

THE
XANTHIAN MARBLES.

DURING my travels in Asia Minor in the spring of 1838, I was so much struck by the beauty and peculiarity of the architectural remains on the coast of the province of Lycia, that I determined, if possible, to penetrate into the interior of the country.

Observing from the works of Colonel Leake and others that the valley of the Xanthus would probably be found to contain ancient cities, and that it had never yet been explored, I commenced my researches at Patara, and within a few miles up the valley discovered the extensive and highly interesting ruins of Xanthus, the former capital of Lycia. I afterwards found another large city, whose situation alone would point it out as the most beautiful of ancient sites: this by inscriptions I found to be the city of Tlos: other piles of ruins I saw and heard of in the mountains, but I was unprepared to remain longer in the country.

On my return to England, the publication of my Journal, and my numerous drawings and inscriptions,

attracted the attention of some of the leading men* connected with the British Museum, and they in the spring of 1839, at my urgent request, applied to Lord Palmerston to ask of the Sultan a firman or letter, granting leave to bring away some of the works of ancient art which I had discovered.

In the autumn of 1839, finding that I could gain no information from books of the interesting district which I had visited, I again left England for Lycia, more fully prepared for a re-examination of its geography and works of art. To secure an accurate representation of the latter, I took with me Mr. George Scharf, a young English artist. Anticipating the possession of the firman from the Sultan, I offered to the Trustees of the British Museum my personal services while in Lycia, in pointing out the most desirable objects to remove. From Smyrna I wrote to Lord Ponsonby, our ambassador at Constantinople, to urge the importance of obtaining the firman by the spring of 1840, and requesting that it might be forwarded to the ship, ordered by the Government to be at Rhodes on the 1st of May. On the 12th of May I found at Rhodes the following letter from Lord Ponsonby :—

“ Sir,

“ *March 7, 1840.*

“ I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 23rd of February, and immediately made application to the Sublime

* To the well-directed zeal of Mr. Hawkins, furthered by two of the Trustees, the Marquis of Northampton and Mr. Hamilton, the country is indebted for the promotion of this expedition.

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Porte for a firman, such as you desire to have, but I regret to say the Porte objects to the extent and to the *generality* of the demand, and I am much afraid I shall not be able to obtain what you want: I will do all in my power. There are other obstacles, besides what I have mentioned, of a nature that I cannot explain to you. Should I succeed, I will send the firman to Smyrna, to Her Majesty's Consul. I have no means of sending it to you.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,
“ Your most obedient, humble servant,
“ PONSONBY.”

At this period I had discovered thirteen other cities in Lycia, and each containing works of ancient art. Returning to England, I again laid before the public my Journal, and with increased zeal the Government applied to Lord Ponsonby; but it was not until October 1841 that the Trustees of the Museum received information that the firman was at last obtained, and was left in the hands of the Consul at Smyrna, at the same time urging the necessity of its being promptly acted upon, and stating the difficulties experienced in obtaining the document.

I was applied to by the Museum to furnish forthwith full instructions as to what objects were to be removed, and to make maps, plans, and descriptions as to where each fragment was to be sought by the Captain of such of Her Majesty's ships as might be appointed to the service. I felt certain that the removal of one stone would bring to light others, probably better preserved and more

valuable, and that the *visible* formed but a fraction of what might be obtained, but could not be enumerated in written orders, which might probably be only literally obeyed. With these feelings I wrote the following letter to the Secretary of the British Museum :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ *October 12, 1841.*

“ At the request of the Trustees of the Museum, I furnish written instructions for the finding the monuments about to be removed from Lycia. I feel that, should this expedition fail in any point, it will be from a want of local knowledge of the country and manners of the people; and as my interest in the works of art makes me feel almost responsible for their safety into our care, I write to offer my services to point out the objects for removal. There is little pleasurable in wintering in a tent, or in a sea-voyage at this season to a spot I have already twice visited; but I should hereafter regret any incompleteness in the expedition which I could have prevented. Of course I require no remuneration, and I pay my own expenses, but shall expect a free passage out and home in some of Her Majesty’s packets, and rations with the officers. Should this meet the approbation of the Trustees, perhaps you will be kind enough to let me know.

“ Believe me to remain, yours very truly,

“ CHARLES FELLOWS.”

“ *To the Rev. J. Forshall,
Secretary, British Museum.*”

In reply I received a letter, dated the 15th of October, accepting my proffered services, and stating that the papers were made up for the vessel starting on the 17th, and showing the necessity of my accompanying

them in order to secure a passage from Malta in the ship appointed to the expedition, which would probably sail on the arrival of the dispatches. The reply concludes, “ The Trustees are very sensible of the liberality and public spirit which your proposal to them manifests, and do not doubt that the naval officer employed on the service will derive essential advantage from your presence and counsel.”

The dispatches and all the requisites for the expedition were therefore made up independently of my accompanying it, which was solely for the purpose of pointing out to the Captain the objects to be removed. On the 16th of October, within thirty-six hours from the receipt of this letter, I was on board the Tagus steam-packet off Southampton, with my tent, canteen, bedding and stores, supplied with no other authority than an order to be received on board Her Majesty’s ship, about to sail from Malta for Xanthus.

On my arrival at Malta on the 30th of October, I found that Captain Graves, of Her Majesty’s ship Beacon, then off the Island of Paros, had been selected for the service ; and the Admiral commanding in chief at once ordered the Vesuvius steam-ship to take me, together with three months’ additional stores for the Beacon, to join the ship. On the 8th of November we arrived at Port Naussa, where the surveying-ship was anchored. A delay of a week here occurred in collecting the small vessels which were out surveying along the coasts. The Isabella, a schooner with Mr. Hoskyn,

the master of the Beacon, was then in Lycia, where he had spent most of the summer in examining and mapping the valley of the Xanthus. On board the Beacon I saw plans of the ruins of the city of Xanthus, as well as maps of the valley, the result of his labours during the previous winter.

On witnessing the opening of the dispatches to Captain Graves, I was surprised to find that no funds were provided for the expedition, nor was the subject at all referred to in any of the papers. The orders to the Captain were simply to this effect: "To sail to Smyrna for the firman, and thence to the nearest safe anchorage to the mouth of the river Xanthus, and there to put on board and bring away to Malta such objects as should be pointed out by Mr. Fellows." This omission of placing funds in the hands of the Captain of the expedition was the first impediment I encountered; but knowing that the necessary expenses would be small, being merely for tools, trifling presents to the peasantry, or the occasional hire of their cattle, I offered to provide the funds required, feeling sure that the Trustees of the Museum had inadvertently omitted the supplies, but would gladly repay any sums advanced.

We arrived at Smyrna on the 15th of November: a heavier cloud here hung over the expedition. The documents left with the Consul, and represented in an accompanying letter from our Ambassador to him, as well as to the Government at home, as "the necessary firman," and on which representation I had left England, were

found to be only letters dated long before, and proposing that inquiry should be made as to what was desired by England, and to wait a report from the local authorities as to the practicability of granting the request. I give a copy of the papers.

Translation of a letter from His Excellency the Grand Vizir to the Muhassil, to the Judge, and to the Effendis and Agas composing the Municipal Council of the Sangiak of Menteché.

“ It is known to the British Government that there are some stones sculptured with art, built into some walls at a place near Eksekuid, a village in the dependency of Macri, in the Sangiak of Menteché, and into the walls of the fortress of Boudroum; and as these stones are antique remains and rare objects, His Excellency the English Ambassador has demanded and solicited by a memorial that they might be removed from thence, and be given as a present to the British Government.

“ Although it is necessary, in consideration of the friendship that exists between the Sublime Porte and the Court of Great Britain, to accede to such demands, yet it has been judged expedient first of all to take some information respecting the stones in question.

“ You will begin, therefore, by informing us, without delay, what it would be necessary to do in order to take away these stones, and replace them by others; and it is for this reason that I have written and sent this letter to you.

“ The 17th Rébud Ahker, 1257; corresponding with 7th June, 1841.

“ L.
Riouf
S.”

The above was accompanied by a letter from the Dragoman of the British Embassy, of which the following is a Copy :—

“ My Lord, “ *Pera, June 10, 1841.*

“ In transmitting to your Excellency His Highness the Grand Vizir’s letter concerning the sculptures of Xanthus and Halycarnassus, I am happy to inform you that I have Rifaat Pasha’s word that they will be given to Her Majesty’s Government. His Excellency tells me that the letter, such as it is, has been thought necessary as a first step.

“ I beg leave strongly to recommend a measure which I consider as being indispensable: it is, that the vizirial letter should be presented to the authorities of Menteché by some person capable to point out the stones therein alluded to. Everybody knows that the modern name of Halycarnassus is Boudroum; but who can say exactly the present Turkish name for Xanthus? From what I know, Xanthus must be at, or very near, the village of Eksekuid, and the letter has been written in consequence.

“ In order, therefore, to leave no pretext for the authorities to make difficulties, and say that they do not exactly know where the stones are, some well-informed person must go to the very spot.

“ Some well-qualified person might be found at Smyrna: Xanthus is, at all events, in the Sangiak of Menteché.

“ I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Excellency’s most obedient, humble servant,

“ FREDERICK PISANI.”

“ *To His Excellency Viscount Ponsonby,*

&c. &c. &c.”

The expedition must here have failed, as Captain Graves could only return and report to the Admiral, who would communicate with England, and an application to the Porte must have followed; and in the slowness of diplomatic proceedings, this might be months or years in coming to maturity. My official friends around me at Smyrna entertained but little hope of our overcoming the difficulties which faced us; but I saw a ray of light, and decided on the course to pursue. My anticipated duty was simply to point out the objects to be removed. It was now necessary to assume the management of obtaining the proper authorities, which did not come within the duty of the Captain. My mission extended only to the removal of the marbles from *Xanthus*, and the orders from the Admiral were also limited to that duty.

I observed that Lord Ponsonby had included in his request permission to remove marbles now built into the inner walls of one of the principal fortresses of the Sultan, the castle at Boodroom, the ancient Halicarnassus. The application to Lord Ponsonby to request this of the Sultan was made more than two years after his application for the Xanthian Marbles, and I had no instructions respecting them; nor would I have been a party to ask what, to all who have seen them, must be considered an unreasonable request. I felt sure that, if properly explained, no objection could be made to the removal of the buried stones in the almost unknown mountains of Lycia. I therefore resolved to go to Constantinople and ask for these only, and, if I failed, then

to return to England. To assume an appearance of authority, of which I had but little in reality, I requested Captain Graves to accompany me in the steam-packet, leaving his ship at Smyrna. We arrived on the 21st of November, and on the first application to the authorities* I was gratified in finding that I had judged rightly. Riouf Pasha observed, that he was glad that the other part of the request was withdrawn, as he feared it never could have been granted; that no difficulty now remained, and a firman should be given forthwith for the marbles from Xanthus. Captain Graves returned to Smyrna immediately, and I awaited the tedious progress of state papers until the 30th, when I received the necessary document from the Dragoman, while on board the vessel in which I was starting for Smyrna. In the whole transaction with the officers of state in obtaining this authority, the greatest attention was paid, and not the slightest fee was expected or given.

The following is a translation of the Authority:—

A letter from H.H. the Grand Vizir to Hadgi Ali Pasha, Governor of Rhodes, dated the 15th of Sheoval, 1257 (the 29th of November, 1841).

After the usual titles.

“The British Embassy has represented by a *tairer* [a note in Turkish], that there are some antiques consisting in sculptured

* I am indebted to Mr. Bankhead, the Minister Plenipotentiary, for his attention to my wishes in communicating with the authorities.