Farouk 1st University
Faculty of Arts

Archaelogical Excavation at Kom el Dik

a preliminary report on the Medieval Pottery

by

ARTHUR LANE

> «But would any frock have been the right one in which to welcome rescuing brothers, since for broken lives there can be no rescuer?»

Sarkis Kilikian, the fourth of these symbolic figures, joins the camp as a deserter from a Turkish labour battalion. Throughout his life, from earliest childhood, he has suffered atrocities of the most ghastly kind; his quietest years have been spent in Turkish prisons. This great, dead, personality, coffined in a fleshless shrunken body, is the very type of the lost, wandering Armenian, the Wandering Jew: in him we see the dehumanization of the persecuted at its most extreme. «His secret lay in his being nothing at all explicit, in his seeming to belong nowhere, to be living at some zero-point of incomprehensible neutrality... Kilikian is Enver, the Turkish Minister of War, reversed: the one the emotionless oppressor, the other the emotionless victim. He is to Gabriel as Tom of Bedlam (the poetic conception, not Edgar-as-Tom of Bedlam) is to Lear. «Thou art the thing itself». Finally, «restless with longing to break out of one jail into the next», he leads a revolt within the camp and Gabriel is forced to shoot him — «Those indifferent eyes as little expressed the wish to live as the wish to die.» Kilikian has to be killed, by his friends, because he is so terrible an example of what his friends, the other Armenians, are becoming: non-moral, non-human, even non-living.

At the close of the novel, while the survivors are being taken on board the ships, Gabriel falls asleep. When he awakes the ships are already leaving. He signals to them, but 'the movements were not those of a desperate man», and he stands in the shadow of a rock. He is surprised at his own calmness in the face of this ludicrous disaster. Then, «in one clear flash, he realized — that he did not want the ships to see him.» As he had said earlier to the Agha Rifaat Bereket, who had offered him a chance of escaping alone from the mountain:

> «No one who stands where I stand can begin again from the beginning.»

After what he has seen and done and suffered, there can be no return to human society. It could not tolerate him, nor he it. Then, at the last — the final irony — he hears the ships' sirens. «Life raged within him». Leaving his son's grave, he starts back to the sea. There is a flash of rifles:

> «Gabriel Bagradian was lucky. The second Turkish bullet shattered his temple. He clung to the wood, tore it down along with him. The Cross of the Son rested upon his heart.»

V

Minorities are a nuisance — political thinkers of the most diverse schools agree on that point. Civilisations are bound to fall — historians and philosophers have proved it. Racial persecution is an inevitable step in the slow march of time — scientists tell us as much. And so, conveniently, we forget that civilisations, even in the moment of their decline and fall, are made up of human beings with every conceivable right to that title. **The Forty Days**

of Musa Dagh jolts us mercilessly, flesh and blood and spirit, into the slow dreadful days of which later theorists speak so glibly. This is what it is to be history. And only the realisation that history is the sum of individual endeavour, success, failure and suffering can save our human history from becoming a sequence of disasters, a criminal indictment which whatever form of life succeeds us may amuse themselves by drawing up. The violence and yet the consummate skill with which Franz Werfel thrusts and insinuates his arguments through the ramparts of our conventional defences, tempt one to compare this novel with King Lear. And if, at the end, we are conscious of that feeling of calmness, relief and purgation with which Lear leaves us, we are no more likely to feel that Gabriel's death is unimportant or in some way justified or natural, than that Goneril and Regan and Edmund are the justified or natural weapons with which the «Life Force» clears its way ahead. «Every man and every nation at one time or another becomes «the weak», pleads Johannes Lepsius. And we are reminded of the end of Lear:

«Is this the promis'd end ?»
«Or image of that horror ?»
«Fall and cease ?»

D. J. ENRIGHT.

---

1. See Noack, *Ath. Mitt.* 1900, p. 215 ff. and Botti, *Bull. Soc. Arch. Alex.* No. 1, p. 56 ff.

2. For information about the forts of Alexandria I have to thank Colonel Abdel Rahman Zaki, Director of the Military Museum, Cairo, and M. Etienne Combe, See also Prince Omar Toussoun, *Bull. Soc. R. Arch. Alex.* No. 34, p. 23 ff., no. 11.

3. Dutilh, *Bull. Soc. Arch. Alex.* No. 7, fig. 19, p. 55 ff.

4. Breccia, *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum*, p. 90, fig. 35 ; Adriani, *Sculture Monumentali del Museo Greco-Romano di Alessandria.*

5. Strzygowski, *Bull. Soc. Arch. Alex.* No. 5, p. 3 ff.