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same time I receive a copy of the size of the original of a naked female figure with a diadem in the form of a crescent on her head, and on the diadem there is written, in elegant letters: *el 'ammāt*. This means, in the *status constructus*, Divinity of the people, or, what is more probable, Divinity of union, and is, in my opinion, equivalent to Astarte. It is, however, just possible that 'Uromath or 'Ammath is the proper name of the goddess." Subsequently he published an engraving of the "Moabitic Astarte" in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch der bibl. Alterthumsk.*, and as the editor of this work professes to exclude every contribution containing controvertible assertions, this novelty was thereby at once raised to the rank of undoubted fact. Professor Kautzsch is visibly horrified at the thought that by these means the error is likely to be perpetuated in schools, and takes great pains to refute it, employing more particularly philological arguments. To me it appears that the inscription is perfectly clear and unimpeachable. When Saleem had succeeded in modelling the lady to his satisfaction, he called her, for the sake of fun, *the aunt*—this is the meaning of *el 'ammāt* in Arabic. What I am struck with is, that he, in this instance, for once took the trouble to present to his decipherers a legible word, whereas in other instances, as appears from Kautzsch's analysis of the inscriptions, he put together any letters of the Moabitic alphabet at random, and employed in the poser mentioned above even fancy letters of his own. He first became acquainted with the Moabitic character by copying part of the inscription of Mesa before it was brought to Jerusalem.

I cannot conclude this notice without expressing my esteem for the erudition, ingenuity, zeal, and candour of Prof. Schlottmann. What he wants is the quality which Goethe recommends to every man as most essential—resignation. It is this quality which gives to Kautzsch the vantage ground over his friend and colleague. Both *savans* enter on any given question with the same ardour; but Schlottmann invariably jumps to a conclusion, while Kautzsch weighs not only the *pros* but also the *cons*, and whenever they are of equal force he has resignation enough to confess that his inquiries lead to no result.

NOTE.—On Thursday, March 16th, 1876, on the occasion of the Lower House of the Prussian Diet resuming consideration of the estimates of the Education Department, attention was drawn to the inefficient administration of the Royal museums, and, as an illustration, to the acquisition of the so-called Moabite antiquities. Professor Mommsen spoke strongly on the manner in which their genuineness had been advocated. The purchase was made on the recommendation of the German Oriental Society, and especially on that of Professor Fleischer. The administration of the museums is to be completely reorganised, and, we suppose, the collection destroyed.

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### LETTER NO. III. FROM DR. TOBLER

SIR,—I have duly received your esteemed letter of the 11th, and the July number of the *Quarterly Statement*, and I am very satisfied with

your translation. I regret that my *Descriptiones Terræ Sanctæ*, the continuation of the *Palestine Descriptiones*, did not receive any detailed notice in the English papers. In the *Academy* they only appeared amongst the selected books; in the *Saturday Review*, in such a manner that the writer of the notice could not have properly read the contents; and in the *Athenæum*, to my knowledge, not at all. In the latter paper specially I should have been glad to see a notice. If only for the sake of the Englishman Willibald, my compilation ought to have some attraction for England. At any rate, I must not think of you, as, from what you wrote to me, you are overwhelmed with business.

As far as I know, the two monoliths in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the northern or the grave of Absalom, and the southern or the grave of Zacharias, have hitherto not been properly investigated. It is true one meets with hindrances or difficulties there, because the Jews have buried their dead near the monument, and will not allow them to be disturbed. An attempt at one time to remove all the rubbish around the northern monolith ended with a wail from the Jews, and a prohibition from the authorities, which undoubtedly was not free from bribery. The monument probably dates back to the ancient Jewish time, and then no doubt the whole monument was open to the eyes of all the world; the present inhabitants do not like the famous things built by their ancestors to be seen. It is to be hoped that another attempt may prove successful. I have myself experienced how difficult it is deal with the Jews in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. In 1845 I made a plan of the so-called grave of Jehoshaphat, and carried off a prayer girdle, which I showed to a Jew. Soon afterwards the entrance was stopped up.

As to the southern monolith, it has no visible entrance or opening; therefore it would be necessary to make an opening in the present time. If hindrances were also to be put in the way of the investigations here, it is to be hoped that they would easily be overcome. There is a want of probability in the description of the Frenchman Cassas, who in his fancy sees the monument freed from rubbish, with a flight of twenty-nine steps leading up to it, and down below a square opening into the grave. See Munk's *Palestine*, plate 30.

At least it ought to be possible to cut an opening such as there are several in the northern monolith, so as to penetrate into the probable cave. If this is barbarous, it is all the more so to oppose the removal of the rubbish, and it was also barbarous to make openings in the other monument; and yet nobody would complain of there being such here, through which one could gain a view of the interior, though not deep enough, if, as is asserted, there is another cave beneath.

Jerusalem is not rich in antiquities of Jewish times, if we pass over the graves, important and worthy of notice as some of them are. All the more is it to be wished that existing ones should be brought to light in their integrity wherever it is feasible.

I had written just so far when the *Quarterly Statement* of July, 1875, reached me. I thank you for it. I now have two copies.

George Grove, Esq.

TITUS TOBLER.