

VIII.

LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE INSCRIPTION.¹

Words or parts of words in () represent what certainly stood in the original, but is not now certainly legible, though it is required by the context.

Words in [] represent conjectural restorations, where the original is neither clearly legible, nor indicated with certainty by the context.

Words required by English idiom, but not by Moabite, together with a few explanatory words, are in italics.

Names found in OT are given in AV. spelling ; in other cases the consonants are given without supplying vowels.

The numerals refer to the lines on the Stone ; the perpendicular strokes show where similar strokes stand on the Stone.

¹ Cf. p. 1 for a more idiomatic version.

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1. I *am* Mesha, son of Chemosh [-melekh],
king of Moab, the D-
2. ibonite | My father was king over
Moab thirty years and I became ki-
3. ng after my father | And I made this
high-place for Chemosh in K̄RH̄H,
[a high-place of sal-
4. vation], because He saved me from all
the [king]s, and because He caused
me to see *my desire* upon all that
hated me. O(mr)
5. i, king of Israel,—he oppressed Moab
many days, because Chemosh was
angry with his lan-
6. d | And his son succeeded him, and
he also said, I will oppress Moab |
In my days he said (thus)
7. But I saw *my desire* upon him and
upon his house, and Israel perished
utterly for ever. Now Omri an-
nexed the (lan-)
8. d of Medeba, and *Israel* occupied it, his

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- days and half his son's days, forty years, and (resto-)
9. red it Chemosh in my days | And I built Baal-Meon, and I made in it the reservoir (?), and I (built)
10. Kirjathaim | And *the* men of Gad occupied the land of Ataroth from of old, and built for himself the king of I-
11. srael Ataroth | And I fought against the town and took it | and put to death all the (people from)
12. the town, a *pleasing* spectacle for Chemosh and for Moab | and I removed thence the altar-hearth of DWDH, and I dr-
13. agged it, before Chemosh in Kerioth | and I settled in it—*Ataroth*—the men of SRN, and the men of
14. MHRT^h | and Chemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel | and (I)
15. went by night, and fought against

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- it from break of dawn till noon |
and I t-
16. ook it, and put them all to death,
7000 men and.....s | and women
and.....
17. s and female slaves | for I had made
it taboo to 'ShTR Chemosh | and I
took thence the al[tar]
18. hear]ths of YHWH, and I dragged
them before Chemosh | And the king
of Israel built
19. Jahaz, and occupied it while he
fought against me | And Chemosh
drove him out before (me, and)
20. I took from Moab two hundred men,
of all its clans, and led them against
Jahaz, and took it
21. to add it to Dibon | I built K̄R̄H̄H,
the wall of the forests, and the wall
of
22. the Citadel (?) | And I built its gates,
and I built its towers | And I
23. built the house of the king, and I

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- made sluices (?) [for the reservoirs
for the water] in the midst of
24. the city | And there was no cistern
in the midst of the city in QRHH ,
and I said to all the people, make
(for)
25. you, each *of you*, a cistern in his
house | And I cut the cutting (?) for
 QRHH by means of the prisoners
26. *taken from* Israel | I built Aroer, and
I made the road by the Arnon, (and)
27. I built Beth-bamoth for it had been
destroyed | I built Bezer for *it was*
in ruins
28.[clans] of Dibon, fifty, for
all Dibon was loyal | And I reign-
29. ed.....a hundred in the cities
which I added to the land and I
built
30. (Medeba) and Beth-diblathaim | And
as for Beth-baal-meon, there I placed
(shepherds)
31.sheep of the land | and

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- Horonaim, wherein dwelt
and.....
32.Chemosh said to me, Go
down, fight against Horonaim, | and
I went (down)
33.Chemosh in my days, and
[‘L’DH] whence.....
34.and I... |.....

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION.

Slight variations in the readings are not dealt with in the notes, where the variations do not affect the sense. See, further, in “Notes on the Text,” p. 60, where also the abbreviations are explained, p. 64; and p. 72.

Also various points are discussed elsewhere; see the references below to the pages on which the discussions will be found, under the several Lines, Names, etc., and cf. “Contents.”

Line 1. *Mesha*, see pp. 16 f.

Chemosh, see pp. 29 f.

-melekh,

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thus *L*, *SS* ; but the corresponding Moabite letters are indistinct, and are also read or restored thus, *D*, *khan* ; *G*, *gad* ; *Cl*, *gad*, *-shlkh*, or *-shlm*.

Line 3. *KRH*, not mentioned in OT, perhaps a quarter of Dibon, cf. p. 40.

[*a high place of salvation*], so *Cl*, *D*, *i.e.* probably a high place erected as a thank-offering for the victory gained over Israel ; but *N*, *SS*, *SH*, "for the deliverance (*msh'*) of Mesha (*msh'*)."

Line 4. [*king*]s, so *L*, *SS*, reading *mlk*, "king" ; but *Cl*, *D*, *G*, *N* read *Sh l k*, a word of uncertain meaning, probably a synonym of "enemy." According to 2 Kings 3, Mesha was attacked by the confederate kings of Israel, Judah and Edom.

Lines 7, 8. *the land*, so *Cl*, *D*, *G* ; but *SS*, *L*, "all the land."

Line 8. *his days*, etc., see pp. 19 f.

Line 9. *built* here and elsewhere does not mean that Mesha was the first to erect the town in question ; it often means restoring and extending, and especially fortifying an existing town.

reservoir, 'SWH, not found in OT ;

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sense requires some such translation; cf. line 23.

Line 12. *spectacle*, see p. 73.

altar-hearth, 'R'L, perhaps also in 17 f., probably = Heb. 'āri'ēl, Isa. 29^{1. 2. 7} EV. "Ariel," Rmg. "The lion of God," or "The hearth of God," Ezek. 43^{15. 16} RV. "altar hearth"; also as a proper name, Ezra 8¹⁶ and perhaps also 2 Sam. 23²⁰ RV. "the two sons of Ariel of Moab," AV. "two lionlike men of Moab"; though possibly here too the meaning may be "two altar-hearths," *i.e.* "sanctuaries"; but RV. is more probable; the Septuagint reads "sons of." The word is not found elsewhere.

DWDH, apparently the name of a deity worshipped by the Israelites of Ataroth; not mentioned elsewhere. There is a god *Dadi* named in the Babylonian Chronicle, L. W. King, *Letters, etc., of Hammurabi*, iii. 245, and *Dudu* occurs as a proper name in the Amarna tablets, Winckler, 105, etc. Hebrew proper names perhaps indicate the existence of a deity *Dôd*, identified with Yahweh, *Die Keilinschriften und das AT.*

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p. 25. *Dwdh* is almost identical with David. It is curious that, of the three or four passages in which 'R'L occurs, it is connected with the City of David in *Isaiah* and with *Dwdh* here.

Line 16. *men and . . . s, and women and . . . s.* The characters here are indistinct; *D*, partly supported by *Cl, N*, has "men and male strangers, and women and [female stranger]s." The "stranger," *ger*, was a resident alien with semi-civic rights; the Greek *metoikos*; *SS* read "men and boys and women and girls."

Line 17. *female slaves rhmth*, cf. Judg. 5³⁰ *rahām rahāmāthāyim*, RV. "a damsel, two damsels."

made it taboo, i.e. "massacred the population in honour of his god,"—the rite of *herem*, recognised in the Pentateuchal law and elsewhere, and practised in the case of Jericho, Josh. 6¹⁷ etc.

'*ShTR Chemosh*, see p. 31.

altar-hearths, cf. line 12, so *L, SS*; but *D* restores "vessels"; and *Cl* suggests either "vessels" or "(sacred) tents."

Line 20. of *all its clans, rshh*. *Rsh* here

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may be the Heb. *rôsh*, "head," *i.e.* "chiefs"; so *D*, *SS* explain "chiefs and their followers." The Heb. *rôsh* sometimes = division of an army, *e.g.* Judg. 7¹⁶.

Line 21. *forests* may be a proper name, *EV*. *Jearim*; cf. p. 34.

Line 22. *Citadel*, 'PhL, Heb. 'ôphel, 2 Kings 5²⁴, Isa. 32¹⁴, Mic. 4⁸ *RV*. hill, *AV*. fort, tower, stronghold. Neh. 3²⁶ etc., *RV*. 'Ophel; apparently a fortified hill.

Line 23. *house of the king*, but Neubauer "house of Moloch."

sluices, *kl'y*, so *L*, *SS*, both doubtfully,—a sense suggested by the use of *kl'* in Heb. for "shut in."

D, *L* (another suggestion), *Jeremias*, *Paton*, "the two"; cf. Heb. *kil'ayim*, "two kinds."

G, "prisons," cf. Heb. *beth kele'*; but this does not suit the sense.

reservoir, so *D*; but *L*, *SS* "reservoirs"; cf. line 9.

Line 25. *I cut the cutting*. The words translated "cut" and "cutting" are both derived from the root *krt*. The noun *mkrtth* is not found in Heb., and we can only conjecture the exact nature of the "cutting";

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L suggests "timber"; *G*, "ditch"; as the immediate content deals with water supply, the word might mean "canal" or "aqueduct," or the "excavation," thus, "I made the necessary excavation," etc.

Lines 28 ff. The following lines are very imperfectly preserved; but they do not seem to have added anything new in character to the rest of the inscriptions. They describe further conquests, and the arrangements made by Mesha for the occupation of the newly acquired territory.

Lines 28, 29. *fifty . . . a hundred*. These numerals perhaps refer to clans, cf. line 20. Possibly Moab generally was divided into 200 clans, of which 50 belonged to Dibon, the royal city, and its territory; and Mesha formed 100 clans for the conquered territory; cf. SS, p. 14, n. 3.

Line 30. *And as for Beth-baal-meon*, so SS, the | is probably equivalent to a stop; moreover, *Beth-baal-meon* is probably the same as *Baal-meon*, which was "built" in l. 9; but *D* and *G* neglect the |, and make *Beth-baal-meon* the last of the list of towns beginning with *Medeba*.

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Line 30. (*shepherd*), the reading *nkd* thus translated, seems fairly certain ; *nōkēd* is used in OT of Mesha, 2 Kings 3⁴ RV. "sheepmaster," and cf. Amos 1¹ "herdmen" ; cognate Arabic words denote a kind of small sheep with abundant wool, and the keeper of such sheep. *L*, *SS* translate here "flocks."

Lines 31 f. *SS* read "wherein dwelt the son of Dedan and Dedan said" ; but the reading is not generally accepted.

Line 32. After "I went down" *SS* read letters which indicate "and I fought" ; but the reading is very doubtful.

Line 33. '*L'DH* would indicate a proper name "'Eleadeh" ; but there may be merely a blank between *d* and *l*.