

## THE RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT SAIDA.

(From the *Bachir*, a journal in French and Arabic, published at Beyrout.)

## I.

ONE of our missionaries at Saida has followed the excavations day by day, and has sent us very full and interesting accounts of them. We, ourselves, having visited the place and admired the tombs which have been brought up, are in a position to give our readers accurate information about these important discoveries.

Towards the end of the month of February of this year, a rich Mussulman proprietor of Saida, M. Mohamed Sherif, had his grounds in the vicinity of the city excavated, with the object of recovering from the *débris* the ancient buildings, out of which the inhabitants of the country for the most part construct their houses.

The workmen lighted upon a rectangular pit, about 4 metres by 5, hollowed in the rock which forms the substratum of the field. Mohamed Sherif had this cleared out. At a depth of 11 metres four apertures were discovered, one at each side of the pit. These openings, 1 metre high by 50 centimetres wide, and closed by a slab, afforded access to the same number of funeral vaults full of large and splendid marble sarcophagi.

According to an Ottoman law, if the proprietor of land where antiquities are about to be brought to light makes a declaration to the Government within eight days, half of the newly-discovered treasures or their value is handed to him; if he omits to make this declaration he has not only no right to anything but he is also liable to a fine.

Mohamed Sherif declined the seductive offers of various virtuosi and others on the look out for antiquities, and in conformity to the law of the country, immediately gave notice of the discovery to the Kaimakam of Saida. Bechara Effendi, engineer of the vilayet of Syria, was sent by his Highness the Waly to reconnoitre the places and monuments. He discovered new sepulchral chambers, new tombs, and on March 27th he sent to the Government a detailed report, with a plan of the places and a brief description of the archæological treasures. He concluded with the despatch of a special commissioner, charged with transporting the sarcophagi to the museum at Constantinople.

His Excellency Hamdi Bey, Founder and Keeper of the museum at Constantinople, and an old pupil of the School of Fine Art in Paris, as well as a distinguished painter, was also sent by his Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by his Excellency Demosthenes Baltazzi-Bey, a learned archæologist of Smyrna, and inspector of ancient monuments. The excavations were recommenced under their direction on the 1st of May. By the end of the month all the tombs of any value were drawn out from their vaults, cleverly packed, and ready to convey by sea.

The field where the tombs were discovered is 800 metres from the sea-shore, and 1,500 metres north-east of the northern gate of Saida, between the villages El-Halalieh and El-Baramieh. It borders on the garden of Doctor Shibli Abela, and bounds the gardens of the city on this side.

The walls of the pit are set exactly to the cardinal points.

Underneath a layer of earth, mixed with *débris* a metre in thickness, there is a conglomerate of silicon and limestone similar to that of the dunes of Beyrout, and 3 metres in thickness; and still lower there is a kind of masonry, in which are set the doors of the sepulchral chambers. These chambers are themselves hollowed out of white limestone, which is fairly thick and soft.

It is impossible to describe the splendour and perfection of the sepulchres which they contain: an art so perfect does not permit itself to be described, it can only be admired.

The variety of form, style, and workmanship is not less marvellous, and baffles all conjecture that can be made as to the origin of these sepulchres.

The vault which is situated east contains two large sarcophagi in white marble placed at the same level, and separated from one another by an interval of 0·50 metre. Their dimensions are the same, 2·60 metres by 1·25 metre wide and 1·20 metre high, without reckoning the lid, which is 0·50 metre in height. The one which the visitor leaves on his left on entrance has no sculpture nor chasing of any description whatever, whilst on the other the second one is covered with sculpture, and first attracts the attention.

All round there is a portico of fluted Ionian columns with Doric pilasters in the angles. On each of the eighteen bays there is a female mourner in high relief in Greek robes. Each of these has a different pose.

The lid forms a roof with two sides, and is filled in with overlapping stone slabs almost identical with the tile slabs of Marseilles used at Beyrout. An Attic "*Kymation*," 0·50 metre, stretches the whole length; it is raised as high as the top of the roof, and adorned with sculpture representing a funeral procession.

A man in Greek dress marches at the head of the procession, then two horses led by hand; after which there follow a triumphal car, a man holding little bandelets in his hand, and a car with two horses bearing the sepulchre of the dead. Behind this car there is an attendant, and finally a horse walking alone. On the gorge of the pedestal there is a very delicate bas-relief representing the chase.

The composition of the work, however, betrays some negligence, and points to a Greek production of the second century, before the Christian era. Inside were found the bones of women and also seven heads of dogs.

The southern vault has likewise two sarcophagi. Although the opening is on the same level as that of the other crypts, the ground on which the tombs rest is about 2 metres lower down.

One tomb in black marble, improperly called Egyptian basalt, is not remarkable for any sculpture. Like the most unadorned of the two tombs in the eastern cavern it will be left in its obscure retreat. At the side of this latter the visitor perceives another in white marble placed at his left, which by its singular form and rich chasings calls forth his admiration. The lid is an ogival vault 1·50 metres in height, the tomb itself is 2·40 metres long by 1·30 metres wide, and its height equals that of the lid.

It is a Lycian tomb. Up to the present time there are only seven tombs of this form known, and they are all found in the province of Lycia; six are now at Constantinople and one at Vienna.

The extrados of the vault forming the cover is smooth and without any ornamentation. At the vertical extremities there is sculpture consisting in part of two magnificent Greek sphinxes with wings, female busts, and extremely beautiful and graceful human heads; and in the other part of two griffins with heads of birds and the bodies of mammals, one male and the other female.

Two quadrigæ, each led by two amazons, are found on the sarcophagus. The horses are of the Archaic and conventional form of the horses of the Parthenon, sculptured by Phidias. The mane is straight like the dorsal fin of a fish; in the mouth is a bit enclosed by two square plates holding the animal's lips. But the finest thing is the expression of the horses' heads; they are living, speaking, and of most exquisite finish. The muscles, the veins, the movements of the nostrils, and the folds of the skin are represented with matchless perfection. "I would give one of the other sarcophagi in its entirety for a single one of these horses' heads," said his Excellency Hamdi Bey.

The opposite front represents a wild boar hunt. A Greek horseman appears to command, raising two fingers, the index and middle. "One would almost say that he is blessing like our Bishop," said the Greek ladies of Saida.

Upon one of the ends there are two centaurs erect on their hind legs, holding a hind between their front feet over which they are disputing; their figures are full of expression and very fine.

On the other end two centaurs are upsetting jugs of water one after another. Who can guess the meaning of this picture? The great height of this sarcophagus has doubtless been the cause of the lowering of the floor of the sepulchral chamber.

The western vault, which is less deep, only contains one white marble sarcophagus in the shape of a mummy chest. We will speak of it later on. This crypt serves as a vestibule to a sepulchral chamber much larger and much better kept than the others which open on to the south side.

In this chamber you may see little gutters against the walls for collecting the oozing water; the holes in the top of the walls, which correspond two by two, and were to hold the beams with which the lids of the sarcophagi were kept in place, and a red horizontal arrow traced

on the wall which has served as a bench-mark to the workmen laying down stones.

It contains four tombs. The largest and at the same time the most valuable and beautiful of all the sarcophagi found here occupies the south-west angle. It is 3.30 metres long by 1.70 metre wide, and 1.40 metre high excluding the lid, which is 0.80 metre high. It is a masterpiece of sculpture, architecture, and colour, the discovery of which will mark an epoch in the history of art.

All the museums of Europe will want to have a cast of it. This tomb is a piece of Greek art, the figures of which lie between the conventional Archaism of the former ages and the realism of the last centuries of ancient art. Its naturalness, nobleness, and grace make it worthy to rank with the finest masterpieces known. Everything is painted in natural colours; the different tints of purple predominate, and go from poppy-coloured red to blue, passing away to the deepest violet.

It is known that Sidon possessed large manufactories for making purple. One may see still in the talus of the hill upon which rise the old citadel called after St. Louis, great piles of *murex* shells, all opened on the same side, for the purpose of extracting the mollusc which yields the Tyrian purple.

The other colours appear to be the ochres so common in the mountains of Lebanon. The tints are admirably harmonised, notwithstanding their brightness. No detail is forgotten, even to the eyes of the men, the horses, and the lions, which are painted in natural colours, without any incision in the marble tracing the iris or the pupil.

All the sculpture is in high relief; the detached limbs are not even supported. The four sides of the sarcophagus are occupied by two subjects. One large and one small side are taken up by a battle scene; the two other sides by hunting subjects, where figure the same personages become friends.

The Greeks, easily recognised by their physiognomy, are nude; they simply bear a helmet and the large round buckler, with a border peculiar to them. The Persians are fully clothed; they are recognisable by the peculiar head-dress called *mītra*, which envelops the whole head from the forehead to the nape, and covers the cheeks and chin, and is the head-dress worn by the companions of Darius in the large mosaic work of Pompeii. They may be further distinguished by their long trousers (*braccæ laxæ*), peculiar to the peoples of Asia and the north. The Greeks never wore trousers; the Romans only adopted them at a late period under the Emperors. The arms of the combatants, which were all of gold, have been delicately removed by the violators of the tomb.

In the centre of the battle there is a ghastly mass of horsemen, foot soldiers, and dead and dying; one perceives a hand, which has been cut off, thrown on one side and crushed under foot. The persons are excited by a fury which contrasts with the calm intrepidity and martial serenity of the Greeks. One understands on which side will be the victory;

almost everywhere the Greek plunges his sword into the breast of the barbarian before the latter has struck him with the club, the hatchet, and the lance which he brandishes in the air. Great beauty of figure and pose is seen here.

The animation of the combatants, the grief and terror of the dying, as well as the fright of the horses, is simply admirable.

According to the Greek custom, the two principal persons are to be seen at the extremities of the picture. These are horsemen clothed in purple. One of them, conspicuous by his attitude, martial air, and the richness of his costume, might probably be the prince buried in the sarcophagus. The other has a Greek head of the most beautiful type, and wears thereon the skin of a lion; he is perhaps Alexander the Great, whom several medals represent with this Herculean head-gear.

In the second picture a lion has thrown himself on a horseman, and is already lacerating with his claw the breast of the horse, from which hangs bleeding flesh. The horseman has wounded it with spear, and struggles to free his charger; but the animal holds to its prey, notwithstanding that an enormous dog has sprang on to him and bites him furiously.

Two huntsmen are hastening up with their swords, and in the distance an archer lets fly his arrow.

Men and animals are magnificent in their bound, courage, and strength. Not far off a poor stag, hemmed in by two huntsmen, from whom it cannot escape, excites compassion, and forms a fine contrast.

The lid is not less beautiful. It is in the shape of a roof with two sides, covered over with tiles in the form of fish scales. All around, on the edge and on the line, are placed the heads of spirits; they are exquisitely graceful, and surrounded by a halo of rays. Those of the top have two sides, and are a little larger than those on the edge; rams' heads projecting over the front of the cornice like gargoyles, alternate with the heads of the spirits. At the four corners are four sleeping lions, which seemed to us unequalled masterpieces; one might almost say that they are mourning for the dead man, and trying to see him by leaning the head outside the roof.

The three other white marble sarcophagi found in the same chamber are exactly similar to one another. They measure about 2.50 metres long by a total height of 2 metres. They look like a Greek temple with most harmonious proportions.

The walls are smooth, and an elegant vine foliage, with yellow leaves on a purple background, runs beneath a very delicately sculptured cornice. The sculptured ornamentation on the pedestal and in the pediments is equally beautiful.

These tombs, in their simplicity, are veritable masterpieces of good taste, harmony, and elegance.

At first sight the northern chamber only presents two sarcophagi, one of which belongs to the class of Egyptian coffins which roughly resemble the human form, after the manner of the mummy chests, and which have

been called anthropoid sarcophagi. Like that of the west vestibule, it is in white marble. The head is roughly drawn on the lid; the arms disappear in the bust.

But, from the haunches down, everything is more clearly defined; the projections of the knees, calves, and ankle bones are distinctly delineated. In this they differ from the anthropoid sarcophagi found at Sidon, and now in the possession of the Louvre Museum. These, on the contrary, have very well drawn heads, whilst the lower portion is a simple case raised towards the feet. At the bottom of one of them was a plank of sycamore, the wood used for the chests of the Egyptian mummies. Small holes set in the edges doubtless served to keep the body in place. Judging from the remains of the fillets and bones, it was very imperfectly embalmed.

On removing the *débris* which covers the floor, were discovered two chambers situated on a lower level, east and west of the former. The one in the east has only a small tomb of no interest; in the other four white marble sarcophagi were found. Only the most remote one has sculpturing. One of its ends shows a prince with an Assyrian tiara on his head, stretched on his funeral bed. They are offering him food and serving him with drink in a large horn; two attendants stand behind his pillow, apparently keeping guard; his wife sits at his feet, weeping for her spouse. It is a representation of oblation to the dead.

All the tombs of which we have up to now spoken have been violated at an already very remote epoch by greedy hands, who have removed all the precious objects. Consequently nothing was found in the shape of jewels, except fifty-four gold buttons, whose diameter was that of a half franc, and which are convex, like a bell, without any carving. They remained hidden in the mud deposited at the bottom of the Assyrian personage's tomb. The violators penetrated into each sarcophagus by breaking one of the corners of the lid, but have not injured the other parts.

His Excellency Hamdi Bey had, however, the good fortune to open a sarcophagus which had not been violated. He discovered it in a lower chamber just beneath the tomb of the eighteen mourners. It is a black stone sarcophagus of a singular semi-human form, and at least a metre in width.

It contains the long hair, teeth, and bones of a woman; with fragments of little bands, a royal fillet of gold, which is flexible, and the width of three fingers; a large gold band, quite plain, like a curtain ring; and at the bottom, a plank of sycamore wood similar to that of which we have spoken.

The excavations have yielded earthenware lamps of rough workmanship, in the form of a rounded plate, the edges pressed and turned up to form the socket for the wick; and also several alabaster vases intended to hold perfume. They are all of Egyptian alabaster, pear-shaped in form, 25 centimetres high, and have no carving except circular arrows left

projecting by the carver ; the orifice is narrow (3 cm.), and the vase is fragile, being scarcely a centimetre in thickness.

Alabastrums similar to these have been brought from Cyprus by M. de Cesnola. It was, perhaps, a vase of the same shape that Mary used to embalm beforehand the body of the Saviour, at one of the last suppers at Bethany, and which she broke at his feet. It contained, says St. John, a pound of spikenard oil, which Judas estimated at the value of about three hundred francs. The alabaster vases of Sidon would contain more.

All the sculptured tombs are evidently of Greek art. The blocks of marble must have been brought from the islands of the Archipelago ; there does not exist any marble on the Asiatic coast from Egypt to the borders of Smyrna. They must have been sculptured at Sidon, for it would have been impossible to bring from Greece objects which were at the same time so heavy and so delicate ; the body of the largest sarcophagus weighs 13,000 kilos. and the lid nearly 5,000 kilos. It is presumed that in order to lower them in the pits, the process of the Egyptians was used, viz., the pit is filled with sand, the sarcophagus is placed on this artificial soil, and lowered slowly while the sand is being taken out.

We are in the presence of tombs which differ in state as well as in style. The complete absence of inscriptions reduces us to conjecture as to their origin and date. They do not appear to us to go back further than the last centuries which preceded the Christian era. A single piece of money has been recovered from the rubbish of the pits ; it dates from the time of Alexander Bala, King of Syria, about 149 to 144 years before Christ.

The labour employed under the direction of his Excellency Hamdi Bey, by M. Bechara Effendi, for the raising of these enormous sarcophagi is not without interest. If the merit of such a work lies in the superiority of the result above the resources which were at one's disposal, certainly the engineer, M. Bechara, merits great praise.

He dug in the soil a trench which descended to the level of the sepulchral chambers, at the uniform incline of 15 per cent., terminating in a tunnel bordering on the pits. Two lines of small pine beams, united by cross beams, were fixed in the soil and greased on the surface ; on this wooden road, by the help of rollers, he caused the sarcophagi to be slid along. This caused no damage to the sculptures, or accident to man. A frigate is expected shortly, from Constantinople, to take away these treasures. Already there is being built on the sea shore a quay jutting out 30 metres into the sea, to take the blocks to the ship.

At the northern extremity of the room, his Excellency Hamdi Bey noticed a gap which appeared to lead to the other excavations. Guided by this indication, he discovered, 6 metres to the north of this hole, a second similar hole, 4 metres long, 3 wide.

When he had dug away to a depth of 7 metres, there appeared an aperture in the north wall. The room to which it gave access was

5 metres long, 3 metres 50 cm. wide ; the stone was covered with thick plastering and stucco, partly fallen to the ground. In an angle at the further end were found two large bronze candelabras ; they are simple and beautiful ; the base is a tripod, the column of the thickness of an arm, terminates in two flowers turned upside down, placed one above the other, and bears an elongated basket to which is fixed the torch. Both are after the same model without being alike ; the one is 1 metre 50 cm. in height, the other a few centimetres less. A Phœnician candelabra, quite similar to these, except that it had only one flower upside down, was found at Curium, in the island of Cyprus, and is to be seen in the Museum of New York.

The soil of the room was formed by a bed of enormous stones, 65 centimetres thick, very well arranged. Beneath these was found a second similar bed still thicker, then a third ; at last an enormous monolith, measuring 10 cubic metres, which covered the hole cut into the living rock, where was hidden a magnificent anthropoid sarcophagus of black stone. It recalls in a striking manner the sarcophagus of King Eshmunazar, of Sidon, found similarly in the gardens of Saida, more to the south, now in the Louvre. It is 2 metres 50 cm. in length, and its average width is 80 cm. The head is magnificently carved ; the head-dress and beard are in the Egyptian fashion ; the breast and the vertical sides of the coffin are covered with hieroglyphics ; and on the raised portion which, in the form of a stool, covers over the feet, there is a Phœnician inscription in eight lines. The whole thing is perfectly intact.

This apparently is the most important tomb, round which so many magnificent tombs are grouped.

On opening the lid the mummy appeared well preserved, but there immediately followed a partial decomposition, accompanied by the escape of a fetid odour, which damaged the centre of the body. The hands and the extremities of the feet no longer existed ; the rest of the body was lost in the sand, with which apparently the sarcophagus was originally filled, and which consequently caused the dessiccation of the corpse. The hands and feet remaining outside were corroded by the damp air. The body rested on a concave plank of sycamore, fitted on each side with six silver rings through which passed the ropes holding the mummy in place.

In the coffin a golden diadem without ornamentation was found.

The squeezes and photographs of the inscriptions were sent to the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres at Paris. We must wait for *savants* to give us the complete translation. Its characters are of exactly the same form as those of the funeral inscription of Eshmunazar in the Louvre ; they appear to be modelled on the same type.

On a level with this royal sarcophagus there is an opening on the south side of the wall which gives access to a sepulchral chamber divided into two compartments. The western one contains an undesecrated tomb in which a quantity of feminine jewellery is to be found : there is a gold necklace, two gold bracelets of beautiful workmanship, and another



bracelet ornamented with coloured stones, and having in the centre a kind of opal called cats-eye. We find further some rings or bracelets for the feet, sixteen rings, a bronze mirror, and several symbolic eyes, viz., an Egyptian trinket presenting the shape and design of an elongated eye with a tear dropping from the nasal angle; some of them were in gold, the others in cornelian stone. The compartment in the east, and a second chamber which follows in the same direction, only contain tombs which have been broken into and are without interest.

The rectangular walls, the sepulchral chambers dug in the sides, the precautions taken to render them undiscoverable or inaccessible, in order that the repose of the dead should never be disturbed—all this is thoroughly Egyptian. There is nothing which more resembles the sepulchre discovered at the last place than the great square well situated at the foot of the great Egyptian pyramid; at the base is still to be seen the black stone sarcophagus.

The most celebrated and longest of all the Phœnician epitaphs, that of King Eshmunazar, which includes twenty-two lines, is full of injunctions on this subject: "Do not open this coffin to seek treasures there," cries the King, "there are no treasures." Then, suspecting that one would want to know if he spoke the truth, he invokes the help of the gods, whom he charges with the punishment of the violaters.

Undoubtedly the king, whose sepulchre has just been discovered, had this feeling in thought, but, more intelligent than Eshmunazar, he deemed that a deep vault with large stone blocks, 3 metres and more in thickness, laid over it, was a preferable guarantee to an inscription and the curse of Astarte. The resemblance of the two sarcophagi leads us to believe that the one just brought to light may be traced to about four centuries before Jesus Christ.

The existence of a third pit near the tunnel has been established, but the advanced season did not permit of the continuance of the excavations; they will be resumed in February next. Everything induces the belief that this Necropolis holds further pleasing surprises for the artist and the *savant*.

## II.

Oriental *savants* already understand the meaning of the Phœnician inscription on the royal sepulchre which is found in the second shaft. It is as follows:—

"I, Tabnite, priest of Astarte and King of Sidon, son of Eshmunazar, priest of Astarte and King of Sidon, lying within this sepulchre, thus speak: Come not to open my tomb; here is neither gold nor silver nor treasures. He who opens my sepulchre shall have no prosperity beneath the sun, and he shall not find repose in his tomb."

The mummy, then, found in the sarcophagus is that of Tabnite, King of Sidon.

The Phœnician inscription on the tomb in the Louvre furnishes some further information about this personage. There we find :—

“I, Eshmunazar, King of Sidon, son of Tabnite, King of Sidon, grandson of Eshmunazar, King of Sidon, my mother, Ammashtoret, Queen, and daughter of Eshmunazar, King of Sidon, have built temples to the gods,” &c.

Thus we learn that Tibnite is the father of the King Eshmunazar, whose tomb is at Paris, and the son of another King of Sidon, also named Eshmunazar. He espoused his sister Ammashtoret, and undoubtedly this union was not happy, for we read in the same funeral inscription of their son : “I have been snatched away before my time. I am the son of few days, an orphan son of a widow.” It has been questioned whether Tabnite is not the king whose history Dodorus of Sicily relates under the name of Tennis. By treason he delivered his capital to Artaxerxes Ochus, King of the Persians, and was put to death by the invader as soon as the latter had no longer anything to expect from the traitor. The Sidonians, seeing themselves betrayed, locked themselves up in their houses with their wives and children, and set fire to them. Forty thousand of them perished, whilst the city was nothing but a devastated field, which the enemy sold piecemeal for a money value. This was in the year 351 B.C. (Dodorus of Sicily, lxvi, 45).

To-day the discovery of the mummy of Tabnite compels us to distinguish between the two personages. The head and limbs are not separated from the trunk, and no traces of wounds or anything indicating a violent death are to be seen. Besides, it is incomprehensible how a burial necessitating so much labour and trouble could have been effected at the death of Tennis during the burning and destruction of the city.

According to the most tenable opinion held at the present time, the last Eshmunazar lived about the year 395 B.C., and consequently Tabnite about the year 400.

It must have entered many persons' minds on reading these lines that the demi-anthropoid tomb found unbroken in the first shaft, containing the remains of a woman with a golden diadem, might probably be the sarcophagus of Ammashtoret, the wife of Tabnite, who died after him. The southern shaft might have been hollowed for the interment of this queen, as that of the north was for her husband.

The upper sepulchral chambers, with their magnificent sarcophagi in white marble, are undoubtedly less ancient than the royal vaults. In particular, the tomb, with eighteen mourners, could only have been placed above that of Ammashtoret several years later, when persons no longer troubled about the fear manifested by the defunct sovereigns of being disturbed in the semi-slumber of their tombs by the dwellers of an upper storey. In his large inscription the young Eshmunazar twice

over enjoins them not to construct any sepulchral chamber above his own.

Let us, moreover, add, that in the tomb of the Assyrian personage, besides the gems of which we have spoken, a gold rectangular plaque has been found, pierced at the four corners like an ornament intended to be fastened on a garment, and covered with carvings representing over and over again the form of a comb, frequently found on the Phœnician jewels in our museums.

The "Times," they tell us, advised the Turkish government to leave these magnificent sarcophagi where they were. "These treasures," said its correspondent, "are in a fair way to be ruined," believing doubtless that there were neither men nor machines capable of effecting the transport without damaging them. We are happy to be able to prove by the fact that he was mistaken.

A transport ship, the *Assir*, belonging to the Imperial Turkish Navy, had arrived at Beyrout with the presents which His Majesty the Sultan sends every year to Mecca by the caravan from Damascus. It received orders to repair to Saida, and on June 13 was moored north of the town, between the islet of Gesireh and the shore, as near as possible to the coast. Owing to the disturbed sea, it was not possible to proceed with the shipping during the two first days. There was, in addition, a moment of uneasiness—the ship touched the bottom, and had to be pushed off again. On the 16th the sea was calm, and the embarkation commenced. The enormous packages, drawn over the same wooden road which had been used to take them out of the shafts, arrived at the wharf, which was built on piling, and from thence passed over upon a solid raft level with the platform.

The raft, the conception of the engineer, Bechara Effendi, who superintended the work, consisted of five rows of large beams superposed, and forty empty tuns fixed between the beams.

The platform measured 11 metres by 6; the draft was calculated in such a way as to render it easy to lower the side of the raft on to the rafters on the arrival of the large blocks. Ropes, attached to pulleys and to the ship, were used to haul the raft and its burden until it lay beneath the machines of the *Assir*.

An enormous crane, constructed of ropes, cords, blocks, and pulleys such as nobody but an old sailor could either imagine or correctly name), and set in motion by two steam engines, was used to put the huge packages aboard, and, under the direction of Captain Hassan Bey, accomplished its task with admirable precision.

The great sarcophagus, of more than 13,000 kilos., was one of the last to be taken. When it was suspended above the deck, his Excellency Hamdi Bey had the scene photographed, and a cannon fired from the vessel announced to the inhabitants of Saida the success of the embarkation. All was accomplished without the slightest accident.

We have been credibly informed that the expenses of packing, excavating, constructing the machines for embarking, transit, and indemnity

to the owners of the gardens traversed *en route* have not exceeded 10,000 francs (£400).

The *Assir*, carrying these monuments to Constantinople, stopped two days at Beyrout. Their Excellencies took advantage of this to put on board certain valuable antiquities which had been confiscated by the law and placed in the court-yard of the Seraglio, viz., a fine head of the Emperor Adrian ; a cuneiform inscription of twenty lines, in a very good state of preservation, covering a slab 0·45 metre square ; a hand-mill, on the upper stone of which are some extremely curious characters, recalling the Hittite inscriptions ; and a cone of white marble 0·50 metre, the Phœnician symbol of the great goddess Astarte.

Before returning to the capital the ship stopped facing Mylassa (in Caria), to take up two marble statues of the best Greek era. The museum of the Louvre had bought them for several thousand francs ; but the difficulties of carrying them down to the sea had caused the transaction to be broken off, but now an easy route afforded an opportunity of taking them away without difficulty. His Excellency, Baltazzi Bey, is of opinion that it is the quarries of Mylassa which have furnished the white marble of the great sarcophagi of Sidon.

It is only a short time ago since a Turkish war vessel loaded at Jassus (the old port, hard by Mylassa) the blocks of stone taken from an old wall and carried them off to Constantinople for some building or other. His Excellency Hamdi Bey heard that these blocks bore inscriptions, and caused the shipment to be seized. They found on them 140 inscriptions containing decrees ( $\psi\phi\sigma\mu\alpha$ ) in the Greek tongue, and of a very interesting nature. He (his Excellency) took advantage of the ship's stopping there to reconnoitre the ruins whence they had been taken.

On arriving at Constantinople he will, no doubt, occupy himself in making those enlargements in the Imperial Museum which are necessary to provide a suitable home for the treasures he is bringing it.

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