

The Moabite Stone Mesha Stele Translation – (Transcription)

*This important inscription was discovered intact in 1868; It was subsequently broken by the Arabs and in 1873 it was taken to the Louvre Museum in Paris. The date of the Mesha Stele is roughly fixed by the reference to Mesha, King of Moab, in 2nd Kings 3:4 after 849 BC. However since the contents of the stela point to a date toward the end of the king's reign, it seems probable that it should be placed between 840 and 820, perhaps about 830 BC in round numbers.

I am Mesha, son of Chemosh [...], king of Moab, the Dibonite – my father had reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father, - (who) made this high place for Chemosh in Qarhoh [...] because he saved me from all the kings and caused me to triumph over all my adversaries. As for Omri, king of Israel, he humbled Moab many years for Chemosh was angry at his land. And his son followed him and he also said, "I will humble Moab." In my time he spoke thus, but I have triumphed over him and over his house, while Israel hath perished forever!

(Now) Omri had occupied the land of Medeba, and Israel had dwelt there in his time and half the time of his son Ahab, forty years; but Chemosh dwelt there in my time.

And I built Baal-meon, making a reservoir in it, and I built Qaryaten. Now the men of Gad had always dwelt in the land of Ataroth, and the king of Israel had built Ataroth for them; but I fought against the town and took it and slew all the people of the town as satiation (intoxication) for Chemosh and Moab. And I brought back from there Arel (Oriel), its chieftain, dragging him before Chemosh in Kerioth, and I settled there men of Sharon and men of Maharith. And Chemosh said to me, "Go take Nebo from Israel!" So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all, seven thousand men, boys, women, girls and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for the god Ashtar-Chemosh. And I took from there the [...] of Yahweh, dragging them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel had built Jahaz, and he dwelt there while he was fighting against me, but Chemosh drove him out before me. And I took from Moab two hundred men, all first class warriors, and set them against Jahaz and took it in order to attach it to the district of Dibon.

It was I who built Qarhoh, the wall of the forests and the wall of the citadel; I also built its gates and I built the towers and I built the king's house, and I made both of its reservoirs for water inside the town. And there was no cistern inside the town of Qarhoh, I said to all the people, "Let each of you make a cistern for himself in this house!" And I cut beams for Qarhoh with Israelite captives. I built Aroer, and I made the highway in the Arnon (valley); I built Beth-bamoth, for it had been destroyed; I built Bezer- for it lay in ruins – with fifty men of Dibon, for all Dibon is my loyal dependency.

And I reigned in peace over the hundred towns which I had added to the land. And I built [...] Medeba and Beth-diblathen and Beth-baal-meon, and I set there [...] of the land. And as for Hauronen, there dwelt in it [...] and] Chemosh said to me, "Go down, fight against Hauronen. And I went down [and I fought against the town and I took it], and Chemosh dwelt there in my time...

Source: The Ancient Near East – An Anthology of Texts and Pictures
by James Pritchard - 1958 Princeton University Press