

at Oboth. ¹¹They set out from Oboth and encamped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness bordering on Moab to the east. ¹²From there they set out and encamped at the wadi Zered. ¹³From there they set out and encamped beyond the Arnon, that is, in the wilderness that extends from the territory of the Amorites. For the Arnon is the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. ¹⁴Therefore the Book of the Wars of the LORD speaks of "...Waheb in Suphah, and the wadis: the Arnon ¹⁵with its tributary wadis, stretched along the settled country of Ar, hugging the territory of Moab..."

¹⁶And from there to Beer, which is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Assemble the people that I may give them water." ¹⁷Then Israel sang this song:

Spring up, O well—sing to it—

¹⁸The well which the chieftains dug,

Which the nobles of the people started

With maces, with their own staffs.

And from Midbar to Mattanah, ¹⁹and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, ²⁰and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the country of Moab, at the peak of Pisgah, overlooking the wasteland.

THE ROUTE THROUGH TRANSJORDAN

(vv. 10–20)

This section offers a summary of the stations of Israel's march through Transjordan, given in fuller form in 33:41–49.

12. wadi Zered A "wadi" is a ravine through which a stream flows. (The word is from Arabic; in Hebrew it is *nahal*.) In present-day Israel most wadis are dry except during the rainy season. The wadi Zered (present-day Wadi el-Hesa), however, contains a perennial stream; it is 35 miles (56 km) long and flows into the southeastern end of the Dead Sea.

13. Arnon A perennial stream flowing midway into the eastern end of the Dead Sea through

¹¹וַיִּסְעוּ מֵאֹבֹת וַיֵּיחַנוּ בְּעֵי הָעֲבָרִים
בְּמִדְבַּר אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי מוֹאָב מִמִּזְרַח
הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: ¹²מִשָּׁם נָסְעוּ וַיֵּיחַנוּ בְּנַחַל זֶרֶד:
¹³מִשָּׁם נָסְעוּ וַיֵּיחַנוּ מֵעֶבֶר אֲרֹנוֹן אֲשֶׁר
בְּמִדְבַּר הַיָּצָא מִגְּבֹול הָאֱמֹרִי כִּי אֲרֹנוֹן
גְּבֹול מוֹאָב בֵּין מוֹאָב וּבֵין הָאֱמֹרִי:
¹⁴עַל-כֵּן יֹאמַר בְּסֵפֶר מִלְחָמַת יְהוָה
אֶת-וְהָב בְּסוּפָהּ וְאֶת-הַנַּחֲלִים אֲרֹנוֹן:
¹⁵וְאֲשֶׁר הַנַּחֲלִים אֲשֶׁר נָטָה לְשֶׁבֶת עַר
וַיִּנְשְׁעוּן לְגְבוּל מוֹאָב:

¹⁶וּמִשָּׁם בְּאֶרֶה הוּא הַבָּאָר אֲשֶׁר אָמַר
יְהוָה לְמֹשֶׁה אֶסֶף אֶת-הָעָם וְאֶתְנָה לָהֶם
מַיִם: ¹⁷סֵ אֲזַ יִשְׁרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-
הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת

עָלִי בָאָר עֲנוּ-לָהּ:

¹⁸בָּאָר חֲפְרִיָּה שָׂרִים

כְּרוּהָ נְדִיבֵי הָעָם

בְּמַחֲקָק בְּמִשְׁעָנָתָם

וּמִמִּדְבַּר מִתְנָה: ¹⁹וּמִמִּתְנָה נַחֲלִיאל

וּמִנַּחֲלִיאל בָּמוֹת: ²⁰וּמִבָּמוֹת הַגִּיאָ אֲשֶׁר

בְּשִׁדְהַ מוֹאָב רֹאשׁ הַפְּסָגָה וַיִּנְשָׁקְפָה עַל-

פְּנֵי הַיְּשִׁימֹן: ^פ שְׁבִיעִי
[רְבִיעִי]

the Wadi el-Mujib, a tremendous ravine that at one point is 2.5 miles (4 km) wide and 1650 feet (500 m) below the tops of the adjoining cliffs. The Arnon unites the waters of a complex of wadis.

territory The Israelites marched in the wilderness that lies to the east of the territories of the Moabites and Amorites.

14. Book of the Wars of the LORD According to Ibn Ezra, this was a separate book which, like the Book of Jashar (Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18), was an anthology of early songs describing the saga of Israel's battles at the beginning of its national existence.

17. Then Israel sang Similar words introduce the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15:1).

17. Encouraged by early military victories, sustained by having found oases in the wilder-

ness, Israel is now a singing community, grateful and reinvigorated.

²¹Israel now sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, ²²"Let me pass through your country. We will not turn off into fields or vineyards, and we will not drink water from wells. We will follow the king's highway until we have crossed your territory." ²³But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness. He came to Jahaz and engaged Israel in battle. ²⁴But Israel put them to the sword, and took possession of their land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as [Az] of the Ammonites, for Az marked the boundary of the Ammonites. ²⁵Israel took all those towns. And Israel settled in all the towns of the Amorites, in Heshbon and all its dependencies.

²⁶Now Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against a former king of Moab and taken all his land from him as far as the Arnon. ²⁷Therefore the bards would recite:

"Come to Heshbon; firmly built
And well founded is Sihon's city.

²⁸For fire went forth from Heshbon,
Flame from Sihon's city,
Consuming Ar of Moab,
The lords of Bamoth by the Arnon.

²⁹Woe to you, O Moab!

VICTORY OVER SIHON (vv. 21–32)

Moving northward along the eastern (wilderness) edge of Moab, Israel now seeks peaceful passage through the Amorite kingdom of Sihon as it did with Edom. Sihon confronts Israel with an armed force.

21. Israel now sent messengers Either at Moab's boundary from Iye-abarim (v. 11) or from the ford of the Arnon, which separates the Moabites and the Amorites (v. 13).

24. put them to the sword That is, Sihon's army. **Jabbok** One of the main eastern tributaries of the Jordan River.

25. its dependencies Literally, "its daughters." In this and in similar contexts, the distinc-

21 וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְאָכִים אֶל-סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ-הָאֱמֹרִי לֵאמֹר: ²² אֶעֱבְרָה בְּאַרְצְךָ לֹא נִטָּה בְּשָׂדֶה וּבְכָרֶם לֹא נִשְׁתָּה מִי בְּאֵר בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ נֵלֶךְ עַד אֲשֶׁר-נַעֲבֹר גְּבֻלְךָ: ²³ וְלֹא-נָתַן סִיחֹן אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵר בְּגִבְלוֹ וַיֹּאסֹף סִיחֹן אֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וַיֵּצֵא לִקְרֹאת יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמִּדְבָּרָה וַיָּבֹא יְהִצָּה וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: ²⁴ וַיַּכֵּהוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִי-חֶרֶב וַיִּירֹשׁ אֶת-אַרְצוֹ מֵאֲרֹנִן עַד-יַבֶּק עַד-בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן כִּי עָז גְּבֹול בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: ²⁵ וַיִּקַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל-הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-עָרֵי הָאֱמֹרִי בְּחֶשְׁבֹן וּבְכָל-בְּנֵי-הָיָה:

²⁶ כִּי חֶשְׁבֹן עִיר סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי הוּא וְהוּא נִלָּחֶם בְּמֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב הָרֹאשֹׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶת-כָּל-אַרְצוֹ מִיַּדוֹ עַד-אֲרֹנִן: ²⁷ עַל-כֵּן יֹאמְרוּ הַמְּשָׁלִים

בָּאוּ חֶשְׁבֹן תְּבִנָּה

וְתִכְוֹנֶן עִיר סִיחֹן:

²⁸ כִּי-אֵשׁ יֵצְאָה מִחֶשְׁבֹן

לְהָבָה מִקְרִית סִיחֹן

אֲכָלָה עַר מוֹאָב

בְּעָלֵי בָמוֹת אֲרֹנִן:

²⁹ אוֹי-לֶךְ מוֹאָב

tion between "mother" and "daughter" is that between walled city and open village.

27. bards Hebrew: *ha-mosh'lim*, those who recite *m'shalim* (sing. *mashal*)—from the stem *משל* (to be like). *M'shalim* included proverb, parable, riddle, and allegory. They could vary from pithy folk maxims to longer artistic compositions, such as Job's discourses and the contents of the Book of Proverbs. They also included taunt songs mocking a foe, such as the following poem, which first recalls the gloating of the newly defeated Amorites over the previously defeated Moabites.

28. fire went forth This image is frequently used for a ravaging army.

Ar A city or district near the Arnon River.

29. Woe Hebrew: *oi*, which also occurs as

You are undone, O people of Chemosh!

His sons are rendered fugitive

And his daughters captive

By an Amorite king, Sihon.”

³⁰Yet we have cast them down utterly,

Heshbon along with Dibon;

We have wrought desolation at Nophah,

Which is hard by Medeba.

³¹So Israel occupied the land of the Amorites.

³²Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its dependencies and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

³³They marched on and went up the road to Bashan, and King Og of Bashan, with all his people, came out to Edrei to engage them in battle.

³⁴But the LORD said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I give him and all his people and his land into your hand. You shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt in Heshbon.” ³⁵They defeated him and his sons and all his people, until no remnant was left him; and they took possession of his country.

אֲבֹדָתָ עַם-כְּמוֹשׁ

נָתַן בָּנָיו פְּלִיטִים

וּבְנֹתָיו בְּשָׁבִית

לְמֶלֶךְ אַמְרִי סִיחֹן:

³⁰ וַנִּירָם אֲבָד

חֶשְׁבֹן עַד-דִּיבּוֹן

וַנַּשִּׁים עַד-נָפַח

אֲשֹׁר* עַד-מִידְבָּא:

³¹ וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ הָאֲמֹרִי: ³² וַיִּשְׁלַח

מֹשֶׁה לְרַגֵּל אֶת-יַעְזֹר וַיִּלְכְּדוּ בְּנֵי יִירָשׁ

וַיִּוָּרֶשׁ אֶת-הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם:

³³ וַיִּפְּנוּ וַיַּעֲלוּ דֶרֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא עֹג

מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן לִקְרֹאתָם הוּא וְכָל-עַמּוֹ

לְמַלְחָמָה אֲדָרָעִי: ³⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-

מֹשֶׁה אֶל-תִּירָא אֹתוֹ כִּי בִידִי נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ

וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וְאֶת-אֶרְצוֹ וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ

כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר

יֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבֹן: ³⁵ וַיָּבוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו

וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ עַד-בִּלְתִּי הַשְׁאִיר-לוֹ שְׁרִיד

v. 30. נקוד על ר'

hoi. Exclaimed when facing death (1 Kings 13:30; Jer. 22:18) or predicting catastrophe (Isa. 3:9,11).

people of Chemosh Chemosh was the national deity of Moab. The phrase refers to the Moabites, just as the Israelites are called “the people of YHWH.”

are rendered Literally, “he rendered.” The god Chemosh willingly surrenders his subjects. In the ancient Near East, a nationwide disaster was often considered the result of a decision made by the national deity.

VICTORY OVER OG (vv. 33–35)

The campaign against Og differs from that against Sihon. No messengers are sent requesting passage, because the way across the Jordan has already been secured with the victory over Sihon. Also, whereas the battle against Sihon is undertaken at Israel’s initiative (the name of God does not appear in vv. 21–32), here the campaign against Og is expressly commis-

sioned by the Lord (v. 34). The land of Og, in contrast to Sihon’s land, is part of the Promised Land, which includes the Bashan (34:10–11). Thus the Lord commands the conquest of the Bashan as part of the conquest of Canaan.

33. Bashan This includes the area bounded by Mount Hermon to the north, Jebel Druze to the east, the hills east of the Sea of Galilee to the west, extending to about six miles (10 km) south of the Yarmuk River.

Og An Amorite. The prophet Amos described the Amorites as a people “Whose stature was like the cedar’s / And who was stout as the oak” (Amos 2:9). Og himself was remembered as the last of the giant Rephaim (Deut. 3:11; see also 2 Sam. 21:16–22).

Edrei Identified with modern Der’a, it was located near the Yarmuk River and the desert, probably at the southeast border of Og’s kingdom.