

THE MOABITE STONE.

TRANSLATED BY

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THIS monument was first discovered by the Rev. F. Klein, of the Church Missionary Society, in 1868, at Dibân. It is a stone of black basalt, being about 3 ft. 10 in. high, 2 ft. in breadth, and 14½ in. thick, and rounded both at the top and bottom to nearly a semicircle, with an inscription on it consisting of thirty-four straight lines about 1¼ in. apart running across the stone.

When the discovery and importance of the inscription became known there was great competition for the possession of it; but the Moabites exasperated, “sooner than give it up, put a fire under it, and threw cold water on it, and so broke it, and then distributed the bits among the different families to place in the granaries, and act as blessings upon the corn; for they

said that without the stone (or its equivalent in hard cash) a blight would fall upon their crops." Squeezes were previously taken from it by M. Ganneau and Capt. Warren, from which the text has been restored.

The inscription records three great events in the reign of Mesha, king of the Moabites. Firstly, lines 1-21 record the wars of Mesha with Omri, king of Israel, and his successors; secondly, lines 21-31 celebrate the public works undertaken by Mesha, after his deliverance from his Jewish oppressors; thirdly, lines 31-34 recount his successful wars against the Horonajim or the Edomites, which he undertook by the express command of Chemosh. We may conclude that Mesha erected this monolith about B.C. 890.

The present translation was published in *The Moabite Stone*, etc., 4to., Second Edition, Reeves and Turner, Strand, 1871. A history of the literature on the Moabite Stone is given in that treatise. Nothing of importance on the subject has appeared since.¹

¹ There was a subsequent translation by Professor Dr. M. A. Levy, *Das Mesa-Denkmal und seine Schrift*, 8vo., Breslau, 1871. S.B.

THE MOABITE STONE.

- 1 I, MESH¹, am son of CHEMOSH²GAD, King of Moab, the
 2 Dibonite.³ My father reigned over Moab thirty years,³
 and I reign-
 3 ed after my father. And I erected this stone to CHEMOSH
 at Korcha, (a stone of)
 4 (sa)lvation,⁴ for he saved me from all despoilers, and let
 me see my desire upon all my enemies.
 5 Now OM(R)I, King of Israel, he oppressed Moab many
 days, for CHEMOSH was angry with his
 6 l(a)nd. His son succeeded him, and he also said, I will
 oppress Moab. In my days he said, (Let us go)
 7 and I will see my desire on him and his house, and

¹ Mesha is the same monarch whose desperate but successful resistance to the invasion of the three allied kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom is described in 2 Ki. iii. 4-27.

² The ruins of Dibon are situate on the east side of Jordan about an hour north of the Arnon, and are called Dibhân. See Jos. xiii. 9; Num. xxxii. 34.

³ The expedition of the three allied kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom against Mesha took place most probably in the first year of Jehoram's reign, B.C. 896, which is to be inferred from the fact that Elisha was in the camp. As this invasion was undertaken because Mesha, on his accession to the throne of Moab, had revolted against Israel and thus terminated the forty years' vassalage, the thirty years' reign of his father Chemoshgad must have commenced B.C. 926, or synchronized with the fourth year of Omri's sole reign and the reigns of Ahab (B.C. 918-898) and Ahaziah (B.C. 898-896).

⁴ Mesha seems almost to use the very language which Samuel uttered, when he put up a similar pillar between Mizpeh and Shen, 1 Sam. vii. 12.

- Israel said, I shall destroy it for ever. Now OMRI took the land
- 8 Medeba,¹ and (the enemy) occupied it (in his days and in) the days of his sons, forty years. And CHEMOSH (had mercy)
- 9 on it in my days; and I built Baal Meon,² and made therein the ditch, and I (built)
- 10 Kirjathaim.³ For the men of Gad dwelled in the land (Atar)oth from of old, and the K(ing of I)rael, fortified
- 11 A(t)aroth, and I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the w(arriors of)
- 12 the wall, for the well-pleasing of CHEMOSH and Moab; and I removed from it all the spoil, and (of-
- 13 ferred) it before CHEMOSH in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran and the me(n of)
- 14 Mochrath. And CHEMOSH said to me, Go, take Nebo⁴ against Israel. (And I)
- 15 went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn till noon, and I took
- 16 it, and slew in all seven thousand (men, but I did not kill) the wom-
- 17 en (and ma)idens, for (I) devoted (them) to ASHTAR-CHEMOSH;⁵ and I took from it
- 18 (the ves)sels of JEHOVAH and offered them before CHEMOSH. And the King of Israel fortif(ied)

¹ A Moabite city, on the eastern side of the Jordan.

² Its ruins are situate about two miles south-east of Heshbon; they are called Maein. See Num. xxxii. 38.

³ The present ruin Kureiyat, under the south side of Jebel Atturus. Num. xxxii. 37, 38.

⁴ Nebo was almost midway between Baal Meon and Medeba.

⁵ Ashtar, the masculine companion to the feminine Ashtarte, appears here for the first time in the religions of Canaan.

- 19 Jahaz, and occupied it when he made war against me ;
and CHEMOSH drove him out before (me, and)
- 20 I took from Moab two hundred men, all its poor, and
placed them in Jahaz, and took it
- 21 to annex it to Dibon.¹ I built Korcha, the wall of the
forest, and the wall
- 22 of the city, and I built the gates thereof, and I built the
towers thereof, and I
- 23 built the palace, and I made the prisons for the
crim(inal)s with(in the)
- 24 wall. And there was no cistern in the wall in Korcha,
and I said to all the people, Make for yourselves
- 25 every man a cistern in his house. And I dug the ditch,²
for Korcha with the (chosen) men of
- 26 (I)srael. I built Aroer, and I made the road across the
Arnon,
- 27 I built Beth-Bamoth,³ for it was destroyed; I built
Bezer,⁴ for it was cu(t down)
- 28 by the armed men of Dibon, for all Dibon was now
loyal; and I reign(ed)
- 29 from Bikran, which I added to my land, and I bui(lt)
- 30 (Beth-Gamel), and Beth-Diblathaim, and Beth-Baal-
Meon, and I placed there the p(oor)
- 31 (people of) the land. And as to Horonaim (the men of
Edom) dwelt therein (on the descent from of old).

¹ Dibon in this line and line 28 denotes a district, which obtained its name from the town it surrounded.

² To make the fortifications as safe as possible.

³ Beth-Bamoth is most probably identical with the place mentioned in Num. xxi. 19; Isa. xv. 2; and in Num. xxii. 4; Jos. xiii. 17.

⁴ Bezer was a city of the Reubenites. See Deut. iv. 43; Jos. xx. 8; xxi. 36; 1 Chr. vi. 78.

- 32 And CHEMOSH said to me, Go down, make war against
Horonaim, and ta(ke it. And I assaulted it),
- 33 (And I took it for) CHEMOSH (restored i)t in my days.
Wherefore I ma(de)¹
- 34¹ year¹ and I¹

¹ Lacunæ.



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