



Smithsonian  
*Freer Gallery of Art and  
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

Jay A. Bisno Collection of Sevruguin Photographs

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Jay A. Bisno Collection of Sevruguin Photographs
<b>Identifier:</b>	FSA.A.15
<b>Date:</b>	1969-1985
<b>Extent:</b>	18 albumen prints (b&w)
<b>Creator:</b>	Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933
<b>Language:</b>	French  Handwritten annotation in French language, on verso of several photographic prints.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Jay A. Bisno Collection of Sevruguin Photographs</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Gift; Jay A. Bisno; 1985.

### Citation

Jay Bisno Collection of Sevruguin Photographs. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Gift of Jay Bisno, 1985

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository.

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## Biographical / Historical

Jay A. Bisno (b. 1939) was Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History curator of archaeology.

## Scope and Contents

Antoin Sevruguin managed and operated one of the most successful commercial photography studios in Tehran in the late 19th century. Born in the 1840s in Iran, Sevruguin's mother returned with her children to her hometown of Tbilisi after his father Vassil, a Russian diplomat in Iran, died in a horse riding accident. Trained as a painter, Sevruguin returned to Iran in the early 1870s accompanied by his two brothers, establishing a photography studio first in Tabriz and then Tehran. His studio's ties to Tbilisi, however, persisted through the years; many of the early portraits of Dervishes and women have been simultaneously attributed to Antoin Sevruguin and Dimitri Yermakov, the Georgian photographer who is often referred to as Sevruguin's mentor from Tbilisi. Many of Antoin Sevruguin's photographs were published as early as 1885 in travelogues, journals and books indicating that by that time he had a fully established practice in Tehran's Ala al-Dawla street, with ties to the court of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar. Often unacknowledged as the producer of published images in his own time - the 1902 photographic survey of Persepolis being the most glaring of such authorial misrepresentations - he was nevertheless celebrated and acknowledged for his artistic vision and his keen eye for composition, achieving the Medal of Lion and Sun from Nasir al-Din Shah, the 1897 Medal of Honour in the Brussels International Exposition, and the 1900 Medal of Honour in Paris International Exposition. Reflecting a career that spans nearly half a century, Sevruguin's diverse body of work includes studio portraits of families, women and dervishes, survey photographs of archeological sites, objects, landscapes and architecture, and photographs of royalty, high officials and ceremonies of the Qajar court. The range of his output not only demonstrates his own pictorial concerns and artistic abilities but also the divergent interests of his clients. Despite numerous devastating incidents throughout his career - the loss of more than half of his negatives in a 1908 blast and fire, an unsuccessful attempt at diversifying into cinematography in the 1910s, and the confiscation of the remainder of his negatives in the mid-1920s to name a few - his studio remained operational even after his death in 1933. A number of negatives from the Sevruguin studio can be dated to the years after Antoin's death, indicating that the Sevruguin studio continued to be commercially viable. As one of the most prolific early commercial photographers in Iran, Antoin Sevruguin's artistic legacy has since proved far more enduring.

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## Arrangement

Images indexed by original photographic print number.

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## Local Numbers

FSA A.15

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## Date/Time and Place of an Event Note

Mr. Bisno purchased the eighteen unmounted albumen prints from a shop in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1969.

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Clothing and dress
- Criminal procedure
- Executions and executioners
- Landscapes
- Portrait photography
- Religious buildings
- Royalty (Nobility)
- headgear

Types of Materials:

- Albumen prints
- Photographic prints
- Studio portraits

Names:

- Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, Shah of Iran, 1831-1896
- Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Geographic Names:

- Asia
- Iran
- Tehran (Iran)

Preferred Titles:

- Early Photography of Iran*

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## Container Listing

FSA A.15 01: Nasir al-Din Shah Sitting on the Lower Step of Takht-i Tavoos (Peacock Throne), in the Talar-i Takht (Throne Room) at Kakh-i Gulistan (Gulistan Palace Complex), Tehran (Iran), 1885-1896  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.5 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Jay A. Bisno Collection of Sevruguin Photographs](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"The Shah is sitting on the lower step of Takht-i Tavoos or the Peacock Throne in the throne room of Kakh-i Gulistan. Nasir al-Din Shah's headgear is missing the royal emblem of the Qajar court. The negative of this image is present in the archives (31.1). A close comparison of the print and the negative shows that the framing of the image in the print is a bit closer to the figure of the Shah, eliminating part of the surrounding room. The overall impression of the scene in the print is therefore that of an intimate and informal encounter between the king and the photographer, much like many other images by Sevruguin (Nasir having his moustache dyed, Hunting with Malijak, patting Aqa Khan Khaja's head, etc.) Takht-i Tavoos (Peacock Throne) is a later name of Takht-i Khurshid or the Sun Throne. Erroneously the name of the Throne as the peacock throne equated it with the famous Indian throne of Shah Jahan and Nadir's war booty from India, whereas Takht-i Khurshid - visible in this image - was ordered by Fath Ali Shah Qajar around 1800s and built by an Isfahani artist known as Haji Muhammad Hussayn Khan Sadr. The name of the throne changed to the Peacock Throne after Fath Ali Shah's marriage to Tavoos Khanum, his favorite wife. The marriage was celebrated on this particular throne. In the occasion of various royal celebration - such as Salam-i Nawruzi - the throne would be moved out of the palace and into the Iwan-i Dar al-Imara (later known as the hall of Takht-i Marmar or the marble throne) and would be the seating place of the Qajar kings of the time. The tight framing of the print as compared to the negative also eliminates the number that is that is visible in the negative." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "628."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "Nasrdin Chah."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Glass negative numbered FSA A.4 2.12 GN.31.01; available in Myron Bement Smith Collection, ca. 1910-1970.

Local Numbers

A.5-11

B-1

FSA A.15 01

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Bibliography

Yahya Zoka and Mohammad Hassan Semsar, Tehran Dar Tasvir, Tehran: Sazman-i Miras-i Farhangi-i Kishvar, 1997, p:155-161

Names: Kākh-i Gulistān (Tehran, Iran)  
Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, Shah of Iran, 1831-1896  
Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Early Photography of Iran  
Palaces  
Portrait photography  
Royalty (Nobility)  
Thrones  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran  
Tehran (Iran)

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 02: Funeral Bier of Nasir al-Din Shah, Placed in the Takkiya Dawlat, Tehran (Iran), May-June, 1896

*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.6 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Funeral Bier of Nasir al-Din Shah, Placed in the Takkiya Dawlat, Tehran \(Iran\) \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"Nasir al-Din shah (b. 1831-d. 1896), the fourth king of Qajar dynasty, was assassinated by Mirza Riza Kirmani on May 1st of 1896, on his short visit to Shah Abdul 'Azim Shrine in Shemiran, North of Tehran. The purpose of the trip was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his reign. On April 30th of 1896, Kirmani, who was amongst the spectators of the Shah's visit to the Abd al-'Azim shrine - allowed for the first time in the presence of the Royal entourage - shot Nasir on his way out of the Shrine. Nasir al-Din shah's funeral was held on the 18th of Zi Gha'da of 1313 (May 1st, 1896) from Kakh-i Gulistan's Diamond room to Takkiya Dawlat. His body was kept in Takkiya Dawlat for a few months until his burial place was prepared. He was then buried beside his favorite wife - Furugh al-Saltana or Jayran - in Shah Abdul 'Azim. Another funeral was held upon his relocation from Takkiya Dawlat to Shah Abdul 'Azim in July of 1896. The image seems to have been taken in Takkiya Dawlat, where Nasir al-Din Shah's body was kept for the first few months. Nasir al-Din Shah's bier is placed on top of a platform that is set up above a few carpet covered steps in Takkiya Dawlat's main iwan. Candles are placed atop the platform and the bier is covered with flowers. The bier is accompanied by religious figures, guards and court officials, standing beside the bier on the platform and the steps. Above the bier a portrait painting of Nasir al-Din Shah - standing and in armor - is hung under another smaller painting that seems to depict Hussayn, the third Imam of Shi'i Islam. In the newspapers of the time, the death of Nasir al-Din Shah was likened to the death of Hussayn and the mourning period for the king likened to the Muharram mourning period of Tasu'a and 'Ashura. Considering the fact that Nasir was assassinated about a month and half before the Muharram mourning days ( 17th of Zi Gha'da) and his body was not moved from Takkiya Dawlat before the end of the Muharram mourning period, the two mourning periods coincided in date as well as the location." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "368."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Catafalque de feu Shah."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "4."

- On verso of the print, handwritten annotation (penciled) reads, "Ernst Höltzer."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

#### Local Numbers

A.5-2

B-2

FSA A.15 02

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

#### Bibliography

Iraj Afshar, *Khatirat va Asnad-i Zahir al-Dawla*, Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahami Kitabha-i Jibi, 1972, p:34 For more info on the symbolic relation of



Qajar kings to the Shi'i Imams see: Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Moustaches Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*, University of California Press, 2005

Names: Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, Shah of Iran, 1831-1896  
Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Architecture  
Early Photography of Iran  
Rites and ceremonies  
Royalty (Nobility)

Place: Asia  
Iran  
Tehran (Iran)

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 03: Muzaffar Al-Din Shah Qajar, Shah of Iran, Before 1896  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.6 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Muzaffar Al-Din Shah Qajar, Shah of Iran \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

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"Muzaffar Al-Din Shah Qajar (b.1853-d.1906) succeeded Nasir Al-Din Shah as the fifth king of Qajar dynasty after his assassination in 1896. The new king, who originally resided in Tabriz, moved to Tehran in May of 1896 to take over his father's throne. However, the inscription on the crown's emblem in this image makes it a Nasiri crown. The photo is therefore taken while he was still the crown prince and during Nasir al-Din Shah's reign. The small bit of railing visible in the image - where the figure rests his arm - closely resembles the studio props of the photographer's studio. If the image is not taken in the studio and in the palace, the choice of the setting complicates the distinction, possibly contributing to the photographic studio's profile of clientele and thus its fame." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "600."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "1."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

A.5-1

B-3

FSA A.15 03

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh, Shah of Iran, 1853-1907  
Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
Regalia (Insignia)  
Royalty (Nobility)  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints  
Studio portraits

FSA A.15 04: Muzaffar Al-Din Shah-i Qajar, Shah of Iran, Accompanied by Amin al-Sultan and Mushir al-Dawla, 1898  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 10.8 cm. x 14.4 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Muzaffar Al-Din Shah-i Qajar, Shah of Iran, Accompanied by Amin al-Sultan and Mushir al-Dawla \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

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"The studio portrait shows Muzaffar Al-Din Shah (seated) with Amin al-sultan(b.1843-d.1907) on his left and Shaykh Muhsin Khan-i Mushir al-Dawla(b.1820-d.1899) on his right. Compared to another portrait of Muzaffar al-Din in the Bisno collection (Bisno 3), the crown in this image is the crown of the king and not the heir to the throne. Therefore the photo must have been taken after the coronation of Muzaffar al-Din Shah and during the short period of Mushir al-Dawla's appointment as the chief minister in June of 1898." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "2."

- On verso of the print, unidentified inked seal marked.

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

2

B-4

FSA A.15 04

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Bibliography

Mahdi Bamdad: *Sharh-i Hal-i Rijal-i Iran dar Qarn-i 12, 13, 14 Hijri*, Tehran: Intisharat-i Zavvar (Zavvar Publishing): 1992, Vol. 3, p:204-212

Bibliography

Ghasem Safi, *Aksha-I Ghadimi-I Iran, Rijal, Manazir, Bana-ha, va Muhit-i Ijtima'i*, Tehran: Intisharat va Chap-i Danishgah-i Tehran, 1989, p:480

Bibliography

Michael Myers Shoemaker, *The Heart of the Orient*, New York: The Knickerbockers Press, 1904, p:129

Names: Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh, Shah of Iran, 1853-1907  
Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
Regalia (Insignia)  
Royalty (Nobility)  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints  
Studio portraits

FSA A.15 05: Ali Asghar Khan-i Amin al-Sultan, 1880-1907  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.7 cm. x 20.9 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Ali Asghar Khan-i Amin al-Sultan \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

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"Standing portrait of Mirza Ali Asghar Khan-i Amin al-Sultan (b.1843-d.1907). Amin al-Sultan was the chief minister of three Qajar kings - Nasir Al-Din Shah, Muzaffar Al-Din Shah and Muhammad Ali Shah - until he was assassinated in 1907, during Muhammad Ali Shah's reign. The print has a partial signature of Amin al-Sultan on the bottom, noting that it might have been a gift to someone." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "83."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Atabeg Azam."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "5."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

#### Local Numbers

A.5-9

B-5

FSA A.15 05

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933  
Topic: Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear  
Place: Asia  
Iran  
Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints  
Studio portraits

FSA A.15 06: Seated Dervish Holding Engraved Axe, 1880-1890  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.0 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Seated Dervish Holding Engraved Axe \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic

ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"Seated portrait of a dervish. A considerable number of Sevruguin's photographs fit within the general title of dervish portraits. Most of the photos, such as this one, is taken either in the photographer's studio or a location of his choosing with ample light and unnoticeable backgrounds. The combination of the two elements allows for a dramatic depiction of the Christ-like figures of dervishes, likening the images more to a painting. It seems that the ambiguity of the subject matter - allowed by the posture and general look of the figures - appealed to Sevruguin's painterly ambitions and became a subject of artistic experimentation with the medium. In this regard, the experiments contribute to his practice of studio photography with diverse subject matters such as the kings and the beggars." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "639."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Derviche."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "46."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Glass negative numbered FSA A.4 2.12 GN.28.07; available in Myron Bement Smith Collection, ca. 1910-1970.

#### Local Numbers

A.5-5

B-6

FSA A.15 06

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Dervishes  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

## Studio portraits

FSA A.15 07: A Dervish and Two Men, 1880s-1930s

*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.7 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): A Dervish and Two Men \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

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"Unlike many other photos of the same subject matter, this image of the three beggars is taken outside the photographer's studio, most probably in Maydan-I Mashq. Compared to the other images with similar subject matters, the composition of this image also seems less structured." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "140."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Dervichs."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "40."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

A.5-4

B-7

FSA A.15 07

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Dervishes  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 08: Jewish Quarter of Tehran (Iran), 1880s-1930s  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.9 cm. x 15.6 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Jewish Quarter of Tehran \(Iran\) \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

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"The quarter was located on the southeast side of the old walls of the city of Tehran. In the background of the image, a man seems to be holding a cigarette in hand." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "1054."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Teheran. Quartier des Juifs."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "26."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

26

B-8

FSA A.15 08

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Architecture  
Clothing and dress  
Domestic animals  
Early Photography of Iran  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Tehran (Iran)

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 09: Man with Hunting Falcon, 1880s-1930s  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.7 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Man with Hunting Falcon \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"The figure could be of one of the falcon trainers of the Qajar court. Unlike the trainer, the falcon seems to be directly looking at the camera." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "1335."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "51c."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

A.5-7

B-9

FSA A.15 09

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Domestic animals  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints



## Photographic prints

FSA A.15 10: Crowd at a Performance in Maydan-i Arg (Arg Square) or the Old Canon's Square (Maydan-I Tupkhana'l Qadim), Tehran (Iran):, 1880s-1930s  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.8 cm. x 15.8 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Crowd at a Performance in Maydan-i Arg \(Arg Square\) or the Old Canon's Square \(Maydan-I Tupkhana'l Qadim\), Tehran \(Iran\): \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"The square was the usual gathering place of people in ceremonies. Iwan-i Takht that was also the entrance to the palace overlooks the square. The image depicts the square from the opposite side of the Iwan with people gathering in the square to witness an event in the background of the image. From the two poles on the either side of the blurred scene in the middle, it can be assumed that the scene is of a hanging." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "653."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Salance(?)."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "9."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

B-10

FSA A.15 10

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Architecture  
Early Photography of Iran

Place: Asia  
Iran  
Tehran (Iran)

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 11: Mirza Riza Kirmani, Nasir Al-Din Shah's Assassin, 1896  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 14.7 cm. x 20.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Mirza Riza Kirmani, Nasir Al-Din Shah's Assassin \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"Portrait of Mirza Riza Kirmani (d. 1896) taken during his imprisonment and after his assassination of Nasir Al-Din Shah Qajar. Mirza Riza Kirmani assassinated Nasir Al-Din Shah Qajar on May 1st of 1896, during the Shah's visit to Shah Abdul 'Azim Shrine in northern Tehran. Mirza Riza was executed by hanging on the dusk of the second day of Rabi 'al-Avval of 1314(11th of August, 1896), about four months after he assassinated Nasir al-Din Shah. The four month delay in his execution was due to the extensive interrogations to find out if he had any accomplices." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "607."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "Mirza Reza."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "3a."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

A.5-3

B-11

FSA A.15 11

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Bibliography

Iraj Afshar, *Khatirat va Asnad-i Zahir al-Dawla*, Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahami Kitabha-i Jibi, 1972, p:44

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933  
Topic: Clothing and dress  
Criminal procedure  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear  
Place: Asia  
Iran  
Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 12: Public Hanging of Mirza Riza Kirmani, August 12, 1896, 1896  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.7 cm. x 15.6 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Public Hanging of Mirza Riza Kirmani, August 12, 1896 \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"Mirza Riza Kirmani assassinated Nasir Al-Din Shah Qajar on May 1st of 1896, during the shah's visit to Shah Abdul 'Azim Shrine in northern Tehran. Nasir al-Din shah's visit to the shrine, which for the first time happened in the presence of people - was to initiate the celebration of his 50th year in reign. Mirza Riza was executed by hanging on the dusk of the second day of Rabi 'al-Avval of 1314(12th of August, 1896), about four months after he assassinated Nasir al-Din Shah. The four month delay in his execution was due to the extensive interrogations to find out if he had any accomplices. His body was left hanging for about two days after the event. From the number of people gathering around the hanging body of Mirza, it can be assumed that the photo was taken within hours after the event. Amin al-Sultan notes in his diaries that the first few hours, the square was rather crowded and he could hardly find his way close to the body." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "623."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "Mirza Reza."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "3b."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

B-12

FSA A.15 12

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Criminal procedure  
Early Photography of Iran  
Executions and executioners

Place: Asia  
Iran  
Tehran (Iran)

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 18: Masjid-i Shah Abd al 'Azim (Shah Abd al 'Azim Mosque) in Tehran (Iran), ca. 1897

*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.5 cm. x 20.5 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Masjid-i Shah Abd al 'Azim \(Shah Abd al 'Azim Mosque\) in Tehran \(Iran\) \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"The photo - taken from afar and a slightly elevated position - shows the courtyard and the entrance iwan of the Masjid-i Shah Abd al'Azim. The Seljuk Shrine/mosque has a lengthy list of restorations during the years, a few of the most significant of which is from Qajar period. From adding minarets and tile work to restoring the other structures and shrines around the main building, works were carried out in the span of about a hundred years during the reigns of Fath Ali Shah, Nasir al-Din Shah and Muzaffar al-Din Shah Qajar. Its golden dome was added during Nasir al-Din Shah's reign, who ordered the dome to be covered in Gold covered copper sheets around 1850s. The minarets were added around 1890s. Many of the images of the building in the 1900s publications are missing the most recent addition of the minarets. The image in Bisno collection however shows the building after the addition of minarets, which puts the date around 1895-1900. Abdullah Qajar has a very similar photo. Copies of Sevruguin's many photos of the site, along with Abdullah Qajar's photos, can be found on the website of the shrine." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "85."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Chahzadeh Abdoulazime."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "23a."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Glass negative numbered FSA A.4 2.12 GN.53.10; available in Myron Bement Smith Collection, ca. 1910-1970.

#### Local Numbers

23a

B-18

FSA A.15 18

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

#### Bibliography

[http://www.abdulazim.com/PERSIANnet/pageview.aspx?na=architecture\\_and\\_building/default.htm&h=1934](http://www.abdulazim.com/PERSIANnet/pageview.aspx?na=architecture_and_building/default.htm&h=1934)

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Architecture  
Early Photography of Iran  
Religious buildings

Place: Asia  
Iran  
Tehran (Iran)

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 13: Group of Prisoners and Guards, 1880s-1930s

*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.7 cm. x 15.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Group of Prisoners and Guards \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"The five prisoners in chains are seated in front of a row of nine, fully armed guards." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "122."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "34."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

A.5-6

B-13

FSA A.15 13

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Criminal procedure  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 14: A Prisoner and Guard, 1880s-1930s  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 15.6 cm. x 20.6 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): A Prisoner and Guard \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"An old prisoner and his guard are photographed standing side by side inside a studio setting. While the prisoner is looking away from the camera, the guard engages the gaze of the viewer and the lens. The prisoner seems to carry a tied up piece of rope and his guard is carrying the remains of the chain on the

prisoner's neck." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "1264."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Un brigand."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "36."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Local Numbers

A.5-10

B-14

FSA A.15 14

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Clothing and dress  
Criminal procedure  
Early Photography of Iran  
Portrait photography  
headgear

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints  
Studio portraits

FSA A.15 15: Executed Prisoner in a Public Square, 1880s-1930s  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.7 cm. x 15.6 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Executed Prisoner in a Public Square \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"The blood covered body of a man in white cloth lays in the opening in front of the camera while a large group of spectators - including children - are watching the event in the background of the image." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "337."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Exécuté."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "51b."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

#### Local Numbers

51b

B-15

FSA A.15 15

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Criminal procedure  
Early Photography of Iran  
Executions and executioners

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 16: Man buried in sand, 1880s-1930s  
*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.7 cm. x 15.5 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Man buried in sand \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"Public display of punishment - be it bastinado, showing of prisoners in chains, hanging or stoning - comprise a group of photos in Sevruguin collection. A



thorough study of this set can yield unexpected results in the matter of uses of violence and punishment in the first few years of 20th century in Iran. The images of bastinado as a usual form of punishment in the 'orient' are prevalent also in the travelogues and other similar publications of around 1900s. Sevruguin's photos are both published in such books and journal entries and utilized as models for lithographs and paintings in them." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "1131."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) in French reads, "Exécuté."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "51a."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

Glass negative numbered FSA A.4 2.12 GN.37.02; available in Myron Bement Smith Collection, ca. 1910-1970.

#### Local Numbers

51a

B-16

FSA A.15 16

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

#### Bibliography

Mansour Bonakdarian, "A World Born through the Chamber of a Revolver: Revolutionary Violence, Culture, and Modernity in Iran, 1906-1911," *A Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 25, iss. 2, p:318-340

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Topic: Early Photography of Iran

Place: Asia  
Iran

Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints

FSA A.15 17: Administration of Punishment by Application of Bastinado, 1880s-1930s

*1 albumen print (b&w; 20.7 cm. x 15.7 cm.)*

[Image\(s\): Administration of Punishment by Application of Bastinado \[graphic\]](#)

Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933

Antoin Sevruguin is one of the early pioneers of commercial photography in Iran. He arrived in Iran from Tbilisi, Georgia in the mid 1870s to set up shop in Ala al-

Dawla street in Tehran. From the early days, Sevruguin's studio was trusted both by the Qajar court and by foreign visitors to Iran. Highly regarded for their artistic ingenuity outside Iran, Sevruguin's photographs of 'ethnic types,' architecture and landscape, and depictions of daily life of Tehran found their way into foreign travelogues, magazines and books. As such, he stands alone in a relatively large group of early Iranian photographers for being recognized and celebrated outside the boundaries of the country. Antoin Sevruguin passed away in 1933, although his family studio continued for some time as a commercial enterprise.

"Public display of punishment - be it bastinado, showing of prisoners in chains, hanging or stoning - comprise a group of photos in Sevruguin collection. A thorough study of this set can yield unexpected results in the matter of uses of violence and punishment in the first few years of 20th century in Iran. The images of bastinado as a usual form of punishment in the 'orient' are prevalent also in the travelogues and other similar publications of around 1900s. Sevruguin's photos are both published in such books and journal entries and utilized as models for lithographs and paintings in them." [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Curatorial Research Assistant]

- On recto of the print, handwritten number in white (inked, probably by Antoin Sevruguin) reads, "299."

- On verso of the print, handwritten caption (penciled), probably by Antoin Sevruguin in French reads, "Bastanad [Bastonade]."

- On verso of the print, handwritten number (penciled) reads, "33."

One of 18 albumen prints, without any apparent organization, housed in document boxes and stored on shelves.

#### Local Numbers

33

B-17

FSA A.15 17

Title and summary note are provided by Shabnam Rahimi-Golkhandan, FSg curatorial research specialist.

Names: Sevruguin, Antoin, 1851-1933  
Topic: Criminal procedure  
Early Photography of Iran  
Executions and executioners  
headgear  
Place: Asia  
Iran  
Genre/Form: Albumen prints  
Photographic prints