

Sfax 1930

(From Diaspora Sfaxienne 2005)

Our friend J.P.Penciolelli sends us an interesting document going back to 1930 published by the Federation of the Tourist offices of Tunisia entitled: "Tunisia, its indigenous aspects, its ruins" which relates to certain cities including the town of Sfax.

Sfax, with some justification, claims the name of second capital of the Regency. Its situation in the center of the country, its richness, the plantations which surround it, the beauty of new buildings that have been raised over about thirty years and all that without it losing its Moslem character secure behind its high walls, all this invites the traveller to come and visit, and the impression that it will compensate for the length of a voyage, with the extra benefit in unusual sights, by the various views of the land traversed.



SFAX. - Dans la ville indigène

Sfax is of Roman origin, if one regards it as heiress of the ancient Taparura, because the materials of the latter were used for construction of the current mosques and the Kasbah.



SFAX - Entrée des Souks

It offers little of interest as for its ruins, but it is original in that many of its indigenous industries have not varied the processes that they received, perhaps, even from the Phoenicians. Its famous street of the Blacksmiths is an striking example of the habits of this primarily traditionalist people.



Femme assise

The plantations and gardens of Sfax are world renowned. Numbered in this countryside are approximately five million olive and fruit trees, vines, scented and flowering plants and are also considerable and the major part of the population is occupied in their cultivation.

It seems that the spirit of the ancient growers remains in this intelligent people who have raised the art of cultivation to such a degree of prosperity that European science did not have anything to teach them.

A splendid port of relatively recent construction, provides space for considerable trade, in spite of a rather difficult approach, and, along with the countryside, has brought this part of Tunisia to an unheard of degree of prosperity.



Sfax is an important fishing center. Shoals allow the establishment of netting which return more than thousand tons of fish each year. The sponge industry is very prosperous and is mainly exploited by Greek and Italian fishermen.

Finally the oils of Sfax have a universal fame and the flowers of its gardens have an exquisite perfume the essence of which is reserved only for the ritual ceremonies of the Mosques.

Nearby the city, close to the shore, sleep the ruins of Thyna celebrated by Horace for its wines. The silence is broken only by the murmur of the islets covered in relics and the offshore wind carries the moanings of the sirens forgotten by the memory of the men.

If Tunis, by its past, its situation and its position as the seat of Government were not 'un-dethroneable', for a long time there could have been found in the rich city of southern Tunisian a rival ready to dispute with it for first place.