

ראה; לפני; עשה; (הו)שעיר; דם; הרס; גם; במח; אף; אן; Aramaic; The word for 'year' is שח as in Israelite Hebrew (Judaean שנה). There is only one word (חלף, Hiphil), where Aramaic supplies the meaning rather than Hebrew. Finally the word קר in the sense 'city' or 'town' is unique to Moabite.

An interesting stylistic difference can be traced within the inscription. The two sections 1-21 (half) and 30 (half) f., like Hebrew narrative prose, consistently employ the Waw consecutive construction and the object marker את, whereas in the section in the middle (21-30) both these features are missing. Sentences in the latter section begin with the pronoun 'I', followed by a verb in the perfect. It is chiefly concerned with Mesha's building operations, and finds its nearest epigraphic counterparts in the Karatepe and Zakir inscriptions. Those trained in the ways of biblical criticism may be tempted to detect here two separate sources used by the writer, but it does not appear to me that the sequence of events is disturbed in any important particular; nor, I think, can the difference in style be made to yield dialectal information. Probably the writer simply slipped unconsciously from one style to the other depending on his main subject matter.

The most comprehensive early studies were by Nöldeke (1870); Smend and Socin (1886); and Dussaud (1912). The text below is taken from the fine plate in the last named, with reference to the sketch by Lidzbarski (1898); most photographs elsewhere are too small for effective use. There are more recent treatments by Yahuda (1944); Albright (1945); Michaud (1958c); Morag (1958); van Zyl (1960); Liver (1967). On the language see in addition to Segert, the syntactical study by Anderson (1966). Maps are supplied in van Zyl and Liver, in Aharoni (1966c) and at the end of this volume. Aharoni (305 f.) gives the latest discussion of the place names.

1. אנה. משע. בן. (משע)יח. מלך. מאב. הד.
2. יבנל. אבי. מלך. על. מאב. שלשן. שת. ראנה. מלך.
3. חי. אחר. אבי. ואעש. הבמת. זאת. לכמש. בקרח'ה. ב(ח. י.)
4. שע. כי. השעני. מכל. השלכן. וכי. הראני. בכל. שונאי. עמי.
5. י. מלך. ישראל. ויענו. את. מאב. ימן. רבן. כי. יאנה. כמש. באר.
6. עז. ויחלפה. בנה. ויאמר. גם. הא. אענו. את. מאב. כימי. אמר. ב(ח. י.)
7. נארא. בה. ובבחה. וישראל. אבד. אנד. עלם. וירש. עמרי. את. א(ח. י.)
8. מחובה. וישב. בה. ימה. רחצי. ימי. בנה. ארבען. שת. ויש.

9. בה. כמש. בימיו. ואת. בעלמען. ואעש. בה. האשות. ואב(ח. י.)
10. את. קרית. ואיש. גד. ישב. בארץ. מעלם. ויבן. לה. מלך. י.
11. שראל. את. עטרפו. ואלתום. בקר. ואחוז. ואהרג. את. כל. הל(ם. מ.)
12. הקר. רית. לכמש. ולמאב. ואשב. משם. את. אראל. דודד. וא(ח. י.)
13. חבה. לפני. כמש. בקרית. ואשב. בה. את. אש. שרן. ואת. א(ח. י.)
14. מחרה. ויאמר. לי. כמש. לך. אחז. את. ובה. על. ישראל. וא(ח. י.)
15. הלך. בללה. ואלתום. בה. מבקע. השחרת. עד. המורס. וא(ח. י.)
16. זה. ואהרג. כל(ה). שבעת. אלפין. (ג. כ. ו) (וגר) ויגברת. וי(ג. ר.)
17. ת. ודמחתי. כי. לעשתי. כמש. ההר. מחלו. ויאקח. משם. א(ח. י.)
18. לי. יהודה. ואסחב. הם. לפני. כמש. ומלך. ישראל. בנה(ח. י.)
19. יהי. וישב. בה. בהלחמה. בליוגרשה. כמש. מפ(ח. י.)
20. אקח. ממאב. מאתן. אש. כל. רשף. ואשאה. בידך. ואחזה.
21. לספת. על. דיבן. אנה. בנתי. קרחה. חמת. היערן. ויחמת(ח. י.)
22. העפלו. ואנה. בנתי. שערה. ואנה. בנתי. מגדל. חילאי.
23. נר. בנתי. בח. מלך. ואנה. עשתי. כלא. האש(ח. י.) במע(ח. י.) בקר(ח. י.)
24. הקר. ובר. אן. בקרב. הקר. בקרחה. ואמר. לכל. העם. עשו. י.
25. כם. אש. בר. בביתה. ואנה. כרתי. הפכרתי. לקרחה. באמר(ח. י.)
26. י. (וישראל. אנה. בנתי. ערער. ואנה. עשתי. המסלת. בארנו(ח. י.)
27. אנה. בנתי. בת. במת. כי. הרס. הא'אנה. בנתי. בצר. כי. עי(ח. י.)
28. (הא. ג. א.) ש(ח. י.) דיבן. חמשן. כי. כל. דיבן. משמעתי. ואנה. מל(ח. י.)
29. ח(ח. י.) על. ה. מאת. בקרן. אשר. יספתי. על. הארץ. ואנה. בנת(ח. י.)
30. י. (ג. מ.) בא(ח. י.) ובת. ובלתן. ונת. בעלמען. ואשא. שם. את. א(ח. י.)
31. די. לרעת. את. צאן. הארץ. ויחורני. ישב. בה. ב. ו. אש.
32. ----- (וי)אמר. לי. כמש. רד. הלחם. בחורני. ואר(ח. י.)
33. תחם. בקר. ואחזה. וישב(ח. י.) בה. כמש. בימי. ועל. דה. משם. עש.
34. ----- 28-30 letters missing ש. ת. ש. ד. ק. א. נ. ר. -
35. -----

1. I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-yat, king of Moab, the
2. Dibonite. My father was king over Moab for thirty years, and I became king
3. after my father. I built this high place for Chemosh in [qarhō], a high place

24. the town. But there was no cistern inside the town at [qarhō]; so I said to all the people, Each of you make for yourselves
25. a cistern in his house. I had the ditches dug for [qarhō] with Israelite prisoners.
26. I carried out repairs at Aroer, and I mended the highway at the Arnon.
27. I rebuilt Beth-bamoth, for it had been destroyed; and I rebuilt Bezer, for it was in ruins,
28. with fifty men of Dibon, because all Dibon had become subject (to me). So did I become king
29. (over) hundreds in the towns which I annexed to the land. Then I rebuilt
30. Medeba also, and Beth-diblathaim. And as for Beth Baal-meon, I led (my shepherds) up there
31. (in order to tend the) sheep of the district. Then in Horonaim there had settled
32.; and Chemosh said to me, Go down, fight against Horonaim. So I went down (and fought against the town and took it), and Chemosh (dwelt) there in my days. As for
- 34, 35. So did I.

NOTES

1. קָרַח = [ʔarhō]; cp. Hebr. אָנַחַי = [ʔnōḥi]; Zenjiril אַנְחַי (Hadad); אַנְכַי (Panammu). The final syllable in the Hebr. form is stressed by the Massoretes, but must originally have been unstressed as in pause. The syllable was retained in Hebr., but was dropped in Moabite, whereas Zenjiril possessed both forms. עָשָׂה = [mēʔaʔ] from [mayʔaʔ]; Hebr. עָשָׂה; but Septuagint Μωσα. Etymologically the two Semitic forms presuppose a Proto-Semitic base beginning with Y, the Greek form one beginning with W; cp. Hebr. מֵישָׁב, 'best part'; מֵישָׁב, 'seat'. The regular verbal form in both dialects (Hiph.; cp. 4), points to Proto-Semitic W. The lexicographers, however, connect the base with the epithet יָל in Old South Arabian personal names, and this ought to derive from Proto-Semitic YI'. The solution is perhaps to be sought in a double Proto-Semitic base WY' and YI'; the first of which survived in the Canaanite dialects, the second in Old South Arabian, but also in the north in the occasional archaic form like the present one in a personal name. In the tradition behind the Greek translation this old form has been accommodated to a more acceptable structure. הַיָּמֵינוּ = [hāmōy'at] or the like. Chemosh is well known from the Bible as the national god of Moab (Num. xxi 23; 1 Kg. xi 7, 33, etc.), and his name appears as an element in several Moabite royal names found in Assyrian sources. The second part, restored from el-Kerak (1), is unparalleled; the suggestion that it is a shortened form from the base NTN or YTN (Phoen.), 'to give' is no more than a guess. הַיָּמֵינוּ = [haddaybōni] cp. Septuagint Δαυβων (Josh. xiii 17), later with the diphthong reduced Δαυβων (Isa. xiv 2); the Massoretic vocalization [dibōn] may reflect the contemporary Arabic pronunciation; cp. 7; see note to chapt. IV, B, no. 9.

4. of salvation, because he delivered me from all assaults, and because he let me see my desire upon all my adversaries. Omri,
5. king of Israel, had oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land.
6. His son succeeded him, and he too said, I will oppress Moab. In my days he said it;
7. but I saw my desire upon him and his house, and Israel perished utterly for ever. Omri had taken possession of the land of
8. Medeba, and dwelt there his days and much of his son's days, forty years; but
9. Chemosh dwelt in it in my days. I rebuilt Baal-meon, and I made a reservoir in it; and I rebuilt
10. Kiriat-haim. Then the men of Gad had settled in the land of Ataroth from of old, and the king of
11. Israel had fortified Ataroth for himself; but I fought against the town and took it; and I slew all the inhabitants of
12. the town, a spectacle for Chemosh and Moab. I brought back from there the lion figure of David, and dragged it before Chemosh at Kerioth; and I settled in it the men of [šarōn] and the men
14. of [mharit]. Next Chemosh said to me, Go take Nebo from Israel. So I
15. went by night, and fought against it from break of dawn till noon; and I
16. took it and slew all in it, seven thousand men and women, both natives and aliens,
17. and female slaves; for I had devoted it to Ashtar-Chemosh. I took from thence the vessels
18. of Yahweh and dragged them before Chemosh. Then the king of Israel had fortified
19. Jahaz, and he occupied it while warring against me; but Chemosh drove him out before me.
20. I took from Moab two hundred men, his whole division, and I led it up against Jahaz and captured it,
21. annexing it to Dibon. I carried out repairs at [qarhō], on the parkland walls as well as the walls
22. of the acropolis; and I repaired its gates and repaired its towers; and
23. I repaired the king's residence, and I made banks for the reservoir at the spring inside