Sunken Antiquities

The search for sunken antiquities began with the interest of the civilization-loving prince Omar Tosson, who noticed an English pilot over the waters of Abu Qir Bay. This led the prince to discover a sunken temple to the goddess Isis. The red granite temple, 7.5 meters long, was submerged beneath the water. It has now been moved to the garden of the Maritime Museum in Alexandria, along with a marble head of Alexander the Great. Since that time, the search has been limited to diving enthusiasts and fishermen, until the last decade, when the Supreme Council of Antiquities began searching for sunken antiquities. The underwater work revealed royal ports belonging to the royal palaces, some artifacts dating back to ancient classical texts, as well as a collection of gold coins dating back to the Roman era. A gold foundation tablet similar to the Serapeum was also found in Abu Qir Bay. It describes the establishment of a temple for Heracles by Ptolemy III. It is made of solid stone and measures 1.95 x 88 cm in length and is made of black granite. Basins, parts of a bronze door, Greek tableware and jugs, grain mills, jewelry, and cosmetics were also found. A granite door in the shape of an Egyptian monument was also found, believed to be the door to Cleopatra's tomb. Gaston Gondet also recorded his discovery of the sunken Pharaonic port west of Pharos Island (Ras el-Tin), extending to the sunken Abu Bakkar Island near Wardian. In 1960, a survey was conducted of the eastern harbor floor to locate sunken antiquities. This resulted in the recovery of a colossal statue of a Ptolemaic queen in the form of the goddess Isis. In 1996-1997, the location of more than 1,600 artifacts was identified.

In 1996, a Department of Sunken Antiquities was established in Alexandria, affiliated with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, for the first time. This department comprises a group of Egyptian archaeologists, headed by Ibrahim Darwish, a pioneer in deep-sea diving.

The Egyptian-Greek mission recently conducted deep-sea exploration in the area between Shatby and Sidi Gaber, where it discovered rock-cut reservoirs in a deep-sea area. The most important of these reservoirs was found in the Ibrahimiya area. Rock-cut basins were also found.