950s, the institute managed various archaeological expeditions. In 1964, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported a long sequence of preservation activities in Iran. Subsequently, in collaboration with Iranian organizations (the Ministry of Culture and Art of Iran, and the Iranian Archaeological Department) the institute restored some of the most renowned architectural monuments of Iran [8–10].

Without any doubt, IsMEO’s conservative projects in the Achaemenid sites of Fārs, with the main focus on Persepolis, had been the focal point of these series of efforts. The Iranian government’s interest for holding the celebration of the 2500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Persian Empire in Persepolis, was an important motivation that supported the Italian mission. However, this was like a double-edged sword; on the one side, this aim of Iranian organizations provided the necessary material and intellectual attention for furthering an extensive sequence of research and site work, but on the other side, this resulted in hurrying the site preparations.

The rise of a considerable tendency towards ancient Iran dates back to the 19th century and during the reign of Rezā Shāh Pahlavi. However, it was during the governance of his son, Mohammad Rezā Shāh, and the unprecedented increase in the country’s income—as a result of purchasing large amount of oil—that the economic basis for a large scale show centering around this topic was obtained. Subsequently, the idea of celebrating the 2500 years of monarchy in Iran was founded in the late 1950s, but implementing this idea was postponed until the necessary basis could be established [11,12]. The idea behind these celebrations was to demonstrate the splendid past of the country as well as its modern new achievements. The Shāh, who was dreaming of leading the country towards the gates of modern civilization, ordered a series of development projects mainly hiding the existing considerable gap between Iran and the Western countries. This was not concentrated on the growth of country’s basic infrastructure; rather the main focus was devoted to the outer superficial layers of country’s structure which were perceivable at the first glance. In doing so, roads, hotels, airports, etc.

were constructed. The ancient Achaemenid sites of Fārs, where the celebrations were planned to be held, also received a considerable amount of attention. However, in the staging of architectural fragments it was the promise for a great future for the country that was prioritized and legitimized the preserving activities.

The terrace of Persepolis, where previously had been only used as a field for archeological investigations, obtained a high value at this time. “Unlike a modern structure or a sheer archeological site, Persepolis as-preserved-ruin could give birth to the holistic vision of a glorious past projected onto a utopian future” [13]. Subsequently, there raised an urgent need to make it ready for the celebrations. Indeed, this preparation included both the rehabilitation of ancient dignity of the site, as well as maintaining the needed basis for holding a large scale ceremony with highly important guests and a modern looking host. While restoring the architectural vestiges and the reintegration of dismantled monuments responded to the first demand, the establishment of some radical architectural and technological measures (the construction of ultramodern residential buildings in the immediate vicinity of ancient site, as well as maintaining museum, theater, road, and devices for controlling sound and light) provided the Iranian organizations with their second goal. Indeed, “a finely-tuned aesthetic synthesis of the ancient and the modern was to guarantee the symbolic and pragmatic success of the entire undertaking” [13]. This was not only an impetus which supported the unacceptable construction of a modern asphalt way on ancient vestiges [14] (p. 206) but, indeed, the whole process of restoration was influenced by such perception. Subsequently, the restoration of some magnificent ancient structures and the preparation of ancient site had to be fulfilled before the start of celebrations.

IsMEO commenced its mission in Persepolis in 1964 under the supervision of Cesare Carbone, subsequently entrusted to Giuseppe Tilia in 1965 [10] (XII). On the one hand, the Italian mission had to work under the Iranians’ highly demanding and pressure-imposing atmosphere and, on the other hand, the loyalty to the principle of scientific preservation was mandatory. This can justify the ultimate lack of constancy of implemented restorations to the IsMEO’s first plans and those policies which were asserted before starting the mission. The recorded official documents affirm the existence of imposed forces by the Iranian administrators for conducting the mission in harmony with their political requirements and time plans [12]. The Italian team’s reluctance to some of the implemented tasks can be also witnessed in their later publications [10] (XI–XII).

Considering the IsMEO’s previous experiences with historical monuments and their fidelity to the principle of historical preservations, the mission was cautious about the methodology of restoration and from the very beginning they established some principles for this issue [9]. Albeit, in practice, the Institute had to modify some previously asserted guidelines [10] (p. 6). For example, while in the first published guideline restorers emphasized the usage of temporary materials for consolidating stone-made elements and fragments (e.g., special resins with the maximum life of five to ten years), in practice they used cement for this purpose. This resulted in the impossibility of further interventions in case of enhancing more appropriate materials in future. The use of air-cushions in floors for preventing moisture or further damage was never implemented, the idea of glass walls surrounding ancient monuments and protecting them against sands never realized, time-consuming restoring projects were abandoned, and despite IsMEO’s preliminary assertions about preventing the theatrical effects in external lighting, in practice acoustic and lighting equipment changed this ancient site into a big theatrical scene in later years [9] (pp. 2–16).

The aim of these activities was to preserve ancient buildings from further damage and, in order to achieve this aim, they re-erected some fallen or moved structures. These reconstructions followed the principles of restoration (e.g., the process of obtaining raw materials for reconstructing the missing elements, making a difference between original and newly-hewn parts, etc.) [10] (pp. 6–9). However, restorers did not pay any attention towards historical surveys to obtain the original state of ancient monuments. This was not strange at that time, since none of their predecessors (neither Herzfeld nor Schmidt) paid enough attention to these valuable studies [15]. Moreover, historical surveys need considerable amounts of time and the existing pressure and haste for preparing the structures for

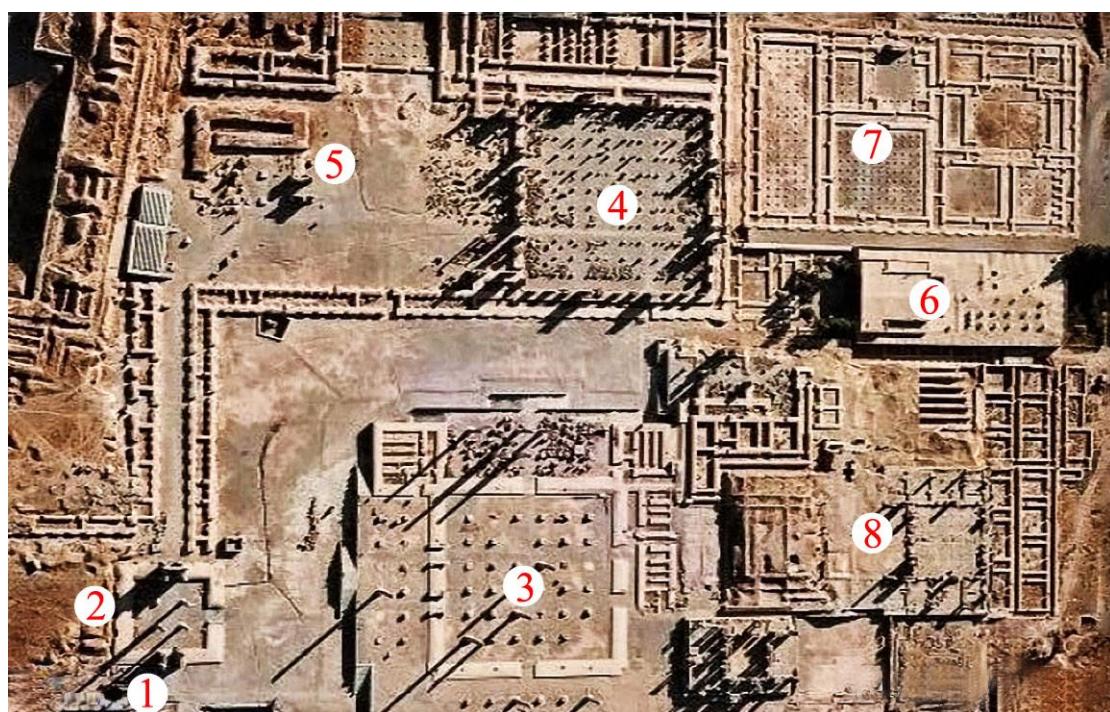
the celebration of the anniversary, which was supposed to take place in Persepolis on October 1971, made profound studies impossible.

The Institute extensively worked on almost the entire ancient monuments above the terrace of Persepolis; however, when the project started in 1964, the Gate of all Nations was among those structures which was prioritized for restoration [14] (p. 202).

### 2.3. Persepolis and the Gate of All Nations

Persepolis is constructed by Achaemenids (550–330 BC), who were the founders of the largest ancient empire. Possessing physical and spiritual powers, the Achaemenids widely profited from the achievements of their subordinating nations in building projects and Persepolis is the Achaemenids' masterpiece of art and engineering. Subsequently, this site is not just a testimony that proves the long history of civilization in Iran; rather, it indicates technical and nontechnical accomplishments of the whole ancient civilized world.

Persepolis is located on a plain and the buildings are constructed on a vast terrace that is about ten meters above the ground level (Figure 1). Surmounting the main staircase of this terrace, colossal stone pilasters that are adorned with accomplished stonework in the shape of animal figures, catch viewer's eyes. These motifs shape the entrance to a square-shaped building, which is commonly known as the Gate of All Nations. This is a big entrance hall that provides access to the entire building complex above the terrace possible. Surrounding adobe walls, as well as four columns that stood among them, carried the weight of the wooden roof that once had spanned the distance between the eastern and western pilasters.



**Figure 1.** Aerial photography from the site. (1) The Terrace Stairway and entrance to the site; (2) the Gate of All Nations; (3) Apadana; (4) Hall of Hundred Columns; (5) Unfinished Gate; (6) Residential Palace of the Queen; (7) Treasury; and (8) Throne Hall of the King.

How the Achaemenid master builders accomplished the construction of the widest spans of ancient world is still a controversial debate. However, there is no doubt that the Achaemenid master builders appropriately benefitted from the integrity of architectural forms and structural components. The unprecedented shape of capitals, animal figures (addorsed bulls, griffins, etc.) leaning against

each other, was not only a highly meaningful architectural motif but, also, the big intermediate cavity, which was obtained from this method of protomes' arrangement acted as a saddle for the placing of a wooden architrave. Hence, the orientation of these motifs is important evidence that can shed some light on a probable method for the roofing of these wonders of ancient architecture.

The restoration of the Gate of All Nations started in 1965 and continued until the early 1970s [10]. The southeastern column, which today stands in this building, is the outcome of the Institute's efforts for piecing together all scattered fragments and some newly hewn sections, which were assembled due to the principles of Anastylosis restoration (Figure 2). Reconstruction of missing pieces of the column was applied just in the case of structural necessity. Consequently, while the lower elements of the composite capital were carved of newly-quarried stones, the shaping of the zoophorous motif was the result of joining broken, dispersed ancient pieces [10] (p. 40). Ultimately, the arrangement of the restored zoophorous capital was a challenging question and restorers had to define its direction.



**Figure 2.** The Gate of All Nations, Contemporary View © David Redhouse photo collection.

In order to find the answer, restorers relied on site surveys. By studying the columns that still stood on the terrace, they tried to find out a probable orientation for the animal motif. The façades of rock-cut tombs were considered as testimonies that could prove their hypothesis. Moreover, as the restorers claimed it, some fragments of animal protome were still visible in the upper part of the northwestern column of the Gate. Consequently, by the means of scaffolding, restorers surmounted the structure and studied the vestiges. These fragments included a few curls from a bull and the position of these curls assured restorers about the arrangement of these motifs [10] (pp. 37–40). As a result, they concluded "the addorsed bulls seem always to have been placed with their flanks parallel to the façade of the respective buildings" [10] (p. 38).

However, restorers' claims are not convincing. On one hand, their study of other columns above the terrace could not shed any light on the orientation of capitals in the Gate. Considering the fact that all the columns that, at the time of restoration, encompassed zoophorous capitals were located on porches and not inside the main halls, their pattern of the capital's arrangement could not provide restorers with a proper suggestion about a structure like the Gate of All Nations, which is surrounded by peripheral walls. On the other hand, reviewing the photographs that were taken from the northwestern column (the column which was investigated by the restorers) during the first decades of the twentieth century until 1965, demonstrates the gradual decomposition of the stone-made capital and at the time of restoration most of the zoophorous capital fragments, which were referred by the restorers, disappeared [9] Figure 70, [10] Figure 73, [16] Plate LVII, bottom left and [17] p. 6.

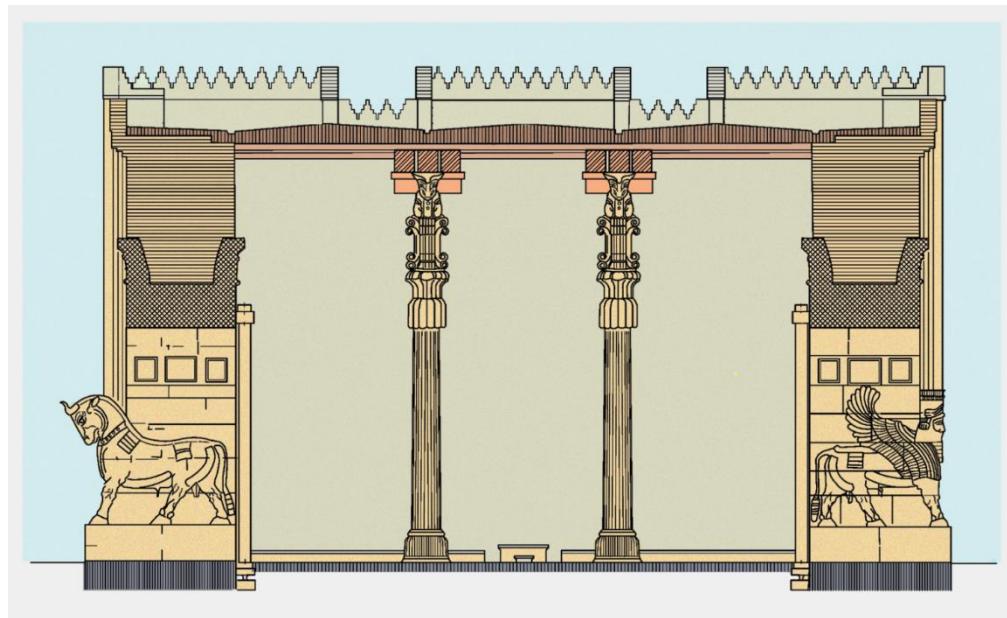
Comparing the curls on neck and flanks of the addorsed bull, identical characteristics can be witnessed (Figure 3). This could be confusing for the restorers and it increases the risk that those curls, referred by the restorers, belonged to some other parts of the motif. Moreover, these small fragments could have been easily removed from their original state on the top of the columns by natural phenomena (rain, wind, etc.) and, specifically, birds, like storks, that have an interest in nesting on the top of historical vestiges. Unfortunately, due to some official difficulties that IsMEO has encountered in recent years, any access to its archival materials is impossible [18]. The author's attempts to access to this archive for the sake of a probable photograph that could support restorers' claim were unsuccessful.



**Figure 3.** The addorsed bull capitals from the Achaemenid site of Susa. Techniques of construction and architectural forms are identical with those of Persepolis. The similarity of curls carved on the flanks of the bulls and those implemented on their neck is obvious. Source: Louvre Museum, photographed by the author.

Restorers' lack of confidence regarding their suggested pattern is demonstrated by Tilia saying: "It would have been most natural if the bulls on top of the columns in the Gate of Xerxes had turned their flanks towards the visitors, who entered the Gate from the west" [10] (p. 38). This is not a logical reasoning since it is known that peripheral walls, that once had surrounded these columns, prevented observers from seeing capitals in a way that today we perceive them.

In the late 1960s, when the Italian restoring group had commenced their preserving mission at the Gate, Friedrich Krefter, the German architect, who had previously accompanied the first excavation mission at Persepolis, was working on his book, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*. His designs and ideas are among the most influential perspectives about the terrace and a probable method for the construction of the Achaemenids' monuments. Interestingly, both Krefter and Tilias were aware of the achievements of another party [19] (LITERATURHINWEISE) and [10] (p. 394). It is possible that Krefter's assertion about the orientation of capitals (Figure 4) and his hypothesized method for the construction of architraves influenced restorers in making their final decision [16] Plate LI, Top Center. Ultimately, restorers overlooked further investigation, especially historical studies which could be useful in this case.



**Figure 4.** The addorsed bull capitals are oriented towards north-south direction in Krefter's reconstruction designs. Based on: [19] (Beilage 2). CAD redrawing and coloring by the author.

#### 2.4. Persepolis, *The Possibility of Historical Survey*

The ruins of Persepolis were well known in Europe even before the modern time. Diplomats, clerics, merchants, and adventurers of many European countries visited the site, then known as Chehel minār, and their observations can be traced in their published memoirs [14,20]. Considering the fact that these visitors did not have an accurate knowledge of history, origin, and function of the ruins, in most cases their accounts cannot present any appropriate information about the function of architectural elements. Nevertheless, the keen eyes of some of these early visitors recorded considerable information about the condition of the site at the time of their visit.

It should be noted that many of these travelers blended their own imaginations and old stories with their observations, so their descriptions are a combination of reality and fantasy. Even in some cases drawings that were accompanied by travelers' books were prepared based on verbal reports and not real observation by the artists [20] (p. 14). Therefore, they might not be reliable. In order to achieve the aim of historical surveys, the verbal and illustrative context of travelers' memoirs and the level of authenticity of reporters should be measured together. It should be noted that, despite scholarly efforts for documenting the history of Persepolis in the past centuries and the considerable amount of information, which is hidden in these historical evidences, the usage of these materials for obtaining the original state of architectural elements or demonstrating how the course of time has damaged these ancient structures is not common. After half a century, the pioneering work of Barnett is still a unique exercise in this regard [15]. In this study, the author investigates publications of the most renowned visitors in order to find out whether traces of the zoophorous capitals of the Gate can be found among these early visits.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1. Travelers' Accounts and Historical Pictorial Evidences

Three travelers, De Bruijn, Chardin, and Kaempfer, who visited Persepolis from the late 17th century should be considered among the first visitors "who made an effort at true exploration: the recording of the available evidence" [20] (p. 15). They can provide us with the most accurate information about the condition of monuments at the time of their visit.

The French businessman and traveler, Jean Chardin, visited the site three times between 1665 and 1677. He has presented one of the best conspicuous descriptions of these ancient monuments [14] (p. 101). Explaining, precisely, the totality of the Gate of All Nations (pilasters, dimensions, *etc.*) he postponed discussion about the columns to later paragraphs. However, when he, again, commenced this topic he did not refer to the Gate anymore and mainly focused on the columns of the Āpādānā [21] (pp. 102–108). Here he noticed the existence of a complete animal protome above the columns and his less precise drawings (Plate. N.LX) show this issue correctly [22]. Comparing the column depicted in this drawing next to some broken pieces of capital elements with the condition of the Gate during the first round of excavations, it can be assumed that the depicted column can be the one which is under our survey ([23], Figure 25). In that case, his drawing shows the existence of considerable pieces of unshaped stone on its upper part that belong to the protome.

Benefitted from the prolific condition of the Netherlands during the seventeenth century Cornelis De Bruijn, a well-trained Dutch artist, made several travels to the East. He was an experienced painter that had valuable trainings under the supervision of some of the most well-known painters of his time [24].

His book, *Travels into Moscovy, Persia, and the East Indies*, was actually Bruijn's second travel account that demonstrates his adventures between 1701 and 1708. As can be seen in the full title of the book, the emphasis is on Persepolis. Bruijn arrived at Persepolis in 1704 and, for about three months, he accommodated in a village next to the ruins. This made him able to make the most accurate paintings from these ancient vestiges.

Indeed, the accuracy of his drawings is based on the fact that they were not prepared as rough sketches but rather they were detailed figures that were drawn *in loco* and were even completed with watercolor [25]. In several cases he mentioned this aim and explained that his desire is to "examine [the] ruins with the greatest care and to render to them more known to the curious than they had been till then" [26] (p. 23). Unlike the conventions of his era, he did not blend his own perceptions about a possible shape of architectural elements and ornaments with his prepared drawings [14] (p. 106). Comparing his illustrations with photographs taken from the terrace before the start of excavations, we can find considerable similarities [27].

In most of the travelers' accounts that were published before the arrival of new technology of photography, the process of making appropriate pictures had been always a big problem. In most cases artists who were accompanying travelers were not appropriately experienced and, even in some cases, they were not motivated enough to invest their highest levels of art in their paintings [28] (pp. 257–258). Moreover, after the preparation of the first-hand paintings and before publication, travelers had to challenge the second phase, which was the making of engravings from original pictures. Unskilled engravers could easily destroy all previous efforts by the artists. Being aware of these matters, Bruijn emphasized that not only he painted the original pictures based on his keen observations, but also he paid a considerable attention in the second phase of work, since all completed details by the engravers, had to satisfy his precise inspecting eyes [26] (p. 211).

One of the outstanding historical illustrations from the Gate of All Nations is depicted in Plate no. 121. In this picture, the most northern column is illustrated accompanied by all components that shape a column in an Achaemenid style. Direction of the addorsed bull can be easily distinguished by comparing the shape of a complete animal motif with this depicted vestige. Specifically, the hole that is hewn between the two joined bulls and traces of rosette ornaments on the chest of beast motif are notable (Figure 5. Left). The addorsed bulls were not always carved from a single piece of stone and their knees were constructed from separated elements, joined to their body by the means of primitive joining techniques. In most cases the sculptures' feet are damaged or cut from the motif's body. This is the case in regard to our under discussion stone capital. De Bruijn's illustration demonstrates the loss of the knees. The depicted condition of this capital is not only presented on this plate, but also on his other illustrations from the ruins (e.g., plates no. 120, 124).



**Figure 5.** The east–west orientation of the animal motif can be seen in De Bruijn’s drawing. Reference [26] (Fig. 121). Source: Utrecht University Library.

Moreover, De Bruijn’s technical and precise descriptions of the ruins are considerable. In several cases, he asserted some points about the zoophorous vestiges. In his general review of the site he expressed the well-preserved condition of the columns of the Gate and, specifically, the capitals. He wrote: “The two columns that appear between the two portals, are the least damaged of all, especially with respect to their capitals and the other ornaments of their upper part” [26] (p. 12). At the last part of his descriptions of the Gate, once more he returned to these columns and their capitals. He, referred to other travelers’ observations and asserted:

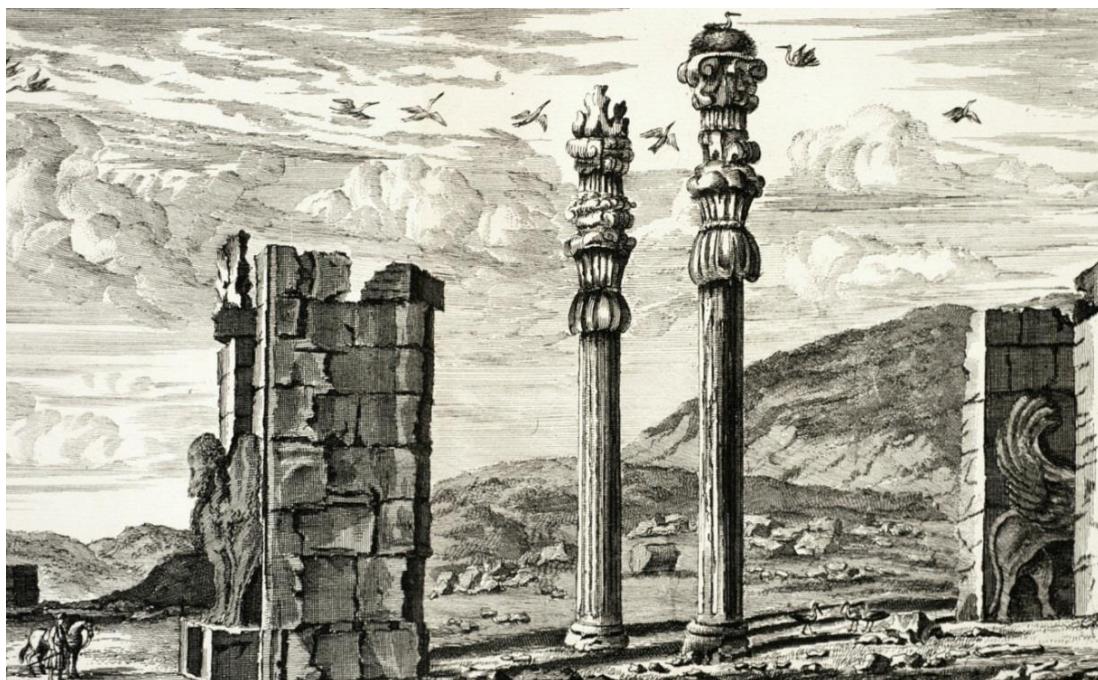
“Some writers pretend that there are winged horses of an uncommon magnitude on the two columns that are near the two portals, on the side of the stair-case, in the façade of the edifice; and one author in particular affirms, that he had seen them, tho’ Without mentioning in what year; but he takes no notice, at the same time, of the camels that are placed on the others: This however is a fact which I can take upon me to aver, and that they are still to be seen on their knees, on one of the nine columns, without capitals, and which are placed in a lateral position to each other. This camel is, indeed, greatly damaged, but, however, one part of the, body is still visible, with the two fore feet, and several ornaments that resemble those of the animals in the first portals. One cannot be deceived in this particular, if one examines the pieces which are fallen from the tops of these columns” [26] (p. 25).

He did not name travelers who made these observations, but the text demonstrates that he accepted the well-preserved condition of the zoophorous capital in a way that he could even recognize the similarity of its ornaments with the surviving capital of the western portico of the Āpādānā.

German orientalist and scientist Engelbert Kaempfer was the secretary of a Swedish legation who was destined for the Russian and Persian courts. He had a constant interest in historical sites and his descriptions illustrate his meticulous observations. Kaempfer arrived at Persepolis in 1686 and stayed at the site for three days examining the vestiges of almost all ancient buildings. Ultimately, he made five drawings from the ruins [29]. In a painting that he presented from the site the Gate can be distinguished. Unfortunately, the work of inexperienced engraver caused the published pictures to turn out insignificant [30]. Additionally, he has some remarks about the Gate of all Nations as “Structure I” in his book, *Amoenitatum exoticarum*. He called the building as “Propylaeum” and roughly examined the monstrous motifs, which were hewn on entrance pilasters. Moreover, he mentioned the existence of a roughly shaped motif on one of the columns, which were, in his eyes, similar to those motifs, which are carved on the pilasters [31] (pp. 336–338).

Stephen Flower, the agent of the East India Company in Persia, visited Persepolis in 1661 [20] (p. 23). He was an accurate, smart viewer who paid a great attention to detail. This can be traced in his letters to the Royal Society, who was supposed to support him with the costs of

preparation of drawings from Persepolis. A skilled painter accompanied Flower on his journey to Fārs and it seems that he and Flower had agreed on details of their collaboration [14] (pp. 114–116). Flower is mostly renowned for his sketches of cuneiform inscriptions, however, his interest in regard to the pictures from Persepolis brought these drawings among the best-prepared paintings which accurately demonstrates the condition of the monuments in the late seventeenth century. There is a probability that *Persepolis Illustrata*, a rather anonymous book published in 1739, is inspired by Flower's drawings of the ruin. Ali Mousavi, the renowned archaeologist, suggests: "Comparing to earlier and latter illustrations, this book is quite reliable" [32]. Back to the topic of discussion, a highly detailed drawing of this book (Plate. X) presents the Gate of All Nations. The northern column of the Gate is depicted with the remnants of its uppermost motif, and like Bruijn's illustration, this capital has the east-west orientation (Figure 6).



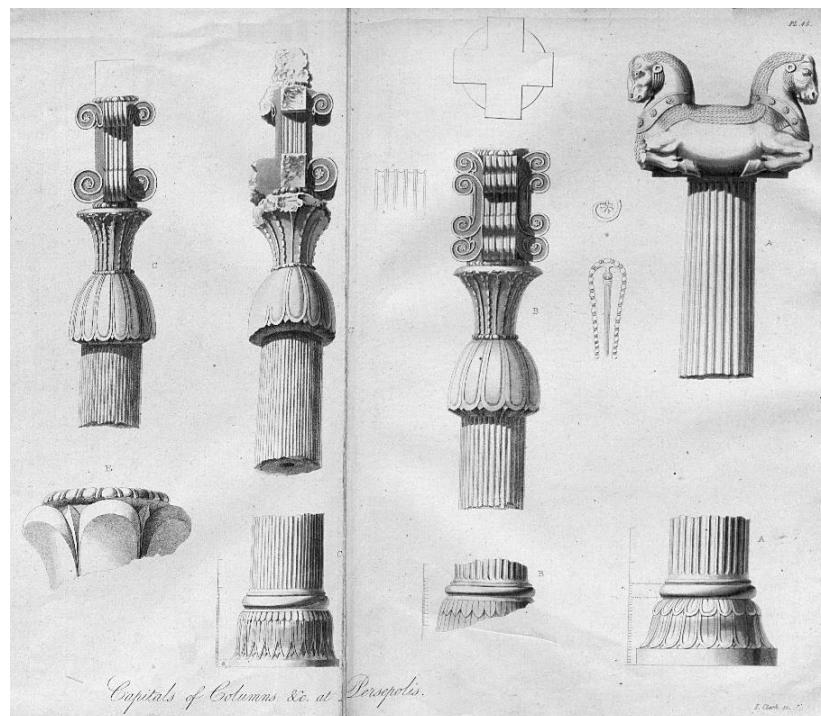
**Figure 6.** The Gate of All Nations, Published in *Persepolis Illustrata*, PL. X (The original illustration is partly reproduced here). Source: Collection of Azita Bina and Elmar W. Seibel.

Sir Ker Porter, the English traveler, visited the ruins of Marvdasht in 1818 and stayed near the site for about ten days. His accounts demonstrate his endeavor to present an accurate vision of the site, monuments, and their history [14] (pp. 127–130). His keen, experienced eye, which is necessary for a skillful painter, supported his effort. He meticulously measured the structures and presented some of the best-drawn pictures of these ancient monuments from before the modern time. Noted in his preface to the account, the main aim of these drawings was to demonstrate the state of monuments at the time of his visit [33] (p. viii). He precisely described the Gate of All Nations and its consisting elements. He was careless in reading Chardin's account, as he wrongly noted that the French traveler had seen all the four columns erect [34]. Regarding the capitals he asserted:

"Their capitals are singular and beautiful; consisting, as it were, of three combined into one... The surface at the top of the capitals is perfectly smooth, without the least vestige of any loos fragments; and I should led to imagine, that when the four stood erect, and were united, they might have sustained the plane or pedestal of some sculptured symbolical image." [33] (pp. 590–599).

Subsequently, in his drawing (Figure 7) the columns were depicted without the beast protomes. One question still remains: why did such a precise observer not mention a vestige of stone zoophorous which, at the time of his visit, was definitely extant? We may find the answer in his more precise

descriptions of the Āpādānā, specifically in the columns of its central hall. There, Porter noted the similarity of the columns' capitals with those of the Gate. Interestingly, he did not distinguish traces of beast motifs standing above some of the pillars and just named hallowed lotus and volutes as the tripled compartments of a capital [33] (p. 637). In order to justify his observations from the uppermost part of stone materials visible above volutes, he asserted that they are traces of piers for a throne-like roof that once surmounted the columns of the central part of the hall [33] (p. 638). The impossibility of settling the piers of a throne-shaped roof above the beast capitals made him to overlook these visible vestiges.



**Figure 7.** Porter's drawings from the Columns of Persepolis. The second one from right hand is Porter's illustration from the columns of the Gate [33] (PL. XLV). Source: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Eugène Flandin, the French orientalist, artist, archeologist, and politician visited the site in 1841. For many years before his travel to Persia he was known as a skillful artist and his paintings were even bought by the King of France [35] (p. 58). However, Flandin gained more fame by his renowned paintings of Persian landscape, architectural monuments, and people, produced during his stay in Persia between 1839–41. As a laureate of the Institut de France, Flandin accompanied the French embassy to Persia. The mission's aim was to obtain as much information as possible about the country's progress under the Qājār dynasty and make a complete inventory of the ancient and modern monuments of the country [35] (p. 58). Nevertheless, the mission did not stay in Persia for a long time and they left Flandin and his French colleague, Pascal Coste.

Coste was older and more experienced than Flandin. He had a good resume of previous, successful missions to Egypt and published paintings [35] (p. 258). He was trained as an architect and had excessive travels around Europe, Russia, North Africa, and the Middle East. His writings, drawings, and archeological explorations were notable as well. Interestingly, almost about a decade prior to his mission to Persia, he was an appointed professor at the École d'architecture de Marseille [36].

What distinguishes the French scholars' accounts from other travelers' memoirs is their aim (as discussed earlier) to provide the French government with the most reliable and accurate information about Persia. In relation to our topic, what assure us about the authenticity of architectural details

in their illustrations and inscriptions are their academic background and their previous experiences which caused them to be considered among the best experts living in France at that time [14] (p. 135).

They spent almost about two months among the ruins [37] (p. 174). Returning to France, they published the result of their extensive travels in Persia in a series of books entitled *Voyage en Perse* in 1851. While the architect, Coste, was responsible for architectural rendering and plans of the monuments, Flandin, the painter, took the task of representing architectural details and picturesque views, as well as writing the context of the voyage [14] (p. 134). In the process of publishing their original drawings, they both collaborated with engravers [36]. This point assures us about the accuracy of archeological details in their published drawings and “Coste’s maps and drawings of structures were among the first accurate visual documents of Persepolis” [14] (p. 135). Their “true-to-nature” illustrations provide us with the precise state of the Gate and its surrounding monuments in 1841.

Their extensive panoramas from the site are not the only sources representing the Gate; rather, fourteen other illustrations (Plates 73–86) specifically focus on this structure and its architectural ornaments [38]. Moreover, they presented a reconstruction design for the Gate [38] (Plate. 87). In their drawings from the under study column, their illustrations exhibit the condition of a damaged capital and its uppermost part. The western and eastern profiles of the Gate (Plate. 73), which properly demonstrate the upper parts of the columns, illustrate an appropriate harmony between the remains of these capitals and the frontal view of the beast capital that is depicted in Plate. 76.

In their travel account, Flandin precisely examined the order of monuments on the terrace and their condition [37,39]. Despite the lack of access to our modern surveying instruments, the French scholars presented some of the most accurate surveys from the site that was only superseded by E. Schmidt almost one century later [15] (p. 55). Interestingly, both Schmidt and Krefter alternatively referred to the French orientalists’ measurements and drawings in their publications.

In a book which accompanied their collection of illustrations, *Voyage en Perse*, which actually served as a guide for a better understanding of depicted figures, Flandin examined the Gate precisely and provided his reader with meticulous observations of the standing columns [39] (pp. 81–83). Introducing the reader to different parts of these columns and especially the triple-part capital, then he continued his descriptions to the zoophorous capital. He described the form of an addorsed bull, the way two motifs are connected to each other and how the void space on the saddle of the motifs were used for the settlement of wooden architraves. Ultimately, he proceeded to the arrangement of the zoophorous capital and said [40]: “From this point, one can easily realize the impact which was produced by these bulls. The front view of the portico offered profiles of these animals while in the spaces between columns viewer could see their foreheads and chests” [39] (p. 83).

The French scholars believed in a mediatory function for the Gate of all Nations, something like a half-open space that prepared visitors for entering into the Audience Hall, Āpādānā. In this way, the building was conceived as a portico, that its open face was towards the northern porch of the Āpādānā. Considering this point, when Flandin remarked the front face of the portico, we know that he was referring to the southern side of the Gate. This fact can be witnessed in their reconstruction design, which is presented in Plate. 87. This part of this valuable account clearly demonstrates the west–east orientation of the capitals (Figure 8).

In another publication which followed by the first series in 1852, Flandin again returned to the Gate [37] (p. 156) and his explanations proves the partially-preserved condition of the protome at the time of his visit. Moreover, the orientalists’ attention towards this portion of the capitals can be proved by comparing the dimensions they presented for the total length of a column (16.58 m) with those measurements that were suggested by Schmidt (16.66 m) [23] (p. 68).

Soon after Flandin’s expeditions, the new art of photography superseded his pioneering work in archeological drawing [36]. The invention of photography backs to early decades of the nineteenth century and soon found its way to Persia. In comparison to traditional media, like painting, photography can provide us with more details and the essence of objects can be presented beyond the

perceptions of observers. Nevertheless, as a result of unskilled photographers and the preliminary available technology, most of the early captures scenes are not particularly significant.



**Figure 8.** Lateral façade of the Gate, reconstructed and published by Flandin and Coste. The animal motifs are facing towards the west–east direction ([38] (Plate. 87)). Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The first pictures made from Persepolis back to the late 1850s by the Italian officer, Luigi Pesce [14] (pp. 138–139). The original pictures are now kept in Golestan Palace Museum in Tehran. One of Pesce's photographs has captured the state of the Gate properly [41] (Photograph no. 35). Though this picture is taken towards the northwestern part of the site and it depicts the whole Gate, similar to those drawings made by the French orientalists, still, the existence of parts of the motif's chest can be distinguished (Figure 9, left part).



**Figure 9.** The first photograph made from the Gate in 1857–58 by L. Pesce. © The Golestan Palace Photo-House.

The author's interpretation of this picture can be proved by an illustration of the Gate that was drawn by Alberto Passini almost at the same time. Passini was a well-trained artist and "his quasi-photographic representation of architecture and figures are a world apart from the imaginary exoticism of earlier orientalists" [35] (p. 124). In a sketch he drew *in loco* from the Gate (towards south) in 1855 and a more completed gouache painting that he presented from this preliminary sketch in 1858, evidences of the chest of protome are presented ([42], Figures 47 and 226).

In later years many visitors, who were equipped with cameras, captured the state of Persepolitan monuments and the Gate of All Nations. German scholars, Franz Stolze and Friedrich Carl Andreas, in their expedition visited Persepolis in 1882 and took a considerable number of pictures from the site. Their pictures are accounted as the first scientific photographs from the terrace [14] (p. 145), albeit "the usual shadow, over-exposure, spots and cracks in the glass plates" are an inseparable part of these illustrations that were soon published [43]. Stolze took several pictures from the Gate. In one of these photos, "Propylaea of Xerxes", he illustrated the column under survey [44]. Considering the depletions mentioned above, this picture cannot provide us with an appropriate suggestion about the orientation of the bull, but it demonstrates a considerable deterioration of its upper part (Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Deteriorated state of the zoophorous capital in 1882. Reference [44] (Plate. 87). Source: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

To the precious early photographic records from Persepolis we should add the superior pictures of Marcel Dieulafoy, a French architect who, with the company of his wife, visited Iran and Persepolis before the start of their excavation at Susa in 1885 [45]. Although he made some photographs from the Gate and its monuments, there is no trace of the discussed capital. In a half-cut picture from the Gate, which is published in their memoir, the other column of the Gate is illustrated [46] (Pl. XXI). Definitely in the original photograph the second column was visible, but since there are not any traces of original pictures, we cannot benefit from this valuable source in this survey [47].

Other early photographic materials, more or less, have inappropriate quality. Since photographers tried to capture the totality of the site and its monuments, these photographs are valuable for general studies and not for the sake of architectural details. There is no considerable difference between the amateur photographs of the Dutch tradesman, Albert Hotz, in 1890 or the professional examples made by Armenian photographer, Antoin Sevruguin, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries [48,49]. Even German scholars F. Sarre and E. Herzfeld do not provide us with better choices in their extended atlas of pictures of Persian monuments [50] (Tafel. XV, XVI, XVI). They all made pictures of the Gate and the author of this paper has profoundly studied them. Indeed, the quality of these pictorial materials made the studying of an object that is more than twenty meters farther from the camera, difficult and unreliable.

Finally, we should name G. N. Curzon, who visited the site in late 1889. His exact observations, which were supported by his eloquent pen, are among the best descriptions of Persepolis before the dawn of scientific archeology on the terrace [14] (pp. 146–149). He called the Gate “the Porch of Xerxes” and widely examined the condition of this part of the ruins [51] (p. 155). The extreme damage that was occurred to the “Bicephalous capital” at the time of Curzon’s visit can be traced in his text. Regarding the difficulty in describing the form of the capital he asserted: “Stolze thinks that the topmost capitals of these pillars were shaped in the form of a horse; but I see no reason for supposing that they terminated in anything else than the familiar bull-headed capital of the composite Achaemenian column, like their counterparts in other contemporary fabrics” [51] (p. 158).

Unfortunately, developments in the techniques of photography were contemporaneous with the destruction of the zoophorous capital. The pace of deterioration under natural phenomena increased and, ultimately, when Herzfeld, in the 1920s and before his excavation at the terrace, for the first time shot his camera towards the column for capturing the state of capitals, just small fragments of unshaped stone remained [52]. This proves that later pictorial evidence is not helpful in justifying the state of the zoophorous capital.

#### 4. Conclusions

Asserted by the international charts, the loyalty to originality is a significant fact in the process of historic preservation. However, this can be influenced by the local condition of historical sites. Historical surveys are vital and useful instruments that help restorers with finding the original state of ancient monuments. Nevertheless, acquiring appropriate criteria for evaluating the reliability of historical testimonies (text, drawings, photographs, etc.) is highly important. Through re-examining an implemented restoration project, this paper presents some useful methods which can assure us about the authenticity of historical documents. Reviewing the history of early preserving tasks in the terrace of Persepolis demonstrates the influence of the 2500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Persian Empire celebrations on the implemented projects. This can also explain the restorers’ negligence in having proper historical surveys. This study questions the restoration of the Gate of All Nations which was restored by IsMEO in 1965–1971. The re-erection of the southeastern column of this building and the orientation of its uppermost part, a zoophorous capital, is the subject of this research.

In order to find the original state of animal motifs that once had surmounted the columns of the Gate, the author relied on travelers’ observation (memoirs and drawings) from the motif, partly standing above the northernmost column of this structure up to the late 19th century. The level of reliability of verbal contexts and drawings are a vital factor that should be considered before making any conclusion. Comparing the travelers’ illustrations and publications with the current state of buildings, as well as considering the observations made by other travelers visiting the site at the same time, are useful mediums. Moreover, travelers background (studies, trainings, motivating aims, etc.), procedures which influenced their observations and the production of their drawings and, finally, the process for the publication of original paintings are among the factors that define the level of authenticity of these historical evidences.

Travelers’ documents, remained from the late 17th century, demonstrate evidence of the zoophorous capital under survey. While De Bruijn drew a comparably-preserved motif above the column, his writings and those texts from Kaempfer, who visited the site at almost the same time, prove De Bruijn’s pictorial claims. Like De Bruijn’s drawings, a painting that is presented in *Persepolis Illustrata* demonstrates the same condition of the capital and its west–east orientation. Interestingly, all of this early evidence has a high degree of authenticity. Flandin and Coste present true-to-nature drawings

from Persepolis in 1841. Their drawings, verbal descriptions from the structure, and reconstructed design from the Gate, all together demonstrate the west–east orientation of the motif. The academic and training background of these scholars empower our reliability on their assertions. In addition, the first ever made photograph from Persepolis, almost about two decades later, and an illustration made by a highly skilled Italian artist in 1850s, prove those suggestions by the French orientalists. The gradual decomposition of stone in the course of time, besides the low quality of early photographs, overshadows the usefulness of this evidence in this survey.

The results of this study demonstrate the Italian restorers' fault in the arrangement of the zoophorous capital. Contrary to restorers' claims, historic travelers have captured evidence from the original state of the monument, which prove the orientation of these motifs in parallel to the animal motifs, which are carved on the pilasters. Entering the Gate, firstly, the head of the protome was visible and, by staying among the columns, their flanks could be perceived.

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18. IsMEO experienced a gloomy ending. From 1995 till 2011, IsMEO merged with IIA (Italian-African Institute) and its activities continued under the title of IsIAO (Italian Institute for Africa and the East). From the late 2011 onward, the IsIAO was the subject of a compulsory liquidation. Today a new association, properly called by its former name, IsMEO, heirs this long term of activities. This information is based on personal communication with Professor Andrea Piras, the Scientific Secretariat of IsIAO and Professor Pier Francesco Callieri from the University of Bologna.
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27. Even his engravings from some parts of the ruins that firstly seemed to be nothing but debris and accumulated soil are so accurate and precise. For instance, on the right lower part of the plate no. 119, vestiges of the so-called Unfinished Gate can be distinguished. Remnants of the only constructed stone column and the pattern in which other parcels were scattered on the ground can be easily determined. Surprisingly, we can find undeniable similarities between this depicted pattern and those that were drawn by Herzfeld, or photographs made by Schmidt almost about three centuries later. cf. [23] Plate. 90, and Herzfeld, E. *Skizzenbuch XIX: Persepolis*; Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives; Smithsonian Institution: Washington, DC, USA; p. 22.
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