



FILIPPI, FILIPPO DE

FILIPPI, FILIPPO DE (1814-1867), a professor of zoology and comparative anatomy at Turin University. He was the director of the scientific group affiliated with the first official mission that the newborn Kingdom of Italy sent to Persia in 1862 in order to re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. Upon his return he wrote several articles on Persian botany and zoology. He also kept a diary that is one of the most interesting 19th-century travel books on Persia. It was first published in parts in *Il Politecnico* (nos. 22, 23, 25, and 26) and then as a book in 1965 (see Bibliography). In this diary of almost 400 pages, De Filippi presented a collection of impressions, data, and scientific observations. The book covers a variety of topics ranging from lucid physical descriptions of Western Persia and modes of traveling there to its agricultural techniques, from Nāṣer-al-Din Shah's manner of receiving the European ambassadors to the Anglo-Persian war of 1856-57 (q.v.) over Herat. De Filippi was a curious and respectful observer whose attention was attracted mostly by the nature and the landscape; but he also commented on the people and the situations he encountered. He praised the character of the Persians, whom he characterized as intelligent and hardworking. He particularly appreciated Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, who was described by him as "good and gentle, inclined to justice, favorable to the Europeans [. . .] and eager to improve Persia"(p. 246).

De Filippi, being a devout Catholic, rarely commented on the Islam, though it is clear he did not esteem it; for instance, he maintained that "elementary education is more widespread in Persian than in some European provinces:



however, Islamism is an irremovable obstacle to the blossoming of education” (p. 228). Yet, religion turns to be an occasion to highlight certain Persian qualities, as in Persia “there is no reason to be afraid of [the] terrible outbursts of Muslim fanaticism” (p. 130). Overall, De Filippi had an optimistic opinion of Persians, who, in his words, had “a bright, open mind that makes them ready to accomplish every enterprise very easily” (p. 227). Moreover, of all the Italians who visited Qajar Persia, De Filippi offered the most informative account about Tehran, which he liked because of the its lush green surroundings and the magnificence of its new buildings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works on Persia. “Nuove o poco note specie di animali vertebrati raccolte in un viaggio in Persia nell’estate dell’anno 1862,” *Archivio per la Zoologia, l’Anatomia e la Fisiologia* 2, 1862, pp. 377-94; “Riassunto del catalogo degli animali vertebrati delle province caucasiche e della Persia occidentale,” *Atti della Società Italiana di Scienze Naturali* 7, 1864, pp. 183-86; “Riassunto di alcune osservazioni sulla Persia occidentale,” *Atti della Società Italiana di Scienze Naturali* 7, 1864, pp. 278-84; “Osservazioni scientifiche fatte in un recente viaggio in Persia,” *Memorie della Accademia delle scienze di Torino* 21/2, 1864, pp. lxxxii-lxxxiii; “Sulla struttura della cute dello *Stellio Caucasicus*,” *Memorie della Accademia delle scienze di Torino* 23/2, 1866, pp. 363-73; *Note di un viaggio in Persia nel 1862*, Milan, 1865.

Michele Lessona, “Filippo De Filippi,” *Nuova Antologia di lettere, arti e scienze* 6, 1867, 631-60.