THE INSRIPTION ON THE STELE OF MÉŠA'
COMMONLY CALLED THE MOABITE STONE
THE TEXT IN MOABITE AND HEBREW, WITH TRANSLATION

BY
H. F. B. COMPSTON, M.A.
VICAR OF BREDWARDINE, HEREFORD

LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1919
LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
DUKE STREET, S.E. I.
PREFACE


The Moabite (Phoenician) re-transcription has been made from the above-mentioned text. This feature of the present edition—new in such works—may, it is hoped, be of use to persons beginning the study of Semitic palaeography. It should be noted that the type used represents a more or less standardized Phoenician script, and is not a facsimile of that of the Inscription, several letters of which (e.g. y, k, q, s, t) represent a more ancient fashion of writing.

I wish to acknowledge indebtedness to Dr. Driver's translation and commentary, Dr. W. H. Bennett's The Moabite Stone (1911), and the Tafel in Smend and Socin: Die Inschrift des Königs Méša von Moab (1886).

H. F. B. C.

Jan. 22, 1919.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moabite Text in Phoenician script</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Text in Hebrew square script</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation into English</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The inscription here set forth is accepted, with practical unanimity on the part of experts, as authentic. It was chiselled on a monument of basalt, by order of the Méša', King of Moab, who is mentioned in 2 Kings iii. 4, and who here recounts his victories over Israel, to whom Moab had long been subject. The date must be somewhere about mid-ninth century B.C., the era of Omri and Ahab, Elijah and Elisha, and Jehu. Line 7 may allude to the overthrow of Omri's dynasty by Jehu, circa 843 B.C.

The interest of this famous monument is manifold.

(a) To the student of palaeography it offers a good specimen of Phœnician script, parent of Alphabets, used not only by Moab but by Israel (as shown e.g. by the Siloam Inscription, eighth century B.C.); the older portions of the Old Testament were, in all probability, written in this script.

(b) The linguist can here study the essential features of the Grammar and Syntax, along with a useful vocabulary, of the Moabite language, separated from Hebrew by merely dialectical differences. A Hebrew student will find the inscription very like historical narrative in the Old Testament.

(c) The historian finds in the Inscription a valuable contribution to the little-known story of a people long extinct.

(d) The theologian sees evidence confirming what modern Biblical study has revealed as to Semitic religion. For there are, e.g. references to Kēmōš, the god of Moab, and to Yahweh God of Israel, and His shrine at Nebo, with allusions to the treatment of con-
queried cities "devoted," *i.e.* put under the ban (*hérem*), to the national god.

The stele, or rather the upper portion of the original monument, measuring 3½ feet in height, 2 feet in width, and 2 feet in thickness, was discovered in 1868 by the Rev. F. A. Klein, of the Church Missionary Society, on the site of the ancient Moabite city of Dibon. Its existence was known, from the report of natives, shortly previous to this event, to Monsieur Clermont-Ganneau, the eminent French archaeologist. The great interest shown by Europeans, and their offers to purchase, led the Arabs in the neighbourhood to break it up, possibly with the object of selling the fragments at fancy prices. Fire was kindled beneath the stone, cold water dashed on the top of it, and the priceless monument was soon cracked in pieces. Happily, before this stupid act of vandalism was perpetrated, rubbings of the inscription had been secured. Later on most of the fragments were recovered, the missing portions restored with the help of the rubbings, and the Stele of Mésa' now stands in the Louvre. There is a facsimile in the British Museum.

The Inscription may be studied more fully with the aid of the works mentioned in the Preface to the present edition and other works named in their bibliographies, or in the various Dictionaries of the Bible.

Students offering the subject for examination should practise transcription in Phœnician and Hebrew, and should add vowel-points to the latter. This would prove a useful exercise. After the revision of his vocalization the student should, with a fine pen, point the Hebrew text on pp. 11–13, adding in the margin, or on an inserted fly-leaf, any various readings or alternative pointings.
INSCRIPTION OF MÉŠAʾ

I. THE MOABITE TEXT IN PHŒNICIAN SCRIPT.

Words and letters within square brackets are restored conjecturally. Overlined letters are more or less uncertain of identification.

```
אֶ. 9xy. 7yy. ?? wyy. 5. 0wy. 5x 1
. 5ws. 9xy. 7y. 7x | מִנּוּ 2
. 7ny. 7wy. 'w
. 8x. 7wy. 8w | 8wy. 8x. 'w
. 9y. 7wy. 8w | מִנּוּ 4
9y | מִנּוּ מִנּו 5
. 6wxy. 7w | מִנּוּ מִנּו
. 7wy. 8x. 90w | מִנּו
. 8wxy. 7wy. 9. 8wy. 8x. 90w | מִנּו
. 9y. 7wy. 8w | מִנּו
. 8wxy. 7wy. 8w | מִנּו 6
. 7wy. 8w | מִנּו
. 8wxy. 7wy. 8w | מִנּו
. 8wxy. 7wy. 8w | מִנּו
8wxy. 7wy. 8w | מִנּו 7
[9x]. 8wy. 8wy. 8wy. 4

Digitized by Microsoft®
THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE MOABITE STONE.
THE MOABITE STONE.

_column_1

_column_2

_column_3

_column_4
II. The Text in Hebrew Square Script.

Words and letters within square brackets are restored conjecturally. Overlined letters are more or less uncertain of identification.

* The מ in Driver's text is obviously a misprint for מ. See translation. The Moabite is clearly מ.
THE MOABITE STONE.
THE MOABITE STONE.

13

למסת ועלו דיב נֵךְ בנות קֹרֶהוּ השמה

וֹכֶל אוֹלֶּף אָנָכָּו בָּנָה שֶרֶה וַאֲנָכָּו בְּנָה

מָגְנַלָה אוֹלֶּף נֵךְ בָּנָה מְלָל אָנָכָּו נֶשּׁרֶה כָּלָי הש

וה נֵךְ בָּנָה הַמִּלְכָּו אָנָכָּו בָּנָה בְּכָרֹהוּ אוֹמוּ בְּלַל

שְׁנֵנֵךְ נָשֵׁר אוֹמֵר אָנָכָּו בָּנָה בְּכָרֹהוּ אוֹמוּ בְּלַל

כָּנֶךְ נָשֵׁר בָּנוֹת אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה נֶשְׁרֶה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

לָקָרֹהוּ ברָאָם

ויָשְׁנֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

לָקָרֹהוּ ברָאָם

וֹסְלֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

וֹסְלֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

וֹסְלֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

וֹסְלֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

וֹסְלֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה

וֹסְלֵךְ אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר אוֹמֵר בָּנָה אוֹמֵר בָּנָה
III. Translation.

Words in italics are required by English idiom: they are not in the original. The transliteration of proper names is in accordance with the notation in the Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius. Words and letters within square brackets are restored conjecturally. Words within curved brackets are alternative renderings, &c.

1 I am Meša son of Ke'mōš ? king of Mo'āḇ the Da-
2 -ibonite. My father reigned over Mo'āḇ thirty years and I reign-
3 -ed after my father. And I made this high place for
Ke'mōš in Krhh.* [High place of sal-]
4 -vation, for he had saved me from all the assailants (?), and because he had caused me to look upon † all my foes. ’Omr-
5 -i was king of Yisrā'ēl, and he afflicted Mo'āḇ days many, for Ke'mōš was angry with his la-
6 -nd. And his son succeeded him, and he too said I will afflict Mo'āḇ. In my days he said s[o],
7 and I looked upon † him and upon his house. And Israel utterly perished everlastingly. And ’Omri possessed the [la-]
8 -nd of Meḥē'deḇā. And (Israel) dwelt therein, his days and half the days of his son, forty years; and
9 Ke'mōš restored it in my days. And I built Bā'al-mē'ōn and I made therein the reservoir (?), and I built

* line 3. Perhaps "Krēḥah" or "Korḥāh."
† lines 4, 7. "Look upon," i.e., with exultation over a fallen foe. Cf. Ps. lix. 10 E.V.
10 Kiųryatēn. Now the men of Gaḏ had dwelt in the
land of "aṭārōt from of old; and the king of Yi[srā’el.
(beginning of line 11)] built for himself
11 "aṭārōt. And I fought against the city and took it.
And I slew all the people [from]
12 the city, a gazing-stock for Ke’mōš and for Mo’aḇ. And
I restored (or captured) from thence the altar-
hearth (?) of Dāwōdoh (or its tutelary spirit?), and
I drag-
13 ged it before Ke’mōš in Ke’riyyōt. And I placed
therein the men of Šrn* and the men of
14 Mhrıt.† And Ke’mōš said unto me Go, seize Neḥōh
against Yisrā’el. And I
15 went by night, and fought against it from dawn unto
noon. And I sei-
16 zed it and slew all of it, 7000 men and men-sojourners ‡
and women & [women-sojourner-] ‡
17 s, and damsels; for to ‘aṣtar-Ke’mōš had I devoted it.
And I took from thence the [ves-]
18 -sels of Yahweh, and dragged them before Ke’mōš.
Now the king of Yisrā’el had built
19 Yāhaš, and dwelt therein while he fought against
me. And Ke’mōš drove him away from before me, and
20 I took from Mo’aḇ 200 men, all the head-men thereof;
and I brought them up against Yāhaš, and seized it
21 to add unto Daiḇōn. I built Krhh,§ the wall of
Ye’ārīn (or the woods), and the wall of

* line 13. Šarōn (?)
† line 14. Maḥarāt (?)
‡ line 16. I.e., recognised settlers. Cf. 2 Sam. i. 13.
§ line 21. See note, line 3.
22 'ōpel (or the Acropolis). And I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof. And
23 I built the king's house, and I made the two reservoirs? for water in the middle of
24 the city. Now cistern there was none in the middle of the city, in Kṛḥh.* And I said to all the people, Make to
25 you every man a cistern in his house. And I cut out the cutting for Kṛḥh* by means of the prisoner-
26 [-s captured from] Yisrā'ēl. I built 'rō'ēr and I made the high-road by the Arnon.
27 I built Bēt-bāmōt for it was destroyed. I built Bēṣer for ruins
28 [had it become. And the head-men of Daḇōn were 50, for all Daḇōn was loyal. And I reign-
29 -ed [over] 100 in the cities which I added to the land. And I build-
30 -t Māḥēḏ[b]ā and Bēt-diblātēn, and Bēt-bā'āl-mē'ōn; and I brought thither the sheep-masters (?)†
31 . . . . . . . sheep of the land. And Ḥōrōnēn, there dwelt therein ??
32 . . . . . . . [And] Kēmōš said unto me, Go down, fight against Ḥōrōnēn. And I went down
33 . . . . . . . and Kēmōš [restored it in my days. And . . . . from thence
34 . . . . . . . And I . . . . . .

* lines 24, 25. See note, line 3. † line 30. See 2 Kings iii. 4.