

THE DURIGHELLO FAMILY

Michel G. Klat*

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Angelique Durighello married my great grandfather Girgis Klat in Saida. Her father Alphonse Durighello was the vice - consul of France in this town. This much I knew. My grandfather Jean, her son, died at an early age in 1914 following a riding accident in Nazareth, leaving two young boys, my father George and my uncle Emile. As a result of this, and of two world wars and the Palestinian troubles, my family suffered many upheavals and reversals which led to the loss of all their photographs and written records. It was while I was working in Saudi Arabia that a colleague of mine, Khalil Chehab, to whom I had mentioned that I was a descendent of the Durighello, informed me that a young man from the accounting firm auditing our books, Antoine Jabre El-Ashkar, was also a descendent of the Durighello family. Virginie the youngest daughter of Alphonse Durighello, is Antoine's great grandmother on his mother side. To my delight Antoine's family had a number of photographs of the three generations of Durighello and they gave me copies of the photographs which I reproduce in this article. Some years later, while on holiday in Portugal, my wife found an item in the Gulbenkian Museum which was obtained from the Durighello collection. Before that date I had no inkling that the Durighello were well known in the XIXth century world of archaeology.

I asked Nadine Lotfi who was then a student at the Louvre to search for the sale catalogue and was astonished at the wealth and extent of the Durighello's collection. While Claude Doumet Serhal was cataloguing my own collection of terracota I mentioned to her my family's connection with the Durighello. Later she asked me to write an article for "Archaeology and History in Lebanon", whilst the name Durighello is well known to archeologists and collectors, little is known about them. I made an attempt in 1991 with the help of Ms Aida Durighello, not a relation, to write an article on the Durighello family, unfortunately circumstances were unfavorable. My hope is that this outline may bring new information to light on the Durighello family.

I have based this outline on documents which my cousin Ghassan Klat obtained for me from the Roman Catholic churches in Aleppo, Saida and Beirut. Mrs. Myriam Provence, a professional genealogist, researched the archives of the Foreign Ministry in Nantes and other departments in France. I am indebted to Ms Elizabeth Fontan, "conservateur en Chef" at the Louvre, Department of the Ancient Near East, who made available to me documents and correspondence the museum had with Edmond and Joseph Durighello, a photograph of the latter in Arab dress as well as photographs of some of the items bought or donated to the Louvre by the Durighello family.

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From the records of the Foreign Ministry of the early XIXth century it appears that Angiolo Piucinto Durighello, the Levantine founder of the family, was an Italian merchant resident in Aleppo. The earliest document I found mentions that

Angiolo on 27th January 1796 stood as godfather to Laura Maria, granddaughter of Joseph Morano, Consul General of the Republic of Venice in Aleppo for Syria and Palestine. Angiolo traded in walnuts and cotton from the Aleppo region, in ostrich feathers and other merchandise including pearls from Sbara on the Persian Gulf. These goods he exported to Constantinople, Genoa, Livorno and Marseilles. On the 22th November 1808 he married Celeste, the daughter of Tomas Vailhen. She was almost certainly French and came from Marseilles. Her father was a resident of Marseilles and represented Angiolo in that town. By 1808, in addition to his business activities, Angiolo was the Consul General of Spain in Aleppo. According to a letter written by a French resident of Aleppo, Angiolo was originally from Venice and looked after the interests of the Seven Islands (?), Raguse and Sweden. I have not been able to confirm this and as yet have not been able to find where he came from and whether he spent the rest of his life in Aleppo. In 1832 he was appointed for two years the agent of the French Consulate in Aleppo in addition to his position as General Consul of Spain. In his new position he looked after the affairs of the French community in Aleppo and reported to the French Ambassador in Constantinople on this and the progress of the war in Syria between the Egyptians and the Ottomans. Angiolo and his wife Celeste had many children. In the church's documents he was always referred to as the Consul General of Spain and the Knight of Knights of the Order of the Church of the Ascension in Jerusalem, in some cases Consul of Sweden. He was decorated many times but with the exception of the Order of the Church of the Ascension, I have not yet been able to identify his medals. Although he had many children, I will in this outline concentrate on his son Alphonse.

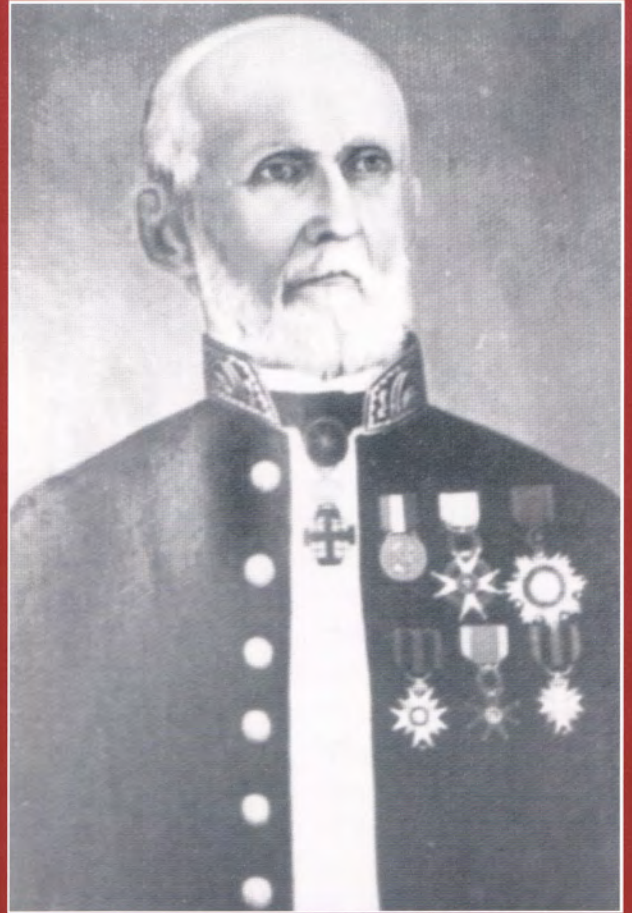
Photograph of Angiolo Durighello, Consul General of Spain in Aleppo.



Alphonse was born on the 13th May 1822. Nothing is known of his early life in Aleppo. There he married Celesta Betera. In 1852 he obtained a passport from the French Consulate to travel to Paris. The following year he was appointed agent of the

French consulate in Saida. Alphonse arrived in Saida on the 29th December 1853 accompanied by his wife Celeste and their three daughters, Eulalie, Angelique and Edmonda. As agent of the French Consulate in Saida (promoted to the post of Vice Consul in 1859) in addition to looking after the affairs of the French community in that town, he was in charge of the Khan el Franj, which was, and still is, the property of the French government. The building of the consulate and the Franciscan church – which is part of the complex - is attached to the Khan on the left side of the main entrance*. It is accessible from the Khan and also has an independent entrance from Suq al Bazerkan. The Khan was rented to European families and traders, the ground floor being used for trading and housing the animals, the upper floors for living accommodation. The revenue of the khan served to cover the emoluments of the agent, his staff and the maintenance of the buildings.

Photograph of Alphonse Durighello, Vice Consul of France in Saida (1853-1887(?)).



* The consulate building is at present a school and the Franciscan church it seems has been leased to the Maronite church.

However the upheavals of 1860 saw Alphonse facing financial ruin. During the civil unrest of that year he unhesitatingly risked his own life in saving the lives of many others, even paying their ransom out of his own pocket. To accommodate the refugees he emptied the Khan, sending his own family to Beirut and asking the tenants to leave. He kept only a small room for himself. The Consul General in Beirut, Count Bonteviglio, in a report to Paris, praised Alphonse's dedication in providing food, clothing and medicine for three thousand refugees at his own expense. The cost of these acts of charity was devastating for, in spite of the Consul's General pleas that he should be reimbursed, Alphonse never received any compensation from the French or Ottoman governments. He remained in Saida until he retired and died in 1896. The decorations which I was able to identify from his photograph include the Papal orders of the Holy Selpuchre, of St. Sylvester and the Golden Spur, the order of St. Gregory the Great as well as the Ottoman order of the Medjidie.

Alphonse became interested in antiquities and archaeological excavations soon after his arrival in Saida and quickly discovered it was a lucrative business. Under the Ottomans there were no regulations covering archaeological excavations and finds. It was only necessary either to own the land or to have the owner's consent to excavate and any articles found became the property of the finder. This is clearly illustrated by a dispute over a sarcophagus between Habib Abela and Alphonse. According to the minutes of a commission appointed to look into the case, dated 24 April 1855, Wamik Pasha, Governor of the Wilayet of Saida, decided that as the case was between two Europeans it should be decided by a commission of their peers. The twelve manuscript pages (see p. 109-114 in this issue) make interesting reading. In summary, it declared that Alphonse Durighello who for a "long time was involved in archaeological excavation" obtained for a fee to Mustafa Effendi, the Mufti of Saida, the exclusive right to excavate on land belonging to the latter and having discovered a sarcophagus sold it *bona fide* to Aimé Péretié. The Commission decided unanimously in favour of Alphonse and dismissed the counterclaims of Habib Abela. The members of

the commission were Portalis, Hawadier, Heald, Black, Weber, Villanis and Corpi. The European witnesses were Santi, Thomson, Vandyk and Dr. Gaillardot. The disputed sarcophagus, now in the Louvre, was the famous sarcophagus of Eshmunazor II.



1 Sarcophagus of Eshmunazor II. Photograph courtesy of the Louvre, Department of the Ancient Near East. Photograph by Pierre & Maurice Chuzeville.

3 Photograph of the Khan at the turn of the XXth century. The consulate building and the Franciscan church – which is part of the complex - is attached to the Khan.



2 One of the sarcophagi presented by Alphonse Durighello to Ernest Renan. Photograph courtesy of the Louvre, Department of the Ancient Near East. (Photograph by Christian Larrieu).

In view of Alphonse's success as an archaeologist and the lucrative nature of this business it was probably inevitable that when the French government sent Ernest Renan to explore and excavate the lands of ancient Phoenicia, Alphonse was unhappy. In May 1860 the Emperor Napoleon III proposed that Renan should mount an expedition to the Levant. With

the Emperor's approval came the full backing and cooperation of the French government. The French forces sent to Syria in 1860 to quell the unrest were assigned to Renan's excavation while the French diplomatic Corp was instructed to give him every assistance. However relations between Renan and Alphonse were uneasy and it was only when Alphonse was threatened with the loss of his job that he fell in with Renan's wishes. After the expense of caring for the refugees in the Khan earlier that year, Alphonse was probably unable to resist the financial pressure brought upon him. Dr Gaillardot, a friend of both men, successfully inter-

vened to reconcile them. Renan later praised Alphonse for his assistance and Alphonse gave Renan two sarcophagi one of which is illustrated fig.2. This information came from the correspondence of Ernest Renan to Hortense Cornu, Napoleon III's milk sister, who had been instrumental in setting up the expedition and from Renan's letters to Dr. Gaillardot.

Alphonse Durighello and his wife Celeste had twelve children of which only seven – four girls and three boys - survived to adulthood. Of the girls Eulalie – born in Aleppo in 1845 - married in 1864 Job Abela (brother of Habib mentioned earlier) whose family was of Maltese origin and had many descendents. Angelique – born in Aleppo in 1847 - married in 1865 my great grandfather, Girgis Klat. Edmonda – born in Aleppo in 1849 - married in 1878 Wakim Bakos but died at the age of twenty nine in her father's house, possibly without issue. Virginie married in 1887 Shaker Haykal Ghoraieb of Damour* and had many descendents. The family obtained the French nationality by the end of 1890.

* According to Dr. Shaker Khoury, writing about the families of Damour, the wedding of Shaker Haykal to Eugenie Durighello and his brother Boutros to Angelique Abela, (daughter of the British Consul in Saida), which was celebrated on the same day, was hailed as the best the country had ever seen. Virginie was, according to the same source, involved in many charitable activities in Damour and travelled to Paris to help in the establishment of the Lebanese students home in that city.

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Of the boys Edmond – born in Saida in 1854 - was very heavily involved in archaeological excavation and died in Helwan Egypt in 1922. For some time he lived in Paris at N°. 118 Avenue Victor Hugo. I do not know if he married or had issue.

Eugene – born in Saida in 1856 - was employed from a young age at the French Consulate in Beirut and was appointed agent of the consulate of Saida in 1899. He married a French woman, Leontine Buffet, whose parents lived in Beirut, and died childless in 1906. There are people who still today remember Mme Eugene Durighello who dressed entirely in black with a small black hat, attending church regularly in Saida. The youngest son, Joseph – born in Saida in 1863 - of whom it was said that most of the leading museums in Europe had items from his collection, was the most avid collector and student of antiquities. He first married in Paris in 1912 Hassibe Khoury born in Beirut and daughter of Chaker Khouri and Marie Tyan. The marriage was annulled. In 1918 he married Xaverine Dubost and had two children, Bernard-Jean and Suzanne-Solange, both without issue. In a mysterious letter to René Dussaud curator at the Louvre, he mentions a third child. He is Jacques Angelo Durighello born at Orleans on 16th August 1918. I do not know at this stage of my research whether he married and had any descendants.



Photograph of Virginie Durighello one of Alphonse Durighello's daughters.

Photograph (30th June 1900) of Eugene Durighello agent of the French Consulate of Saida (1899-1906).

Alphonse Durighello must have passed on his passion for antiquities to his two sons, Edmond and Joseph. From the few letters that I have of his, Edmond had the more turbulent life. However he worked with

his father on a very successful excavation during the course of which they unearthed the *Mythreum* (see p.117). Edmond was embroiled in the politics of excavation with the French government which was reluctant to take any action to which the Ottoman government might take exception. Finally, in despair Edmond informed the French that he was bypassing them and dealt directly with the curator of the Constantinople Museum, Hamdi Bey, who however, reneged on his and his government's promises to Edmond (*Chronique d'Orient* 1888). Edmond was at times derided by his peers but proved them wrong specifically in the case of the Phoenician necropolis at El Hesi (*Chronique d'Orient* 1890).

Joseph appears to have been much more successful than his brother, both in his business affairs, as an archeologist and collector. He was extremely generous with his donations to the Louvre. Two of his most important bequests to this museum were the silver Vase of Emes (today Homs) and a Roman military diploma of 139 AD while in 1913 his first wife Hassibe Khouri, donated a Roman bronze vase to the same museum. In 1901 Joseph exhibited his collection of glass at the Musée Guimet. He sold this collection to a Mr. Henri Buisset of London, who later sold it at an auction in Paris in May 1911. In June 1924, he sold at an auction 32 magnificent items of antiquity, among them the Aphrodite by Demetrios, which belonged to his wife Xaverine who died in 1922. After the death of Joseph in September 1924, the remaining nine objects in his collection were sold again at an auction in June 1925 of which the most notable were three bronzes of Apollo, a horse and a kneeling Venus.

Photograph of Joseph Durighello in Arab dress, courtesy of the Louvre, Department of the Ancient Near East. Photograph by Christian Larrieu.



EDMOND
1854-1922

EUGENE
1856-1906

CHARLES
1859

EMANUEL
1860-1862

JOSEPH
1863-1924

NATALIE
1867-1883

VIRGINIE
1869-1949

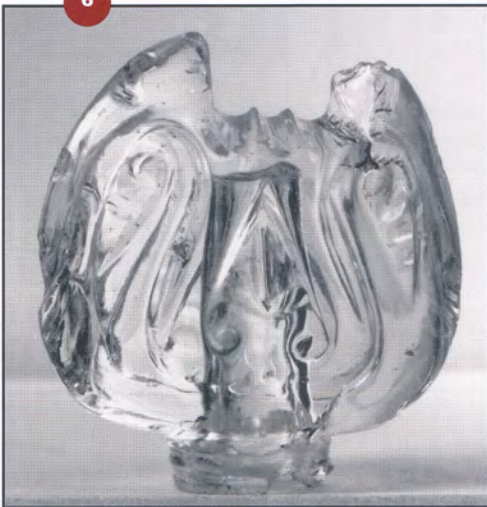
MARRIED 1891
LEONTINE BUFFET

MARRIED 1912
HASSIBE KHOURY

ANNULMENT 1916
MARRIED 1918

MARRIED 1887
SHAKER HAYKAL-
GHORAIEB

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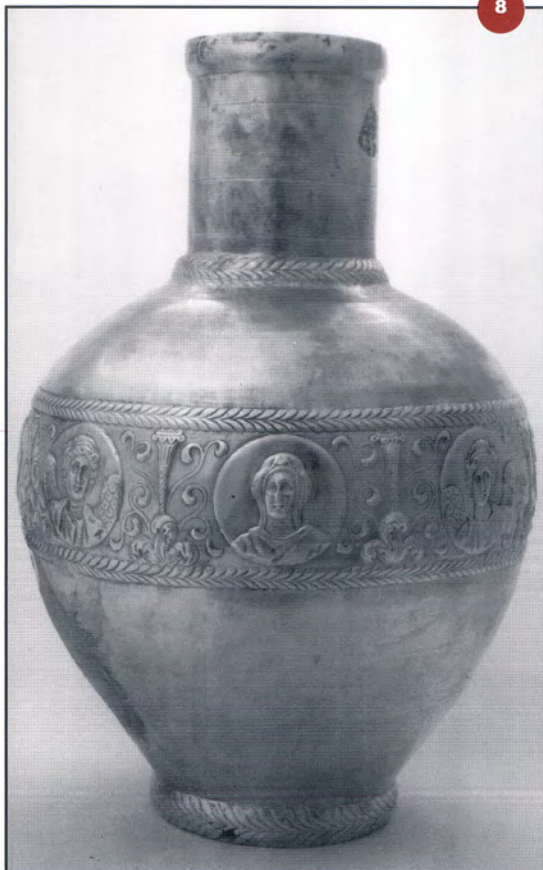
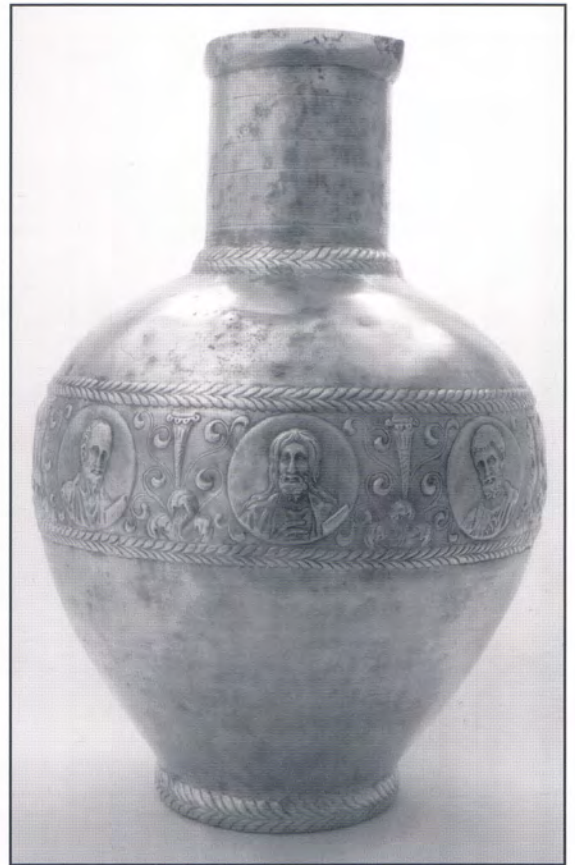
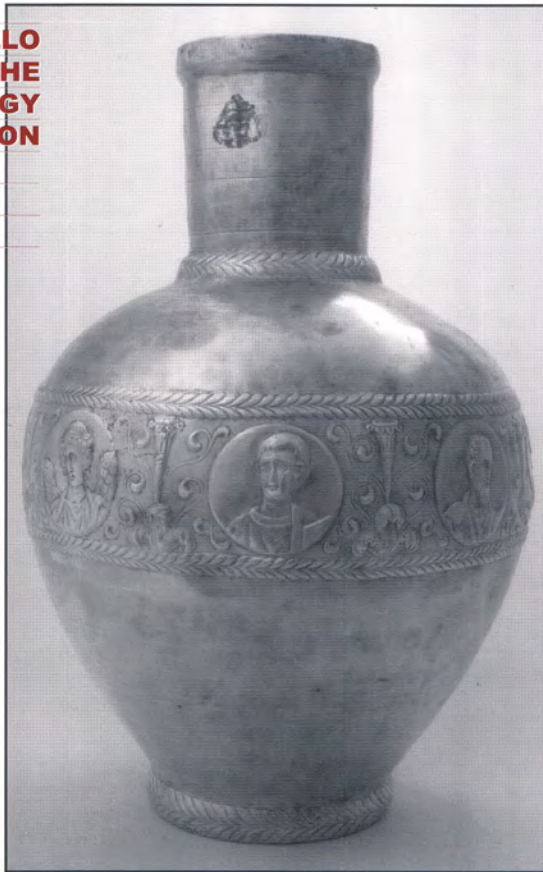


6 Scepter pommel, rock cristal, 9th-10th century AD, found in Phoenicia, acquired by the Louvre from Durighello. Photograph courtesy of the Louvre, Department of the Ancient Near East. Photograph by Pierre & Maurice Chuzeville.

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7 Aphrodite, bronze by Demetrios sold by Joseph Durighello at Drouot. Silver incusted eyes, first half of the 3rd century BC, Hellenistic Period. Photograph courtesy of the Louvre, Greek and Roman Department. Photograph by Hervé Lewandowski.



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8 Silver vase of Emes donated by Joseph Durighello to the Louvre depicting the bust of Jesus between two apostles, the Virgin Mary between two angels and two further busts. End of the 6th century AD. Photograph courtesy of the Louvre, Greek and roman Department. Photograph by Hervé Lewandowski.