



The Sidon Sarcophagi

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rest. On the lower front panel is a lion's head, similar to the lion's head decoration on the stone Greek and Roman sarcophagi found at Sidon, which are doubtless the development of the metal plaques, in the same form found on Phœnician coffins of wood at the same place. On the panel above are three small busts in high relief. These are somewhat damaged, but it is clear that two, and perhaps the third, are of female figures: the style is Greek or Græco-Roman. The other panels are ornamented with rosettes, and shapes like these—



The circumference of the pillar increases as it rises. In the rear it is shaved off, so that the back panels occupy a flat surface. From the plain back of the pedestal it is clear that this part at least stood against a wall, but as the flat back of the pillar is ornamented, the wall may have been a low one.

It is the naturalistic treatment of the feet which appear from under the drapery that leads me to suppose that the pillar was in the form of a caryatid, with the main portion of the drapery about the lower limbs conventionally ornamented. That a pillar with an ordinary capital should terminate in a few inches of drapery with a pair of feet seems improbable. I may mention, however, that the open hand occurs as a symbol on a stile from Carthage, figured on p. 263 of the first volume of Perrot and Chipiez's "History of Art in Phœnicia," &c.

From the well-carved bulls and the busts, I am inclined to refer this fragment to the Greek period. The photograph is kindly furnished by my friend Mr. Moore, of the College.

BEYROUT, *February 14th*, 1894.

THE SIDON SARCOPHAGI.

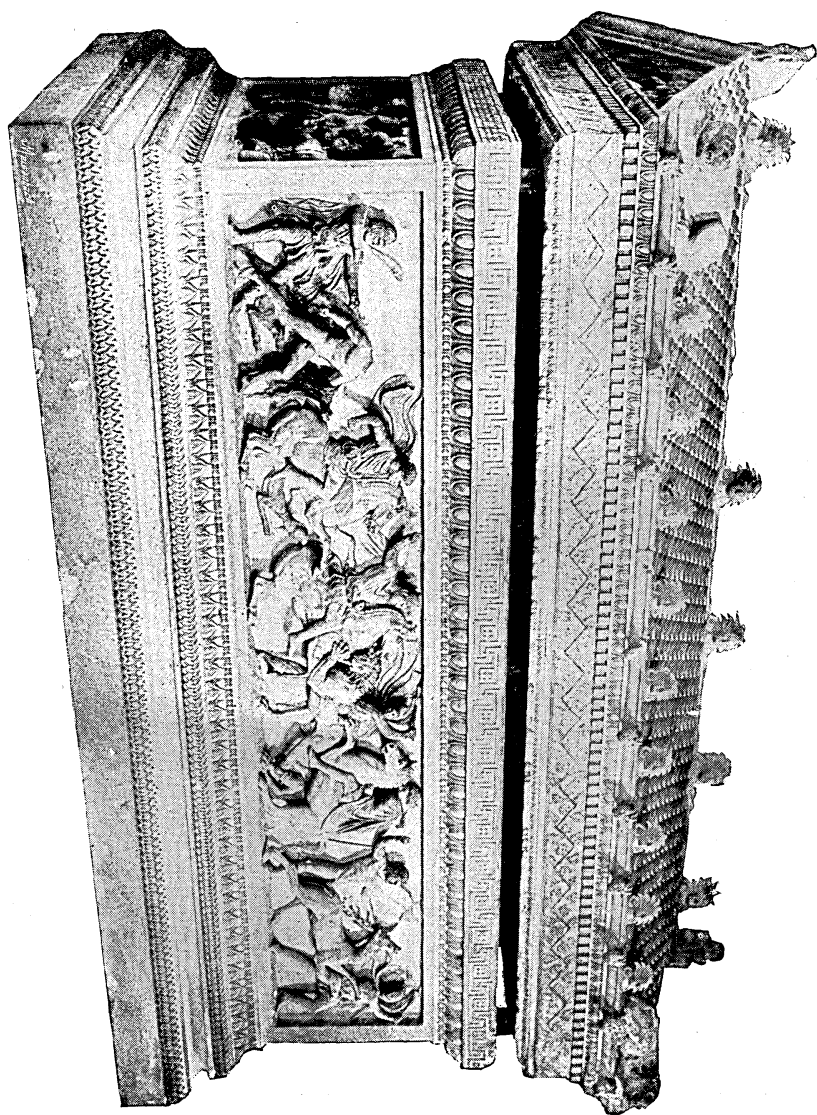
By the Rev. CANON C. G. CURTIS, M.A.

THE *Quarterly Statements* for the years 1887 and 1888 contained accounts of some very remarkable and beautiful sarcophagi which had then recently been found in a sepulchre at Sidon, and a monogram on the subject is now in course of publication at Paris by His Excellency O. Hamdy Bey, Director of the Museum of Antiquities at Constantinople. The sarcophagi have been placed in a room built for the purpose in that Museum, and have attracted a great deal of attention from antiquaries and others. The learned Canon Curtis, of Constantinople, kindly permits us to publish a paper on these most interesting objects which was read by him before the British Institute of that city.

The paper is reprinted from the "Levant Herald," by permission of the editor.

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THE SO-CALLED SAROPHAGUS OF ALEXANDER.



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THE SO-CALLED SARCOPHAGUS OF ALEXANDER.

THE SARCOPHAGUS—CANON CURTIS'S LECTURE.—Canon Curtis read a highly interesting paper at the British Institute on Thursday last, containing, as the lecturer modestly put it, "Some conjectures respecting the—so-called—Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, now in the Imperial Museum."

Canon Curtis prefaced his lecture by a statement of his impression concerning the other sarcophagus known as "The Mourning Women." Speaking of the figures on one side only of the sarcophagus, he suggested that they might represent not so many different persons, but one and the same person under different phases of emotion. The lecturer presented this expression of opinion tentatively, and then passed on to his subject as follows :—

"The youth of Pella *one whole world* confined ;
 Within earth's *narrow* bounds he fum'd and pin'd
 As if shut up in banishment the while
 On Gyara's rocks or on Seriphus' isle ;
 But, when within that brick-girt town he went,
 With *one sarcophagus* he was content."

So moralised the Roman satirist Juvenal.¹ Where is that sarcophagus at the present day—that sarcophagus in which he was laid after he had been carried off by fever in Babylon? Some say that it is at our very doors—proud to believe that the tomb of *Alexander* the Great is now preserved in the city of the Great *Constantine*. Others doubt, having learnt, it may be, that the sarcophagus was conveyed from Egypt to the British Museum in London.² But it is *now* agreed by Egyptologists that the sarcophagus, supposed before to be Alexander's, is in reality the tomb of a Pharaoh, Nectanebo I, King of Egypt, 378-360 B.C.

No one has yet proved that the sarcophagus discovered at Sidon, and now on view in the Stamboul Museum, was Alexander's ; on the contrary, writers, both Greek and Roman, are at one in attesting that his remains were taken to Egypt. Diodorus Siculus,³ Strabo,⁴ Suetonius,⁵ Pausanias⁶ have written to this effect. According to Pausanias, Alexander was buried at Memphis ; his coffin was removed thence to Alexandria, for it was in that city that the remains of the hero were visited by Cæsars. At Alexandria, Augustus, whose visit Suetonius relates, gazed on the body and laid on it reverently a chaplet, and showered flowers over it. Vain Caligula ordered Alexander's breastplate to be taken out of the coffin there and sent to him that he might deck himself with it for the Circensian games at Rome.

¹ Juvenalis x, 168.

² Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum.

³ Lib. xxviii.

⁴ Lib. xvii.

⁵ Caligula, 18, 52.

⁶ Lib. i, cap. 6.

The last Imperial pilgrim was his namesake Alexander—called Severus. The poet Lucan¹ hints that in course of time these precious relics *would* be altogether *lost*, and *were* lost *before* his time. He wrote, in the 1st century of the Christian Era—

“Sacratis totum spargenda per orbem
Membra viri posuere adytis.”

These are the poet's words in English dress—

“They laid in sacred shrines the hero's limbs
Which would be scattered o'er the whole wide world.”

No wonder, then, that, when his remains were so dispersed, St. John Chrysostom should ask²: *Where* is the tomb of Alexander?

The coffin, which, according to Strabo, was made of *glass*, quickly disappeared; it had replaced the coffin of *gold* in which Ptolemy I had caused the body to be placed, and which had been stolen.

Now, although proof is altogether wanting to identify the sarcophagus in question with that of Alexander the Great, we can hardly doubt that its history had some relation to its *supposed* occupant. Let us examine two pieces of sculpture in high relief on the sarcophagus—those on its two parallel sides. You may remark, on the *left* hand edge of the carved slab that confronts you as you pass up the room, the head of a Greek horseman wearing a cap of lion's skin—the skin of a lion's head. As Alexander the Great is so represented on his coins, this has been recognised as his portrait. But it must be observed that the position of this cavalier is *secondary*, whereas another, also a Greek, is represented in the centre of the group, raising his sword as if ready to cut off the uplifted arm of a Persian who has dropped his weapon and is asking “quarter.”

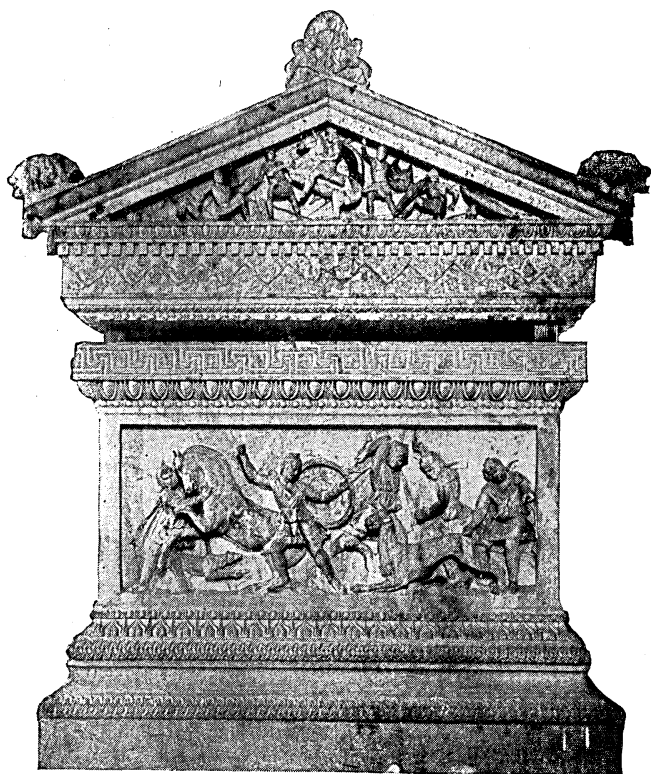
Who is this Greek? May it not be *Clitus*, who saved Alexander's life at the Battle of Granicus? And who is that disarmed Persian? We may suppose him to be that Spithridates who had assaulted Alexander. The sculptor, we may remark, only *suggests* the infliction of the wound without representing the mutilation of the limb or the blood gushing out of the wound. This treatment is in accordance with the rule of Greek art to keep out of sight all that is repulsive; that appeal to the imagination is more impressive which is addressed by the artist through suggestion, rather than by *direct* expression.

Why should the figure of Clitus occupy the central, the most prominent, the chief place? In his honour, possibly, both this position was assigned and moreover this monument raised. This might be the tribute offered by Alexander to the cherished memory of him who had saved his life, but whose life he had himself taken away. Inconsolable was Alexander for having, in a frenzy of intoxication, slain his friend, his comrade, his companion-in-arms, his deliverer. By day and by night those

¹ Lib. x, 24.

² St. J. Chrys. in Ep. II ad Cor. Hom. 26.

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last appealing words of faithful Clitus echoed on within his conscious spirit, "This hand of mine saved thee, O Alexander." His bitter remorse would have driven him to suicide, but those about him now saved him from himself. For three whole days he remained fasting, mourning, and accusing himself as the murderer of his friends. At last, through the sculptor's art, those inner chidings of his conscience would sting him less acutely, and the anguish of his soul be somewhat relieved, when his love and gratitude should find utterance, not in fleeting words and momentary cries of self-reproach, but in a monument at once fair and lasting. May we not conjecture that this masterpiece of Greek art was conceived and completed in memory and in honour of him whom he lamented with so deep a compunction? a monument whereon is figured in the centre of that group the arm uplifted once to stay the hand of the enemy, and to save the life of the Chief.

I have ventured to infer on these grounds that the scene represented in this composition is that of the Battle of Granicus. The position and attitude of Alexander remind us of a like portraiture of him in the well-known mosaic brought from Pompeii and preserved now in the Museum at Naples, which probably represents the Battle of Issus fought between Alexander and Darius. The mode of treatment was apparently typical. I have myself recognised it on a monument of the Volumni—an Etruscan family—preserved in the sepulchral vaults near Perugia, a city of Tuscany, Etruria of old. The respective attitudes of two engaged in a hand-to-hand fight—a Greek and a Mede—are the same as in the composition before us. The Etruscans, we may believe, received their model from their neighbours, Greek colonists in Italy, settled in the Southern Province, which was known accordingly as "Magna Græcia."

It is not known either when or by whom the sarcophagus, called Alexander's, was prepared. After the death of their Chief, the disputes among his surviving Generals delayed the *official* funeral for two years, and it is not probable that any one during that period of confusion took thought for the monument.

The sarcophagus was, as I am inclined to think, made ready during the lifetime of Alexander—not long before his death—and as he permitted no one but Lysippus to execute his likeness in sculpture and only Apelles to paint it, then, if it can be proved that Alexander's portrait is upon it, none other than Lysippus was the artist who designed it. Some inequality, however, has been remarked in the execution of the design, as if some part of the work had been entrusted to an apprentice. This wonderful masterpiece is, to a certain degree, imperfect; the requisite harmony of the whole composition is somewhat wanting. We see before us, as we may suppose, the production either of Lysippus or of a pupil or pupils of his School; or it may be a copy in marble of a work of the Master in bronze. But, whoever executed or designed the battle-scene, these characteristics of the art of Lysippus are to be noticed, such as Pliny describes¹: elegance, precision in details and portraiture, as well as

¹ Plinii, *see* Lib. xxxiv.

energy of action, and that somewhat dramatic movement which Propertius¹ attributes to Lysippus when he admires his "*animosa signa*," "figures full of life." Lysippus rather neglected the ideal and preferred to copy nature; most of his works are in bronze—chiefly statues—rarely groups. But of his groups we seem to have examples here, and these two specimens appear to be like the two famous groups which Pliny describes as works of Lysippus.

According to that writer, Lysippus executed one group of 25 horsemen, comrades of Alexander, who fell at the Battle of Granicus, and gave their likenesses in it; and another group, representing a lion hunt, in which work Leochares² was associated with him. One may well ask, as to the representation on the other side of the sarcophagus, what relation it has with Clitus. In the workmanship displayed this piece is like that which we have been studying—excellent; but, in other respects, it is different; the one side shows a battle; the other a chase; the first, a bloody encounter between Greeks and Persians; the second, their peaceful co-operation. We see men fighting here with men; there with lions, enemies of all men. On the two separate sides we mark the beginning and the end; on the one the first steps taken in the long desired enterprise of the West; on the other, the realisation of the schemes inherited by Alexander from his father, Philip of Macedon, who dreamed of the supremacy of the West over the East, of the propagation of Hellenism, of the civilisation of Asiatics by the spread of Greek influence, of the bettering of conquered peoples, the progress of the subjugated. "Into whatever country he marched," writes Carr of Alexander, "he encouraged useful industry, alleviated public burdens, and bridled the animosity of domestic faction." All such beneficent projects had been conceived by Philip, and were carried out by his son.

We may see now from these sculptures what was due to Clitus. If Alexander had not been saved by Clitus at that first battle, what would Alexander have accomplished in Asia and in the world? Justly, then, in honour of Clitus would such a monument as this sarcophagus be made and embellished by the foremost artist of Alexander's day; but then the arts were already on the decline. Traces of this decline are seen in these carvings; they were coloured. But the painting of statuary was not in use at the period when art reached its perfection; colour was not laid on except in the earliest period and the latest; for example, an unsightly statue of Venus, taken out of the ruins of the *first* Parthenon at Athens, is adorned with shoes of a brilliant *red* colour, and in a *late* age the Romans had the custom of painting with divers colours the white marbles of Greek art. Were the sarcophagi, discovered a few years ago at Sidon, accessible to the Romans?

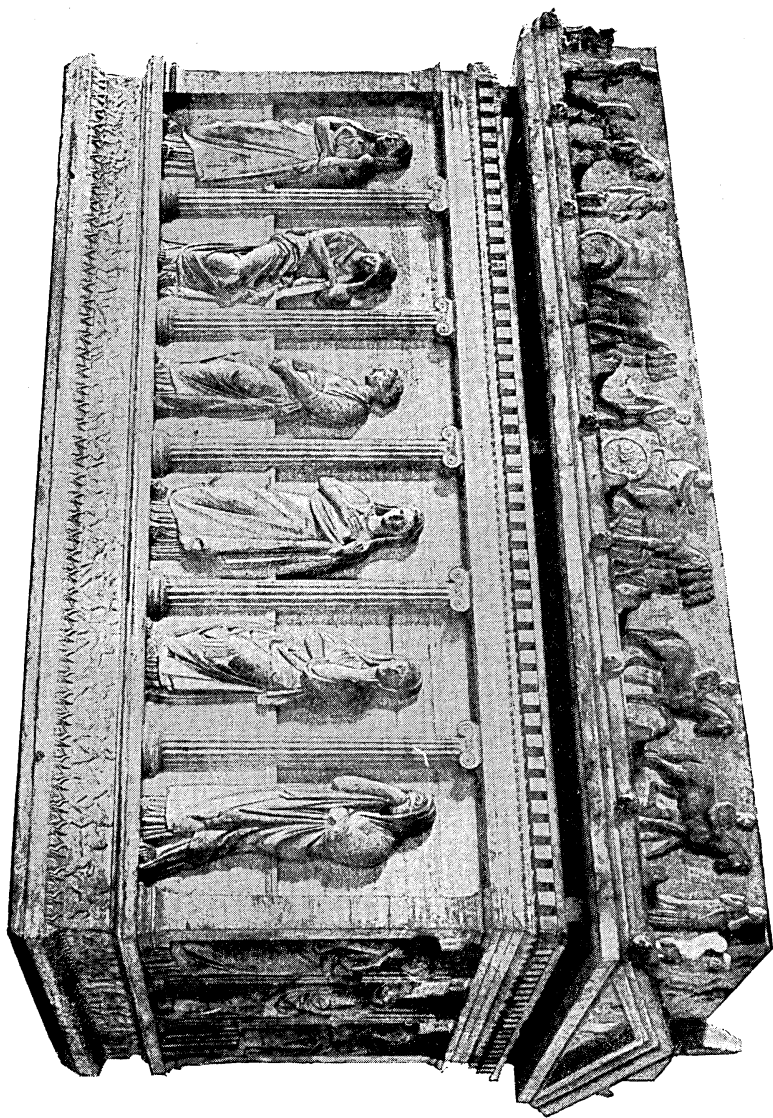
If we suppose that the body of Alexander the Great was never laid in

¹ Sir Charles Newton, "Essays on Art and Archæology," ch. 3.

² History by D. Smith, ch. 47.

³ *Ἱστορία τῆς ἑλληνικῆς καλλιτεχνίας ὑπὸ Π. κασ σαθια, χιφ. β'. 4.*

SARCOPHAGUS OF THE FEMALE MOURNERS.



this sarcophagus, is there any lack of monuments of that memorable man? Surely not. Cities in Asia and in Africa called after his name—Alexandria, Alexandretta, Samarcand, Astrakan, Candahar, which is Iskander—bear witness, while whole tribes of the East and South add *their* testimony.¹

A French traveller describes a tribe settled in the regions of Persia, who boast of their descent from the Hellenes (Yunani) that were left there by Alexander the Great (Iskander Roumi), and he quotes Marco Polo's account of such a people, remnants of the Macedonians, as dwelling on the borders of Chinese Tartary; and English travellers² on reaching Kafiristan (so-called by their neighbours, who are fanatical Afghans) have been surprised to find there a nation of "nearly a million of warriors, descendants of Greek colonists left by Alexander the Great at Candahar (Iskenderhar) and at Cabul." These people have a bias towards Europeans," wrote Major Gordon in a letter to the "Times" of February 5, 1880, "and call for their help against Afghan enemies who surround them and harass them." They call themselves Kami. Even the name of their city, Cabul or Kabul, shows their Greek origin, for it was formerly *Κάμων πόλις*—Camboul, city of the Kami. Remains of Greek art and workmanship are found among them, and even to this day "they hold on to an ancient Greek Pagan Religion," and worship Bagghesh (Bacchus).

It may be supposed that by this time English missionaries from India proper have succeeded in reaching them so as to show them the light of the Gospel. Is it not to be wished that Greeks would join in the work of imparting *true* civilisation and *saving knowledge* to these benighted heathens who may be called their kindred?

In Africa, too, a Greek explorer recognised as descendants of ancient Greeks the tribe of Somali.

Are there not, then, in the world traces of Alexander's success, monuments of his genius and power, and of his triumphs, not only as a conqueror of *nations*, but as a benefactor of *mankind*. It is true that his victories were not complete in other ways, for, while he grieved that there had been only one world for him to master, he did not gain that greater, harder victory—the conquest of himself.

His memory is stained with *innocent* blood, his character befouled with dark *crimes*, but that character was made up of contrary qualities, and displayed some very noble features. So have I seen in a hut on the site of his native town, Pella, in Macedonia, a delicate fragment of Greek sculpture on a marble block imbedded in a wall of mud and straw.

We may assert that memorials of Alexander the Great survive in distant regions of the earth; such are the fruits of his policy in pushing forward the frontiers of the civilised world; in spreading the language,

¹ "Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, &c.," by J. P. Ferrier.

² Elphinstone Wood, a letter to the "Times," 5th February, 1880, from Major R. Gordon, F.R.A.S.

literature, art and science of the Greeks by means of the Greek or Macedonian colonies which he projected, and which Seleucus, founder of the Syrian Empire, and companion of Alexander in his Asiatic expedition, was diligent in planting; colonies which Dr. Smith describes as so many centres of civilisation and refinement. The very coins of Bactrian Kings give evidence of the attractive power of Greek influence, since their names are stamped in *Greek* letters, and the title often added is Philhellen (lover of the Greeks).

St. Paul's Cathedral in London—a Polyandrion of England—contains many monuments of worthies of our nation, famed for their exploits in arts and arms, while the recording stone in honour of the *architect himself* is wanting. But this inscription arrests the visitor in his search: "Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice." "Reader, if thou art searching for his monument, look around." So would we say to one who desires to see the monument of the Great Alexander, "look around." Seek not only one in one city, but look at many in three continents of the earth.

The coffin of *gold* was stolen, the coffin of *glass* was broken, the sarcophagus is *nowhere*, but his memorials abound and his memory *remains* imperishable for ever.

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SARCOPHAGUS OF THE FEMALE NURNERS.

