

*Review article*

EGYPTIAN PHOTOGRAPHY TRENDS FROM 1875 TO 1900 THROUGH SOME  
OF ARMENIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS AND THEIR WORKS

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Received 24/1/2015

Accepted 21/6/2015

**Abstract**

*The research aims to studying the artistically trends of photography in Egypt since 1875, the year which Armenians began to appear on the art scene. The research deals with three distinct models of photographers, who came to Egypt, settled out in it and practiced this art without interruption until 1900 and possibly beyond that. Their works expressed about the reality of the Egyptian environment, and reflected the international art trends that dominated in this period, whereas it was transported to Egypt in what was transported to Egypt such as all European influences generally. They were chosen, as they practiced this art in Turkey and Egypt at the same time, and they have learned at the hands of the Europeans in Europe and Turkey, and competed their Europeans peers in Egypt and outnumbered them, and saw them all European art academies in particular, the study shows the origin and artistic education and the most important technical features for each of them and the factors that affect it and all its implications and their role in the Renaissance of photography in Egypt.*

**Keywords:** *Photography Trends, Armenian photographers, New classic, Realism.*

**1. Introduction**

The writings of pilgrims and orientalist writers who visited Egypt and the East represented generally important factors that drew the attention of Europe. It rooted in the minds of the Europeans through ages unreal ideas and fantasies. The crusades were an important part of these desires towards the acquisition of the East and its riches, by enjoying life in it. The French campaign to Egypt and the Levant, 1798, was the first attempts to colonize the East. Attempts Continued always order it and succeeded in colonizing most of these countries, draining their wealth, spreading European culture and bringing up generations owning with loyalty, belonging, and entrenching the European approach in various aspects of life. The photography was one of the

most famous tools that have played a major role in exposing the secrets of the East and its entire natural, human, social, religious, and cultural features. Photography was a double-edged weapon, as work of art expressing the aesthetic East values, and transmitted photos designed to uncover facts, as studying in preparation for use. He practiced this art looks outward artist but perhaps besides journalists or pastor or missionary spy. Despite the cost of these paintings of the time, effort and skill and variety, but that did not deter every so many years of photographing the details of various aspects of the lives of the peoples of the East, and Egypt in particular, as evidenced by the vast left by those artists.

## 2. Photography

With the beginnings of the modern renaissance, the revolution of industry in the West and its resulting progress and growth manifestations in various fields photography appeared. Although the real birth of this art was in the nineteenth century the first of its ideas began since the beginning of the sixteenth century representing in the dark room machine that Leonardo da Vinci was one of its users at this time [1]. The photography continued his evolutionary advance. After Joseph Nicephore Niepce 1826 had got his first photo in history [2]. The French citizen Loud Daguerre could patent camera 1839 "the date of birth of the camera". It is the same date that this machine went into Egypt with Frederic Goupil Fisch and Horace Fournier where they taken the first photograph in Africa in November 7 to the Governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali Pasha in Alexandria. Muhammad Ali Pasha always sought to achieve the renaissance of Egypt. Therefore, he always welcomed all foreigners of different nationalities, religions, professions and cultures,

whereas he considered-with their skills-as principal factors in the building of the Renaissance. Foreigners attended to Egypt and communities of photographers not only from Europe but also from the nationals of Ottoman Caliphate came with them like Jews, Tumor, Syrians, and Armenians which their proportion was about 20.8 % of the total number of all photographer in Egypt [3]. The illustrators of paintings relegated their position gradually and their works began to disappeared replaced by large numbers of photographs that were comparable in these beginnings in form and substance. New directions started to appear in photographic works according to quickly modern variants and the successive variables at the local, regional and international levels. The competitions started between photographers as personal and collective level. standing out on the scene a group of the Armenian photographers who appeared in this period the basic unit in the Renaissance photography in Egypt as a success, limb and superiority over their European peers.

## 3. The Emergence of Armenian Photographers

Armenia is the main home of the Armenians and continued to suffer from political and economic problems that have affected on the citizens. Consequently many of them were forced for migration and stability totally in different countries. They practiced various economic activities; taking advantage of the privileges granted for them by the Ottoman Empire such as religious tolerance and freedom of thought and belief. They assumed administrative jobs and prominent leadership positions, such as ordinary citizens. The idea of stability in Egypt reflected to Armenian photographers in the artistic creations stemming from the Egyptian reality other than the work of Europeans, which aimed only for quick

profit; as it was dedicated to the rich than just tourists, or to serve political reports and press releases official institutions. Armenians were known for their excellence and skill in various industries, and took control of the photography profession. They were teased many historians impressive even some of them said they had laid the foundations of the industry in the cities of the Ottoman Caliphate [4]. Also, one of their studios was "Nazar" In Alexandria, "Sarvian Brothers" In Beirut, "Ysayi Kara Btyan" and "Grabid Krikorian" in Jerusalem [5]. "Avitizov Brothers" in Akaltski of Georgia, "Markaryan Brothers" in Bulgaria, "Baronakien Brothers" in Alexandria pole of Armenian. Earlier Armenian

photographers excelled in the field of photography, as considering one of the first in Astana. They practiced it as apprentices, after appearing directly at the hands of foreign photographers and professionals after leaving many of those the Astana. A lot of them allocated in the art of portrait most notably "Bagdasaryan" (1860-1880), and "Baghos Tarcolian" who was favored by the elite of the Ottoman, and its pictures highlighted clear tendencies towards Europe in terms of artistic traditions, and skill in highlighting the religiosity, affluence landmarks and the degree of learning on his clients photos. Another group of prominent photographers appeared and replied the needs of tourist market, most notably of them "Jolmes Brothers" who photographed the cultural sights of Turkey as "Siraskirat" court and the port area of "Amen Oyono. "Mihran Iranian" 1890 photographed the suburbs and back streets of Astana during the rapid transformations and successive works from his famous work "Istanbul Street", he influenced by the work of photographer "Ara Guler" [6]. Their role was not limited to Astana, but worked

in various countries and capitals as Tbilisi and Baku. They have played a prominent role, one of most notably photographers of them was "Gregor Terre" (1860-1920), using the photo as the educational and political tool, he produced an distinct album for all Armenian personalities and others who lived or passed Tbilisi. Whereas the "Ristimaan" who was a dramatic photographer of Baku, from his notable works a theatrically photo of a boy expressing various Caucasian habits in 1900. "Vrtanov" also appeared with the early twentieth century, its photo of an unknown man from Tbilisi expressing sensuality of a modern Caucasus folk art features [7]. Portraiture was the highlight art of the Armenians for excelling in various parts of the Ottoman Empire and Russia, and it has become for them a good reputation with the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It was derived from their speed observation of habits and traditions of the peoples and their integration into the various ranks of the Arab and Islamic societies that have undergone the Ottoman Empire.

#### **4. Armenian Photographers in Egypt**

Armenians played a vital role in enriching the field of photography in Egypt at the same time that the Egyptians abstained this art because of Islam's position on it, expressing totally and spontaneously by Muhammad Ali Pasha when he stood for the first time in front of the camera commenting "This is from the work of the devil"[8]. A lot of Egyptians in this time who did not read about modern Western cultures, and perhaps those who read Vacuumed culture through Educational missions standing the cautious attitude of photography, pending to take religious position slowly, Armenians photography entered the field quickly and strongly. And they had prized it and

excelled at their counterparts from tumors their predecessors' stability in Egypt also fanning out and achieved a great success. Egypt was accounted for Armenians as the first destination after Astana because of its constituents achieving their ambitions, whereas gangrenous opportunities for fiancé wealth, achieving fame, social environment, customs and traditions converged with each other. The weather was fair and sunny skies most of the months of the year. Egyptian environment was rich with natural scenery. Social life was full of various activities of various classes and ranks of various nationalities participate. Renaissance was going fast and successive pace. Armenians were

welcomed like other foreigners Classes. Among of them were of equal access to major jobs in the collections of the Egyptian government. Thus they began on coming and stability in various Egyptian cities such as Cairo, Alexandria and the Suez Canal. The year of 1875 was the real beginning of the emergence of Armenian photographers in Egypt. It was chosen only three of them first-generation models for the study, because of their emergence in Cairo and Astana at the same time, excelling their works as well as the comprehensive abundance, clear link between these two environments, their continuity without interruption in the practice of the profession since the beginning of their backs until the early twentieth century. The link between them, a

#### **4.1. Sebah family**

This family consists of two brothers: Cosme, Pascal, and Pascal's son Jane. Pascal was born 1823 in Istanbul to Syriac Catholic father and Armenian mother. His first Studio was opened 1857 in Istanbul, and was moved quickly in 1860 to the big Street in Pera the most vital, it was called "Studio of the East" and was in a neighborhood post Akilar, In order to benefit from French expertise he nominate "La Roche" the photographer for the studio technically and artistically management, also to increase expertise in the field co-operated with prestigious painter Osman Hamdi Bey, who gave him all the photographic models for paint. Most of Osman Hamdi's works mimic the European impressionists, particularly the orientalist "Jean Leon Gerome", and it therefore reflected on what was provided by Pascal has to implement manual drawing. The profession of Osman Hamdi's reflected on the works of Pascal to choose the poses and dimensions and the amount of shadow and light in various works [9] After recording studio in Istanbul good reputation, Pascal succeeded in opening another in Egypt in 1873 next to the French consulate at European district.

common denominator familiarity with expertise in English and French, was piloted early and practiced in the court of the Ottoman Empire and rulers of Egypt at the same time. Thus their works expressed about the two main trends of this art. The first is the traditional orientalist trend. The second is the modern trend. The proximity of the ruling court in both Egypt and the Astana and work directly inside this court was important role in enriching their art work, spread and the enthusiasm of the people of regionally and globally. The previous abuse of the education profession has an important role in their supremacy as practiced and educated art and craft by Ottoman and Italian painters, who were heirs of the known classic orientalist painting.

Most Pascal's customers were of tourists. When he came to Egypt, he studied the various elements of its environment and was assisted by "Bishard" which was working in Egypt since 1870 whereas he provided him with the negatives of his photographs in Egypt Later they became partners and they put their signatures on negatives, mostly of these were pictures of monuments areas that fit the requirements of tourists. Pascal's work influenced the French photographer "Bonn fills" that he imitated them in many of his works as the photo of "Street in Cairo" and "School of Sultan Barkouk". He could participate with his works about Egypt regularly in international exhibitions in Paris, and won the silver medal in 1878 and became a member of the Association of French photographers [10]. In addition to personal skill in the art of portraiture during his work in Egypt, he managed to root the idea of social portraiture that was about a mass of thematic photos with social dimension as the problem of poverty. He took many scenes including archaeological temples, personal photos and pictures of the Nubian Desert tribes to highlight the architecture in an attempt

to link the human and cultural achievements. Many of his photos used as illustrative plates for travellers and historians writers. He died on June 25, 1886 and was buried in Istanbul. his brother Cosme conducted the two studios in Egypt and even Turkey, until Jane son of Pascal could work with his uncle in 1888 and then share with them the French

"Jolliet". They worked together in Egypt until the early 1900 and continued in Istanbul until the death of Jane on June 6, 1947 at the age of 75 [11]. Congress library of America still retain their artistically album issued in 1893, fig. (1- a, b) showing examples of Pascal Sebah works.



Figure (1) **a.** Pascal Sébah image sheets, showing manufacturers of the Mothes, 1876, Albumin paper, 20.4×26.3 Cm., (National Institute of art History, France), **b.** Egyptian Landscape, Egypt 1876., Albumen silver photograph, 21.2×19.6, (*Brooklyn Museum, U.S.A*).

#### 4.2. Abdullah brothers

They are three fraternity brothers, Vekin (1820- 1902), and Hofseb (1830-1908), and Kevork Abdullah (1939-1918). Fakin photographic career began early in 1856 when he was trained by German photographer "Rabach" studio, which was inaugurated by the latter in Pera. Fakin colored solar photos. Rabach left Istanbul in 1858, leaving the studio to Vekin. He called in the same year his the younger brother Kevork. Who finished his academic study at the Armenian Murad Ravlian Academy in Venice [12]. They all decided with their brother the third Hofsab to leave the place and inaugurate new studio in Beyazid district of Constantinople. Thanks to the use of the latest technologies, they had achieved notable successes in the Ottoman and European circles. It manifested in reliance them in 1863 as the official court photographers during Sultan Abdul Aziz time (1861-1876), and they continued on for a period of thirty years until the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909). He allowed them to use the sultanate monogram on their paintings [13]. They transferred their activity to the second time for Pera 1868. The Studio had

achieved remarkable leadership and fan base of Ottoman elites, foreigners and representatives of diplomatic missions who are informed by the feasibility of this art. Because of this fame they received calls from Frederick III of Germany, Frederick Joseph King of Hungary, Edward III and Crown Prince of the Principality of British Wales [14], and from the khedive Muhammad Tawfiq Pasha ruler of Egypt (1879-1892). The opening of the Suez Canal, 1869, entering of Egypt under British occupation 1882 referred to start shifting the center of gravity from Istanbul to Cairo. Since the internationalization of the Armenian issue on the Congress of Berlin 1878 the Ottoman Armenian relations was marked by tense, despite the intimacy between the elite [15]. Accordingly, Abdullah Brothers decided to open a Studio in Alexandria which departed to 1886 [16], but they changed their minds about heading to Cairo. They selected the place of Kantaret Al-dekkh in Bab El-Hadeed [17] where elders, ruling elders and aristocratic elite in Central Cairo next to Palace of Nubar Pasha, Chairman of the Board of supervisors (1884-1888). The

Studio was opened on Monday March 14, 1887. The portraits of the Ottoman sultans and the photo of the khedive Tawfiq taken during his visit on Sunday 2 April 1887, accompanied by princes of the khedivial family were their first production [18]. The senior Princes were in front of visitors to see the exhibits, and they bought a large number of photographs of the Ottoman power men as Ibrahim Adham Pasha Osman Nuri Pasha, Ottoman representative Ahmed Mukhtar Ghazy Pasha [19] and all who served as Great Ministry and many international characters such as Mark Twain, and other celebrities [20], as well as many beautiful landscapes. Abdullah Brothers took advantage of the positive credit is at Yildiz Saray in Astana and Abdeen Palace in Cairo in the rhetoric of the audience materially who were capable to buy their art and flirt with their feelings towards the star of society at that time and all the beautiful scenes of the Egyptian environment. They had exaggerated so they went for women who didn't want the came to have photos in the studio for their homes to pick up their photographs [21]. Contin-uous and intense publicity resulted for their products to tourists frequenting the Europeans not only in Astana but also in

Cairo; you could not see European tourists even go to them [22]. Abdullah Brothers Whitlam 1889 documented visit of the German Emperor to Astana and graced them by a commemorative medal "cordon doers" of admiration for their work. They were assigned to document all sightings and the conditions of the Ottoman Empire. They documented 1891 to trip of the khedive Ismail Pasha's daughters' princesses of the Upper Egypt. They shared in Colombia world exhibition 1893 with many rare works that the congress library still retains a copy of the album that took part in this exhibition. At the end of 1895 they ended their activity in Egypt and closed the Studio. In 1900 they sold it to Jane Pascal Sebah and his partner Joliet with all its negatives. He was signed by Jane and partner along with their signatures after printing. The Abdullah Brothers Foundation was a manifest-tation of success and Excellent of the Armenian photographers and foreign competition both in Astana and in Cairo also represented about their great efforts in the dissemination of the urbanization in Ottoman Empire over decades of time [23], fig. (2- a, b) showing examples of Abdullah brothers works.

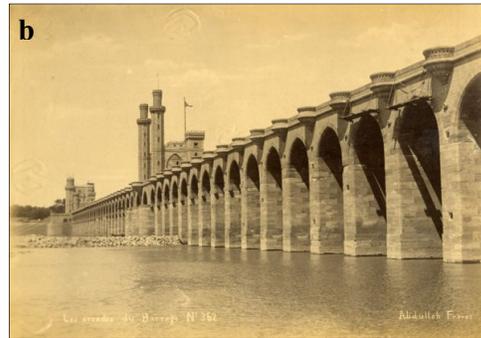


Figure (2) Abdullah brothers, image sheets, showing **a.** Cairo station, 1880-1896, 19.7×25.9 Cm., **b.** the arcades of the Nile Dam, 1880, Albumin photograph, 19.4×25.5Cm., Armenian Photographer Foundation (*Lusadaran*).

### 4.3. Likigian

Gabriel Likigian was born in Istanbul at the late of 1850 and received his technical education at the hands of Englishmen photographers. began his artistic career as a painter before 1880. worked with the Italian painter, "Salvatore

Valerie" who married his sister Maria. began his desire to document the daily life of people that reflected on some of his early works. preferred filming scenes of the lives of the aristocratic elite and tourist attractions. Many of his works had seen a

tendency toward private "Valerie" and "Jerome" classic Orientalists methods with a penchant for realism. His pictures were shown in Istanbul in 1881 and London in 1885 as painting with watercolor carrying all these properties. won the gold medal in the international exhibition in Paris 1892. also won the grand prize at the International Exposition in Chicago in 1893 [24]. Some pictures expressed about his Armenian nationality and they were with a theatrical nature dazzled affected with some Orientalists works. It isn't known that how and when he moved to Cairo, and when he began to shift towards the practice of photography. It is likely that he worked and trained for a period of time in some tumors studios in Istanbul before arriving in Cairo. He began to establish his studio near the studio of Pascal Sebah against the Shepherd Hotel. This was the presence of the elite, the communities and attractions area [25]. It was so-called "Artistically studio for Likigian & Co." and continued in Egypt since 1887 until 1920. The competition began between photographers Greek, French. He produced thousands of photos and albums scenes every day, natural, architectural and engineering life as temples in Egypt, the Pyramids, the Nile and others. Its production was in vogue and desirable among European tourists and residents.

Furthermore, he had many scenes of the poor, farmers, craftsmen, everyday life and Nubian women with their exposing breasts with traditional orientalist postures. Documented the rapid development in the field of industry and civil surpassing the traditional character of the rigid images which became the favorable photographer for many princes and princesses of the ruling house of Egypt as Princess Nazli, whose photos were taken by him had become "The Operator of the English army photography" after the Britain occupation to Egypt. Also, this matching took place on its products and stepped up to the English press, pro and anti-Turkish propaganda for him in various ways, he came upon the people of residents and foreigners [26] began to insert photos of the official military reports and newspaper articles and government buildings. He produced documentary photographs and photos relating to commercial transactions and designed models for mailing cards used in official correspondence. In spite of his fame, he was quickly forgotten after his departure directly. He was an example of the photographer business-man with a prestigious in the nineteenth century. In early twentieth century, he was aware of the requirements of the market, and the ability to achieve them, fig. (3- a, b) showing examples of Likigian works..



Figure (3) G. Lekigian, image sheets, showing **a.** merchants of Khan Khalili, Cairo,1890, Albumin photograph, 21×27.4 Cm., **b.** group of poor women with their kids in front of cottage, Albumin photograph, 21.8×27.6 Cm. Armenian Photographer Foundation (*Lusadaran*)

#### 4.4. Photography trends in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The works of Armenian photographers expressed for Egypt in the period from 1875: 1900 about two main photography arts, that have been linked in turn to trends in general art at the

time, whereas the Neo-classical style movement revealed since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the eighteenth century [27]. It called to portray photos imitating from the history of people's

views and referring to the old classic models in the subject and implementation technology. This style characterized by style nobly subject and seriousness and stricter lines and sober colors. It represented in the photos of sultans, rulers, governors, princes, princesses and the elite of dignitaries and state officials and senior staff. With the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, many of the technical revolutions against this movement occurred. The results of these revolutions were the emergence of romantic direction. Its pioneers took classic noble subjects to the reality. It expressed about tales and contemporary events. This direction also appeared normal direction. Then it also appeared realistic direction. Then it finally emerged Impressionism [28]. It is the most powerful movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its beginning was in England and then spread to France. Its final aim was the liberation of all the classic values and moving towards reality, portraying the poor and common people in their simple life, and imaging aristocracies stripped of falsity. It had been officially recognized by France after the length of the opposition. This style spread across Europe, and became technically current vogue in various arts, especially photography. It was followed by many Muslims Turkish artists such as Osman Hamdi and others [29], so many of European photographers. It also moved to various Middle East countries such as Turkey, the Levant and Egypt through this period. The most of these traditions moved, which manifested itself in the work of the Armenian photographers who learned sometimes in Europe at the hands of its artists and photographers, and the other in Turkey at the hands of the first generation of photography professors who worked there, and finally, in various Arab countries, citing and quoting from their competitors from photographers from different European nationalities. From specialized point of view, it could

be noted that there are two main photography trends present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. **The first trend** seemed clear to all Armenian photographers. It is a new classic in the last stage of its end that represented for them in the various details of the effects of fixed and movable Pharaonic, Coptic, and Islamic Egypt, River Nile; its boats, hotels, anchorages and bridges, landscapes, gardens, fields, roads, streets, markets, cafes, cemeteries, hawkers, processions, men, women and children of different races and social ranks in successful attempts to highlight the aesthetic values of natural phenomena, places and persons. The most popular models of this trend were: "*Boats of the Nile*", "*Temple of Edfu*", "*veil of the Church of St. Sergio's*", "*Old houses of Cairo*", "*El-badrashine date market*", "*A wedding ceremony*" "*Funerary procession*", "*Road to Pyramids*", "*Hotel on the Nile*", "*Lady veiled from Cairo*" and "*Forest of Palm in the Desert*" for Likigian. "*Sheik El-Balad*", "*Jetty of boats on the Nile*", "*Mamluks cemetery*", "*The khedive Tawfiq descending from the train station of Asyut*", "*Bab El-Hadeed*" and "*Al-Asr market in Bulak*" for the Abdullah Brothers. "*Qasr al-Nil Bridge*", "*Sellers of sugar cane*", "*Nubian Lady*", "*Arab Cafe*" and "*Makary in the market*" for Pascal Sebah. In addition to "*Al-Mahjar Street*", "*Sheikh Al-balad statue*" and "*Bazaar near the pyramid*" for Jean Pascal Sebah and Jolliet. **The second trend** was to abandon all these classic traditions and treat the most realistic topics that reflect the various variables and modern achievements. So social portraits were appeared to highlight many inherent shortcomings in preparation for its treatment and elimination. The countryside with working-class districts of the laboring poor, men, women and children of the General and the Miserable. also small artisans, vendors, the dilapidated ruins, animals, stray dogs were all depicted. The most famous work that expresses it were, "*A passerby drinking from Sabil*", "*Cairo dogs*", "*Cart carrying a group of women and children*"

in Cairo", "Popular street in Cairo" and "Qasr al-Nil Bridge" for Jean Pascal Sebah. "Poor's women standing with their tractor in a Pharaonic temples", "Farmers in the field", "Villager riding his buffaloes", "Industry of Mothes" and "A group of ladies watered their jars of the Nile", for Pascal Sebah. "Railway station in Cairo" and "Marina on the Nile" for Abdullah Brothers. "A group children and women in the front of their poor huts", "two villagers women", "The

makers of copper plates in Khan Khalily", "Small carpenter shop in Cairo" and "The Makary and the Donky", for Likigian whose works were a summit realistic direction that is known as the impressionism which appearing in a photo of "Arab nude girl carrying jar on her head", and another showing "Arab girl with nude breasts and legs", fig. (4-a, b, c, d) showing some examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs.

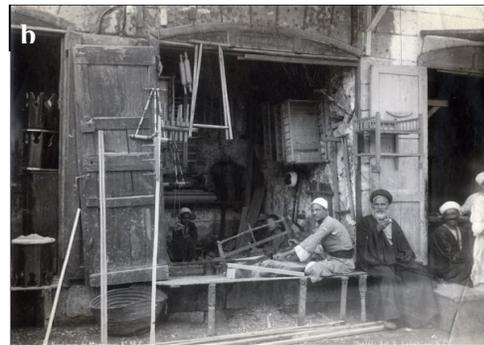


Figure (4) **a.** Abdullah brothers image sheet showing arriving of Tawfiq Pasha "Khedive of Egypt" with his court and royal guards at the Asyut train station (1879-1892) Albumin photograph, 21.3×28.4 Cm., (Memory of Modern Egypt Digital Archive, No. DHP13401-1-3 01), **b.** Lekigian, image sheet showing carpenter Boutique, Cairo, 1890-1900, Albumin photograph, 21.7×28.2 Cm. , Armenian Photographer Foundation (Lusadaran), **c.** Jane Pascal Sebah image sheet showing Mangali players Cairo, 1995, Albumin photograph, 22.3×17.6 Cm., (after <http://367art.net/>), **d.** Jane Pascal Sebah image sheet showing arab women's Chariot, Cairo, 1893, Albumin photograph, 19.3×18.4 Cm., (after <http://www.museumsyndicate.com>).

## 5. Conclusion

The study resulted in a statement of how these photographers contributed in the deployment of civilian and urbanization in Egypt from all these great achievements that had occurred. This drew the attention of major foundations art adopted it entirely later in various activities as a journalistic enterprise, the committee of Arab monuments preservation, topographic and geological foundations. There are Studios specialized only in photography of modern construction and engineering contracting. The study showed how the Armenian photographers were able to express global trends of public art generally, the art of photography especially. The study explained how these trends were reflected on the large amount of their production which has remained until now witnessing in Egypt realism through real visual visions and sincere that their eyes picked them and lenses of the cameras documented. Consequently it was recorded as a live fingerprints and chronicles of ancient,

*modern and contemporary Egypt as people, places , and natural social phenomena and realistic things. all of this at a time when Egyptians might protest against from practicing the profession and even consider it as contrary to the teachings of the religion.*

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