

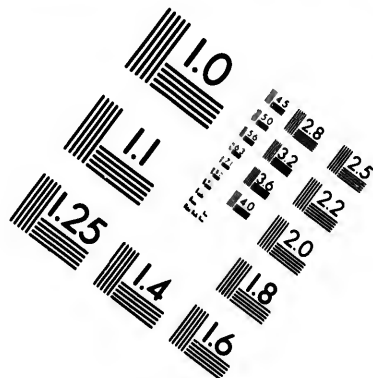
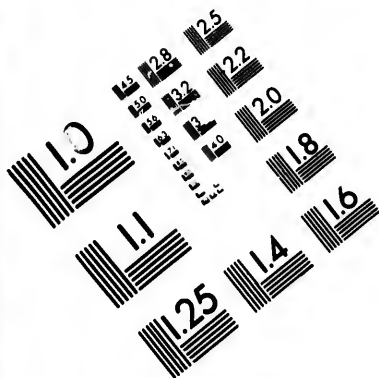
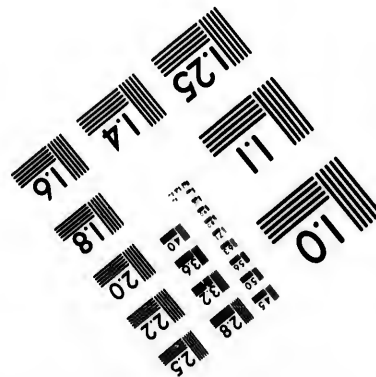
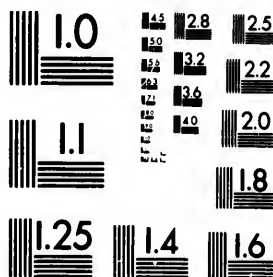


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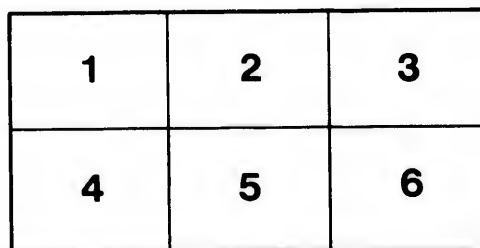
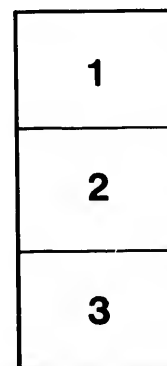
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à

The Moabite Stone.

BY THE REV. B. F. DeCOSTA,

AUTHOR OF "THE PRE-COLUMBIAN DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY THE NORTHMEN."

NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & CO.

1871.

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THE MOABITE STONE.

PERHAPS it would hardly be an exaggeration to say, that there are two antiquities: an antiquity of the Past and an antiquity of the Future. One is the inspiration of history; the other the burden of prophetic song. If this were not so, how could Abraham have seen the day of Christ, or Christianity become venerable before its founder was born? And both of these periods belong to the antiquary, if he wills it so.

At the present time there are too many vague views abroad in regard to what constitutes the antiquary and his vocation. First

NOTE.—This paper was contributed to the *AMERICAN QUARTERLY CHURCH REVIEW*, to appear in July, 1871. It was based on the following works:

The Moabite Stone; a Fac-Simile of the original Inscription, with an English Translation and a historical and critical Commentary.

The Palestine Exploration Fund: Quarterly Statement, No. VI.

The Recovery of Jerusalem: an Account of Recent Excavations and Discoveries in the Holy City. By Captain Wilson, R. E. and Captain Warren, R. E., with an Introductory Chapter by Dean Stanley.

It was the aim of the author of this paper to give a *resumé* of the whole question, and present the facts connected with the Moabite Stone in a form adapted for general use, and free as possible from technicalities. The article includes all the facts known to the author down to the present time (June 13); but it is stated that Dr. Ginsburg is already preparing a second edition of his learned and valuable work. It is not apprehended, however, that he will find anything of importance to recall, but it is thought that he may give us additional light in regard to the closing portions of the inscription. It is to be hoped that this paper may contribute something to the interest already felt in the American Palestine Exploration Fund, at least among those students of Biblical Antiquities into whose hands it is likely to fall.

of all, there is the notion, that the antiquary is a man of the Past. But if the remark already made be true, this view should be dismissed. Indeed we do wrong when we consider the antiquary as one wrapped up exclusively in the Past, like the madman who, last year, was enamored of Cleopatra; and regard him as one out of sympathy with the Present, and hopeless of the Future. The *true* antiquary is no musty, retired individual, backward in his motions, narrow in his aims, prone to magnify trifles and hoard his possessions, and view all recent times as out of joint. Yet, it is to be regretted, this false conception is embodied in literature, while, worst of all, it is often justified by living examples. Too few of our antiquaries ever feel like Arnold of Rugby, who, when he saw the first railroad train rushing down on its way from the metropolis, thanked God that the feudal age was past. And this is why we have the narrow statement of Webster, the prince of definers, to the effect, that an antiquary is "one versed in antiquity;" and hence the sarcasm of Pope, who says:

"With sharpened sight pale antiquaries pore,
The inscription value, *but the rust adore*;"

while Walter Scott insinuates that the antiquary is a dolt.

But, as far as possible, the Past should be made a thing for present and prospective use. While we admire the *setting sun* our heart and hopes should be with the *coming day*. If we go backward, it should be for the purposes of an advance. The Past is not dead, and the ages that are gone should be laid under living contribution for our own day. The Past cannot die. Often when an age is dismissed from the calendar it then begins, for the first time, to live, and to be powerfully felt. It is, therefore, the business of the antiquary to study the Past for the benefit of all succeeding times. He must deal not alone with its rust, but with its reasons, with whatsoever is good and true, and useful to living men. His studies should be made to minister to human hopes, to dispel the mysteries of the Present, the key of which is buried in the mouldy Past, and thus do all in his power to save the world from errors and superstitions which, even now in the Nineteenth Century, linger amid its light like belated ghosts, not yet dismissed to their congenial shades. In a word, the antiquary who does nothing for his own times is unworthy of the profession and the name.

The antiquary should also be known by his broad, comprehensive and liberal spirit. While a man, not of one, but of every age, so he should be a citizen of every country, ignoring the provincial spirit that seeks to shed exclusive glory around some favored spot; a spirit that is often the abettor of falsehood and the foster-father of fraud. He should be a man of the world, in the highest and noblest sense. *Sic non vobis* is the motto his banner should bear, while he goes onward in his investigations, jealous of no man's well-earned and consequently well-deserved fame, open to the truth as the day to the light, and in sympathy with the progress of mankind.

Nor will the world ever fail to applaud the antiquary who thus deals with the Past for the benefit of the Present, or be slow to recognize his superior aims. The spirit in which a man pursues his calling possesses a peculiar and easily-recognized significance. Especially is this the case in connection with biblical and ecclesiastical antiquities, where the tone of the investigator's mind reveals his purpose, and his methods tell us what the world has to hope from his aims. The spirit of the antiquary often indicates whether he is digging around the roots of a religion that is false or true, and shows the hopefulness of his Christianity. It is even not too much to say, that we may judge of a school of religious thought by the character of the historical researches to which it gives rise; for every school of thought refers to the Past, in connection with its aspirations for the Future. These researches signify plainly whether the school in question is mining deep, or merely scratching upon the surface. What, then, shall we say of that ecclesiastical antiquary who strains every nerve to find an ancient surplice for the man who needs a soul,—and whose zeal reaches its climax with the acquisition of some long-forgotten ornament to wear over a brain that is numb, or a heart that is cold?

On the other hand, how noble are the investigations of those students of antiquity whose researches deal with the original elements of Sacred History, and who have for their subject themes connected with the Providence and Word of God. Exhibitions like these indicate the deep source from which they spring, and, at the same time, assure us, that the investigators are in sympathy with that class of religionists of whom the world has many hopes. These are the researches of the *living* Church, the studies of a

devout and robust Christianity, which, unlike mediæval archæology, and ultramontane antiquity, has nothing to invent and nothing to conceal. Otherwise it is, in the main, and with some distinguished exceptions, the reforming branch of the Church of God, whose archæological labors possess this hopeful significance; for while the decrepid and legend-loving section entertains its votaries with the sordid shoes of Joseph of Arimathea, the Palestine Exploration Society, speaking for the great party of progress, gives to the world discoveries, that excite genuine wonder, and, at the same time, foster, not a shallow credulity, but a deep and reverential faith. Thus widely divergent in their dogmas and investigations, the two wings of the Church go on in their work, the one party putting manuscripts, like the *Sinaitic Codex*, into the rubbish box, and the other taking them out; the one in the Convent of St. Catherine, filling the traveler's ears with idle tales, and the other, measuring rod and theodolite in hand, giving scientific surveys of the whole *Gebel-Mousa* region, thus localizing the encampments of Moses and disposing of infidel sneers; the one inventing traditions over the site of the Holy Sepulchre, the other digging around the walls of ancient Jerusalem, fixing the positions of the towers, marking the remains of ancient bulwarks, and harmonizing the statements of early historians with the declarations of the inspired Word.

All these things go to illustrate the wide difference existing between what we might call the two religions, but which are, nevertheless, only two forms of the old faith, one of which represents repression, and the other the spirit of free, enlightened inquiry. It is hardly necessary to prophesy the final effect upon the world.

But let us now turn to the more immediate subject of this Article, the MOABITE STONE, which is beyond question one of the most valuable of all recently-discovered monuments of antiquity.

First, however, let us make one observation in regard to the volume lately published by the conductors of the Palestine Exploration, a volume which shows in the most striking manner how genuine antiquarian research is conducted in the interest of our own times.

We find, that in 1864, the condition of Jerusalem had become so unhealthy as to excite great commiseration, as well as alarm,

for the safety of the inhabitants. The uncleanness had everywhere become intolerable, both on account of the great lack of sewerage, and suitable supplies of pure water. Century after century the rubbish had everywhere been accumulating, until at last it was thought by philanthropists that something should immediately be done for the relief of the suffering people. At this juncture, Miss Burdett Coutts, always foremost in good works, manifested a deep interest in the subject, and contributed a liberal sum for the purpose of making the needed examinations to discover the old water-course through which, in ancient times, the fair city of God received those supplies which the rock-hewn cisterns alone could not yield.* The Jerusalem of the Past was, therefore, made the subject of exact archæological inquiry for the benefit of the Jerusalem of the Present, with its narrow quarters, its fever-breeding streets, and its wretched inhabitants, to whom impure water is sold in goat-skin sacks from door to door. And the inquiry thus made for the ancient aqueduct,—in order that the needed supplies might be furnished without money and without price from fountains bubbling up with crystal, pure and sparkling, as the dew distilled on Hermon's Hill,—has led to other discoveries than those originally anticipated. Here, then, we have a noble illustration of the usefulness of antiquarian research; in connection with which, in addition to the partial recovery of Jerusalem, has also been brought to light the monument known as the Moabite Stone, a relic of the highest value.

In discussing this remarkable monument of antiquity, it will be necessary to inform the reader of the circumstances attending its discovery; venturing also a few remarks on the Moabites, and the region where they found their home.

Moab was the son of Lot's elder daughter, and brother of Ammon, the father of the Ammonites. From the "cradle of the race of Lot" in the mountains above Zoar, situated east of the Jordan

* "It may be added, that in this investigation the interesting question of the supposed spring within the walls of Jerusalem and under the Temple Courts, has been for the first time followed to bottom; and the result appears to be, that, while there is no actual spring within the walls, the whole mount is so honey-combed with cisterns as to give ample materials for the conjecture of Tacitus, and for the imagery of Scripture, while, at the same time, it takes away from them the foundation of exact and literal truth." (*Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. xvi).

and north-east of the Dead Sea, the brother-tribes spread far and wide. Ammon went to the north-east, and occupied those waste places possibly known at an earlier day as Ham, inhabited by Zuzim, while Moab, with a more peaceful and settled disposition, remained nearer his original seat. Among the fertile highlands which crown the eastern borders of the Dead Sea and extend northward to the mountains of Gilead, the children of Moab became firmly established, the original inhabitants known as the Enims gradually becoming extinct before the invaders, even as the American aboriginal tribes disappeared on the approach of the Europeans. They thus became possessed of a district equal in its pastoral capacities to the agricultural advantages of Philistia and Sharon, located by the sea. Yet of the highlands they were not the sole possessors, since, ere long, the Ammonites crossed the Jordan, and pushed them back southward behind the natural boundary of the River Arnon. At the time the Israelites reached this region in their journeys, the two tribes were engaged in war, and Sihon had taken Heshbon and reigned there, while his victory was recited in a sort of popular ballad now preserved in the Book of Numbers. (Chap. xxi. 27).

Of the connection of Moses with this people it will not be necessary here to speak, and we need only to add that after attaining to a large degree of civilization and power the Moabites were at last destroyed, and the cities that they built became desolate, the modern Bedouins now being left in the land as their representatives, while some have sought to discover descendants in the well-known tribe of Druses. The region where they dwelt, like other places east of the Jordan, has been little visited, and is poorly known. Only a comparatively small amount of information has been contributed by Seetzen, Burckhardt, Irby and Mangles, and De Sauley; but while there may be some difference of opinion on certain points connected with the country, all agree that it abounds in an extraordinary number of ruins. Among these ruins is that of Dibân, the ancient Dibon of Scripture, whose name, while slightly varied in orthography, to-day maintains the old sound. It was in this remarkable region that the Moabite Stone was found, preserved intact by the rainless climate so many hundred years.

The story of the discovery is very easily told, but the history

of the steps taken to secure the treasure is not perfectly plain, since the Bedouins, so intimately concerned in the affair, after beginning negotiations in an amicable spirit, ended with a lamentable quarrel, in the course of which the stone was reduced to fragments.

It appears that the discoverer of this stone was the Rev. F. Klein, a German in the service of the English Church Missionary Society, who, in 1868, made a journey to Jebel Ajloon and the Belka, and, August 19th, arrived at Dibân (ancient Dibon) about one hour north of the Wady Majeb (Arnon). He tells us that, for the sake of his friend Zattam, son of the Sheik of the famous Beni-Sachr, under whose protection he traveled, he was received in the most friendly way by the tribe of the Beni-Hamûdeh, encamped near Dibân. Carpets were spread in the tent of the Sheik and coffee prepared with all the usual ceremony. And while they were engaged with the entertainment, Zattam informed him that, among the ruins of Dibân, scarcely ten minutes from the present encampment, was an interesting stone with an inscription that no one heretofore had been able to read. Mr. Klein was at once filled with impatience, but was unable to persuade Zattam to leave his couch and narghilee. Accordingly the Sheik of Beni-Hamûdeh, who spoke of the stone as one of the wonders of the region, volunteered to show him the way; declaring what was perfectly true, namely, that no European had yet looked upon the treasure. Mr. Klein says:

“When I came to the spot where this precious relic of antiquity was lying on the ground, I was delighted at the sight, and at the same time greatly vexed I did not come earlier, in order to have an opportunity of copying at least a good part of the inscription, which I might then under the protection of Zattam have done without the least molestation. I, however, had time enough to examine the stone and its inscription at leisure, and to copy a few words from several lines at random, chiefly with a view, on my return to Jerusalem, to ascertain the language of the inscription, and prevail on some friends of science to obtain either a complete copy of the inscription, or, better, the monument itself.

“The stone was lying among the ruins of Dibân perfectly free and exposed to view, the inscription uppermost. I got four men to turn it round (it was a basaltic stone, exceedingly heavy) in or-

der to ascertain whether there was no inscription on the other side, and found that it was perfectly smooth and without any inscription or other marks. What time was left me before sunset I now employed in examining, measuring, and making a correct sketch of the stone, besides endeavoring to collect a perfect alphabet from the inscription."

On his return to Jerusalem, he showed the sketch and parts of the inscription to Dr. Peterman, who took immediate steps to secure the stone for the Museum of Berlin. An Arab was engaged as a negotiator, but the greedy Bedouins put insuperable obstacles in the way. Another agent was appointed without success; and finally the Moabites made an effort to excite competition among the Franks at Jerusalem, among whom was Captain Warren, Agent of the Palestine Exploration Society. But, on hearing that the Prussian Consul had already commenced negotiations, designed to secure the stone for the Prussian Government, he of course did not feel at liberty to concern himself about it until the Spring of the next year, when he learned with surprise that nothing had been done to get a "squeeze" of the Stone. Being called away in July, he was still unable to take any action beyond writing to England on the subject.

But M. Genneau, the French Consul at Jerusalem, suspecting that the Stone was one of great importance, employed several agents to obtain "squeezes," and also contracted to pay about £375 for it, though it had previously been promised to the Prussians for a far less sum. As a consequence, the Moabites became excited, while the Governor of Nablûs also desired to obtain possession of the prize, and thus secure the money for himself. When therefore M. Genneau's agent, Yegaub Caravace, reached the ground, fighting had already taken place; and next the Moabites, in their anger, made a fire under it, threw on water, and so broke it up, afterwards distributing the various fragments among the different families to place in the granaries, and serve as favorable charms to win a blessing upon their corn. When Captain Warren was returning to Jerusalem, the following November, he learned the melancholy fact of its destruction, and was presented with one of the fragments, by an Adwân, who brought the news. Thus the oldest known Semitic lapidary record yet discovered, after standing unharmed 2700 years, was finally destroyed

through the bad management of those who should have left the Prussian Consul to secure the stone.

The relic thus fought over and destroyed, was of black basalt, about three feet five inches high and one foot nine inches in width and thickness, rounded both at top and bottom to nearly a semi-circle, notwithstanding, Professor Rawlinson teaches in his Article in the *Contemporary Review* (August, 1870,) that the stone was square at the bottom. The inscription consisted of thirty-four straight lines one inch and a fourth apart.

It has already been stated, that during the negotiations to secure the stone, M. Genneau secured a "squeeze." For this purpose he sent an Arab with two horsemen, furnishing him with the needed material to make the impression. While the Arab, Yegaub Caravace, was taking the impression, the Moabites engaged in a fight about the ownership of the stone, and consequently the squeeze was imperfectly done and saved with difficulty in seven crumpled fragments. Captain Warren also sent his Adwân, and obtained impressions of the two largest fragments of the stone, now unfortunately broken, together with the twelve small pieces of the stone itself. Impressions of other fragments were afterwards obtained, and finally the text was restored as we have seen it in the so-called *fac-similes*. The work of reconstruction was performed chiefly by M. Genneau, who, it is generally conceded, has accomplished his task in a most scholarly manner, though he does not explain the particular methods employed. He has, since the outset, issued two revised texts with elaborate notes. But, with all the study and care bestowed, the text is imperfect. There are still wanting thirty-five entire words, fifteen half words and eighteen letters. Nearly two-thirds of the stone, consisting of thirty-eight fragments, are in the possession of M. Genneau and the Palestine Exploration Society.

Next we must speak of the paleographical character of the stone, a point lately discussed in the *Contemporary Review*, by Professor Rawlinson. The characters used in the inscription are those of the so-called Phenician tongue, a language and alphabet common more than seven centuries before Christ. This people, so aptly styled the English of antiquity, exhibited marvellous enterprise and great force of character, appearing equally powerful in the marts of the world's commerce and on the well-fought field.

The mode of writing, practiced by them, had at this time spread all over Western Asia, and become established in France, as we learn, especially from the inscribed slab of Marseilles.* In

* In connection with the Moabite Stone, it is important for the better understanding of the discussion, to give both the Marseilles and Eshmunazer inscriptions. The latter will be found on a succeeding page. The Marseilles Stone was found at that place, on the ruins of a temple of Baal, in 1845. The following is the translation of the Rev. Nathan Brown, D. D., read by him, in connection with a learned paper on the Phenician literature, at a recent meeting of the New York Association for the Advancement of Science and Art.

"House of Baal. These are the requisitions for the sacrifice tribute, established for perpetual observance by Halisbaal the Ruler, son of Bodtanith, son of Bod—and Halisbaal the Ruler, son of Bodeshmun, son of Halisbaal, and the associate directors. For a bullock offered entire, whether an oblation or a whole peace offering, the priests shall have ten shekels of silver for each victim; and with the whole burnt offering they shall have in addition, the tribute of flesh, three hundred misquals (or pounds); and with the oblation, grain and fine flour, as well as the skin, viscera and feet; and the rest of the flesh shall belong to the owner of the sacrifice. For a young bullock that has horns, but does not strike with the horn or hoof, and is not used for labor, or for a stag entire, whether an oblation or a whole peace offering, the priests shall have a duty of five silver shekels, for each victim; and with the whole burnt offering they shall have in addition the tribute of flesh, pounds one hundred and fifty; and with the oblation, grain and fine flour, as well as the skin, viscera and feet, and the rest of the flesh shall belong to the owner of the sacrifice. For a ram or he goat offered entire, whether an oblation or a whole peace offering, the priest shall have one silver shekel and two gerahs for each victim; and with the oblation they shall have in addition the tribute of flesh, thirty pounds, and grain and fine flour, as well as the skin, viscera and feet; and the rest of the flesh shall belong to the owner of the sacrifice. For a lamb, or kid, or fawn of a stag, offered entire, whether an oblation or whole peace offering, the priests shall have three-fourths of a shekel of silver, and two gerahs for each victim; and with the oblation they shall have in addition the tribute of grain and fine flour, as well as the skin, viscera and feet, and the rest of the flesh belongs to the owner of the sacrifice. For all produce of the garden, whether flowers for a whole peace offering, or jujubes, or onions, the priests shall have three-fourths of a silver shekel and two gerahs for each offering, and the peace offering shall be for the priests. For every bird, or first fruits, or sacrifice of spices, or sacrifice of oil, the priests shall have two gerahs for each offering. For every oblation offered before the gods, the priests shall have grain and fine flour, and the oblation. . . . Upon cakes, and upon milk, upon lard, and upon every offering which men shall offer there shall remain. . . . Of every offering which a poor man shall offer, whether property or birds, nothing shall remain to the priests. Every leper or person with scurvy, and every murderer, is rejected; and every man, of that which he offers. . . . The man of the congregation shall give upon each sacrifice, according to the rate fixed in the regulations. The tribute which he shall bring is fixed, and he shall give according to the regulations made by the ruler Halisbaal, son of Bodtanith, and Halisbaal, son of Bodeshmun, and the associate directors. Every priest who shall exact a tribute exceeding that which is decreed in this tablet shall be punished, and he shall give to the owner of the sacrifice who presented it, double the amount in silver, of all the duties which he unjustly exacted." See also "Inscription Phénicienne de Marseilles. Nouvelle Interprétation. Par M. L. Abbé, J. J. L. Barges. Paris, 1858."

their trading voyages they afterwards pushed on to the shores of England and Ireland, where they left their mark upon language and customs; and possibly reached America, likewise, at a time when the Northmen, the undoubted Pre-Columbian discoverers of America in the tenth century, were still unknown. Unfortunately, in America the supposed visits of the early Phenicians lack monumental proof. Yet the forms of the letters used by this people were the forms of those characters through the medium of which Ahab and Elijah may have corresponded, and in which Moses wrote the Pentateuch. These characters are the same as those of the Eshmunazar inscription, which, in interest if not in length, is the second in rank of the few specimens of Phenician literature now extant. They show that the Moabites used the same language, though the Moabite approaches nearer to the common Hebrew than the Phenician. Indeed, nearly all the words on the Moabite Stone are found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus the paleographic character of the inscription goes to confirm what was demonstrated two centuries ago by Bochart, and declared again by Gesenius, long before the discovery of the Eshmunazar stone fifteen years ago—namely, that the Phenician language was cognate with the Hebrew of the Old Testament. It is hardly necessary to observe here that henceforth the students of the Phœnician tongue will labor with better aids and with a superior zeal.

As soon as the contents of the Moabite Stone became known, various scholars hastened to give interpretations, and crude translations were sent out from a number of sources, creating no little excitement in England, where they sounded like a “page of the Bible.” These have been followed by careful revisions, and, perhaps, in the present state of the text, all has been done that can be done with profit. Any future emendations of the present text will be very likely to prove valueless. We still need a perfect transcript of the stone. Among those who have labored on the inscription, the first is M. Genneau. He was followed by the Count de Vogüé, Mr. Grove, Emanuel Deutch, Captain Warren, M. Neubauer, Professor Schlottman, Professor Nöldeke, Professor Rawlinson and others. We will give here the work of Dr. Ginsburg, some of the parts supplied being indicated by brackets:

1. I Mesha* am son of Chemoshgad † King of Moab the
2. Dibonite. My father ‡ reigned over Moab thirty years and I reigned
3. after my father. And I erected this stone to Chemosh § at Karcha ||
[a stone of]
4. [Sa] lvation, for he saved me from all despoilers and let me see my
desire upon all my enemies,
5. and Om [ri] King of Israel who oppressed Moab many days, for
Chemosh was angry with his
6. [la] nd. His son succeeded him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab.
In my days he said [Let us go]
7. and I will see my desire on him and his house, and Israel said, I shall
destroy it forever. Now Omri took the land,
8. Medeba ¶ and occupied it [he and his son and his son's] son, forty
years. And Chemosh [had mercy]
9. on it in my days; and I built Baal-meon,** and made there in the ditch
and I [built]
10. Kirjathaim, †† for the men of Gad dwelled in the land [Atar]oth from
of old and the K [ing of I] srael fortified
11. A [t] aroth, ‡‡ and I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all
the wa[rriors of]
12. the wall, for the well pleasing of Chemosh and Moab; and I removed
from it all the spoils and [of-
13. fered] it before Chemosh in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men
of Siran and the me[n of Zerath]
14. Shacher. §§ And Chemosh said to me, go take Nebo||| against Israel.
[And I]

* A great desire has been shown by critics to exercise their ingenuity on the text of Mesha's inscription; and all has perhaps been already done that can be expected without a more careful rendering of the text. And while the general sense of the document is clear, we can with the more equanimity abstain from guessing, until we have a *fac-simile* that will give every possible fragment that has thus far eluded the explorers. The writer will only allude to such points as may seem to require remark from the very nature and purpose of this article. For instance the custom of setting up memorial stones like these is referred to in 1 Sam. vii. 12; and 2 Sam. viii. 13.

† The lacuna after Chemosh in the inscription has been filled up by *Gad, fortune*, which appears to be accepted as the true reading. Thus it signifies *whose fortune is Chemosh*. It is analogous to *Baalgad*. (Joshua xi. 17).

‡ It appears from this that Mesha's father was not a king.

§ Evidently done as a pious act to Chemosh. The habit of religious thought on the part of the Moabite appears identical with that of the Jew, except as regards its object, which was Chemosh, on whom—see Num. xxi. 29; Judges xi. 24; Jer. xlviii. 7, 13, 46.

|| A suburb of Dibon.

¶ Medeba, a Moabite city east of Jordan where the Amorites fought Joab.

** The present Msein, a ruin south-east of Heshbon.

†† About two hours from Baal-Meon.

‡‡ A city of Gad. Num. xxx. 11, 34.

§§ See Joshua xiii. 19.

||| Named from its proximity to the mount from which Moses saw the Promised land.

15. Went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn till noon, and I took

16. it and slew in all seven thousand [men] but I did not kill the women

17. and maidens, for [I] devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh *; and I took, from it

18. [the ves] sels of Jehovah and offered them before Chemosh. A King of Israel forti[fied]

19. Jahaz, and occupied it, when he made war against me; and Chemosh drove him out before [me and]

20. I took from Moab two hundred men, all chiefs, and fought against Jahaz and took it,

21. in addition to Dibon. I built Karcha, the wall of the forest, and the wall

22. of the city, and I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof, and I built the palace, and I made the prisons † of the men of

. . . . with [in the]

24. wall. And there was no cistern within the wall in Karcha, ‡ and I said to all the people make for yourselves

25. every man a cistern § in his house. And I dug the ditch ¶ for Karcha with the [chosen] men of

26. [I]srael. I built Aroer and I made the road ¶ across the Arnon,

27. I built Beth-Bamoth,** for it was destroyed; I built Bezer, for it was cu[t down]

28. by the fifty men of Dibon, for all Dibon was now loyal; and I sav[ed]

29. [from my enemies] Bikran, which I added to my land, and I built]

30. [Beth-Gamul], and Beth-Diblathaim, and Beth-Baal-Meon, and I placed there the Mo[abites]

31. [to take possession of] the land. And Horonaim . . . dwelt therein

32. And Chemosh said to me, go down and make war against Horonaim and ta[ke] it

33. Chemosh in my days

34. year and I

* Schlottman considers this name important in connection with Canaanite mythology, as the original of the Aphrodite of Aristophanes.

† Here we are reminded of the sad fact that the prison is almost always the accompaniment of the palace.

‡ A suburb of Dibon.

§ The place was probably honey-combed, like Jerusalem, with vats sunk in the rock.

¶ This phrase, "dug the ditch" is elsewhere translated, "decreed the separation." Schlottman favors the view that it refers to a covenant made by Mesha with his god Chemosh to remain forever in a state of non-communion as regards the Jews.

¶ Burckhardt mentions ruins opposite Arûir-Aroer called Mehadet el Hâj which occupy two hours in passing through them. Near by are the ruins of the Roman bridge, probably based on the work of Mesha, which was evidently a work of great magnitude.

** Bamoth, that perhaps of Numbers xxi. 19.

Now it will readily be seen that this inscription records three events in the reign of Mesha, King of the Moabites. *First*, the wars of Mesha with Omri, King of Israel; *second*, the celebration of the public works undertaken by Mesha after his deliverance from his Jewish oppressors; third, his successful wars against Horonaim, undertaken at the command of Chemosh.

But who was Mesha?

In order to understand his relation to this stone and to his age we must turn to the second Book of the Kings, where Mesha, King, of the Moabites, is the subject of a few verses, at the end of which he drops out of the history, and is seen no more, disappearing in a more histrionic way even than that in which he was introduced. The account says:

"And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. And he went, and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him: Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. Ent now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see win, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight

against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood: And they said, this is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country. And they beat down their cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.*

And thus, with a fearful tragedy, Mesha the sheep-master disappeared, to come forth again before the world after the lapse of ages, through the medium of a long-neglected stone, erected by Mesha himself, as a monument and religious testimonial.

The inscription upon this monument, Dr. Ginsburg maintains, is referable to the event above described in the sacred narrative; while he thinks the story is told with less difference than usually appears in the accounts of two hostile parties both of whom are describing the same thing. It is true, that Mesha on his monument says nothing about the humiliating fact that he was obliged to pay tribute to the king of Israel, yet he confesses that he was oppressed forty years by Omri. So likewise he thinks we have a recognition of the three kings who fought against him, in the statement that Chemosh delivered Mesha "from all his enemies," and, as he immediately adds, from "Omri, king of Israel." This is, possibly, an undesigned coincidence.

Mesha also, as Dr. Ginsburg observes, would not be likely to record the blunder alluded to in the Book of the Kings, namely, that of mistaking water for blood,† a misapprehension that led to the destruction of his army. The great event recorded is that of his final defeat of Omri and his allies, which he claims is practically conceded in the end of the 27th verse, where after stating that Mesha sacrificed his only son for "a burnt offering upon the

* 2 Kings iii. 4—27.

† The cause of this blunder, of course, was the ditches during the night and filled with water from the neighboring elevations.

wall," it is added, "And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him [Mesha] and returned to *their own land*." This was simply the euphemistic way of saying that Omri was finally defeated. The sacrifice of Mesha's son appears to have kindled such a degree of blind enthusiasm on the part of his soldiers, that Omri's men could not stand before them, and therefore, beat a retreat. Josephus saw that this was so, and in paraphrasing the account of the sacred writer, lets down the national pride as gently as possible, saying that the allied kings withdrew on account of the terrible distress which they had created, and that they "were so affected, in the way of humanity and pity, that they raised the siege."* Yet the Divine Word stands, and tells us that they departed, because there was "great indignation against Israel!" While the Jews at times, could be overcome by *ferre*, they were never driven from an enemy's country by *pity*. Clearly, the Moabites were the more powerful of the two parties then in the field, and, eventually, as the Scriptures concede, and as Mesha proclaimed upon the stone, if he refers to this event, they recovered from their disasters, and, in an hour of lofty enthusiasm inspired by the great sacrifice of the king, drove the invaders from their land; a land which Omri, single-handed, did not dare even to approach, and which, aided by the two kings, he finally entered trembling, and by stealth. Therefore, Dr. Ginsburg holds that the Moabite stone refers to the same event detailed in the Sacred narrative.†

Still, on the other hand, it is maintained that this account by Mesha had reference to another part of Jewish history, mentioned in 2 Kings i. 1: "Then Moab rebelled against Israel, after the death of Ahab." The account in 2 Kings iii., is referred to the punishment of this rebellion. This is the view of Count Vogüé, of Schlottman, and Rawlinson, who hold that the Moabite stone was erected in the reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel, and about 896—894 B. C., while Dr. Ginsburg fixes its date at 884 B. C.,

* *Antiquities*, B. IV. C. iii. S. 2.

† The writer in Smith's Dictionary hardly knows what to say on this point; and, after speaking of the sacrifice of Mesha's son, gets away with the irrelevant, and, under the circumstances, almost unmeaning remark, that "Mesha had no one like Balaam at hand, to counsel patience and submission to a mightier power than Chemosh or Baal-Peor."

the first year of Jehu's reign. It is, therefore, chiefly a question in regard to dates.

Another writer, whose views are entitled to a respectful hearing, maintains that the pillar was "set up either in the last year of Ahaziah's reign, or in the first year of Jehoram's, to commemorate Mesha's successful invasion of Reubenite territory during the two years that elapsed from the death of Ahab to the accession of Jehoram; and further, "that the biblical narrative in 2 Kings iii. refers to transactions *subsequent* to that invasion, and entirely different from anything recorded on the stone."* He then goes on to argue that the Moabite Stone localizes Mesha's exploits *north* of the Arnon, while the account in 2 Kings iii. puts it *south* of the Arnon. He likewise urges the fact that the Biblical account has three kings, while Mesha refers to but one, though this is a point, met in his own way, by Dr. Ginsburg, as we have already seen. The reviewer says also that Mesha writes of his successful invasion of the enemy's territory, while the Biblical account is one of three kings "beating down the cities" of Moab. He also considers it "incredible" that Mesha should have "made no allusion to the sacrifice of his only son, which took place upon the walls of Kir-haraseth." Yet we must confess that we see nothing so incredible in this. Further, what the writer says in regard to the localizing of the events does not appear unanswerable, while we think that he does not fairly invalidate Dr. Ginsburg's remark that

"The differences between the two narratives are such as might be expected in two records of the same events emanating from two hostile parties; and are far less striking than the conflicting descriptions given by the English and French of the battle of Waterloo; by the English, French and Russians of the capture of Sebastopol; by the Prussians and Austrians of the battle of Sadowa, or by the French and Germans of the battle of Worth."

Dr. Ginsburg's critic seems to suggest a real difficulty in regard to his own theory, which allows only two years for the achievements of Mesha, including the erection of the great bridge over the Arnon, the remains of which even now tell us something of the magnitude of the enterprise.

The work accomplished was really great. There were numerous battles and sieges; the capture of about a dozen walled cities, and their subsequent rebuilding and fortification; the restoration

* Princeton Review, April, 1871, p. 225.

of Karcha, with its fortifications, gates, towers, palace, prisons and water-works; and, perhaps, above all, the road and bridge across the Arnon. A careful examination of Mesha's account seems to indicate, that a large portion of the work was of a character that demanded a long time for its completion. Besides this, much of the work appears to have been of a kind that would not have been undertaken during the supposed brief period of two years, which, if the supposition be true, was a period filled by apprehension and anxiety, even when not actually resounding with the din of war. When we subtract from the two years the time actually expended in the campaigns, when everything hung in the scales, how much time will be left for the completion of the many extensive works, the very nature of which points to a period of lengthened leisure. To account for the supposed rapidity of Mesha's victories by the "royal slackness or the military feebleness of king Ahaziah," and to suppose that Mesha's fear of the return of his enemy, strengthened by "powerful allies," caused him to hasten these great public works, really seems quite as gratuitous as the declaration, that the building of the bridge over the Arnon, "was clearly vital to the security of his conquests." On the whole, therefore, it would appear, that Dr. Ginsburg's view is quite as reasonable as that of his critic.

Still it is not now the design of the writer to argue either of the two positions as regards the date of the Moabite Stone, even though this might safely be done, for the reason that no amount of proper discussion could for one moment obscure the great fact concerning which *all agree*, namely, the fact that the Stone sheds substantial light upon the Biblical narrative. To this phase of the subject let us, therefore, turn. But as preliminary, however, we may first quote a passage from Dr. Ginsburg, who says:

"The historical importance of the 'Moabite Stone' to the Bible narrative will be apparent when we consider the fragmentary record of the relationship subsisting between the Hebrews and the Moabites as given in the Old Testament. The Biblical history of Moab before the establishment of the Monarchy among the Jews, is beyond the scope of our investigation. David, the second king of the Israelites, who himself was of Moabite descent, and who committed his parents to the care of the king of Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3-5), for some reason which has hitherto defied all the powers of divining, and which may perhaps be explained by the discovery of another Moabite Stone, we are abruptly told waged a most bloody war against the king who had

afforded protection to those so near and dear to him (2 Sam. viii. 2, 11, 12; 1 Chron. xviii. 2, 11). We are told the result of this war was, that this shepherd king massacred two-thirds of the Moabites and despoiled and made tributary the remainder. Apart from the incidental remark, that some of Solomon's foreign wives were Moabites, and that Chemosh, the Moabite god was worshiped in Jerusalem (1 Kings xi. 1, 7, 33; 2 Kings xxiii. 13), we hear nothing of the relationship of Moab to the kingdom of Israel for about eighty years, when we are suddenly informed, that upon the death of Ahub, they revolted, to rid themselves of a grinding tribute (2 Kings iii. 4, &c.) Hence, it has generally been concluded, that the awful carnage inflicted upon them by David . . . had so crippled and cowed the survivors, who were reduced to vassalage, that they continued after the disruption of the kingdom to be tributary to Israel up to the reign of Jehoram, when they revolted, refusing to pay the enormous contribution heretofore demanded."

But from the Moabite Stone (line 5) we receive additional information, and discover the fact, that the Moabites were free from Jewish bondage down to the year 924 B. C., when they were reconquered by Omri. It is clear, therefore, that the Moabites must have taken advantage of the public distractions in the time of King Jeroboam I. (975 B. C.) to obtain their liberty, or that this liberty was freely granted as a favor by Solomon. Dr. Ginsburg and Professor Schlottman incline to the latter view, which is extremely reasonable.

First of all, Solomon himself was, in part, of Moabite origin. Again, we find, that he was under peculiar obligation to the Moabites, for the reason that his father, David, had, in a time of public distress, freely confided his grand-parents to their care. We read:

"And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold." (1 Sam. xxii. 3.)

Then, likewise, we learn, that Solomon's father waged a terrible war against the Moabites, without, so far as we know, any just cause. Here, then, may have been an opportunity for an act of reparation to an injured people. Besides all this, Solomon had a number of Moabitish wives, who exercised a great and even baneful influence, being sufficiently powerful to draw him away, at times, to the worship of their own gods. We read—"Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of

Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem." (1 Kings xi. 7).^{*} And the people who were thus successful in securing high honor to their gods, could scarcely have neglected to use their influence in behalf of their kindred and country. It is, therefore, highly reasonable to suppose, that Solomon improved the occasion to cancel his ancient obligations while gratifying the pride of his favorites. But however the Moabites may have gained their liberty, we know from the Pillar of Mesha, that down to the year 924 B. C., they were free, which is a fact that we did not know before.

The declaration that Omri reconquered Moab at the above dates and that Mesha afterwards delivered his people by force of arms, explains other points.

Now from the year of the invasion of Moab by the Kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (the narrative of which has already been given from 2 Kings, iii.) down to the death of Ahaz, a period of about one hundred and eighty years, we hear nothing of the relation of Moab to Israel. And yet we know that the Moabites were actually masters of the country, not only south, but *north* of the Arnon, occupying that region which the Amorites originally wrested from them, but which the Jews, in turn, conquered from the Amorites, and assigned to Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. How, then, did the Moabites reconquer the territory from the two and a half tribes, and rise to that condition of wealth and power described by Isaiah, where, in his Burden of Moab, he presents a great and warlike people, abounding in "armed soldiers," with wealth "laid up," "summer fruits," and harvests, "vineyards," "gladness" and "joy out of the plentiful field," the "shouting" treaders of the purple vintage, the high altars of Chemosh with their gorgeous ritual performed in an atmosphere faint with the fragrance of the aromatics of the East, and, above all, the "haughtiness" and "the pride of Moab," ruling in assured safety, "from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion"? (Isaiah xv. 16.) When we ask, and *how* did the Moabites attain to a position of such ease, splendor and strength?

^{*} It was king Josiah's mission to destroy these high places: "And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon did the king defile." 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the answers that have been given in times past, which suppose that during the interregnum following the death of Jeroboam II. (793—21 B. C.) they recovered their cities, a task rendered all the more easy by the carrying away of Reuben to Assyria, which was begun by Pul (770 B. C.) and completed by Tiglath-pileser. If such an invasion had been performed at the time referred to, we should probably have found it enumerated by Isaiah in the "Burden" with the rest of the sins of Moab.

But the Triumphal Pillar of Dibon explains this point, and shows us that it was Mesha who reconquered the territory about 884 B. C., and rebuilt the cities which Israel had originally taken from his nation by Omri 934 B. C. And the country thus taken from the Jewish transjordanic tribes remained in possession of the Moabites down to 726 B. C., when the claims of the conqueror had been recognized and when they had risen to the proud and prosperous condition described by the Seer in the Burden of Moab. Thus this remarkable stone, after standing silent in the desert for so many ages, is brought forward to cry out against the guesses and surmises of the well-meaning but misled antiquary.

Another fact is also clear, namely, that after achieving these victories and restoring the cities, he made Dibon the capital of his Kingdom.

The historical information given by this stone is important, if not extensive, and at the same time it forms so much *contemporaneous testimony* to the historical basis of the Old Testament, which is no longer a solitary book, speaking in unparalleled and unsupported language out of the dim past. The composition of Mesha written in the characters employed at the time, not only in Phœnicia, but in Jerusalem and Samaria, is older than two thirds of the Hebrew Scriptures, as old as the closing days of Elijah, and within a century of the age of Solomon's Temple, the foundation of which still remains, after a lapse of two thousand eight hundred years. Skeptical criticism which would question the antiquity of the Hebrew oracles, is therefore rebuked, and its vaunted *a priori* arguments dismissed to the winds, by this new and remarkable monument, which in addition to other advantages, gives the names of twelve places mentioned in Numbers, the forty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah alone containing ten.

But we must turn from this aspect of the Moabite stone, to glance at its theological importance. We find that, after the capture of Nebo, Mesha says (line 18): "I took from it the vessels of Jehovah and offered them before Chemosh." This simple sentence sheds light upon a hitherto uncertain question, for it indicates that the transjordanic tribes of the Jews had a separate service and ritual of their own. This has hitherto been regarded as matter of tradition. It is true that the Acts of the Apostles (xv. 21) tell us how "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day," while Josephus (*cont. Apion*) says that Moses permitted the people in general "to leave off their employments, and to assemble together for the hearing of the law and learning it exactly, and this not once or twice or oftener, but every week." (B. II. S. 18.) Yet such exercises did not imply any ceremonial service, at least a service of a high order. This required an elaborate ritual, with altars, bowls, sacrificial vessels and musical instruments. Consecrated apparatus like this appears to have been possessed by the people of Nebo, and these "vessels of Jehovah," Mesha took at the capture and offered them before his god Chemosh. How long the worship at Nebo had been established, and whether their ritual was that of the ancient Tabernacle or of the more recent order of the Temple, we cannot say. Yet it is clear that they had a worship of a superior character, which is a fact that we learn exclusively from the Moabite Stone.

We are also taught by this stone that in the days of Mesha the Tetragrammaton was used, for we have the name Jehovah in the inscription, which incommunicable name could be uttered by the High Priest alone, in the Benediction on the great day of Atonement, in confessing the sins of the nation. When the priests and people in the outer court heard it, they fell upon their faces, and exclaimed, "Blessed be the name of His glorious majesty forever and ever." And every student of the Hebrew Scriptures is familiar with the fact that יהוה (Jehovah) is pointed יהוה, or with the אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*) thus avoiding its utterance. And as regards the antiquity of this use, critics have hitherto been unable to agree. Nevertheless Jewish tradition has boldly maintained that the use began with Moses. And clearly the aversion of the Jews to the utterance of the Tetragrammaton is very ancient, but still not

more ancient than the Moabite stone, for here we have the name which evidently was then so common that the Moabites had heard it and now placed it upon their triumphal stone.

Next consider the distinct *linguistic* importance of the stone. And here we are reminded of a passage in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, a passage which will surely be revised. The writer says:

"Of the language of the Moabites we know nothing or next to nothing. In the few communications recorded as taking place between them and the Israelites no interpreter is mentioned. (Ruth; 1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4, etc.) And from the origin of the nation and other considerations we may, perhaps, conjecture that their language was more a dialect of Hebrew than a different tongue."

And the only suggestion offered by the editors of the work, the closing portions of which in the American edition have lately come from the press, is that materials for an investigation of the language might be found in some Moabite names preserved in the Scriptures. But a blaze of light has now been poured upon the subject by the discovery of the Moabite Stone, which bears a composition in the identical language of that ancient people; and we no longer depend upon a "perhaps" or conjecture. We know the absolute truth. And here it must also be remembered that the inscription of Mesha is something entirely distinct from the cuniform characters of Nineveh and the hieroglyphs of Egypt. It is the oldest known original alphabet writing in the world, a pre-Maccabean composition in a language almost precisely like the Biblical Hebrew. Its antiquity and purity, therefore, render it a model, while from it we may ascertain what were the linguistic peculiarities of the Hebrew Scriptures in the original manuscripts, and thus be able to learn whether or not we are following them, when we adopt the Masorite editions with their divisions of words.

Now, while we have hitherto followed the Masorite custom, and adopted the convenient divisions, there have been many indications that went to show the prevalence of the *Scriptio continua*. With a few unimportant exceptions, we know that those ancient examples with which we were hitherto acquainted, including the oldest Phœnician inscriptions, made no divisions of words. The Mar-

scilles stone and the Ashmunesar sarcophagus* of Sidon, however valuable in other respects, go to confirm the authority of the *scriptio continua*. From all these things it has been argued that in the original Scriptures there was no division of words, and that the convenience of division is an innovation. Besides it was said, and with truth, that the oldest editions of the Scriptures show divisions of words different from those accepted at present, and also that the Jews wrote a certain number of consonants on one line, which was made an unvarying rule for the rest, and could not have been one more or less. They, therefore, followed the usage

* The following is a translation of the inscription on the stone found at Sidon fifteen years ago, by Dr. Thompson.

"In the month Bul, in the fourteenth—xiv.—of my reign, King Ashmunazer, the King of the Sidonians, son of Tabnith, King of the Sidonians, King Ashmunazer, King of the Sidonians spake, saying, I am snatched away before my time, like the flowing of a river. Then I have made a house for my funeral resting place, and am lying in this sarcophagus, and in this sepulchre the place which I have built. My prohibition to every royal person and to every man not to open my sepulchre, and not to seek with me treasures, nor to take away the sarcophagus of my funeral couch, nor transfer me with my funeral couch upon the couch of another, and, if men command to do so, listen not to their opinion, because every royal person, and every man who shall open this funeral couch, or who shall take away the sarcophagus of this funeral couch, or who shall transfer me with the funeral couch, he shall have no funeral with the dead, nor be buried in a sepulchre, nor leave behind them son or posterity; and the holy gods with the king that shall rule over them, shall cut off that royal person, and that man who has opened my couch, or who has abstracted this sarcophagus, and so also the posterity of that royal person, or of that man, whoever he may be; nor shall his root be planted downward, nor his fruit spring upward; and he shall be accursed among those living under the sun, because I am to be pitted—snatched away before my time, like a flowing river. Then I have made this building for my resting place, for I am Ashmunazer, King of the Sidonians, son of Tabnith, King of the Sidonians, grandson of Ashmunazer, King of the Sidonians; and my mother, Imiastorath, priestess of Astarte, and sovereign queen, daughter of King Ashmunazer, King of the Sidonians. It is we who have built the temple of the gods * *

* * in Sidon by the sea, and the heavenly powers have rendered Astarte favorable. And it is we who have erected the temple to Esmuno, and the sanctuary of Ene De'il in the mountain. The heavenly powers have established me on the throne; and it is we who have built the temple of the gods of the Sidonians in Sidon by the sea, the temple of Baal Sidon, and the temple of Astarte, the glory of Baal Lord of Kings, who bestowed on us Dor and Joppa, and ample corn lands which are at the root of Dan, extending the power which I have founded, they added them to the bounds of the land, establishing them to the Sidonians forever.

"My prohibition upon every royal person and upon every man who shall open upon me, or uncover me, or shall transfer me with this funeral couch; lest the holy gods desert them, and cut off that royal person, or that man, whoever he may be, and their posterity forever."

The Land and the Book, Vol. I. p. 201. See also, "Mémoire sur le sarcophage et l'Inscription Funéraire D'Eschmounazar Roi de Sidon. Par M. L'Abbé J. J. L. Borgia. Paris, 1856."

of antiquity. But then what was the usage of antiquity? *That* of course must be settled by its oldest known alphabetical monument, *which is the Moabite Stone*. This sets aside all the ingenious learning that has been brought to bear against our Masorite usage. While its character is Phenician, its language is Moabite, and nearer to the Hebrew than to the former, as close as the Phenician tongue may approximate to the Hebrew. And in this monument the *words* are divided with points, and the *text* is divided into verses by vertical strokes. There is every reason then to believe that this was the custom in the original Hebrew, preserved in modern Synagogue Rolls which reject the vowel points, on account of their modern origin. We, therefore, rationally infer that the Hebrews, so intimately allied to the Moabites in everything else, for example as in their syntax and particles, must have followed them in their punctuation also.

Again, on the question in regard to the use of the *scriptio plena* and *scriptio defectiva* of the Masorite text, some have argued that the vowel, consonants or *matres lectionis*, forming the mnemonic sign אֵהוּי (*Ehevi*)—when they indicate a vowel did not occur in the original Hebrew. This point is discussed very fully by Dr. Ginsburg, who shows that the argument is without foundation, and that the Moabite Stone proves that the vowels were originally represented by the consonants אֵהוּי (*Ehevi*); which, of course, is a very important point to establish.

Finally we have to speak of the Paleographical *importance* of the Moabite Stone. Says Dr. Ginsburg—

“In this respect, this triumphal Pillar is perfectly peerless, inasmuch as we obtain an alphabet which is more than a century and a half older than any other Epigraphic document containing the same species of writing; and it is three centuries older than the Sarcophagus of Eshmunazer, which has hitherto been considered the most ancient inscription of any considerable length.”

Having already described the characters employed as Phenician (though it should be remembered that these characters were generally employed by all the chief nations at that time, even though the Phenicians did invent them) we come directly to the point before us, and inquire what makes the inscription so important in the palæographical view. This importance arises from the fact that it gives us fresh knowledge in regard to the number of

letters contained in the primitive alphabet, from which the Greek characters were derived. Herodotus tells us that the Phenicians who accompanied Cadmus gave the Greeks, among other things, the letters of the alphabet. Pliny also says, that the Cadmean alphabet brought into Greece, contained sixteen letters; and that afterwards Palamedes and Simonides each added four. He also gives the affirmation of Aristotle, that there were originally eighteen letters, two more being added by Epicharmus, instead of Palamedes. It has accordingly been declared that the original Semitic alphabet contained only *sixteen letters*. On the other hand, the Alphabetical Psalms and Poems,* the initial letter of each verse of which begins with a letter of the alphabet, from which it appears that there were originally twenty-two. In opposition to this it has been replied that, at some post-Babylonian date, these compositions were recast, and the acrostic arrangement devised to suit a more modern alphabet. But this is swept away by the Moabite Stone, which was erected nine hundred years before Christ, and contains *twenty-two* † letters, demonstrating that even long before this time, twenty-two letters were in use. The integrity of the Scriptures is thus maintained, in a most unexpected manner, by the oldest alphabet writing in the world. This, every one must concede, is an advantage of no little magnitude.

The Moabite stone also shows us the origin of the *forms* of the Greek alphabet, whose archaic characters are identical, we may say, with those of the Moabites. This will appear from a comparison of the forms, which have already been conveniently tabulated, in parallel lines, including also, the alphabets of the Eshmunazer and Marseille Stones, and the Assyrian Tables and Gems, the forms being arranged according to their respective age. The Archaic Greek is thus as it were, traced back to the ancient quarry from which it was taken; for instance, the Greek Xi, a perpendicular line with three cross bars (≡), said to have been invented by Simonides (530 B. C.) being easily identified with the Moabite Samech.

We have now nearly reached the limits of the space proposed

* *Ps.* 25, 34, 37, 101, 112, 119, 145; *Prov.* 31: 10-31; *Lam.* 1-4.

† We say twenty-two because *Teth* has clearly been lost from the word *ataroth* in the eleventh line.

for this Article, and must draw to a close. Yet we may nevertheless remark, that in the treatment of this subject little account has been taken of the differences of opinion expressed thereon during the past year by various writers, for the reason that much has been written that appeared, not only a little pedantic, usefully so we trust, but premature. Revision has been the task of nearly all those who have labored on the Moabite inscription not in vain. And in the future we shall, it is to be hoped, have a more perfect text, and also learn more of the methods employed to secure the present so-called *fac-simile*. Still the general views of the subject most recently laid before the public, will probably, in the main, be permitted to stand. At the outset a somewhat exclusive advantage was claimed for the inscription by several individuals; and hence Professor Rawlinson insisted upon the paleographical value of the stone at the expense of its historical character, averring that it fell far behind the Assyrian inscriptions in respect to the illustration of Sacred History, and that stones with the cuniform letter, equal in value to the Moabite stone, are being brought to light every year, without attracting any special notice. Yet while no one can easily undervalue the revelations from Nineveh, it is still undeniable that the Moabite inscription asserts its lessons in a peculiarly pointed manner, and that, few as may be its words, they necessitate a revision of a numerous class of cognate educational and philological works relating to the Hebrew language and literature. Accordingly, we believe that no competent critic will be found at last cherishing a desire to take away aught from *any* of the special values now claimed for the inscription, but that scholars and antiquaries will, with a general consent, allow the high and enduring usefulness of its varied peculiarities. And this suggests the importance of keeping in mind the great difference between the Moabite Stone, and that of Marseilles and Eshmunazer. As valuable as may be the latter, they cannot after all be compared with the new-found pillar of Mesha. While the Marseilles slab, and the coffin lid of the Sidonian King, after furnishing valuable material for the compilation of Phœnician grammar, pass into comparative obscurity, the Moabite Stone must hold its place in the practical studies of the Biblical scholar, and form a sort of standard reference on certain questions in theological schools.

But shall this be the last of the Moabite stone? Is it doomed to stand out in its present solitariness in the barren field of Moabite Literature; or shall it be regarded simply as the first fruits of a generous antiquarian and Biblical harvest? This is a question for our people to decide, since it is highly probable that the deserted cities and crumbling palaces of ancient Moab have other treasures waiting to reward the well directed labors of a liberal zeal. It is true the author of the Article on "Moab"* already referred to, speaking of the fulfillment of the "Burden of Moab," assures us that "we shall never know who the 'lords of the heathen' were who, in that terrible night, laid waste and brought to silence the prosperous Ar-moab and Kir-moab. On the occasion of that flight over the Arnon, when the Moabite women were huddled together at the ford, like a flock of young birds, pressing to cross to the safe side of the stream, when the dwellers in Aroer stood by the side of the high road which passed their town and eagerly questioning the fugitives as they hurried up, 'What is done?'—received but one answer from all alike—'All is lost! Moab is confounded and broken down!'" Yet, now that the discovery of the Moabite Stone is on record we must not adopt the language of doubt. A proud, wealthy and civilized people like that of Moab, the rivals of the more favored Jews, and a people whose boastful prosperity was, so to speak, *prophesied at* for a space of nearly two hundred years,—certainly found more triumphs to record than one. It is therefore the business of societies like that of the American Palestine Exploration Fund to search for their monuments, to uncover the grass-grown walls, to lift up the fallen columns, to restore the shattered tablets of Moab. This is a work intimately connected with the illustration and vindication of the Word of God. It is true that there are difficulties to be met. The "Sick man of the East," a pitiful anachronism compounded of weakness and tyranny that the progress of civilization should ere this have forever swept away, is watching the explorer with a jealous eye. The Bedouins themselves are suspicious, and far from reliable. But the disciples of Mahomet can be bought with *backsheesh*, and the most Jesuitical firman can be transmuted into an accommodating document with a

* See Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

little gold. The first thing really needed is a proper appreciation of the importance of the work to be done, and, second, a suitable supply of funds. Confidence in the enterprise is mentioned first, because the mental creates the material, and the earnest faith and purpose of liberal American Christians cannot successfully be denied. If they say that the thickly-strewn ruins of Moab shall be explored, it will be done.

And besides there is a greater charm about this country than many suppose. It is true that the long suspended judgment proclaimed by Jeremiah at last fell upon the people. Openly did they deride those words, "For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity *with* his priests and his princes together. And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plains shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken." (Chap. xlviii. 7, 8.) But the tented traveler to-day realizes their truth, and on the very ground where Mesha set up his Triumphal Pillar, he also reads again, "Thou daughter that dost inhabit DIBON, come down from *thy* glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, *and* he shall destroy thy strong holds." Yet we can but take a deep interest in Moab, and long to know more of its past. The people sprang from the same stock as Israel, and in common with the Canaanites, they used an almost identical language. They enjoyed at times pleasant intercourse with the Hebrew nation. To-day the ashes of Moses rest in Moab where God buried him; buried him in an unknown grave, and (let those who yearn for peculiarly consecrated ground, and the perpetuation of enmities after death, remember it,) hard by the sanctuary of Baal-Peor, the false one to whom during life Moses was an implacable foe. Moab was the country of Elijah, who "was a man of Gilead." The Israelites journeyed this way when approaching the land of Canaan, and afterwards friendly and devout Jews resorted to Moab in a season of famine. Then the Perean days of our Lord, occupying portions of the last five months of His public life, carried Him to this country, where He delivered some of His tenderest instructions, and where His soul overflowed in marvelous acts of divine, disinterested benevolence. While who can ever forget that this land was the home of the grandmother of King

David, the gentle and loving Ruth, who clave to Naomi's God, and whose idyllic story will touch the hearts of countless readers to the end of time? It is this land, invested with so many venerable and tender, as well as tragic associations, our present land of Biblical promise—that the reverent antiquary, earnestly desiring to know the truth of history and eager to illustrate the Divine Word, is invited to enter, and, in a sense that no Mohametan firman contemplates, make his own.

We have referred to the American Palestine Exploration Society. In connection with the English Society, it proposes to act at once, and ere this summer goes by one or more of its agents will perhaps be abroad, searching among the ruins of Moab, a field to which it has been specially assigned by the English Society, the latter intending to confine itself to its old and selected ground. Americans should therefore feel a deep interest in the work, a work that for ages has been waiting to be done, and which is a work whose accomplishment would perhaps at no period have appeared so grateful as it would now: and whose accomplishment, moreover, has possibly been reserved until our own time to meet by its fruition the assaults of a Strauss and the sneers of a Renan.



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