The "Ruins" at Virginia Water

By G. E. Chambers, B.A., F.S.A.

Following on their occupation of the North African province of Tripoli, the Italians, in 1920, began a series of extensive excavations of the Roman-built city and port of Lepcis Magna, some seventy miles east of the capital, on the Mediterranean coast.

War intervened, and the work was halted. Very soon there was a danger lest the site should again become a quarry of conveniently dressed stone for reuse by the natives; or re-buried by shifting sand and silt. However, the work of clearance and preservation has since been carried on intermittently, in part by the Italians, and in part under the auspices of the British School at Rome.

The increasing interest occasioned by the gradual revelation of the town as the buildings have been cleared of the superincumbent drift, has resulted also in renewed attention being drawn to the neglected "Ruins"—so called—at Virginia Water, in the south-east corner of Windsor Great Park, since in the main they are made up of material which has as its provenance the city of Lepcis.

The history of the circumstances which led to the inception and building of these "Ruins" is of rather more than academic interest, and furthermore is indicative of an attitude towards what are termed "Antiquities", which prevailed in the early years of the 19th century. Until comparatively recent years our historians have tended to regard Lepcis only in the light of the fact that Septimius Severus was born there (146 A.D.), and even this mention has been subsidiary to the comment, more insular, that it was in the town of York that he died (211 A.D.).

Of Phoenician origin, Lepcis was, in the 1st century, absorbed into the Roman Imperium after a probationary period as an allied community. Promoted to the status of colony—Colonia Ulpia Traiana Lepcis—in the early years of the 2nd century, it reached the summit of its prosperity in the succeeding two hundred years, whilst at the same time it was gradually transformed into a city of considerable architectural importance. Subsequent decline, due primarily to the constant shifting of sand, was hastened in the 5th century by Gaiseric, King of the Vandals, whose fear of rebellion among his subject tribes led him to a deliberate policy of neglect, and at times to positive destruction, of the African towns other than his capital at Carthage.

A new lease of life, induced by Justinian's conquests in Northern Africa, was of short duration. Decline set in anew, and the only mentions we have over several centuries are in occasional travellers' stories, mostly of Arabic origin.

Late in the 17th century Claude Lemaire,[1] the French Consul at Tripoli, describes a visit to Lepcis, where he carried out excavations, and subsequently shipped some of the plunder, including, we are told, more than six hundred of the columns, to France as an ingratiating, if ponderous, gift to Louis XIV. The latter is said to have incorporated the material in some of his many building projects, notably Versailles, and Le Vaux's work at the Tuileries.

Four columns, again, are stated to have supported the baldacchino in the Church of St. Germain des Prés in Paris, or, according to another authority, "the columns adorn the maître-autel", which may, or may not, be intended to mean the same thing. In either case it is of no great consequence, as the columns were removed during the Revolution, and cannot now be located. Yet again, we are told that other columns from Lepcis were used in the Church of S. Giovanni, Valetta, but these also would seem to have disappeared.

In 1816 Col. Hanmer Warrington, the English Consul-General at Tripoli, persuaded the Bashaw of that province to offer to the Prince Regent such of the remains of Lepcis as should be thought worthy of removal, and could in fact be removed; with the proviso, apparently, that the operation should be arranged by Warrington himself.

At the time, Commander, afterwards Rear-Admiral, W. H. Smyth, who, as he himself said, had an "antiquarian taste", was on duty in the Mediterranean. Hearing of the offer made by the Bashaw, he obtained permission to join the main squadron under Lord Exmouth. The latter was then negotiating with the states of the Barbary coast with a view to the suppression of the traffic in Christian slaves; negotiations which displayed a tendency to fortify "moral suasion" with elegant but unmistakeable threats of force.

Smyth went with Lord Exmouth to Tripoli and through his good offices was allowed by the Bashaw to visit Lepcis in company with Warrington (16th May 1816). We are reminded that British prestige was then of some account, and was sustained.

In a series of official reports[2] over a period of eighteen months, Smyth describes his part in the subsequent proceedings, which resulted in the transference from Lepcis of the architectural remains which are now by the lakeside at Virginia Water. He was a man with a wide range of interests who became not only a naval officer of considerable distinction by reason of his extensive nautical and geographical knowledge, but later was an eminent Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a scientist of international repute. His reports suggest an individual knowledge of classic architectural detail, but we must stifle instinctive regrets that, in accordance with custom, he was regarding Lepcis merely as a spoil-heap from which could be sifted objects, useful only for their potential decorative value.

[1] *cf.* P. Romanelli. Article on *Lepcis Magna*, in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, 1933.

[2] Reprinted in part: Admiral Smyth, *The Mediterranean*, 1854.

The enthusiasm and satisfaction shown in his preliminary statement affirming that the city abounded in splendid public edifices, the remains of which were so numerous, that complete shafts of columns could be removed immediately without excavation, is indicative of the fact that he was up to some considerable mischief. He specifies "upwards of thirty monolithic columns of variegated marble, upwards of twenty of oriental granite, and about eighteen of porphyry, exclusive of large blocks of entablature, cornice and architrave"; on all of which he was casting an acquisitive eye. He then enlarges on the value of the town as a potentially gratifying and productive site wherefrom "may be excavated valuable statues and bas-reliefs".

A water colour drawing in the Royal Library, Windsor,[1] has a memorandum attached to it which gives us an alternative description of Lepcis at the time of Smyth's first visit:—

"SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RUINS OF A CITY IN AFRICA PRESENTED BY THE BEY OF TRIPOLI TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT.

About seventy miles to the Eastward of Tripoli on the sea coast and not far to the Eastward of the River Cinyphis is situated the Remains of an Antient Town called Lebida, formerly Ptolemais; Neapolis; Leptis Magna; also called Lepida and by the native Arabs Lybda; it occupies a space of about eight thousand yards square.

This Town appears to have consisted of Magnificent Public and other Buildings, the summits of which rise above the fine Light Sand in which the whole city may be said to be concealed; this Sand has drifted from the Desert along the Beach and being arrested by the remains of the Buildings it has accumulated so as to form one vast Mound, the irregular Surface of which plainly indicates the course of the several Streets. The City was encompassed by strong Fortified Walls ornamented with magnificent Gates, and Porticos. It abounds with the vestiges (still appearing above the Sand) of stately and splendid Public Edifices the remains of which appear over part of the City. These are evidently the works of different Ages as may be deduced from the remains of a fine Grecian Doric Temple of a similar character to that of Concord at Agrigentum—of fine specimens of the Ionic and Corinthian Orders of Building besides the Egyptian and Arabesque—and probably vestiges of the Persic may be found as Major Reynall[2] conceived it to have been at an early period under the Government of Persia. It was afterwards a Roman Colony, and in process of time it became Episcopal.

The City was certainly destroyed either by some convulsion of nature, or by the Force of very powerful Engines, for in such part as are most exposed vast Fragments of Buildings are found which

[1] No. 17055.

[2] There is nothing to indicate who Major Reynall was, or why his opinion should have been accepted as authoritative.

are thrown down and without those testimonies of decay which they would have exhibited if destroyed by lapse of time: indeed many of the fine Fragments of Antiquity that are to be seen above the sands are pure and in such fine preservation from the Nature of the Climate that the marks of the Chisel are still evident upon them—those Treasures of Antiquity that have for Ages been Buried in the Sands must be in more perfect preservation because the Lightness and Purity of the sand would preserve them from the corrosive action of the Climate, which is the Chief cause of their decay.

From the examples already seen, from the splendor of the City, and from the representation of the Native Arabs there is every reason to believe that Works of superior Art in Sculpture would be the reward of removing the Sand from them, which would be found a Work of comparatively little Labor as it is of so soft a Nature that in walking upon it the Passenger sinks up to the middle of the Leg.

The Arabs relate that subjects in Bas Relief are also to be seen about the neighbourhood. Many columns of rich and valuable Marble from 18 to 30 Inches in diameter are quite exposed, they are in single Blocks and consist of Verde and Gialle Antique, Porphyry, Oriental Granite, etc., and might be removed with little trouble—there are three Columns each in a single Block eleven and a half feet in Circumference now lying on the Beach either as landed for the purposes of removal to the City or placed there for the convenience of being Shipped; for a small Harbor is formed at the entrance of a River which divides the east Suburbs from the City.

The short time allowed to make the sketch accompanying this account (during the time that Captain Smyth was making his observations accompanied by the Consul General Colonel Warrington) and the very unfavourable weather prevented an opportunity of making a more extensive Drawing—but if Permission were granted at any future Period—a most interesting series of Views may be made on the Spot, which presents so many curious and beautifull Specimens of Art".

The memorandum is signed "Augustus Earle". Though neither Smyth or Warrington mention the writer as being one of their company it is reasonable to assume that of the men in the foreground of the drawing (Plate III) the one with a cocked hat and sword is Smyth, and the man with the sketching block is Earle himself.

It would seem that this memorandum and drawing were sent to the Prince Regent in 1816, probably in connection with the proposed present to him of the remains from Lepcis. It is of some interest to note that Earle at a later date was appointed Draughtsman to His Majesty's Survey Ship *Beagle*, and as such accompanied Darwin on the voyage which was to become the subject of one of the classics of scientific literature.

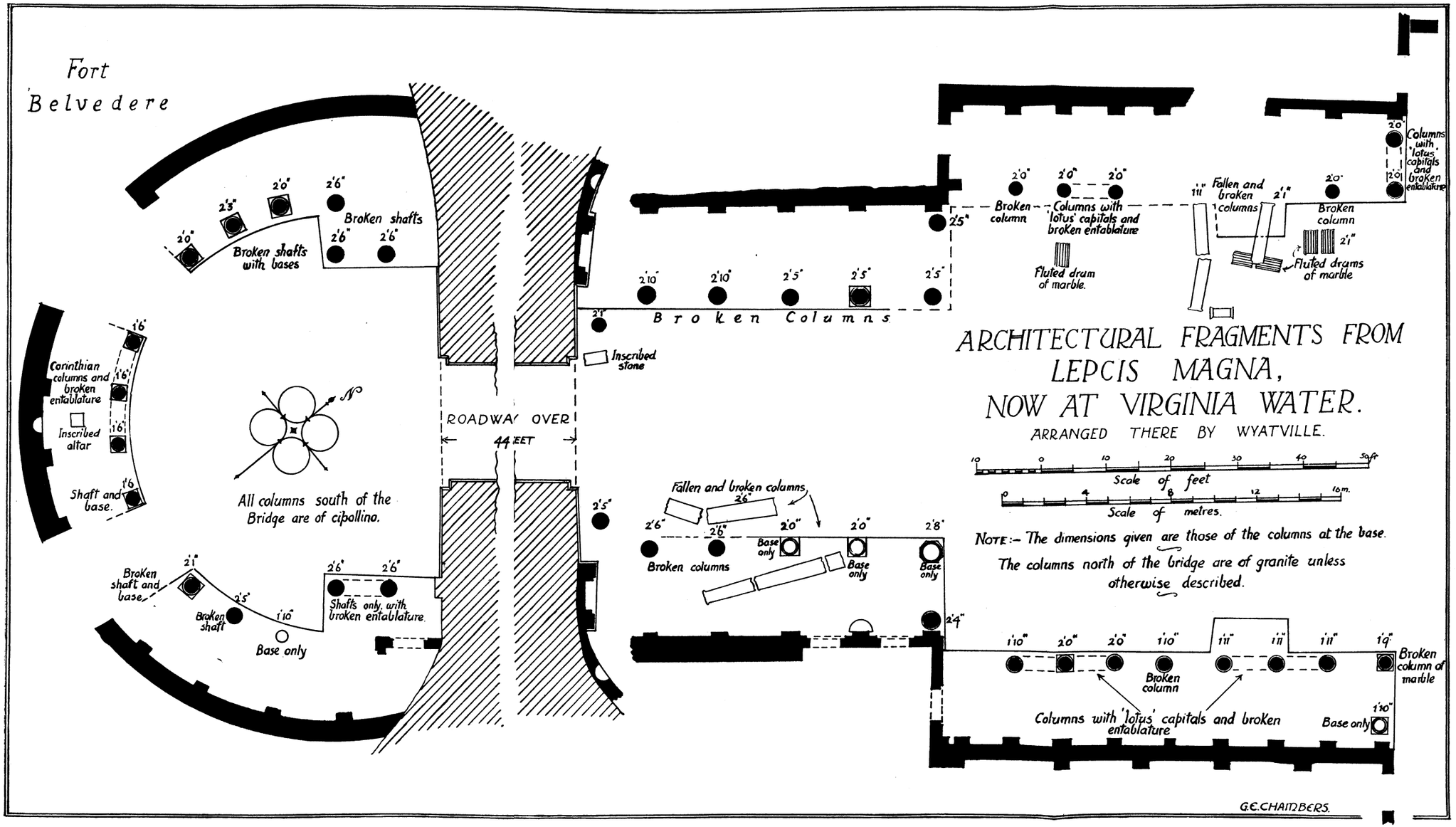

Fig. 2 Plan of the "Ruins", Virginia Water

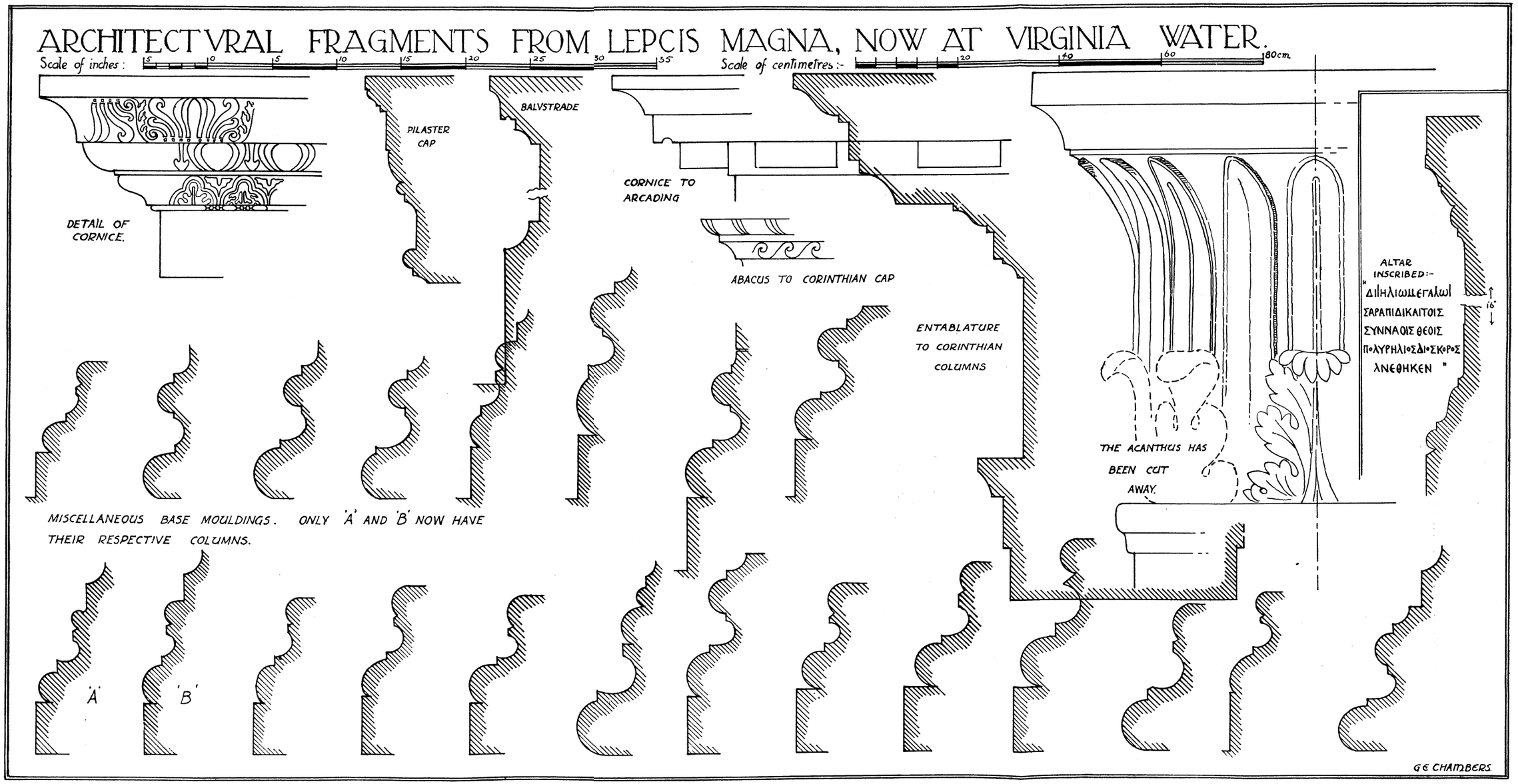

Fig. 3 Details from the "Ruins", Virginia Water

While at Lepcis at this time Smyth inserted on his Chart a rough plan and drawing of the town, probably sufficient for his immediate purpose, but sadly inadequate as a record of the site as he found it. (Fig. 1.)

In the book written later by the Brothers Beechey,[1] relating to a joint Admiralty and Colonial expedition to survey the eastern half of the African coast, reference is made to Smyth's plan, placed at their disposal for publication, but not, in the end, reproduced since they "were obliged, for motives of economy, to limit the number of plates". This in spite of their admission that the exertions of the active and intelligent officer (Capt. Smyth) procured at Lebida the matter for the only existing plan of that city and its antiquities.

It had been arranged that this Survey expedition should sail in *H.M.S. Adventure*, with Smyth as Captain, rejoicing, no doubt, in thus revisiting his old hunting ground. He allowed the Beecheys to make use of his private journal which conveys his first impression of Lepcis, and amplifies the descriptions given in his official reports. He says in the Journal that "the city with its immediate suburb occupies a space of about ten thousand yards, the principal part of which is covered with a fine white sand . . ." It is not clear if Smyth means 10,000 yards across, or so many yards square, but in any case his estimate differs materially from that of the Beecheys, who considered that the town "was comprehended within little more than a square half mile".

He then relates how, in October, 1816, he hastily embarked a few tents, mattocks, and spades, as all the equipment necessary for his purpose, and again set out from Malta to Tripoli, but, finding the latter plague-stricken, he was unable to land. He returned two months later and, since the Bashaw still maintained an attitude of diplomatic benevolence, Smyth was encouraged to ask permission to explore, not only Lepcis, but also the whole coastal region to the east of the town.

The Bashaw, besides being of an oriental abundance in respect of his titles, was also of an exuberant generosity with regard to things he evidently held to be of little account. To such an extent that he made a grant to the Prince Regent of "all works of taste, of whatever materials of value" that could be found in his domain; feeling, no doubt, that the friendship of England was only too easily procured at such trivial cost.

Meanwhile the natives of Lybda, having become aware of the possibility of the columns being taken away, had forthwith proceeded to cut them up for sundry purposes. In particular they had chosen those of granite as most suitable for their needs. Of the columns that remained, the necking and base mouldings had been cut away as a preliminary process in the manufacture of mill-stones.

[1] *Proceedings of the Expedition to explore the Northern coast of Africa from Tripoli eastward*, F. W. and H. W. Beechey, 1828.

Warrington, who had again accompanied Smyth, returned immediately to Tripoli to notify the Bashaw of the damage that had been and was being done; while Smyth commenced his excavations, engaging a hundred Arabs as labourers. Seeking, as he says, only specimens of art, he was so disheartened to find the statues broken in pieces, the arabesques defaced, and the acanthus leaves and volutes knocked off the fallen capitals, that he decided, after little more than a fortnight, that it would not be profitable to persevere. By then, however, he had explored, in a spacious manner which may be considered not only desultory but devastating, the principal basilica, a triumphal arch, a circus, a peristyleum, an arcade, and several minor places. Romanelli, in his book on Lepcis[1], concludes that the triumphal arch was part of the Thermae (Plate V), and that the others were situated in the Forum of Severus.

Smyth goes on to say that in his opinion the town, when at the height of its prosperity, was of that post-Augustan age when art had lapsed into a marked decline, and that, although the principal buildings were of valuable materials, they were overloaded with bad ornament.

At Smyth's suggestion the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, was asked by the Admiralty to authorise Warrington to assist in the removal of the "columns and other pieces" to the waterside. Instructions to this effect having been given, Warrington spent the summer at Lepcis, and, when rather belatedly acknowledging receipt of these instructions (August 24th), he trusted that he would be forgiven in claiming a small share of the credit for what had been achieved. There would seem to have been a feeling that Smyth had annexed some of his thunder, despite the fact that the Captain had, in his reports, made generous mention of the Consul's efforts.

Warrington's letter, somewhat naive, and ambiguously expressed, goes on:— "It was me who obtained the gift of Lebida and all other places of Antiquity, and having successfully removed the immense Columns and other things to the waterside, your Lordship can naturally form an opinion of the laborious undertaking in this climate in the middle of summer".

We then hear from Warrington to the effect that the Storeship *Weymouth* had arrived to convey the Antiquities from Lebida to England. He trusts that the first "samples" would not only be approved by the British Government but would induce the Secretary of State to order the vessel to return for another cargo, which would probably be found more perfect.

It becomes clear from Warrington's letters that a gift that had at first been personal to the Prince Regent was now to be accepted as a present to the British Government.

From Smyth, as Captain commanding "His Majesty's Ship *The Aid*", we have a report to Rear Admiral Sir Charles Penrose, dated 9th November, 1817:— "I anchored off Tripoli on the 14th ultimo,

[1] *Leptis Magna*. P. Romanelli, 1925.

with the Weymouth Store Ship in company; and, in order to prevent loss of time, pressed an immediate audience with the Bashaw, who received me with a very marked attention, and readily entered into all the views I proposed. His Highness also directed that Seidi Amouri, his son-in-law, and Mourod Reis, his senior Admiral, should be embarked on board the "Aid", in order to render me every facility for expediting the departure of the "Weymouth". We arrived at this anchorage on the 18th (Oct. 1817), and the same day commenced towing the spars on shore, and preparing the Storeship's derrick and Hold for the reception of the architectural remains which Colonel Warrington had, during the summer, brought down to the beach, under the ruins of the Western Fortress. As we had a continuance of fine weather, and the seamen unanimous and cheerful in their exertions, I had the satisfaction to perceive the mighty masses embarked and stowed at the rate of at least sixty tons a day, which, when you consider the open roadstead, the distance the ships necessarily rode from the beach, and our limited crews, I trust will meet your approbation.

On the 22nd His Highness Sidi Achmet Bey, the presumptive successor to the Musmed, arrived with his army from Bengazi, whither he had been with intent to have brought his elder Brother, an abandoned cruel character, prisoner to Tripoli. His Highness, accompanied by his principal officers, road down towards the Beach, where he was received with repeated cheers by the Boats' Crews; and I deemed it expedient to salute him from the ships, with which attention he was so gratified, that we experienced the good effects in the orders he gave, and the additional good humour it inspired the Moors with. It is, on many accounts, satisfactory to state that this service has been performed without the occurrence of a single quarrel or dispute between the Seamen and the Natives.

I was very sorry to find that neither the raft ports nor the hatchways of the Weymouth would admit the three large cipollino columns,[1] and, in embarking the others, I have been under the necessity of selecting those of various dimensions, in consequence of the destructive mutilation that has taken place since my first visit, and I have besides sent pieces from which drums might be cut to fit the damaged columns. With the same view I have put several fragments of marble slab and cornice on board, that fractures in the capitals, etc., might be repaired with stone of the same quality. But the specimens of sculpture are only embarked in order to show the style of execution, and the manner in which they have been defaced. The inscriptions are on specimens of marmoric conglomente with which the public edifices of Leptis Magna were constructed. Of those five columns I styled granite porphyry, and of which I sent you a fragment not one remains above ground; and, on examining the ruins, I find that notwithstanding the threats of the Bashaw, and the promises of the Sheiks, a number of the finest columns I then left have been broken,

[1] These columns are still lying on the beach.

and there is actually a Tunisian vessel now loading the pieces. I observed also that several of those the astragal of which just appeared above the sand, have been cleared down a few feet, and struck off; consequently none worth removal (except the three large cipollino ones on the beach) remain visible; and though a great quantity might perhaps be procured by excavation, their removal would be very expensive. I therefore judged it expedient to discharge all the working party until a determination on the subject would be made on the arrival of the Storeship in England, or a communication to the contrary should be sent by you, in either of which cases the Consul General can immediately procure the necessary assistance again".

The log of *H.M.S. Storeship Weymouth* provides a professional commentary of the proceedings from the point of view of its Commander.—The day after the arrival in Lebida Bay was spent prosaically, but probably energetically enough, in getting up a derrick to hoist in marble. The loading was spread over a period of eighteen days, though at times there was too much surf, so that the operations were not continuous. Altogether the log details the hoisting in of 47 marble columns, 14 "cases", 54 pieces of marble, and one piece of granite; the last shipment, on the 10th November, being one case and 13 pieces—"that", we are told with nautical finality, "being the remains of the Antiquities".

We see that whereas the log has a total of 47 marble columns, the Admiralty Inventory as subsequently presented to the British Museum (see Appendix), and Smyth's own statement, both show a total of 37 columns, some of them granite, some of marble. Possibly the log accounted broken pieces as complete columns.

In a further letter to his Chief, Warrington again stresses his claim for consideration, and adds "I take the liberty of suggesting the propriety of availing ourselves of the winter months, should it be the intention of your Lordship to prosecute the research into the Ruins, and in my humble opinion should His Majesty's Government go to the expence of Five thousand dollars, it would be amply sufficient to extract the different Antiquities, and to gain a thorough knowledge of that ancient City. I have to acquaint your Lordship that during the last summer His Highness the Bashaw requested me to allow some of his subjects to have some of the damaged Columns to convert into Mill Stones to grind the Olives, to which I acceeded to, at the same time taking due care that they were perfectly useless to His Majesty's Government, and indeed there has not been one taken away measuring more than 3 feet 3 inches in length".

The *Weymouth* sailed for Malta, arriving on the 19th November. She was there for two months before proceeding to England, during which time it was necessary to rearrange the cargo. At Malta also the ship took on board what is listed as "the head called that of the Younger Memnon" from Egypt. This head is now in the British Museum, identified as that of Rameses II, from the Memnonium at Thebes.

England was not reached until March 1818, when both the Foreign Office and the Admiralty notified the British Museum authorities that the *Weymouth* with its cargo had arrived at Spithead. My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty do not sound at all impressed, or convinced of the value, either aesthetic or intrinsic, of the cargo, referring to it as comprising "several specimens of architecture and statuary"; and, again, writing to say that these "articles will be delivered up to the order of the Trustees (of the British Museum) whenever they may wish".

Unloading was not in fact commenced for another three weeks, during which time there is nothing to indicate curiosity concerning his new acquisition on the part of the Prince Regent. One can but spare the passing tribute of a sigh of sympathy for poor Warrington![1]

The "disjecta membra" rested, in a seclusion more or less honourable, in the courtyard of the British Museum for six years. At length, in August 1824, we have a letter from Sir Charles Long, communicating "His Majestey's commands that the Columns and Fragments deposited in the Courtyard of the Museum should be placed at the disposal of his architect, Mr. Jeffry Wyatt, to whom His Majesty had given further directions concerning them".

By now the Prince Regent had become King as George IV, and Sir Charles Long, besides being his personal friend, and one of the Commissioners appointed to keep watch and ward over Wyatt's egregious restoration of Windsor Castle, was also a Trustee of the British Museum. So that it is reasonable to assume that he was in some way responsible for this next chapter in the Odyssey of the "Remains".

Even so, there is a further two years of obscurity; and then, from the files of a local newspaper we get:— "August 28. 1826. About 5 a.m. a detachment of the Royal Engineers left Woolwich and proceeded to the British Museum for the purpose of removing the magnificent remains of the capitals, columns, etc., which have so long lain neglected in the Courtyard, to Virginia Water, to form a representation of a temple in ruins. The detachment, consisting of forty men, arrived at the Museum about half past nine; they succeeded in removing three columns, one of which was understood to weigh seven tons thirteen hundredweight, and was drawn by 12 horses, which left at half-past one o'clock. It is expected it will take six weeks to complete the removal".

On October 7th we are given some startling information— "Several of the columns, which formed part of the Elgin marbles, and which from their enormous size could not be advantageously exhibited, and from their want of ornament would have excited little attention, have been removed from the British Museum to the border of the lake at Virginia Water. It is probably in contemplation to construct a Grecian ruin on this delightful spot. The

[1] The granite used in the repair of the obelisk from Philae, now at Kingston Lacy, Dorset, was taken from the material sent from Lepcis, and was presented by Geo. IV.

weight of these fragments of antiquity is so enormous that one column required the force of fourteen horses to convey it to its destination".

The issue of October 14 is in more sober vein, but is still a little incautious—"On Wednesday all the remaining marble columns, etc., that were in the Courtyard of the British Museum were removed by the detachment of the Royal Artillery. These magnificent ruins did not form part of the Elgin Marbles, but were presented to the King, when Prince Regent, by the Bey of Tripoli, and were taken from the ruins of an ancient Greek colony situate nine miles from Tripoli. They were conveyed in eight artillery wagons to Hounslow, and thence to Virginia Water".

By this time Wyatt, (subsequently knighted and his name augmented, for some reason not now obvious, so as to become Sir Jeffry Wyatville) was engaged in his work of remodelling William of Wykeham's buildings at Windsor Castle. He was now called upon to erect at Virginia Water one of the mock classical ruins which were, and for too many years had been, fashionable features of landscape gardening. With this in view he drew up a design in which the material from Lepcis was to be incorporated within a modern framework of containing walls, running north and south, and on each side a range of columns set on a modern podium; gracing the whole with the name "A Temple of Augustus", a label hailed by a contemporary as a "pretty conceit". As an indication of late Georgian taste in such matters the lay-out is of some interest, but otherwise it is of no significance, and, of course, has no relation whatsoever to any original arrangement at Lepcis. (Fig. 2)

On June 6th, the following year (1827), the irrepressible newspaper announces that His Majesty viewed the erection of the ruins formed from the Elgin Marbles. By March, 1828, it is reduced to playing for a draw, stating—"His Majesty, in company with Wyatville, viewed the ornamental ruin formed from the columns brought from the shores of the Levant".

For additional adornment a number of statues, said to have been captured in a French ship during the Napoleonic Wars, were brought from the Wolsey Chapel at Windsor where they had previously been deposited.

An engraving of about 1848[1] shows four Hermae on the eastern side of Wyatville's Augustan Temple which may have formed a part of this group of statuary. At a later date, after William IV had opened Windsor Park to the public, the latter showed its appreciation of the privilege by so mutilating the statues that it was decided to remove them. They were carted to a remote shrubbery and dumped therein, with the pious hope, presumably, that instead of being further damaged, they would be saved by being completely lost. As indeed they have been !

[1] In Leith Ritchie, *Windsor Castle and its Environs*, 1848.

The Rev. F. J. Rawlins, in a short monograph on Virginia Water[1] states that in his day (c.1866) all that remained of "these Grecian statues of Venus, Ceres, Fauns, Satyrs, etc. . . . . their heads severed, their arms and legs broken off, their beauty effaced . . . ." was still to be seen, but unfortunately he does not give their exact location. It appears probable, however, that the relics seen by Rawlins were in fact unused and discarded portions of a group of statuary by the Flemish sculptor Pierre de Francheville (known also as Francavilla) brought from Hampton Court for the adornment of the gardens at Windsor Castle.

Wyatville's final arrangement is in two groups, one on each side of the road leading west from Virginia Water to Ascot. The northernmost group is in Windsor Park, the southern, apsidal, group is within the grounds of Fort Belvedere. (Plate V). The bridge between them was built in George IV's time to provide him with a carriage drive beneath the existing road, and presumably formed an integral part of the architect's design. A photograph of about 1865, when compared with the "Ruins" as they are today, shows that they now have an even more querulous aspect than Wyatville perhaps intended. In particular three of a group of four Corinthian columns with their entablature, towards the southern end of the east range, are now in pieces on the ground. The columns behind this group, though still erect, are precariously balanced, and seem only to be awaiting the inevitable wind storm which will overthrow them. The setting up of the columns, and the remainder of the work, was, indeed, so carelessly carried out that it gives one to wonder if Wyatville after all had not the deliberate intention of evolving a structure which in a very short time would disintegrate into a truly convincing picture of irretrievable decay. Ritchie, as early as 1848, describes how trees had apparently grown up since the temple (*sic*) had become a ruin, and intruded themselves, as if in mockery, between the shafts of granite and marble; while the statues which had adorned or sanctified the place were either enshrined in wooden niches, or lay prone and broken on the ground. But he is still of the considered opinion that Wyatville's design is a creation of true taste.

He says further:— "We have seen the original designs for this ornamental ruin; and the work must have cost the architect as much intellect and labour as a finished building of similar proportions". Unfortunately these drawings are not now to be found.

Rawlins, again, affirms that the Ruins were brought from Lepcis in two lots, the first in 1817, the second at the request of George IV, and under the direction of Sir F. Ponsonby, the Governor of Malta, in 1830. There is, however, no reference to the second transaction in the official records, and the details of the stonework now in position at Virginia Water agree so nearly with the Admiralty's inventory which covers the first cargo that it appears more than likely that the second cargo may have been intended, but did not materialise.

[1] Notes on Virginia Water by F. J. Rawlins, *Windsor Great Park*, 1866.

By reason of the quite considerable disintegration of the work since it was first set up by Wyatville it is now hardly possible, and would indeed be superfluous to attempt, to identify all its component parts with those detailed in the Admiralty list.[1] A number of the columns have broken in their fall, two of them taking their entablature with them; some of the material has in the course of time sunk into the ground, or is so covered by debris as to be unrecognisable; and in some cases the description as given in the list—for instance—"slabs, 7, loose", is discouraging.

Of the item—"five pieces of rough stone, with Inscriptions, supposed to be Head or Tomb Stones", we may be justified in identifying three which still remain at Virginia Water.

The first, in the grounds of Fort Belvedere, is a rectangular Altar stone, of *c.* 200 A.D., about four feet in height, and with moulded capping and base. The inscription, in Greek, is to the effect that "Publius Aurelius Dioskoros dedicated (this altar) to the God Helios; to the great Sarapis, and to the gods who share their temple".

The second, by the N.W. corner of the archway beneath the road, is a stone 3′ 6″ by 1′ 9″, having, on each of two opposite faces, a small part of a duplicated inscription in large Roman characters:—(a) ". . . AFRICA . . . . AFRICAE . . . ." (b) ". . . . NUSPO . . . AEPAT . . . .". More of the stones with these inscriptions have since been found, reused in the Byzantine Gate at Lepcis,[3] enabling the text to be reconstructed almost in its entirety.

The third inscribed stone lies half buried in the bushes to the north of the east range. It is a rectangular, marble pedestal, 3′ 11″ high, and tapers slightly from the bottom to the top, where it is 2′ 3″ square. It retains parts of two worn inscriptions in Greek, unrelated, and the more recent with an intelligible reference to the Emperor Constans, of mid 4th c. date.

A fourth inscription, noted by Rawlins, is said to be on a tombstone, and he gives his version of the inscription, a version which differs materially from that given in the Berkshire Journal in 1903.[2] It is in Latin, and relates the setting up of the stone by one Marcus, or Marius, Cethegus, to his most beloved wife Domitia Rogata. While Rawlins admits the difficulty of deciphering each letter, he substantiates his reading with a careful drawing; his transcription being "Domitiae Rogatae Vixit Annis XXIII. M. Julius Cethegus Philyss . . . . uxori carrisimae fecit". The Corpus of Latin Inscriptions[4] agrees with Rawlins' except that it gives THIYSSAAE for PHILYSS . . . .

The Corpus places the stone in the British Museum, but it is said to have been observed at Virginia Water as late as 1923. If it is still there—and it cannot be located at the British Museum—it has been

[1] See Appendix.

[2] *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*, Vol. IX pp. 48-50.

[3] For details of this and the other inscriptions see— *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*, edited by J. M. Reynolds and J. B. Ward Perkins; and published for the British School at Rome, 1953.

[4] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Vol. VIII, Pt. 1, p. 5.

caught up in the ever increasing accumulation of debris, and cannot now be recognised.

The fifth of the inscribed stones was taken from Virginia Water to the Royal Library, Windsor; and from thence, in 1862, to the British Museum, where it is now in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities. The stone is broken and badly worn, so that it's two inscriptions are incomplete. The first inscription now reads "AUG .... SUFE ....": (FORTUNAE) AUG(VSTAE) .... SUFE(TES); references to the Emperor Domitian, and to a local magistrate, both in Roman lettering, and much worn. Below, in Neo-Punic characters, part of an inscription which would seem to permit of a considerable latitude in the matter of translation since we have from three separate authorities:— (a) "The dominion of the Empire of Rome remains to eternity"; (b) "To the mistress of the eternal house"; and (c) "Placed by the magistrates of the district as a permanent monument". The last is the translation given in the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.[1] It is clear that all three were put forward with considerable diffidence, in view of the fact that the sentence is incomplete.

The German orientalist, Dr. Gesenius,[2] quoting the Spanish savant Badia, states that at sometime between 1803 and 1807 the slab formed part of a Triumphal Arch of Roman origin which stood near the house of the French Consul at Tripoli. But neither Smyth or Warrington mention the spoilation of any monument in the town of Tripoli, and Gesenius very probably was misinterpreting his authority. He himself then relates how, about 1825, as he supposes, this stone, together with other monumental remains of early date, were brought from the shores of Tripolitania to England as a gift to George IV, and were shown in the forecourt of the British Museum. At the order of William IV it was then transferred to Virginia Water, where Gesenius saw it (October 1835) turned upside down and used as a pedestal for a statue of Flora or Ceres, and in poor condition.

Four of the five "Faces" listed by the Admiralty can probably be identified in the Medusa faces set in the piers of the lakeside landing-place, a short distance north of the "Ruins". A fifth has been broken into two pieces which now lie, widely separated and much defaced, by the western range.

Towards the southern end of the East range, and for the most part hidden by debris, is a damaged statue of a man wearing a toga, life size, but without head or feet. The work is of poor and spiritless technique when compared with that of the statuary found at Lepcis in recent years, but it may be one of the two "Statues without head or feet" mentioned in the Admiralty Inventory, and the material out of which it is carved would come within Smyth's category of "marmoric conglomeration". (Plate VI).

[1] C.I.L. Vol. 8, No. 1. *Tripolitania*, 1881.

[2] Guil. Gesenius, *Scripturae Linguaeque Phoeniciae*, 1837.

Such interest as now pertains to the "Ruins" lies in the circumstances which led to their being in the present site; to the rather tenuous opportunities they offer to the student of later classic detail; and to the academic emotions aroused by the possibility of correlating the work at Virginia Water with that of the buildings at Lepcis from whence it originated. (Fig. III)

APPENDIX

A list of marble columns etc., received at Lebida between 19th October and 10th November 1817 on board H.M. Store Ship Weymouth.

Description	*Quality*	*No.*	*Length* F.	*Length* I.	*Diameter* F.	*Diameter* I.	*Observations*
Columns	Grey Granite	1	15	8	2	0	Defective
		1	15	6	2	4	Good
		3	15	6	2	3	
		3	15	6	2	2	A little injured
		3	15	6	2	0	
		1	15	0	1	9	Good
		1	13	0	1	11	
		1	12	0	2	1	
		1	7	10	2	0	Broken
	Red Granite	1	22	3	2	8	Nearly perfect
		1	22	6	2	5	A little injured
		1	22	4	2	0	Perfect
		1	21	3	2	3	
		1	16	0	2	8	
		1	15	0	2	5	Broken, but good
		1	14	0	3	0	
		1	19	4	2	4	
		1	19	2	2	4	
		3	15	6	2	4	Good
		1	14	0	2	7	
	Blue and White Marble	1	14	0	2	4	
		1	14	0	1	9	Broken, but good
		3	13	6	1	8	
		1	12	6	1	9	Good
		1	10	0	1	9	One column in halves
		1	5	0	1	9	
		1	5	0	2	4	Broken, but good

Capitals marble 7 no. in 7 cases, in a tolerably good state
Faces 4 ,, ,, 4 ,, —a little injured
Statues without heads or feet 2 No.
Legs and feet of a statue
Pedestals 25 no. loose, the greater part defective
Slabs 7 ,, ,,
Cornice 10 pieces ,, somewhat defective
Capitals 3 No. ,, } a little injured
Face 1 ,, ,, }
Statue in halves Head and Feet deficient
Half Pedestal
Pieces of rough stone, with inscriptions, supposed to be Head or Tomb Stones } 5.
Also
A Bust of the Younger Memnon, received at Malta.

Signed R. Turner. Master Commy.