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[Continued on p. 3.]

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GENERAL EDITORS: CAROLINE A. J. SKEEL, D.Lit.;
H. J. WHITE, D.D.; J. P. WHITNEY, D.D., D.C.L.

THE INSCRIPTION 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

14121

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
DUKE STREET, S.E. I.

PREFACE

THE text adopted in this edition is that of the late Dr. Driver's Hebrew transcription in the Appendix to the Introduction of his *Notes on the Hebrew Text . . . of the Books of Samuel*, 2nd edition, 1913, by the kind permission of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

The Moabite (Phœnician) 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 Phœnician 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.

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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 palæography 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 K^emôš, the god of Moab, and to Yahweh God of Israel, and His shrine at Nebo, with allusions to the treatment of con-

quered 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 $3\frac{1}{2}$ 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 archæologist. 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 Méša' 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 MÉŠA'

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.

- אנ . גאא . ילל ? ? וו . יג . וו . ילל 1
 . ילל . גאא . לו . ילל . תגא | תגא 2
 ילל . ילל . ת
 . תא . תגא . וו | תגא . גאא . ת 3
 [ת . ת] | גאא . וו
 . תא . ילל . לל . תגא . ת . ו 4
 אא | תא . לל . תגא
 . גאא . תא . ילל . לל . ת . ילל . ת 5
 אא . וו . ילל . ת . יג . ילל . ילל
 . אא . ילל . גאא . ילל . ילל | גאא 6
 י . אא . תגא | גאא . תא . ילל
 . אא . לל . תגא | גאא . יג . אאא 7
 [אא] . תא . תגא . וו . ילל . אא

- . מרעא . גמ . גג . גממ | קגאג . ר 8
 ממ . פמ . גוגאק . גגג . מממ
 . גוגלוג . פק . גקמ | מממג . מממ . גג 9
 גקמ . ממממ . גג . מוקמ
 . רקקג . גממ . אל . מממ | גממק . פק 10
 מ . גלמ . גל . גממ . גלוג . פק 11
 . קקג . ממממ | פק . פק . לקמ
 [מ] . מוג . למ . פק . לקמ | גממ 12
 . גממ | קממ . מממ . פמ . קק 13
 [מ] . גממ . למ . פק . מממ
 . גממ | פממ . מממ . ממ . גג 14
 . גמ . למ . מממ . קממ | פממ 15
 פק | קממ . למ . גג . פק
 . מוקמ . גג . מממ . גלג . גלג 16
 פק | קממ . למ . גג . פק
 . גלג . מוקמ . גלג . לקמ . גמ 17
 [ק] . פק . מממ . מממ | גמ

- . ממ . ממ . גממ . גממ . מ 18
 פק . גג . לקמ . גלמ | ממ
 | מ . מממ . גג . גממ . רמ 19
 [מ] . ממ . ממ . גממ
 | גמ . למ . ממ . גמ . גמ . ממ 20
 . גמ . רמ . גממ . גממ
 . גמ . ממ . ממ | גמ . למ . ממ 21
 פק . גמ . פק
 . ממ . גממ . ממ . ממ | גמ 22
 פק | גמ . ממ . ממ
 . ממ . ממ . למ . פק . ממ 23
 גמ . ממ . ממ . פק . ממ . ממ
 גמ . ממ . גמ . ממ . ממ | גמ 24
 למ . ממ . ממ . למ . ממ . גמ
 . ממ . ממ | גמ . ממ . ממ . ממ 25
 ממ . גמ . גמ . פק . ממ . ממ
 . ממ . ממ . ממ | לקמ . [מ] 26
 . ממ . ממ . ממ . ממ . ממ
 . ממ . ממ . פק . פק . ממ . ממ 27
 . ממ . ממ . ממ . ממ | פק

- 28 . 5978 . 47 . 77 . 5978 . 47
 7777 . 7777 | 777777
 29 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777
 7777 . 7777 | 7777 . 7777
 30 | 7777 . 7777 . 7777 [7777] . 7777
 7777 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777
 31 . 7777 . 7777 | 7777 . 7777
 7777 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777
 32 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777
 7777 | 7777 . 7777
 33 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777 . 7777
 7777 . 7777 . 7777
 34 7777 | 7777 . 7777

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.

- 1 אנך . משע . בן . כמש . ?? מלך . מאב . הר
 2 יבני | אבי . מלך . על . מאב . שלשן . שת . ואנך . מלך
 3 תי . אחר . אבי | ואעש . הבמת . זאת . לכמש .
 בקרחה | ב[מת . י]
 4 שע . כי . השעני . מכל . *השלכן . וכי . הראני . בכל .
 שנאי | עמר
 5 י . מלך . ישראל . ויענו . את . מאב . ימן . רבן . כי .
 יאנף . כמש . באר
 6 צה | ויחלפה . בנה . ויאמר . גם . הא . אענו . את .
 מאב | בימי . אמר . כ
 7 וארא . בה . ובנתה | וישראל . אבד . אבד . עלם .
 וירש . עמרי . את . [אר]
 8 ין . מהרבה | וישב . בה . ימה . וחצי . ימי . בנה .
 ארבען . שת . דיש
 9 בה . כמש . בימי | ואבן . את . בעלמען . ואעש . בה .
 האשוח . ואבן

* The ה in Driver's text is obviously a misprint for ה . See translation. The Moabite is clearly א .

- 10 את . קריתן | ואש . גר . ישב . בארץ . עמרת . מעלם .
ויבן . לה . מלך . י
- 11 שראל . את . עמרת | ואלתחם . בקר . ואחזה |
ואהרג . את . כל . העם . [מ]
- 12 הקר . רית . לכמש . ולמאב | ואשב . משם . את .
אראל . דודה . וא[ם]
- 13 חבה . לפני . כמש . בקרית | ואשב . בה . את . אש .
שרן . ואת . אש
- 14 מחרת | ויאמר . לי . כמש . לך . אחז . את . נבה .
על . ישראל | וא
- 15 הלך . בללה . ואלתחם . בה . מבקע . השחרת . עד .
הצהרם | וא
- 16 זה . ואהרג . כלה . שבעת . אלפן . ג[ב]רן . וגרן |
וגברת . ו[גר]
- 17 ת . ורחמת | כי . לעשתר . כמש . החרמתה | ואקח .
משם . א[ת] . כ[
- 18 לי . יהוה . ואסחב . הם . לפני . כמש | ומלך . ישראל .
בנה . אֵת
- 19 יהץ . וישב . בה . בהלתחמה . בי | ויגרשה . כמש .
מפני | ו
- 20 אקח . ממאב . מאתן . אש . כל . רשה | ואשאה .
ביהץ . ואחזה .

- 21 לספת . על . דיבן | אנך . בנתי . קרחה . חמת .
היערן . וחמת
- 22 העפל | ואנך . בנתי . שעריה . ואנך . בנתי .
מגדלתה | וא
- 23 נך . בנתי . בת . מלך . ואנך . עשתי . כלאי . האש
[וה . למ] ין . בקרב
- 24 הקר | ובר . אן . בקרב . הקר . בקרחה . ואמר . לכל .
העם . עשו . ל
- 25 כם . אש . בר . בביתה | ואנך . כרתי . המכרתת .
לקרחה . באסר
- 26 [י] . ישראל | אנך . בנתי . ערער . ואנך . עשתי .
המסלת . בארנן .
- 27 אנך . בנתי . בת . במת . כי . הרם . הא | אנך . בנתי .
בצר . כי . עין .
- 28 ש . דיבן . המשן . כי . כל . דיבן . משמעת |
ואנך . מלך
- 29 תי מאת . בקרן . אשר . יספתי . על . הארץ | ואנך .
בנת
- 30 י . [את] . מהר[ב]א . ובת . רבלתן | ובת . בעלמען .
ואשא . שם . את . נקד
- 31 צאן . הארץ | וחורנן . ישב . בה . בת . וק . אש
- 32 ויאמר . לי . כמש . רד . הלתחם . בחורנן | וארד
- 33 [ויש] בה . כמש . בימי . ועל . דה . משם . עש
- 34 שת . שרק . ואנ

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 Méša' son of Kēmōš ? king of Mō'āḥ the Da-
- 2 -ibonite. My father reigned over Mō'āḥ thirty years and I reign-
- 3 -ed after my father. And I made this high place for Kēmōš in Kṛḥh.* [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 -ī was king of Yisrā'ēl, and he afflicted Mō'āḥ days many, for Kēmōš was angry with his la-
- 6 -nd. And his son succeeded him, and he too said I will afflict Mō'āḥ. 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 M'hēdēḥā. And (Israel) dwelt therein, his days and half the days of his son, forty years; and
- 9 Kēmōš restored it in my days. And I built Bá'al-m'e'ōn and I made therein the reservoir (?), and I built

* line 3. Perhaps "K'rēḥah" or "Korḥāh."

† lines 4, 7. "Look upon," i.e., with exultation over a fallen foe. Cf. Ps. lix. 10 E.V.

- 10 Kiryātēn. Now the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of 'aṭārōt from of old; and the king of Yi[srā'ēl (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 Kēmōš and for Mō'āḥ. And I restored (or captured) from thence the altar-hearth (?) of Dāwḏōh (or its tutelary spirit?), and I drag-
- 13 -ged it before Kēmōš in K'riyyōt. And I placed therein the men of Šrn* and the men of
- 14 Mḥrt.† And Kēmōš said unto me Go, seize Neḥōh against Yisrā'ēl. 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 'aštar-Kēmōš had I devoted it. And I took from thence the [ves-]
- 18 -sels of Yahweh, and dragged them before Kēmōš. Now the king of Yisrā'ēl had built
- 19 Yáḥaš, and dwelt therein while he fought against me. And Kēmōš drove him away from before me, and
- 20 I took from Mō'āḥ 200 men, all the head-men thereof; and I brought them up against Yáḥaš, and seized it
- 21 to add unto Daiḥōn. I built Kṛḥh,§ the wall of Ye'ārīn (or the woods), and the wall of

* line 13. Šārōn (?)

† line 14. Maḥarāt (?)

‡ line 16. I.e., recognised settlers. Cf. 2 Sam. i. 13.

§ line 21. See note, line 3.

- 22 'ōpēl (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 reser-
[voirs? for wa]ter 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 'ārō'ēr and I made the high-road by the Arnon.*
- 27 I built Bēt-bāmōt for it was destroyed. I built Bēser for ruins
- 28 [had it become. And the head-me]n of Daiḥōn were 50, for all Daiḥōn was loyal. And I reign-
- 29 -ed [over] 100 in the cities which I added to the land. And I built
- 30 -t Mēhād[ē]ā and Bet-diplātēn, and Bet-bá'al-mē'ōn; and I brought thither the sheep-masters (?) †
- 31 sheep of the land. And Hôrōnēn, there dwelt therein ??
- 32 [And] Kēmōš said unto me, Go down, fight against Hôrōnēn. And I went down
- 33 and Kēmōš [resto]red it in my days. And from thence
- 34 And I

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

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