



The Ozymandias Colossus at the Ramesseum

Date

late 19th to early 20th century (printed 1992)

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

gelatin silver print

Description

This is a photograph of the second, or "festival," court of the Ramesseum, the mortuary temple of Ramesses II, called by the ancient Egyptians "The Temple of Millions of Years United with Thebes." Classical travellers referred to the temple, already much quarried away, both as the "Tomb of Ozymandias" and as the "Memnonium." It was Jean-François Champollion who correctly identified the ruins as those of Ramesses's mortuary temple and coined the name "Ramesseum." On the right lies the toppled torso of a seated colossal statue of Ramesses II carved in red granite, called the Ozymandias colossus, originally about 20 meters high and weighing roughly 1,000 tons. Ozymandias is a Hellenized form of the prenomen of Ramesses II, Usermaatra. Shelley's famous poem "Ozymandias" appears to have been inspired by Diodorus Siculus's description of this Ramesseum colossus.

Dimensions

Sight: 9 5/8 x 11 7/8 in. (24.4 x 30.2 cm) Mat: 20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm)