

where he supposes Ophel to have been. The Temple itself was, he will admit, outside the City of David, or at all events it was not inhabited. If this be the case his city is only about 10 to 15 acres in area—a population of 600 to 1,000 souls at most, taking even the proportion of any squalid modern village in Palestine, without public buildings, or indeed without any street. In Galilee the ordinary size of a village is 20 acres, and there are many of nearly double that size. Herod's Temple alone occupied 35 acres, and modern Jerusalem 200 acres, within the walls. But Mr. Birch's Jerusalem, or City of David, is only 10 to 15 acres in area, including the "fort," which was the lower city (2 Sam. v, 6), and the citadel itself, which was *not* the lower city (Josephus, "Ant.," VII, iii, 1), unless Josephus makes another false statement. In fact, we have Zion, Moriah, Acra, Ophel, all on one spur within about 10 acres, while the remaining two larger hills and the remaining 190 acres have no names at all! And why? Because Mr. Birch refuses to accept any statement of the ancient accounts which does not agree with his theory.

Was this hamlet the capital of 15,000 square miles of kingdom in the days when Nineveh and Memphis were still inhabited? and if so, at what period of history did Jerusalem grow over the Upper City until it covered 300 acres in all? Not in the troublous latter day of her history surely, when, according to Mr. Birch's view, the "very old wall" of Josephus would seem first to have been built.

C. R. C.

THE SHAPIRA MANUSCRIPTS.

ON the morning of July 20th last, Mr. Shapira called at the Society's office in Adam Street, and informed the Secretary that he had brought to England a manuscript, which if genuine would be certainly considered of inestimable value, being nothing less than a text of the Book of Deuteronomy, written on sheepskin, in characters closely resembling those of the Moabite Stone, and with many and most important variations. He refused to show the documents to the Secretary, but offered to do so if Captain Conder were also invited to be present.

On Tuesday, the 24th, he returned, and, in the presence of Captain Conder and Mr. Walter Besant, he produced the manuscript, and with it an account in writing of the manner in which he acquired it. This account, which he afterwards gave to the officers of the British Museum, was subsequently published in the *Times*, and is as follows:—

"He first heard of the fragment in the middle of July, 1878. A Sheikh, with several Arabs of different tribes, came to him at his place of business in Jerusalem on other matters. The Sheikh had nothing to do with antiquities. They spoke of some little black fragments of writing in the possession of an Arab. They had been found in the neighbourhood of the Arnou. One of the Arabs spoke of them as talismans, smelling of asphalt.

"The day following Shapira was invited to dinner by the Sheikh, and heard more about the fragments. About the year 1865, at a time of persecution, certain Arabs had hid themselves among rocks. There, on the side of a rocky cavern, they found several bundles wrapped in linen. Peeling off the covering they found only black fragments, which they threw away. They were picked up by one of the Arabs, believing them to be talismans. He kept them as such, and became rich, as he thought, in consequence. This was probably ten years or more before Shapira heard of them. Captain Conder knows the exact time. Shapira promised the Sheikh a reward if he would bring to him an Arab he spoke of who would be able to get hold of the fragments. This happened on the day of the dinner. The Sheikh fell ill, and afterwards died.

"About ten or twelve days after the dinner, a man of the Ajayah tribe brought to him a small piece, containing four columns. A few words only were legible. A week after, on Sunday, he brought fourteen or fifteen columns, containing the clearer writing. The next Sunday he brought fourteen or fifteen more columns, in another character of writing, but not all of one form. Ten days after, on Wednesday, he brought three or four columns, very black. Shapira saw nothing more of him.

"After an interval of four or five weeks Shapira wrote to Professor Schlottmann, on the 24th of September; soon after, also, to Dr. Rieu. The writings were (some of them) in better condition than at present. Schlottmann wrote that they were fabrications, and blamed Shapira for calling them a sacred text. He never saw the writings themselves, only Shapira's copy. Schlottmann wrote in similar terms to the Consul at Jerusalem, Baron von Münchhausen, and desired him to prevent Shapira from making the find public. Then Shapira wrote or telegraphed to Dr. Rieu that the writings were forgeries, and that he was to take no steps in respect to them. This he did in consequence of Schlottmann's judgment of them, and the reasons on which it was founded. He placed them in a bank in Jerusalem.

"Subsequently he began to reconsider Schlottmann's objections, and he found that they were partly grounded on mistakes Shapira had made in deciphering the writing. He felt better able to judge of them himself because he had had more experience in manuscripts. It was before Easter of the present year that he re-examined them, and he deciphered them a second time. Professor Schröder, Consul in Beyrout, saw them in the middle of May, 1883, and pronounced them genuine. He wanted to purchase them. Shapira took the writings to Leipzig at the end of July to have them photographed. Professors there saw them. Dr. Hermann believed in them, as did Professor Guthe, who intends to write about them. They had been smeared with asphalté originally as a kind of embalment oil and spirit. The oil was used by the Arabs to counteract the brittleness, and to prevent their suffering from wet."

Professor Schröder, of Beyrout, has since written to the *Times* denying that he ever pronounced the documents to be genuine.

On Tuesday, the 26th, Mr. Shapira exhibited his manuscripts to a

small party of *savants* at the Society's offices. They were thence taken to the British Museum to be subjected to a closer examination. A translation of the commencement was also published in the *Times*, thus:—

“These be the words which Moses spake according to the mouth of Jehovah unto all the children of Israel in the wilderness beyond the Jordan in the plain. God our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount. Turn you and take your journey and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and by the seaside. And when we departed from Horeb we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw; and we came to Kadesh-Barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come this day unto the mountain of the Amorites. Go ye up and possess ye the land, as said [unto thee the God of thy fathers.] [Notwithstanding] ye would [not] go up. And ye murmured and said, Because [God] hated us . . . to cause us to perish. And God was angry [and sware] saying, As I live, surely all the people that saw my wonders and my signs which I have done these ten times . . . not . . . they have not hearkened unto my voice, they shall not see that good land which I sware to give unto their fathers, save your children and Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun which standeth before thee, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it. But as for you, turn you and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, until all the generation of the men of rebellion shall be wasted out from among the host. [And they abode] in Kadesh-Barnea until the men of rebellion were wasted out by death from amongst the host. . . . Ye are to pass over this day the coast of the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir. Thou shalt not distress them, nor meddle with them in war, for I will not give you of their land any possession, because I have given it unto the children of Esau for a possession. The Horim from of old dwelt therein, and the children of Esau succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead. And we turned and passed the wilderness of Moab. And God said unto me, Ye shall pass over this day the coast of Moab, ye shall not distress them, nor meddle with them in war, for I will not give you of their land any possession, because I have given unto the children of Lot the city for a possession. The giants dwelt therein from of old, and the Moabites called them Amim, but God destroyed them, and they dwelt in their stead. And we turned and passed the brook Zered. And God said unto me [saying], Rise ye up and pass over the river Arnon. This day will I begin to deliver to thy face Sihon the Amorite, King of Heshbon, and his land. And we went forth against Sihon to Jahaz, and we smote him till we left him none to remain. And we took all his cities from Aroer, which is by the brink of the river Arnon, unto Gilead, and unto the brook Jabbok. God our God delivered all unto us. Then we turned and went up the way of the brook Jabbok. And God said unto me, saying, Ye are to pass this day the coast of the land of the children of Ammon. Ye shall not distress them nor meddle with them in war, because I have given unto the children of Lot the land of the children of Ammon for a possession. The

giants dwelt therein from of old, and the Ammonites called them *Azammim*, but God destroyed them before them, and they dwelt in their stead."

A *fac-simile* of one slip of the manuscripts, containing four columns, was published in the *Athenæum*, with notes by Dr. Ginsburg, on September 8th.

On August 18th, while the skins were under examination at the Museum, the following letters appeared in the *Academy* :—

"OXFORD,

"August 13th, 1883.

"From the very outset, when I did not as yet know a word of the contents of Mr. Shapira's Moabite Deuteronomy (as I must call it, since it was discovered in the land of Moab, and is reported to be written in characters similar to those on the Moabite Stone), I held it to be a forgery. Mr. Shapira seems to have undergone for the second time the fate that befell him (according to his own statement) in the case of the Moabite pottery which now adorns the Foreign Office at Berlin (the Municipal Museum having refused to accept it). Judging from two inscriptions published by Dr. Schlottmann, of Halle, I then declared in the *Academy* all this pottery to be a modern fabrication. That I was right is now acknowledged on all sides. I am not now going to imitate Professor Kautzsch, who wrote a big book in order to prove the mistakes of grammar and idiom in the inscriptions on the pottery; for this a few instances would have been sufficient, as they will also be in the present case.

"We have now the original text of the Decalogue as contained in the Shapira sheepskins, published by Dr. Ginsburg, with a few remarks, in the last number of the *Athenæum*. Here we find the first two Commandments of the received text fused into one in the Moabite text. There can be no doubt as to this, since each Commandment in the new version concludes with the words, 'I am God, thy God' (I shall have to say a word or two about this apostrophe later on). This is not, however, a new idea; it was already mooted by mediæval Jewish writers. Next we are struck by the *ἀπαξ λεγόμενον*, **יְהוָה יִצְאָךְ**, 'I liberated thee.' The usual verbs employed for liberating from Egypt and from the house of bondage, in the historical as well as in the prophetic books of the Bible, are either *yatsa* in the Hiphil form (as the received text has it here) or *padah*. The roots *harah* or *hur* are not used as verbs in the Old Testament, but only in the Targum, and in the Talmud, and then not in the Hiphil form, or with the particle *min*. It is difficult to understand how both texts of the Decalogue, in Exodus as well as in Deuteronomy, should have no trace of such a word, but employ uniformly instead of it the root *yatsa*. In all the other Commandments of the Moabite text, moreover, Israel is addressed in the second person singular; why, then, do we find in the First Commandment 'Ye shall not have,' 'ye shall not bow down?' I shall not say much about the omission of the words 'before me' and the passage beginning 'for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,' and ending with verse 10. This last passage we shall find in another Commandment of the new text. If, however, we have already found a strange idiomatical

expression, we have as yet come across no grammatical mistake. For this we must wait until we reach the Second Commandment, which refers to the keeping of the Sabbath. It runs thus: 'Sanctify . . . for in six days I have made the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and rested the seventh day, therefore rest thou, also thee, and the cattle, and all that thou hast.' וַשְׁבַּתִּי, 'and I rested,' is ungrammatical; it ought to be וַאֲשַׁבֵּת. Evidently the Moabite writer did not make use of Dr. Driver's excellent work on the Hebrew tenses. The root *shaboth* does not mean 'to rest,' but 'to cease from work,' and in this sense only it is found in the Old Testament. The forger made a blunder in not leaving the root *noah* as in the received text. The word *gam* ought to be repeated according to classical Hebrew: cf. Exod. xvii, 31, 32, and elsewhere. The expressions 'and all thou hast' and 'anything that is his' are not classical Hebrew. The Fourth Commandment runs thus: 'Thou shalt not murder the person of thy brother.' But this is not Hebrew, as can be seen from the passage *vrezaho nefesh* (Deut. xxii, 26). Here a clumsy use has been made of the Chaldee paraphrase. The Fifth Commandment says: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery with the wife of thy neighbour:' cf. Lev. xx, 10. The Sixth Commandment reads: 'Thou shalt not steal the wealth [not property] of thy brother.' *Hon* is not to be found in the Pentateuch, the word *hail* being employed there instead of it in the sense of 'wealth.' Now what is the meaning of these paraphrases of the last three Commandments? It is usually supposed that concise texts are the early ones, and paraphrases the later. Why is the word 'brother' employed twice, and the third time 'neighbour?' Is that a slip of the pen? We come now to the Seventh Commandment, the composition of which does no great credit to the author of it. Here we read: 'Thou shalt not swear by my name falsely [Lev. xix 12], for I shall be jealous [Dr. Ginsburg translates 'I visit;'] but can *kaná* be used in that sense, or is it a misreading? the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third generation who take my name for a lie' (not 'in vain,' as Dr. Ginsburg renders it). I have already pointed out the strange—I should rather say the impossible—use of the root *kaná*; but the expression *lenosey* is rabbinical; in classical Hebrew we would expect *laish asher yissa*. The word *eduth*, 'witness,' is equally a rabbinical form. Such is the grammatical and idiomatic character of the new Moabite text of the Decalogue. I will now pass on to some other points. Dr. Ginsburg informs us 'that every Commandment begins a fresh line.' This is a modern idea of writing; in the Siloam Inscription a word even does not end with a line. Dr. Ginsburg goes on to say that the words 'that thy days may be prolonged' (in the Fourth Commandment) are absent on one of the slips, but occur on the duplicate. He adds: 'This is either due to an omission on the part of the scribe, or indicates that it is intended as a different recension.' The account which Mr. Shapira gives of the way he came into possession of his treasure is rather contradictory, and somewhat damaging to the authenticity of the fragments. He says at the end of his letter addressed to Dr. Ginsburg:—

“‘In about twelve days I got [from an Arab near Aroer] four or five columns, with a few Phœnician [?] letters visible upon them; in eight days more he brought me about sixteen beautifully written columns; in eight days more about fifteen, not so well written; in eleven or twelve days more four or five well-written columns; and I have not seen the man again. The Sheikh died soon, and I lost every trace that would enable me to follow the object further.’

“The end of the story is tragical; death sometimes comes when it ought not. But where are these *beautifully* written columns? From the reports in the *Times*, I gather that all the slips are not so easy to decipher. One point more. I have mentioned that the Decalogue begins and ends with the words ‘I am God [*Elohim*, not *Jehovah*, Lord], thy God,’ and that at the end of every Commandment these words occur again. This is certainly the cleverest thing in the new Deuteronomy, as it turns the fragments into an Elohistic text. (Dr. Ginsburg, by the way, states from memory that the expression אלהים אלהך, ‘God thy God,’ does not occur in the Old Testament. It does, however, occur in the Elohistic Psalms, xlv, 8 and 1, 7. The last quotation might have served as a model for the new Decalogue.) Unfortunately, the Moabite Moses has blundered at the very beginning of the book by using the following words:—‘These be the words which Moses spake according to the mouth of *Jehovah*’ (so, at least, we read in the translation given in the *Times*). The rest of the chapter has only *Elohim*. This and the following chapters of the new Deuteronomy might be criticised with as damaging an effect as the Decalogue, but it is not worth our while to do so; *ab uno disce omnia*. The omissions and the additions in this part are made without even a superficial knowledge of the results of modern criticism. I shall only point out one oversight: i, 9 of the new text reads ‘because I have given unto the children of Lot the city for a possession.’ Instead of *city* the Authorised Version has *Ar*. The new text must consequently have עיר instead of ער. Now in the Decalogue, as well as upon the Moabite Stone (for the *scriptio* of דיבן, Dibbon, Dr. Nöldeke rightly suggests that it was most probably pronounced *Daybon*), and also in the Siloam inscription, the *scriptio defectiva* is general; how, then, does it happen that עיר is written *plene*? Is it a slip of the pen again? I give my opinion on this grave question without being able to take any notice of the palæography of the sheepskins. But I am certainly not very anxious to study the ‘beautifully written columns’ of the new Moabite scribe, as I am convinced from the text itself that the whole is a forgery.

“A. NEUBAUER.”

“QUEEN’S COLLEGE, OXFORD,

“August 13th, 1883.

“We learn from the *Times*, as well as from Dr. Ginsburg’s communications to the *Athenæum*, that the fragments of the Book of Deuteronomy which Mr. Shapira has brought to England are written in characters

resembling those of the Moabite Stone. Now the discovery of the Siloam inscription has shown that these were not the characters used in Judah (and therefore presumably in the northern kingdom of Israel) in the pre-exilic period. Consequently, if the fragments were genuine, they would belong to a Moabite and not to a Jewish Book of Deuteronomy, and the opening verse of the book would contain the name of Chemosh, and not of Yahveh or Jehovah.

"It is really demanding too much of Western credulity to ask us to believe that in a damp climate like that of Palestine any sheepskins could have lasted for nearly 3,000 years, either above ground or under ground, even though they may have been abundantly salted with asphalt from the Vale of Siddim itself.

"A. H. SAYCE."

On August the 21st, M. Clermont-Ganneau's letter, written on the 18th, appeared in the *Times*, and on the same day Captain Conder's letter of the same date.

"I reached London on Wednesday last, instructed by the Minister of Public Instruction in France with a special mission to examine Mr. Shapira's manuscripts, at present deposited in the British Museum, and which have, for some time past, excited such great interest in England.

"My studies of the stone of Mesha, or 'Moabite Stone,' which I conveyed to the Louvre, and re-constructed in its entirety, my decisive disclosures with regard to the fabrication of spurious Moabite potteries, purchased by Germany, and my labours in connection with Semitic inscriptions generally, gave me, I ventured to think, some authority upon the question, and caused me to hope that the favour would be shown to me, which was accorded to other scholars, and to persons of distinction, of making me acquainted with these documents, which, if they should prove to be authentic, would unquestionably be of incalculable value.

"I will not conceal the fact that I entertained, in advance, most serious doubts as to their authenticity, and that I came here in order to settle these doubts. But I thought it my duty to pronounce no opinion until I had seen the originals.

"As soon as I had arrived I went to the British Museum, where my learned and obliging friend, Dr. S. Birch, was kind enough to introduce me to Dr. Ginsburg, whom I found in the Manuscript Department, engaged in studying the fragments, in company with Mr. Shapira. Dr. Ginsburg was good enough to allow me to glance at two or three of the fragments which were before him, and postponed until the next day but one (Friday) a more extended examination. He showed, however, some degree of hesitation, and finally expressed himself as uncertain whether it would be convenient or not to submit the fragments to me. It was agreed that I should have a decisive answer on Friday. I fancied that Dr. Ginsburg feared some encroachment on my part, in the matter of the priority of publication of a text which he has deciphered with a zeal which I am

happy to acknowledge, and which he has had the honour of first laying before the public. I endeavoured to reassure him in this respect, by informing him that I only wished to concern myself with the external and material state of the fragments; that I should examine them exclusively with this object in view, in his very presence; and that I was ready to bind myself to refrain from examining the text, properly so called, and from publishing anything whatsoever on the contents of the fragments.

“On Friday I went again to the British Museum, and Mr. Bond, the principal librarian, informed me, in the presence of my distinguished friend Mr. Newton, that he could not, to his great regret, submit the fragments to me, their owner, Mr. Shapira, having expressly refused his consent. There was nothing to be said against this; the owner was free to act as he pleased. It was his strict right, but it is also my right to record publicly this refusal, quite personal to me; and this to some extent is the cause of this communication. I leave to public opinion the business of explaining this refusal. I will confine myself to recalling one fact, with comment. It was Mr. Shapira who sold the spurious Moabite potteries to Germany; and it was M. Clermont-Ganneau who, ten years ago, discovered and established the apocryphal nature of them.

“In these circumstances, the object of my mission became extremely difficult to attain, and I almost despaired of it. I did not, however, lose courage, and I set to work with the meagre means of information which were at my disposal:—(1) The hasty inspection of two or three pieces which M. Ginsburg had allowed me to handle for a few minutes on my first visit; (2) the examination of two fragments exposed to public view in a glass case in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum—a case very ill-lighted and difficult of approach, owing to the crowd of the curious pressing round these venerable relics. I devoted to this unpleasant task both Friday and Saturday, and had the satisfaction of obtaining an unhopèd-for result. These are my conclusions:—

“The fragments are the work of a modern forger. This is not the expression of an *à priori* incredulity, a feeling which many scholars must, like me, have experienced at the mere announcement of this wonderful discovery. I am able to show, with the documents before me, how the forger went to work. He took one of those large synagogue rolls of leather, containing the Pentateuch, written in the square Hebrew character, and perhaps dating back two or three centuries—rolls which Mr. Shapira must be well acquainted with, for he deals in them, and has sold to several of the public libraries of England sundry copies of them, obtained from the existing synagogues of Judea and of Yemen.

“The forger then cut off the lower edge of this roll—that which offered him the widest surface. He obtained in this way some narrow strips of leather with an appearance of comparative antiquity, which was still further heightened by the use of the proper chemical agents. On these strips of leather he wrote with ink, making use of the alphabet of the Moabite Stone, and introducing such ‘various readings’ as fancy dictated, the passages from Deuteronomy which have been deciphered and trans-

lated by M. Ginsburg, with patience and learning worthy of better employment.

“That which put me on the scent was the presence—ascertained by me at first sight—on the fragments of an important detail, of which I had not at first understood the full significance. The lines of Moabitish writing are arranged in the shape of columns, separated by vertical creases in the leather—that is to say, by creases perpendicular to the general direction of writing. On the right and left of each of these folds I had noticed two vertical straight lines, drawn with a hard point, as guides for the vertical margins, starting from the upper edge of the strip, and extending to the lower edge, which they do not always reach. The Moabitish forger had not paid much attention to these extremely fine lines, which have scratched the leather in an almost invisible but indelible manner; and the lines of Moabitish characters, instead of being confined by this drawing, have no relation to it. Sometimes they pass over the lines, sometimes they rest on the inner sides of them, both at their beginning and ending. The forger was obviously guided in observing the limits of his space, not by the vertical marginal lines, but by the intermediary creases. If, however, we compare these strips of leather with one of the synagogue rolls of which I spoke just now, the explanation of this mystery will be made plain to us at once.

“These rolls consist of large pieces of leather (generally sheepskin) sewn end to end, forming enormous strips, which may be 30 or 40 mètres in length, and with a breadth of 16 centimètres or more.

“The text of the Pentateuch, in the square Hebrew characters, is arranged in regular parallel columns containing some fifty lines each. At the top a horizontal margin is left, and at the bottom another horizontal margin, everywhere wider than the upper one, both extending for the entire length of the roll. This lower margin, to take an example, on a roll in the British Museum coming from Jerusalem and bearing the number 1460, measures 8 centimètres in height. The columns of the text separated by intervals, which, in the roll instanced by me by way of comparison, measure about 4 centimètres, are marked out with the stylus. The horizontal marks along which the square Hebrew characters are brought into line are confined on the right and left by two long vertical lines, traced in the same manner, which, for the most part, cross the first and the last horizontal line, and jut out into the upper and lower margin. This is not all. Between each column and the next one, the leather has a vertical crease which runs from top to bottom of the roll. It is these ends of the vertical lines drawn with the stylus and the peculiar creases which divide them which we meet with on the long narrow Moabitish strips whereon the forger has written his Moabitish characters.

“There is more yet. I have said that the large pieces of leather of the synagogue rolls were sewn end to end. Now, among the Moabitish strips, I saw at least one where this seam still exists. I need not point out how interesting it would be to examine the character of the thread. Finally, one sees that on the Moabitish strips one of the two edges, either the upper or the lower, is fringed and ragged. It is the original lower edge

of the roll which furnished the raw material to the forger. The second edge, on the other hand, is sharply cut with a penknife or scissors; it is the cutting made by the forger immediately under the last line of the square Hebrew characters.

"I advise all the impartial scholars who would thoroughly inform themselves as to this gross imposition, and to whom may be permitted an examination which is denied to me (I know not, or rather, I know very well why), to take the suspected strips, and to lay them against the lower edge of one of the synagogue rolls preserved at the British Museum. The trick will stare them in the face. I will also beg my more favoured fellow students to be kind enough, in order to throw complete light upon a problem (which is no longer one to me), to make certain important investigations, especially the following:—

"(1) To ascertain whether, by chance, there does not remain on the upper portion of the strips traces of the tails of the square Hebrew letters, especially of the final letters which, as we know, descend below the normal line.

"(2) To see if the back of the leather does not materially differ in appearance from the face of it, and whether it has not been left in the raw state, as on the synagogue rolls.

"(3) To take the average height of all the strips, in order to obtain from them the greatest height, which will enable us to determine the height of the original margin of the roll (or the rolls) that supplied the forger. I can at once affirm that on this roll the columns of square Hebrew characters were from 10 to 11 centimètres in breadth, and were separated by blank intervals of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ centimètres in breadth.

"(4) To ascertain the description of leather, and above all of the thread in the seams.

"Nothing is more easy than to effect the experimental examination which I suggest. Let there be given me a synagogue roll, two or three centuries old, with permission to cut it up. I engage to procure from it strips in every respect similar to the Moabitish strips, and to transcribe upon them in archaic characters the text of Leviticus, for example, or of Numbers. This would make a fitting sequel to the Deuteronomy of Mr. Shapira, but would have the slight advantage over it of not costing quite a million sterling.

"Who is the forger? That is a question which it does not concern me to answer, nor even to raise. I will merely call attention to the fact that he can only be a person familiar with Hebrew, and who has had before his eyes exact copies of the Moabite Stone.

"One word in conclusion. It would be interesting to learn whether the forger has completely destroyed the synagogue roll from which he has cut the strips required for the imposition. Certainly elementary prudence would have required the annihilation of this *corpus delicti*. Nevertheless, the Hebrew text remaining intact, after the abstraction of the lower margin, and these synagogue rolls having a fixed market value, it is not impossible, although it would have been at a serious risk, that the forger

should have tried to make something by it, and to 'kill two birds with one stone.' If ever a synagogue roll should be met with without a lower margin, it will be well to try if, by chance, the Moabitish strips would not fit it.

"CLERMONT-GANNEAU."

"42, Great Russell Street, August 18."

"To the Editor of the "Times."

"Sir,—As my name has been mentioned in a letter published in the *Times* concerning this manuscript, I should be glad to be allowed to make a few remarks on the subject. I have no remembrance of having seen the fragments in question before they came to London, but have since had an opportunity of examining them, and, after comparing them with other manuscripts, true and forged, which I have seen in the East, I had no hesitation in concluding that the supposed fragments of Deuteronomy were deliberate forgeries. During the course of my visits to Moab in 1881-2, I had frequent conversations with the Bedawin concerning the Moabite Stone and other antiquities, and I collected four Nabathean texts, which are shortly to be published. I never heard any Arab speak of the supposed find of Mr. Shapira's manuscript, but what I did hear from all the Arabs was that persons from Jerusalem had buried pottery in Moab, which they afterwards dug up in the presence of Europeans, and represented to be ancient. They showed me the places where these articles were buried, and named the persons concerned. The pottery in question was pronounced in 1873-4 by English and French *savants* to be forged. The alphabet of the pottery inscriptions was the same as that of the present manuscript, save for the introduction in the former of Himyaritic letters among the Phœnician forms. Some fragments of similar pottery have been shown to me by Mr. Shapira, and I understood that the Arabs represented these as having been found with the manuscript.

"Forgeries of coins, inscriptions, and manuscripts are common in Jerusalem, Nâblus, Beyrout, Sidon, &c., and are often attributed to the poorer class of Jewish adventurers in those towns. In the present instance, it would be satisfactory to know the name of the tribe which discovered the manuscript. The only name yet given is that of Sheikh Mahmûd Arekat, who is not a Bedawin chief, but only a fellah chief of Abu Dis, near Jerusalem. The names of the Moabite chiefs and tribes I have carefully ascertained, and could say whether the district east of Aroer on Arnon belongs to any one of them or not.

"The use of square Hebrew by the Jews we have now traced in Palestine to a period earlier than the Christian era, and we know that the Palmyrenes and other trans-Jordanic peoples were using a similar alphabet about that time. The manuscript under consideration is therefore (if it be genuine) more than 2,000 years old. I do not think any archæologist will suppose that leather, as limp and supple as that on which this manuscript is written, could exist for such a length of time in the damp atmosphere of a country

which has a rainfall of 20 inches. Having explored many hundreds of caves and tombs, I know well the mouldy smell of such excavations, and the rapid decay of frescoes not more than 600 years old on their walls. We know that the Accadians and Assyrians used papyrus and parchment, but not a fragment of their books is known to remain. The tattered fragments of our oldest Hebrew manuscript are not older than the seventh century A.D., and the condition of the famous oldest Samaritan roll at Shechem (a document which I have three times examined, and which, from the character of its letters, is not older than, perhaps, the sixth century A.D.) contrasts in an extraordinary manner with that of Mr. Shapira's leather leaves, supposed to be at least 1,400 years older, as does the faded colour of the letters with the very distinct black ink of the Shapira manuscript. It is only in the dry, rainless Theban desert that really ancient papyri (some 3,000 to 4,000 years old) have been found, or are likely to have survived, and the condition of such papyri before they are unrolled is very different from that of the supple leather of the new manuscript, which, however, is not unlike the forged manuscripts which have been offered for sale at Nâblus. It is quite a misnomer to speak of Mr. Shapira's leaves as embalmed, although they are said to have been found with a mummy.

"As regards the same mummy, I would ask, finally, whether this assertion alone is not sufficiently suspicious. Exploration has shown us that the Jews, the Israelites, and the Phœnicians never mummified the dead. Their tombs are not constructed to contain mummy cases. East of Jordan the survey party found that the Moabites used the same tombs as the Jews, and even smaller chambers in rocks. We should be forced, then, to conclude that an Egyptian was buried in the Moabite desert, after being converted to Judaism by some unknown sect, who wrote in the Dibon alphabet, and not in that of Western Palestine, as now known in the Siloam Inscription. A more improbable set of assumptions could hardly be conceived, yet the difficulty of the great age which it is necessary to suppose leather to be able to attain without rotting in a damp cave is even more fatal to this clever forgery.

"CLAUDE R. CONDER, R.E."

"*Guildford, Aug. 18.*"

On the 25th another note from M. Clermont-Ganneau was published, giving a diagram showing the folds of the skin, the sutures, &c.

Lastly, the following paper on the subject, written by Dr. Ginsburg to Dr. Bond, of the British Museum, was published in the *Times* of August 27th. It has only to be added that it is now said that the German Professors in Berlin to whom Shapira showed the skins, immediately discovered that the writing was a forgery. That may be so, but no one thought fit to publish his opinion until there was no longer any doubt on the subject existing among English scholars.

“August 22, 1883.

“The manuscript of Deuteronomy which Mr. Shapira submitted to us or examination is a forgery.

“As the interest which it has excited is so great, and as the public are waiting to hear the result of our investigation, I shall endeavour to give my reasons for the conclusion I arrived at in as popular a manner as the essentially technical nature of the subject will admit.

“The writing of the manuscript exhibits the oldest alphabetical characters hitherto known. The letters greatly resemble those on the Moabite Stone, *circa* B.C. 900. The document, therefore, pretends to be about B.C. 800–900. This conclusion cannot be set aside by the supposition that extremely archaic forms may have been retained in some districts, either in the east or west of the Jordan, and that the manuscript may therefore only claim to be of about B.C. 200–300. The pretence to extreme antiquity is confirmed by the fact that the text of Deuteronomy in its present form was substantially the same *circa* B.C. 300. This is attested by the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch, which, as is generally admitted, was made about that time. As the Shapira manuscript pretends to give an entirely different recension, it presumably claims to exhibit a text prior to B.C. 300.

“The evidence which to my mind convicts the manuscript as a modern forgery is of a twofold nature—viz., external and internal.

“I. The narrow slips of leather on which it is written are cut off from the margin of synagogue scrolls. According to an ancient practice, the Jews in all parts of the world read the Sabbatical lessons from the Pentateuch from manuscript scrolls. Owing to partial defacement or damage, these scrolls frequently become illegal, and are withdrawn from public use. And although the Jews as a rule guard these sacred relics against profanation, and deposit them in receptacles abutting on the synagogues, still the communities in the East, and especially in South Arabia, are driven by poverty to part with them. Hence almost every public library in Europe, and many private collectors, possess such disused parchments or skins belonging to different ages, ranging from the eleventh to the nineteenth century. On the 24th of November, 1877, the British Museum bought a number of these scrolls from Mr. Shapira, which he brought from Yemen. The remarkable part about these scrolls is that (1) some of them are written on similar rough sheepskins to the material on which the Deuteronomy slips are written; (2) the lower margin of some of these scrolls (Comp. Oriental, 1452; Oriental, 1453; Oriental, 1454; Oriental, 1459; Oriental, 1465) is the same width as the height of the Shapira slips; and (3) one of these scrolls—viz., Oriental, 1457, has actually such a cut-off slip fastened to the beginning of Genesis—and this scroll was bought from Mr. Shapira in 1877, the very year in which he declares that he obtained the inscribed slips.

“II. The columns of these scrolls are bounded on the right and left by vertical lines drawn with a hard point. These lines not only extend from the top to the bottom of the written portion, but reach to the very end of

the leather, right across the upper and lower margins. Now, the Shapira fragments exhibit these lines with the dry point, but not as boundaries to the margin, for the writing on them extends on each side beyond the lines, thus confirming the theory that they originally formed the ruled margins of legally written scrolls. What is still more remarkable is the fact that the uninscribed slip already mentioned has also these guiding lines, and that they correspond to the inscribed Shapira fragments.

“III. The upper and lower margins are very rough, ragged, and worn in the old scrolls, as will be seen in scroll Oriental, 1456, and Oriental, 1457. Now, many of the Shapira slips are only ragged at the bottom, but straight at the top, thus plainly showing that they have been comparatively recently cut off from the scrolls, since they have not had time to become ragged at the top.

“IV. Some of the slips show plainly that they have been covered by a frame which inclosed the writing, and that this frame was filled with chemical agents. The result of this is to be seen in the fact that, while the inscribed part has thereby been rendered perfectly black and shiny, the part of the leather covered by the frame is of a different and fresher colour, and exhibits the shape of the frame.

“As to the internal evidence, it will be seen from the following analysis of the documents that there were no less than four or five different persons engaged in the production of the forgery, and that the compiler of the Hebrew text was a Polish, Russian, or German Jew, or one who had learned Hebrew in the North of Europe.

“I. Taking for granted that because the canonical text already contains two recensions of the Decalogue, no insurmountable objection would be raised against a third recension, provided it exhibited the Biblical precepts, the forger manifestly made the Ten Commandments the groundwork of his text. Accordingly, he not only modelled the Decalogue after the pattern of Leviticus xviii and xix, but derived his additions from those chapters. Thus the refrain ‘I am God thy God,’ which he inserted ten times, is simply a variation of the longer refrain ‘I am the Lord your God,’ which occurs exactly ten times at the end of ten precepts or groups of precepts in Leviticus (xviii, 2, 4, 30; xix, 2, 3, 4, 10, 25, 31, 34). Again, what is here the Seventh Commandment is made up from Leviticus xix, 12, while the additional Tenth Commandment is simply Leviticus xix, 17.

“II. Though Deuteronomy xxvii, 11-14 orders that the representatives of the twelve tribes are to place themselves on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, in order to recite the blessings and the curses for the observance and the transgression of certain precepts, yet the maledictions only are given (verses 15-26). This manifestly suggested to the forger the idea of supplying the benedictions. In accordance with his plan, therefore, he not only filled up the gap with ten beatitudes, but made these ten benedictions harmonise with his version of the Ten Commandments.

“III. Equally manifest is his design in altering the maledictions contained in the canonical text of Deuteronomy xxvii, 15-26. The additions,

omissions, and insertions in the Shapira slips are palpably so framed as to yield ten maledictions to range round the Ten Commandments according to the forger's version of them.

"To impart to the document the appearance of antiquity, the forger not only imitated closely the archaic writing of the inscription on the Moabite Stone, but adopted the expressions which are to be found on this lapidary document. Thus, for instance, in the Decalogue, which, as I have already shown, forms the central point of the forged text, the forger not only separated the words, but put a full stop after every expression, exactly as it is on the Moabite Stone; the only exceptions being the particles *eth*, which is the sign of the accusative, and *lo*, which is the negative. That the forger used the Moabite Inscription as a model is, moreover, to be seen from the following facts. He exchanged the word rendered 'before time' in the Authorised Version (Deut. ii, 12) for the word *meolam*—'from of old,' because it occurs in this ancient inscription. Again, in describing the Moabite territory, the forger mentions Moab, Aroer, Jahaz, and the Arnon, because these four names are to be found on the Moabite Stone; but he omits Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazereth, and Dizahab (which occur in Deut. i, 1) simply because they are not to be found in the Moabite Inscription.

"V. My reason for concluding that the compiler of the text was a Jew from the North of Europe is that certain errors in spelling which occur in this document can only be accounted for on this hypothesis. Thus the Jews in Poland, Russia, and Germany pronounce the undagghed *caph* and the gattural letter *cheth* alike. Hence, when the compiler of the text dictated to the scribe the word *chebel*, the latter spelled it *kebel*, with *caph*; and *vice versa*, when the compiler told him to write the expression which denotes 'of their drink-offerings,' and which is written with *caph*, the copyist spelled it with *cheth*. In the North of Europe, moreover, the Jews pronounce alike the letters *teth* and *tau*. This accounts for the otherwise inexplicable spelling in this document of the word rendered 'frontlets' in our Authorised Version.

"VI. The compiler of the text, who was a tolerable adept in writing Hebrew, could not have been familiar with the Phœnician characters exhibited in these slips, or he would assuredly have read over the transcript and have detected those errors. He would especially have noticed the transposition of the two letters in the predicate applied to God, which, instead of saying He was 'angry,' declares that He 'committed adultery.'

"From the fact that the slips exhibit two distinct hand-writings, I conclude that there were two scribes employed in copying them. These, with the compiler of the Hebrew text and the chemist who manipulated the slips, account for my remark that there were four or five persons engaged in the forgery.

"CHRISTIAN D. GINSBURG."