

## THE FORM OF THE MOABITE STONE, AND THE EXTENT OF THE MISSING PARTS.

It is now nearly 21 years since the Moabite Stone was first seen by a European, and the facts connected with its discovery have probably faded from the memory of many. It may be useful to recall them here, in so far as they ought to influence the course of future search.

One is often asked whether the Moabite Stone did not turn out to be a forgery? But those who have watched the course of events know very well that although there was at one time an attempt to palm off upon the world some Moabite pottery, &c., there has never been any serious reason to doubt the genuineness of the Stone of Dhibân, discovered in August, 1868. M. Clermont-Ganneau, in the "Contemporary Review" for August, 1887, very successfully demolished the arguments of an attack which was then recent.

But in the same article M. Ganneau advances the idea that the stone was perhaps twice as large, and the inscription twice as long, as we had supposed it to be, and as the restored form of it shows. On this point it is difficult to agree with him. M. Ganneau has deservedly associated his name with the recovery and the decipherment of the stone; but he did not see it before it was broken to pieces, and he is not the best authority as to the form that it had. The only European who saw the stone before it was shattered was Rev. F. A. Klein, a missionary, who was travelling under the protection of his Arab friend, Zattam, and was taken to see the stone one evening. In the short time at his disposal he made a drawing of the stone, counted 34 lines of writing upon it, endeavoured to collect a perfect alphabet from it, and copied a few words from several lines at random. After this, attempts were made by Dr. Petermann and others to obtain possession of the stone for some European Museum; but the Arabs broke it up, and carried the pieces in different directions, depositing some in their granaries to secure blessings on their corn. Eventually two large pieces were recovered and a number of smaller fragments, making up, as was believed at the time, about seven-tenths of the entire stone. But the absence of the remainder made it difficult to determine the form of the stone in its lower part, for those who sought to do so from the fragments alone, disregarding the sketch made by M. Klein. It was eventually "restored" as a stone rounded at the top but squared at the bottom, and standing on a flat base without a pediment, like a tomb-stone. But M. Klein uttered his protest against this idea. In a letter to the "Academy"<sup>1</sup> he vouches for the perfect correctness of his drawing, since he had made it on the spot. He says, "The stone is, as appears from the accompanying sketch, rounded on *both* sides, not only at the upper end as mentioned by Monsieur Ganneau." And again, "According to my correct measurement on the spot, the stone was

<sup>1</sup> See *Quarterly Statement*, March to June, 1870.

1 mètre 13 centimètres in height, 70 centimètres in breadth, and 35 centimètres in thickness; and according to my calculation had 34 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 the lower lines, had somewhat suffered."

In accordance with M. Klein's sketch and his testimony, Dr. Ginsburg's "Moabite Stone: a Fac-simile of the Original Inscription," &c., published in 1871, represents the stone as rounded both at top and bottom.

Nevertheless, M. Ganneau retained the opinion that the bottom of the stone was squared; he "restored" it so, and in that form it stands in the Louvre, in the British Museum cast, and in the photographs. Yet one would think that there was no room to question M. Klein's testimony, and no appeal from his sketch of the stone, made on the spot, and still to be seen in the office of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

It is not an unimportant point; for intimately connected with the form of the stone is the quantity of writing missing and still to be looked for. M. Ganneau, in the "Contemporary Review," repeats his impression "that the stela must have been of the ordinary shape of Egyptian and Assyrian stelæ—a block, the upper part rounded, the lower part square," and suggests that the primitive stela may have exceeded 2 mètres in height, and may have contained an inscription double or more in length than which has reached us. Search among the ruins of Dibon might bring to light, he thinks, the other half of the stela, and then the two together would constitute a truly imposing text. Of course, if M. Klein is correct, this is a visionary hope. On the other hand, if the stone was rounded at the bottom, it seems to follow that it did not stand on its own base, nor on any low pediment, but was part of a larger monument. As early as 1873, Mr. Alexander Forbes of Aberdeen, wrote a paper,<sup>1</sup> in which he argues that the nature of the monument in question is indicated in the third line of the inscription, where it is said, "I made this high place for Chemosh." "High place" is here *bomoth*, a sacrificial altar (see LXX; Numbers xxiii, 1); and Mr. Forbes thinks it was so splendid and conspicuous a monument as to be well known to the people of Judea, against whom and against whose God it was a proud boast. Isaiah and Jeremiah seem to rebuke the boastfulness and exaggerations of the inscription: "We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so" (Isaiah xvi, 6; Jeremiah xxix, 30). Instead of making Mesha say, "I set up this stone," as the translators have done, Mr. Forbes would render it—I erected this *altar* (*βωμὸς*). He argues that the stone, being rounded at all its corners, must be regarded as a tablet inserted in a

<sup>1</sup> The paper is printed *in extenso* as an Appendix to W. Pakenham Walsh's "Lectures on the Moabite Stone."

larger building, which building was a βωμός; and he suggests that search should be made for the stones which surrounded the tablet.

Is it not further possible that since the altar would stand four-square, like the pediment of the Nelson column, there would be inscribed stones in all the four sides? If so, three more stelæ may await our search.

GEORGE ST. CLAIR.

### THE TELL ES SALAHYEH MONUMENT.

LONG before Professor Sayce published his book on "The Hittites, the Story of a Forgotten Empire," he was looking over some of the Palestine Exploration Fund photographs in my possession, and on coming to the one marked "Tel Salahyeh, near Damascus, Slab found in the Mound," which is figured on p. 88 of the *Quarterly Statement* for April, he observed, "That is an especially interesting photograph, for it is undoubtedly from a Hittite monument." So that he was then fully aware of the existence of the Hittite monument in question, discovered near Damascus by Sir C. W. Wilson.

A. G. WELD.

I SHOULD like to ask how "the very archaic monument discovered by Sir C. W. Wilson, in his excavations at Tell es Salahyeh," and supposed by Major Conder to be "Hittite," differs from the one discovered at the same place forty years ago by J. L. Porter, and figured in his 'Five Years in Damascus?' It is there spoken of as "Assyrian." Have two monuments been found in this mound? The two representations (Porter's work just referred to and *Quarterly Statement*, April, page 88) show a striking resemblance to each other.

SELAH MERRILL.

### THE "VIA MARIS."

THE Rev. Charles Druitt wishes to know "how I explain Elijah's direction to his servant in 1 Kings xviii, 43," and "did Elijah mean that his servant was to look north-east across the Acca Bay?"

The first point to consider is, where was the place where Elijah stood when he said to his servant, "Go up now, look towards the sea," and the Bible (verse 42) states that it was on "the top of Carmel." It is beyond doubt that by "the top of Carmel" that place is meant now called "el Muharka" (or el Mahrakah), the burning place, situate on one of the most conspicuous summits of Mount Carmel, which, from its geographical position just above the Kishon River and the Tell el Küssis (the adopted