

## ***The Adventure of the Golden Bracelet– Gold***

*The Chronicles of Solar Pons, 1973*

Date - Copper/August, 1939

### The Case

Simon Sabata is an archaeologist who has been accused of stealing some national treasures by the Turkish government. The rather unlikeable Sabata had met a woman on the underground and noticed her gold bracelet. He convinced her to let him see the rest of her collection and is stunned to find rare treasures. She let him take rubbings of them, then she essentially disappeared. His findings were printed in the *Tempest* and it turns out they were stolen relics and he was accused of theft. There is no sign of the woman or the items and his tale looks like a preposterous excuse. Bancroft arranged for him to seek help from Solar Pons.

### Quotes

- *In matters of a man's reputation, it is only necessary that a charge be made for, once made, an indelible impression has been created and it can never be entirely erased.*
- *A man driven by passion – whether it is for gold or women or fame – recognizes no bar.*
- *“Ah well,” said Pons, his eyes dancing, “there is an ambiguity in that, Mr. Sabata. Good and bad are relative matters; they depend upon more than the perspective of the individual, is it not so?”*

### Comments

- August Derleth drew heavily on a real life archaeology scandal known as ‘The Dorak Affair.’ [Issue 1.1](#) of the *Solar Pons Gazette* contains a point-by-point comparison of this story with the Dorak Affair.
- Chronologically, this is the last Solar Pons tale, Parker clearly stating that it took place in August of 1939. England would declare war on Germany the following month and Basil Copper states that Pons worked for British intelligence until the war ended in 1945.
- It is clear very early that Parker is less than enamored with Simon Sabata. He writes, “Sabata acknowledged the introduction with only a frosty, distraught nod” and “He was manifestly impatient.” Later, he adds, “This fellow only seems to surface to quarrel with someone.” And as we see by story's end, Pons isn't exactly a fan, either.
- Sabata tells Pons that the type of bracelet the woman was wearing has only been found in one place in the world: Troy, famously unearthed by Heinrich Schliemann. To even those with only the rudimentary knowledge of archaeology, the name of Heinrich Schliemann is familiar. He excavated Hissarlik,

acknowledged as the site of ancient Troy: or rather, several cities on the same site, including the Troy of myth. He was a pioneer in field excavation, though his methods have been criticized over the years (dynamite can be a bit destructive). But there is no denying the influence this businessman turned archaeologist had on the field in its infancy. His biography makes for fascinating reading.

- While the Sea of Marmara is a Turkish inland sea that connects the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea, I cannot find any reference to the village of Mehmet, where the antiquities were supposedly taken from three tombs. Sarah Sirit would not have just made up a village name to a famous archaeologist in Turkey. Or was Sabata so dazzled by the artifacts that he simply ignored the name she gave him? He did not care about the origins of the obviously genuine treasures.
- The Sherlockian and Pontine Canons are replete with stories of individuals who encounter situations that seem too good to be true. And often are. Sirit lets Sabata, a near total stranger, stay over night, alone, in her house, with treasures of almost incalculable wealth, for three days and nights! Again, he must have been blinded by his find; who could believe his good fortune? Indeed. Then, after forbidding him from publishing his findings, she tells him he may do so if he doesn't hear from her in three months. What?
- Simply put, August Derleth was a good writer: I think better than Doyle. By 'writing,' I mean in the selection of words and the order to put them down on the page. I like this sentence from the story: "A succession of emotions chased one another across Corum's face – indignation gave way to wariness once more, wariness faded into craftiness, and presently he was eyeing Pons as if he saw him in a new light."
- Nathaniel Corum is reading a recent book by Henry Williamson. As this case took place in 1939, it might have been *The Children of Shallowford*, published that year. Williamson was an English naturalist and farmer who wrote prolifically; chiefly natural history and social history novels. He was impressed with Hitler's nationalist agenda and was briefly detained at the start of World War II because of his political views.
- This is a tale of an elaborately crafted revenge upon an unlikable character. As such, it an enjoyable read.