

mittee hope that they will be enabled to offer this book to subscribers at a reduced rate. Full particulars will be announced in the next *Quarterly*.

The Committee are now engaged in maturing their plans for the next expedition to Palestine. Any suggestions, information, or advice on the subject from their friends will be willingly received and considered. But in offering such suggestions, it is hoped that the original prospectus of the Fund, the basis on which the Committee works, will be steadily borne in mind.

The squeezes taken by Captain Warren of the two larger fragments of the Moabite Stone have been all photographed full size, and can now be obtained. The four photographs can be had together for £2 10s., which is about the cost of their production. Casts of the fragments have been taken, and any subscribers wishing to obtain them for a museum, or for themselves, may address the Secretary on the subject.

In conclusion, attention is called to the remarks made by the speakers at the Annual Meeting, the report of which is here published.

THE ORIGINAL DISCOVERY OF THE MOABITE STONE.

BY THE REV. F. A. KLEIN.*

It was on the 19th of August, 1868, that in the course of a journey I undertook to Jebel Ajloon and the Belka I arrived at Dibán (ancient Dibon), about one hour to the north of the Wadi Mojeb (Arnon). For the sake of my friend and protector Zattam, the son of the famous Fendi-l-Faiz, Scheich of the Beni Sachr, who accompanied me, I was received in a most friendly way by a tribe of the Beni-Hamdeh, encamped near Dibán. Carpets and cushions were spread in the tent of the Scheich, and coffee prepared with all the ceremonial of Bedouin etiquette. Before the operation of preparing and drinking coffee had been terminated, my friend Zattam, who was always most anxious to make my tour as pleasant and interesting as possible, had informed me that there was among the ruins of Dibán, scarcely ten minutes from our encampment, a most interesting stone with an ancient inscription on it which no one had ever been able to decipher, which he would take me to see. As sunset was drawing near I was anxious to be off at once, but Zattam

* This letter was addressed to Mr. Grove, and appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of April 19th, 1870. The sketch alluded to is in the office of the Fund. It was published also in the *Illustrated London News*.

was not to be persuaded to get up from his soft couch and leave off smoking his narghilee; while I was burning with a desire to see the inscription, which the Scheich of the Beni-Hamîde also described to me as one of the wonders of this region, which no Frank had yet seen, and which he now had offered to show me as a mark of honour to his friend Zattam and to me who was travelling under his protection. I, of course, took this for what it was in general meant to be: a Bedouin compliment calculated to bring out a nice bakshish. Still I afterwards ascertained that his assertion as to no European having before me seen the stone was perfectly true; none of the distinguished travellers in those parts had ever seen or heard of it, or they would not have shunned trouble and expense to secure this treasure. I am sorry to find I was also the last European who had the privilege of seeing this monument of Hebrew antiquity in its perfect state of preservation; and it is for this reason I think the few observations I am able to offer on the subject may be welcome to those who take an interest in this important discovery. 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 order 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 endeavouring to collect a perfect alphabet from the inscription. What I have I now enclose, and vouch for the perfect correctness of what I give, having taken it down on the spot. The stone is, as appears from the accompanying sketch, rounded on *both* sides, not only at the upper end, as mentioned by Monsieur Ganneau, who says: "La forme de la stèle était celle d'un carré long, terminé en haut par une partie arrondie, l'angle inférieur de droite était déjà cassé depuis fort long-temps." From his sketch also of the stone he admits it not to have been rounded, but square at the bottom; but the fact of this being so cannot but be of importance to him, as it will give him the comfortable assurance that in the lower corner sides there are not as many words of the inscription missing as would be the case if it were square at the bottom, as he was wrongly informed by his authority; for, as in the upper part so also in the lower, in exactly the same way, the lines become smaller by degrees.

Possibly in the length of the several lines there may be more letters to supply, as now supposed, as in this respect the information received by M. Ganneau is not quite correct. He says of the stone:—"D'après les estampages elle aurait eu 1 mètre de hauteur et 0.60 centimètres de largeur, avec une épaisseur égale."

According to my correct measurement on the spot, the stone had—

1 mètre 13 centimètres in height,
 „ 70 centimètres in breadth, and
 „ 35 centimètres in thickness,

and, according to my calculation, had thirty-four lines; for the two or three upper lines were very much obliterated. The stone itself was in a *most perfect state of preservation*, not one single piece being broken off, and it was only from great age and exposure to the rain and sun that certain parts, especially the upper and lower lines, had somewhat suffered.

On my return to Jerusalem I showed my sketch and parts of the inscription to Dr. Petermann, of Berlin, who I knew took great interest in archæological researches, and he was delighted at the information, and immediately took the necessary steps to acquire the Moabite monument for the Berlin Museum. A young clever Arab at Salt was entrusted with the business of transacting the matter with the Bedouins at Dibân, but the difficulties he met and the greediness of the Arabs put an insuperable obstacle in his way. The services of another native were subsequently engaged, but also without success. The matter, being thus necessarily entrusted to the hands of natives, of course then ceased to be a secret, and other parties also heard of it and exerted themselves with laudable zeal and energy to obtain, if not the stone itself, at least a copy of it; and one cannot too highly praise the zeal, energy, and tact of M. Ganneau and Captain Warren, who have through their exertions preserved to the learned world parts at least of this most valuable monument of Hebrew antiquity, and who I sincerely trust will ultimately succeed in obtaining and deciphering the whole inscription.

Scheich Zattam has since informed me that he had in his possession a small idol made of brass with similar characters upon it, which I have, however, lately been informed was sent to Nablous, and sold there. Whether this is true or not I know not. But most assuredly a scientific expedition to Moab is a great desideratum, and could not but greatly enrich our knowledge of Hebrew archæology.

I have to add that among the letters I copied from the Moabite inscription I see several letters which are not found in the parts published by M. Ganneau and Captain Warren. Probably these letters are of rare occurrence, and found on pieces not secured. I have not thought it necessary to give you my entire alphabet, but only those letters I missed in the inscription published by the gentlemen referred to.

F. A. KLEIN.

JERUSALEM, *March* 23, 1870.