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## NOTES. MISCELLANEA.

## NAAMAH THE SHUNAMMITE.

SINCE writing the note on the text of Cant. vii. 3, 5-7 (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, XI, 404-407), I have made, as I almost venture to think, a discovery. Budde's theory that the bride in Canticles is called "the Shulammitte" (or, rather, following LXX, "the Shunammite"), because the "companion" of David's old age was the typical Israelitish beauty, is highly plausible; but the reference to "the Shulammitte" coming so soon after Cant. vi. 8, 9, where the bride is contrasted with Solomon's crowd of women, we should naturally expect "the Shulammitte" to be Solomon's chief wife. This, "Abishag" has never yet been supposed to have been. I am pretty confident, however, that "Abishag" really was this, and that 1 Kings i-iii originally stated the fact. It is most probably quite a mistake that the Shunammite damsel referred to in 1 Kings i was named Abishag. אַבִּישָׁג, to which the Anglo-American Lexicon gives the scarcely possible meaning, "my father is a wanderer," has arisen by transposition of letters and corruption of a letter from אִשָּׁגָה, "concubine"; it is no real objection to this that the text of 1 Kings i. 3, ii. 17-22, in its present form, assumes that "Abishag" represents a proper name, for we have before us a *very early* corruption. The damsel's real name was Naamah, and she was the mother of Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv. 21, 31); עֲמוֹנִית is corrupted from שְׁנַנְמִית. Does any one really think it likely that Solomon married an Ammonitess, and made her his chief wife? It is much more likely that he did what Adonijah tried in vain to do, and married the סִכְנָת of his father. The wife who was next in rank would be the Musrite princess (see JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, XI, 554 ff.), but the child of the Shunammite had the birthright. And it is probably not once only that the word "Shunammite" occurs in Canticles. In vi. 12 (intermediate corrected text) and vii. 2 the expressions בַּת עַמִּי נָרִיב and בַּת נָרִיב, and in vii. 7 בַּת עֲמוֹנִיִּים, should, as I now think, rather be בַּת שְׁנַנְמִית, "O Shunammite maiden" (in vi. 12 an interpolation). The alternative would be to suppose that שְׁוֹנְמִית in Canticles has taken the place of עֲמוֹנִית, "Ammonites," and to correct vi. 12, vii. 2, vii. 7 accordingly. But in spite of the friendly feeling towards Moabites in the Book of Ruth

I cannot think it likely that marriage-songs would be devoted to the implied glorification of an Ammonitish queen. It is true that Heshbon is referred to in Cant. vii. 6; but the passage seems to be corrupt. One would certainly be glad to think that Rehoboam's mother was not an Ammonitess, though the Chronicler (1 Chron. xii. 13, 14) was probably glad to account for Rehoboam's "evil-doing" by his Ammonitish descent.

T. K. CHEYNE.

### ARABIC RESPONSES OF MAIMONIDES.

IN the last number of the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW (XI, 533-50) Mr. G. Margoliouth has published twelve *Arabic Responses of Maimonides*. The two responses described as autograph were hitherto quite unknown; but as for the ten others, a part of a greater collection, they are also found in the famous MS., brought from Africa to Europe by Rabbi Jacob Sasportas, translated in part by Mordecai Tama, afterwards used by Geiger, Munk, Derenbourg, Goldziher, and others, and now, after the death of the Chief Rabbi Bernstein<sup>1</sup> at Hague, in my possession<sup>2</sup>. My copy is quite legible, but not correct. I am therefore most thankful for the communication made by Mr. Margoliouth as a help for the critical control of ten responses. The ten published numbers are in my copy nos. 17-26, and they form a part (nos. 9-18) of the thirty-two answers sent from Maimonides to the scholars of Tyre, the pupils of R. Ephraim. Tama has omitted some of these responses, and dispersed the rest all over his book.

As the last of the responses is incomplete in the copy of the British Museum, I shall now complete both the small lacunae and the missing end, and forward some variations of readings found in my MS. I omit a number of insignificant variations and faults, but as the contents of the responsum is interesting<sup>3</sup>, I shall add a paraphrase of it in the English language. It will be seen that Tama's translation is not at all trustworthy. "MS. B. M." will designate the text published by Mr. Margoliouth, "MS. S." my copy.

<sup>1</sup> Not Dr. Ferrares, as Mr. Margoliouth says (p. 534).

<sup>2</sup> In Brody's *Zeitschrift für hebr. Bibliographie*, II, 151-3, I have corrected the superscription found in עמר דורר.

<sup>3</sup> Löw, *Graphische Requisiten*, I, 157, 6, and notes at the end of the volume, and Steinschneider, *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften*, p. 23.