THE AMMONITE ONOMASTICON:
SEMANTIC PROBLEMS

M. O'CONNOR
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

The small corpus of epigraphic finds associated with the Ammonites testifies to a South Canaanite dialect closely allied to the dialects attested in Epigraphic Hebrew and Moabite finds and in the Hebrew Bible.[1] The Ammonite inscribed remains also testify to a characteristic South Canaanite onomasticon (see Excursus A at the close of this article). Most of the Ammonite names are of well-known Northwest Semitic types, involving common formants (for some exceptions, see Excursus B at the close of this article). Certain of the names, however, remain obscure, and I hope to clarify some of these here by considering a variety of semantic factors.

1. *Single-Unit Names Referring to the Non-Human World*

1.1. Plant Names

Two Ammonite names may refer to plants: *ʾlmg*[2] and *grgr*.[3] Personal names from plants are not common, but they are attested: note simply Ugaritic names in *gpn*, "vine"; *krm*, "vineyard"; and *yᶜhr*, "forest."[4] The

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[1]See K. P. Jackson, *The Ammonite Language of the Iron Age* (Chico, CA, 1983) (hereinafter *JAL*); W. E. Aufrecht, *A Bibliography of Ammonite Inscriptions*, Newsletter for Targumic and Cognate Studies, Supplement #1 (Toronto, 1982); and D. Sivan, "On the Grammar and Orthography of the Ammonite Findings," *UF* 14 (1982): 219-234. Aufrecht will shortly publish a full study of the Ammonite texts.

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[2]*JAL*, no. 61 (p. 84); K. P. Jackson, "Ammonite Personal Names in the Context of the West Semitic Onomasticon," *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN, 1983), no. 15 (hereinafter *JAPN*). No gloss is given, and no cognates are cited.

[3]L. G. Herr, *The Scripts of Ancient Semitic Seals* (Missoula, MT, 1978), no. 6 (p. 61) (hereinafter *HASS*) = *JAL*, no. 58 (p. 82); and *JAPN*, no. 39.

[4]F. Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, Studia Pohl, 1 (Rome, 1967), pp. 29-30.

more certain of the two is ʾlmg, "almug"; *anglice*, "Juniper." Ammonite ʾlmg is apparently cognate to Biblical Hebrew ʾalmuggîm (so in 1 Kgs 10:11,12) / ʾalgûmmîm (2 Chr 9:10,11). The Akkadian cognate, the earliest attestation of which dates back to the Old Akkadian period, *ela/emmakku* ~ *elemmaqqu* ~ Nuzi *ela/emmaḫḫu*, establishes some warrant for the Hebrew spelling in Chronicles (but is it a "correction" after the Akkadian or a "correction" at the textual level to Kings?). The drug use of the wood in the Mesopotamian sphere is probably not relevant to the onomastic use of the word.

Another plant name may be found in grgr. Among cognates previously noted are Biblical Hebrew *gargar*, "berry" (Isa. 17:6), and Arabic *jirjir*, "watercress," to which may be added Arabic *jirjir*, "beans," and Akkadian *gurgurru*, "(a plant)." [5] Whether these are relevant to the onomasticon is not clear.

1.2. Animal Names

Two animals are unquestionably implicated among Ammonite names.[6] The names ʿkbr[7] and ʿkbry[8] both reflect the mouse, and šʿl reflects the fox.[9] If the name bʿrʾ is not to be associated with the Midianite/Balaam Cycle complex of names tied to Luwian *paḫura*,[10] then it, too, may be an animal name; cf. Biblical Hebrew *bêʿîr*, "cattle, beasts of burden," whence *bāʿar*, "to be brutish," and Arabic *baʿîr*, "(beast of burden, ass, preeminently) camel."

1.3. Phenomena Names

The names of natural phenomena can yield personal names; and Ammonite brq, "lightning," is a splendid example.[11] Less obvious is ʿšnʾl "Il is smoke," [12] but the plethora of names in qṭr, "smoke," argues in favor

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[5]*AHW*, p. 299. Cf. nn. 21–22 below.

[6]For animal names, see, e.g., H. B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts* (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 151-152; I. J. Gelb, et al., *Computer-aided Analysis of Amorite*, Assyriological Studies, 21 (Chicago, 1980), p. 195; Gröndahl, pp. 27-28 (animal names constitute 20% of all one-word Northwest Semitic names at Ugarit); and F. L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*, Studia Pohl, 8 (Rome, 1972), p. 239.

[7]In the Nimrud Ostracon, J. Naveh, "The Ostracon from Nimrud: An Ammonite Name-List," *Maarav* 2 (1979-1980): 170; *JAPN*, no. 80.

[8]In the seal cited in Excursus A, no. 11.

[9]*HASS*, no. 15 (p. 64) = *JAL*, no. 46 (p. 76) and *JAPN*, no. 101. The gloss is beyond question and given in Naveh, p. 170; cf. Sivan, p. 225. Why Jackson registers no gloss is unexplained.

[10]See Excursus B.

[11]In a 6th-century ostracon, *JAL*, p. 54; cf. *JAPN*, no. 37.

[12]Probably Ammonite. *HASS*, no. 39 (p. 72) = *JAL*, no. 2 (p. 70), and *JAPN*, no. 87.

of the gloss. Amorite offers an early set, e.g., *ga-tar-a-bi, ga-ta-ar-DINGIR*,[13] and we may add the Murašu names [m]*DINGIR.MEŠ-qa-ta-ri* and [md]*AG[nabû]-qa-ta*[14] *-ri*.[15]

2. Single-Unit Names Referring to the Human World

2.1. Occupation Names

The most exalted class of the West Semitic occupation names is represented in the Ammonite onomasticon by two shortened forms, *ᶜbd*[16] and *ᶜbd⁾*, "servant."[17] A more mundane occupational name is *přš*, "horseman."[18] The vexatious *grgr*[19] may be likened to supposed Akkadian *gurgurru*, "craftsman,"[20] though that form may be *qurqurru*[21] and so of no more relevance than the *kurkurru* bird.[22] The name *šwḥr*[23] is so spelled as to make unlikely[24] reference to *šaḥar*, "dawn."[25] If the name is a participle, gloss "caravaneer" or the like; and compare Biblical Hebrew *šōmēr*[26] and *ᶜōbēd*[27] and Epigraphic Hebrew *ḥwrṣ*.[28] The text of the seal, *lšwḥr hnss*,

[13]Gelb, p. 342.

[14]*ta* sic, not *ṭa₂*, which is an earlier value.

[15]References in M. D. Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents* (Missoula, MT, 1976), pp. 14,30. For other *qt/ṭr* names in first-millennium cuneiform sources, see R. Zadok's review of Coogan, *BASOR*, no. 231 (1978), pp. 73-78 (at p. 76).

[16]Reading difficult. *HASS*, no. 37 (pp. 71-72) = *JAL*, no. 39 (p. 75), and *JAPN*, no. 74.

[17]Possibly Ammonite. *HASS*, no. 44 (p. 74) = *JAL*, no. 50 (p. 80), and *JAPN*, no. 75.

[18]Reading uncertain, as noted. *JAL*, p. 54; *JAPN*, no. 93. The Ugaritic name cited is not relevant; indeed much of the comparative data throughout *JAPN* cannot be relied on and needs to be checked.

[19]See above, 1.1 and n. 3.

[20]So *CAD*, G, 138.

[21]So *AHW*, p. 929.

[22]*AHW*, p. 511.

[23]*HASS*, no. 14 (p. 64) = *JAL*, no. 59 (p. 83), and JAPN, no. 97.

[24]For this name, if not for apparent congeners; e.g., Biblical Hebrew *šěḥaryah* (1 Chron 8:26); Punic *šḥrbᶜl* (Benz, p. 180); Ugaritic *ilšḥr*, *ᶜbdšḥr* (Gröndahl, p. 192).

[25]Whether as common noun or divine name; cf. J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1971), p. 113.

[26]1 Chron 7:32.

[27]Ruth 4:17.

[28]*HASS*, Hebrew Seal no. 90 (p. 122).

makes it impossible that *šḥr* is a *nomen occupationis*, but there is no oddity in a job title being used as a personal name.[29]

2.2. Quality Names

West Semitic names may refer to the qualities of a person or the birth itself. Thus Ammonite *gn*ʾ[30] may be associated with Arabic *janaʾ*, "hump-backed,"[31] and Ammonite *ḥgy*[32] reveals that its bearer was "(born on a) festive (day)." The notion that the name is distinctively Jewish[33] is ground-less[34]; festive names are common.[35]

3. *Some Verbs in Verbal Theophoric Names and Related Hypocoristica*

The dominant form of Northwest Semitic name is the verbal-sentence theophoric name: e.g., Ammonite *ʾlʾmṣ*, "El is strong"; *zkrʾl*, "El remembers (*or*, has remembered)"; *šmʿl*, "El hears (*or*, has heard)."[36] In the paragraphs that follow I discuss nine verbal

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[29]See, e.g., Gröndahl, pp. 28-29.

[30]In the Nimrud Ostracon, Naveh, p. 168. Naveh cites the root *gnn*, "to protect"; see further in n. 60.

[31]So G. L. Harding in glossing Safaitic *jnʾt*; see *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions*, Near and Middle East Series 8 (Toronto, 1971), p. 168. For physical defect names, see, e.g., Gröndahl, p. 29, and Benz, p. 240. Note also Palmyrene *ʿrgn*, "Lame," and *ʿbny*, "Fat"; Stark, pp. 103, 107.

[32]In the Nimrud Ostracon, Naveh, p. 169.

[33]So Stark, p. 87, though the genealogies in the Palmyrene texts afford no support. Note also the discussion of *ḥgt*.

[34]So also Naveh, p. 169. See, too, the valuable remarks of Coogan, p. 123.

[35]See, in addition to the references in the previous note, J. T. Milik's treatment of names like *šmšḥdyt*, "*Šamš* is (the) joy(ful banquet)"; *Recherches d'épigrafie proche-orientale*. I: *Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiases sémitiques à l'epoque romaine* (Paris, 1972), p. 381.

[36]For these names, see *JAPN*, nos. 9, 43, 99. There is no justification for the vocalization *šamaʿ<ʾ>il* (?); elision of the glottal stop is commonplace. Sivan refers to quiescence of ʾ, *and* elision, *and* scribal error in his garbled treatment of this name; see Sivan, pp. 222, 226-227. Benz is surely correct in treating the comparable phenomenon in Phoenician (!) and Punic names as a phonological fact, not a scribal one; see Benz, p. 203, and cf. F. V. Winnett and G. L. Harding, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, Near and Middle East Series 9 (Toronto, 1978), p. 30. The god Lim is alleged to be attested in Amorite names like Zimrilim and Yaḥdunlim; see Huffmon, pp. 226-227, and Gelb, pp. 145-146; but C. R. Krahmalhov has suggested that *lim* is an aphærized form of *ʾilim*; see his "Studies in Amorite Grammar" (Harvard dissertation, 1965). On *ʾlšmʿ*, *JAPN*, no. 24; note that *JAL*, nos. 5 and 33 appear to be the same seal.

formants which may be discerned, with varying degrees of certainty, in Ammonite names. Two are found in full theophores, *ʾlybr* and *dblbs*; one in a marked hypocoristicon, *bꜥṣꜥ*; and the remainder in names which do not reflect their proposed status as shortened names, *bṭš*, *grgr*, *ytb*, *ytyr*, *nqr*, and *šql*.[37]

3.1. *bṭš*, "to be strong" (?)

The name *bṭš*[38] may be a hypocoristicon from a name involving a root *bṭš*, "to be strong." (Cf. Arabic *baṭš*, "strength, valor"; the sense of the corresponding verb is specialized in Arabic: "to attack with violence, bear down on.") Such a name would be semantically similar to names in *gbr* and *lʾy*, and, more remotely, *ḏ/zmr*, *nṭ/ṣr*, *smk*, *ꜥdr*, *ꜥqb*, and *tmk*, and thus would not be out of line, though other Northwest Semitic onomastic uses of the root *bṭš* are lacking. If this explanation is correct, the sibilant would suggest that the name is Arabic rather than Canaanite.

3.2. *bꜥš*, "to descend unawares" (?); "to call forth" (?)

The Ammonite name *bꜥšʾ* is attested not only in an ostracon from Ḥisbān but also in Shalmaneser III's account of those who opposed him at the Battle of Qarqar.[39] The mid-ninth-century Ammonite king Baasha shares the name of a slightly earlier Israelite king.[40] Taking the name as a hypocoristicon of a verbal theophoric name, we may see in *bꜥš* a verb related to the birth process. One possibility is offered by Arabic *baꜥata*, "to call forth (scil., the child)."[41] A better prospect is provided by Arabic *baġata*, "to surprise, descend unawares,"[42] used as a causative[43] in the sense "(the god) made (the child) descend unawares" or perhaps "(the god) made (the child) a surprise." Such a name would be analogous to causative names in *gyḥ*, "to burst forth," e.g., Amorite *ya-gi-iḥ-ᵈIM*, "Haddu made (the child) burst forth."[44]

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[37]The apparent favoring of a hypocoristic understanding of these names is justifiable in the larger picture of West Semitic onomastics. Only one, *bṭš*, is even arguably a single-unit name on the etymologies proposed, though not all of these, I must repeat, are equally grounded.

[38]*HASS*, no. 31 (p. 69) = *JAL*, no. 53 (p. 81). *JAPN*, no. 53, offers no comment.

[39]F. M. Cross's Ḥisbān Ostracon IV; "Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon," *AUSS* 13 (1975): 1-20; see p. 6 for discussion of the name.

[40]1 Kgs 15:16.

[41]Note Safaitic *bꜥt*, in Winnett and Harding, p. 559.

[42]Also used in Safaitic, *bġt*; see ibid.

[43]Presumably a *Piꜥel*.

[44]See Huffmon, p. 180; Gelb, p. 299.

3.3. *brr*, "to purge, purify"

The name *ʾlybr*[45] is structurally ambiguous: It could be parsed *ʾly* + *br*, "my god is pure" (*br* an adjective);[46] *ʾly* + *br*, "my god purges" (*br* a suffixing verb-form); or *ʾl* + *ybr*, "El purges" (*ybr* a prefixing verb-form).[47] The cognate evidence[48] is not clear enough to permit certainty about the parsing,[49] or indeed about whether the root involved is the geminate *brr* or a metaplasm of it.

3.4. *g(w)r*, "to sojourn" (?)

The name *grgr*, mentioned earlier,[50] is clearly reduplicative, and reduplicating names are rare in the Semitic onomastica, as indeed are reduplicating word formations in general. The root *gwr* "to sojourn," yields two major classes of Northwest Semitic names, both involving the same term, *gēr*, in slightly different senses: *gr* + *DN*, e.g., Phoenician *grmlqrt*, "client of Melqart"; and *gr* + *GN*, e.g., Phoenician *grhkl*, "dweller of the temple."[51]

Forms in *grgr* are found in two Ugaritic poetic passages. The Keret epic uses a noun designating a military implement:[52]

46. *apnk ǵzr ilḫu*	**Then as for Gazru Ilḫu—**
47. *[m]rḫh yiḫd byd*	**He grabs his lance in his left hand,**
48. *[g]rgrh bm-ymn*	**his *grgr* in his right.**

The verb-form in the Story of the Beautiful Gods may be germane here:[53]

65. *šu ʿdbtk mdbr qdš*	**Lift your offering in the holy desert,**
66. *ṯm tgrgr lʾbnm wlʿṣm*	**sojourn there amid stone and trees,**
67. *šbʿ šnt tmt*	**for seven full years.**
67. *ṯmn nqpt*	**Eight (years) you shall go round.**

[45]*HASS*, no. 28 (p. 68), and its obverse *HASS*, no. 29 (p. 69) = *JAL*, no. 38 (p. 75).

[46]So *JAPN*, no. 11, with no references to the alternatives; cf. Sivan, p. 233.

[47]The statement in *JAPN* that the Ammonite onomastic "corpus includes only one . . . name containing [a] prefixing verb," viz., *ʾlydn*, is groundless. Even this supposed example is ambiguous, as *JAPN* duly notes; see *JAPN*, p. 517. Note also *ʾbyḥy*, *JAPN*, no. 1; more dubiously *ʾlyʿm*, *JAPN*, no. 13; and the *yšʿ* names; and *ytb* and *ytyr*, below.

[48]For Amorite, see the names s.v. *byr, Gelb, p. 285. For Ugaritic, cf. *brrn*, though Gröndahl, p. 121, is hesitant. For Phoenician, see the names s.v. *brn?*, Benz, p. 292. For pre-Islamic Arabic, see the names s.v. *br* in Harding, p. 99.

[49]Neither is it obscure enough to warrant the complete omission of it in *JAPN*.

[50]See 1.1 and n. 3; also 2.1.

[51]Benz, p. 14.

[52]UT 125 = CTA 16.I, lines 46-48.

[53]UT 52 = CTA 23, lines 65-67.

The common rendering of *tgrgr* as "sojourn"[54] is difficult in context.[55] The rarity of reduplication in ancient West Semitic nonetheless warrants considering this difficult verse usage alongside the obscure Ammonite name.

3.5. *dbl*, "to shape"

The early sixth-century seal inscribed *lᶜnmwt ʾmt dblbs* contains two difficult names, and the second, which contains the formant of interest, is the more difficult of the two. The name was originally read *rblbz*,[56] then *dblks*,[57] and finally *dblbs*.[58] It has, however, resisted understanding,[59] doubtless because both the divine name Bes[60] and the verb *dbl* are uncommon in the West Semitic onomasticon.

The Egyptian god Bes, a singing and dancing clown and dwarf god as well as a grotesque *Schutzgott*, is not literarily attested before the New Kingdom,[61] and his greatest popularity (and that of his female counterpart

[54]So, e.g., M. Pope, "Ups and Downs in El's Amours," *UF* 11 (1979): 701-708 (at 708).

[55]Thus, Pope renders the beginning of the previous line, *šu ᶜdb tk*, "Up, repair to . . . ," and translates *nqpt*, "cycles."

[56]A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Hebrew Seals* (London, 1950), p. 43.

[57]W. F. Albright, "Notes on Ammonite History," *Miscellanea biblica B. Ubach*, ed. R. M. Carbonell (Barcelona, 1953), pp. 131-136 (at 134).

[58]N. Avigad, "Ammonite and Moabite Seals," *Near Eastern Archæology in the Twentieth Century: Essays . . . Glueck*, ed. J. A. Sanders (Garden City, NY, 1970). pp. 284-295 (at 285, n. 10). This reading is taken up in *HASS*, no. 13 (pp. 63-64); *JAL*, no. 57 (pp. 81-82); *JAPN*, no. 40. On the possibility that this name is royal, see F. M. Cross, apud L. G. Herr, "The Servant of Baalis," p. 171.

[59]G. Garbini has proposed that it is structurally comparable to names of the *m + k + ʾl* type, viz., *ḏ* (the relative pronoun) + *b* (the proposition) + *lbs* (an unknown deity). This analysis is far-fetched. See "La lingua degli ammoniti," *Le lingue semitiche. Studi di storia linguistica* (Naples, 1972), pp. 97-108 (at 99-100). *JAPN* has no comment on the name.

[60]Note the *bs* names in Stark, p. 11. On the lone Egyptian name in Ammonite, *psmy*, see Excursus B; on Egyptian names in first-millennium West Semitic social contexts, see R. Zadok, "Phoenicians, Philistines, and Moabites in Mesopotamia," *BASOR*, no. 230 (1978), pp. 57-65 (at 60). For the Egyptian deities in the Phoenician-Punic onomasticon, Bastet (*ʾbst*), Isis (*ʾs*) and Osiris (*ʾsr*), see Benz, pp. 258-259, 271-273. *Schutzgötter* such as the *Sibittu/i* and chthonic deities like Nergal, Bau, and Gula are well known in Akkadian onomastics.

A related deity may be attested in the name *gnʾ* (see 2.2 above and n. 30), if it is derived from a *jinn* or demon of birth. A variety of other derivations related to the root *gnn* ("to protect")/*janna* ("to be possessed") could be proposed, so rich is the entangled semantic field of covering (and thus gardens), darkness, madness, and possession.

[61]Note especially the Amarna popular graffiti; C. Aldred, "Egypt: The Amarna Period and the End of the Eighteenth Dynasty," *CAH*[3], 2.2. 49-97 (at 89).

Beset) is post-Pharaonic. Though there are early iconographic witnesses, the late date of his first literary appearances has been prominent among factors that led Egyptologists to suspect him of being of foreign origin; scholars at the end of the nineteenth century wrote of an Arabian source,[62] and current students prefer to speak of an inner-African origin, citing Nubia and Punt.[63] Bes's associations with Hathor, an Egyptian deity attested in southwestern Asia, and with Rešep, a Canaanite god known in Egypt, are relevant here, as is his special association with Harpocrates and with birth and children.[64] The Egyptian iconography[65] is modified but recognizable in the Megiddo ivory forms and at Karatepe.[66] The commanding Iron II Asiatic version of Bes is the one found at Kuntillet ꜥAjrud, on the pithos with the Yahweh blessing.[67] There are Egyptian personal names in *bs*.[68]

The verbal element is *dbl*, cognate to Classical Arabic *dabala*, "to collect, shape (into lumps)," a root seen also in Biblical and later Hebrew *dĕbēlâ*, "lump of pressed figs." The few data I have found on the root in modern Arabic dialects are not coherent: Moroccan has *debla*, "gnat," "(portion of lamp) wick exposed (for burning)";[69] and Syrian has *dabal*, "to bore, torment," *dáble* (i.e., Form III?), "to be boring, demanding," and *dibel*, "to wilt, become languid," causative *dabbal*, and the adjective *dablān*, "wilted, languid."[70]

[62]K. Sethe, "Besas," *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa (Stuttgart, 1899), vol. 3, cols. 324-326.

[63]H. Altenmüller, "Bes," *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. W. Helck and E. Otto (Wiesbaden, 1975), vol. 1, cols. 720-724.

[64]V. Wilson, "The Iconography of Bes With Particular Reference to the Cypriot Evidence," *Levant* 7 (1975): 77-103; see pp. 94-95 for Rešep, and pp. 81-82 for Harpocrates.

[65]See Wilson and Altenmüller for plates.

[66]Megiddo: *ANEP*, no. 663; cf. H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 268. Karatepe: *ANEP*, no. 664; cf. Frankfort, pp. 308, 310.

[67]The materials from this site still await serious publication, *pace* the hectoring of W. G. Dever, "Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet ꜥAjrud," *BASOR*, no. 255 (1984), pp. 21-37, esp. 25-26. For the Bes figure, see Z. Meshel, "Did Yahweh Have A Consort?", *BARev* 5/2 (1979): 24-36 (at 31 and 36). On a Phoenician Bes, see J. W. Betlyon, *The Coinage and Mints of Phoenicia: The Pre-Alexandrian Period* (Chico, CA, 1982), pp. 26-27, 107.

[68]See briefly Altenmüller, col. 720; and more fully H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* (Glückstadt, 1935), 1:98, nos. 14-18 and 1:xxi. Ranke qualifies most of the names as late, viz., roughly first millennium B.C.E.

[69]R. S. Harrell, et al., *A Dictionary of Moroccan Arabic* (Washington, DC, 1966), p. 19.

[70]M. elꞋ-Massarani and B. C. Segal, *Arabsko-Russkij Slovar Sirijskogo Dialekta* (Moskva, 1978), p. 199. My thanks to E. McCarus and M. Hamlen.

The name belongs to the class of "DN made/formed [me?]" names, most commonly formed with *bny*[71] and perhaps also formed with *pḥr*, "to gather,"[72] and *šrb*, "to produce."[73] The metaphorical understanding of gestation would be related to the notion behind Jeremiah's remark, "Before I shaped you[74] in the womb, I knew you"[75]; the image is one of shaping and molding clay, whether potter's clay or humus.[76] This shaping metaphor is combined with one based in the root *qp*ᵓ, which is similar to *dbl*, and some others in one of Job's complaints:[77]

10:9a.   Remember: you made me (ᶜ*śytny*) as from clay (*kḥmr*).
10:9b.   Will you return me to dust?
10:10a. Did you not pour me (*ttykny*) as from milk (*kḥlb*)?
10:10b. Did you not congeal me (*tqpy*ᵓ*ny*) as from rennet (*kagĕbinâ*)?
10:11a. You clothed me with skin and flesh.
10:11b. With bones and sinews you wove me.

The cosmological projection of these notions in Ps 139 uses some of the same vocabulary. The hapax *gĕbinâ*, if derived from a root for, say, curdling or the like, may suggest an etymology for the Murašu name ᵐ*ga-ban-na-a*.[78]

3.6. *ytb*, "to rest" (?)

One of the Ḥisbān ostraca records disbursements to, among others, *ytb*.[79] The root *ytb*, "to rest,"[80] is well paralleled semantically, and Phoenician and North Arabic cognates are known. The form could be either prefixing or suffixing.[81]

[71]See, e.g., Huffmon, p. 177; Benz, p. 288.

[72]Gelb, p. 28; Huffmon, p. 254.

[73]Coogan, pp. 85-86.

[74]MT Q ᵓ*eṣṣārkā*, K ᵓ*ṣwrk*.

[75]Jer 1:5a.

[76]Gen 2:7; contrast Ps 22:10.

[77]On the language of creation here, see F. I. Andersen, *Job* (Downers Grove, IL, 1976), pp. 154, 248, and more generally pp. 228, 274, 278.

[78]See Coogan, pp. 19, 70. On the hapax and apparent relatives, see H. R. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Missoula, MT, 1978), p. 141.

[79]Cross, p. 7.

[80]Cognate to Arabic *wataba*; so Cross, in preference to (1) *tabba*, "to perish" (originally proposed by G. Ryckmans and hesitantly affirmed by Harding, p. 657), and (2) *tāba*, "to repent" (also noted by Harding, ad loc.). The first is inappropriate semantically, and the second is an Aramaic loan. Cross's discussion is clear and persuasive, but *JAPN*, no. 55, omits all reference to it and cites only Safaitic and Thamudic cognates, implicitly rejecting Cross's citation of *ytb*ᶜ*l* (<*ytb* + *b*ᶜ*l*), Benz, p. 129, and ᶜ*šrtrty*[*t*]b, Benz, p. 328.

[81]*Pace* the warrantless anti-*yqtl Tendenz* in *JAPN*.

3.7. *ytr*, "to exceed" (?)

The name *ytyr*[82] is difficult,[83] but hardly beyond inquiry.[84] Is the relevant root *ytr*, "to exceed, be surpassing," as in Amorite (e.g., *ya-te-ir-na-zi*, *yatīr-naśi*, "The [divine] Prince is surpassing"),[85] Biblical Hebrew, Phoenician-Punic, and perhaps Ugaritic names?[86] If so, the name may be a prefixing finite verb form.[87]

3.8. *nqr*, "to pierce"

One of the Ḥisbān ostraca includes the name *nqr*.[88] It is possible that *nqr* is a name referring to a physical defect,[89] derived from a cognate of Biblical Hebrew *nqr*, "to bore, dig," used in four of its six biblical occurrences of boring out an eye and in another of the wearing down of bones.[90]

I would propose rather that we should see here a birth metaphor, yielding the sense that "(the god) has pierced (the womb and withdrawn the child)." The opening lines of Isa 51, which contain the remaining biblical occurrence of *nqr*, are relevant:

> 51:1a Listen to me, justice-chasers,
> 51:1b. Yahweh-seekers.
> 51:1c. Look to the rock you were hewn from (*ḥuṣṣabtem*),
> 51:1d. To the pit-piercing (*maqqebet bôr*) you were dug from (*nuqqartem*).
> 51:2a. Look to Abraham, your father,
> 51:2b. To Sarah, who writhed with you.
> 51:2c. It was as one that I called him.
> 51:2d. I blessed him and multiplied him.

Line 1d is tied to 2b, and both refer to the female role in procreation; note in 1d the noun *maqqebet*, from the same root that yields *nĕqēbâ*, "(*perforandum>*) female," and in 2a the pleonasm of *ḥwl* (*Polel*) and *ḥll*, "to pierce." The imagery of the Book of Isaiah is here, as often, too convoluted for a brief reading, especially as the language here is to be reused

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[82]*JAL*, no. 29 (p. 73).

[83]So ibid.

[84]But there is no gloss or commentary at *JAPN*, no. 56.

[85]Gelb, pp. 279-280; cf. Huffmon, pp. 217-218.

[86]See Zadok, "Phoenicians, Philistines," p. 57, for references.

[87]See also n. 81.

[88]*JAL*, p. 54; cf. *JAPN*, no. 71, which cites only a Safaitic cognate and proposes no gloss.

[89]For the type, see above, 2.2.

[90]Job 30:17.

in a description of the cosmological defeat of Rahab, in 51:9;[91] but notions of birthing are clearly involved in 51:1.

Analogous names are those involving the root *pth*, "to open (here, the womb)."[92] The recently published texts associated with the Nabatean queen Paṣa³el have drawn attention to her name, which may be rendered "God has opened (the womb)."[93]

3.9. *šql*, "to weigh out"

The name *šql*, used in a Ḥisbān ostracon,[94] is hardly to be glossed "Shekel,"[95] as if in anticipation of the medieval and modern Jewish custom of redeeming a first-born son with a coin paid to a hereditary priest. Render rather as a hypocoristicon for the name form *DN + šql*, "DN has weighed out." For cognates, note Amorite *ši-iq-li-im*, *ši-iq-la-nu(-um)/-nim*, *šu-gul-tum*, and *ša-ta-aq-lum*.[96] Note similar names in *spr*, "to count" (Biblical Hebrew *mispār*,[97] *misperet*,[98] *sōperet*[99]), in *mny*, "to reckon" (in Akkadian,[100] and perhaps Amorite,[101] and Ugaritic[102]), and in *ḥšb*, "to reckon" (in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Phoenician[103]).

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[91]Note *mḥṣbt* and *mḥwllt*, root *ḥll*!

[92]See the discussion of Huffmon, pp. 255-256, and Coogan, p. 82.

[93]So Stark, p. 109, contra J. T. Milik and J. Starcky, "Inscriptions récemment découvertes à Petra," *ADAJ*, 20 (1975): 111-130 (at 114), who render "God has delivered." On the queen, see J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 156, 159; G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 63.

[94]*JAL*, p. 54.

[95]So *JAPN*, no. 102.

[96]Gelb, pp. 33, 363.

[97]Ezra 2:2.

[98]Neh 7:7.

[99]Neh 7:57.

[100]K. L. Tallqvist, *Assyrian Personal Names* (Helsinki, 1914), p. 294.

[101]Note the names s.v. *mn* in Huffmon, p. 231; cf. Gelb, p. 25.

[102]See Gröndahl, p. 159.

[103]See Zadok, "Phoenicians, Philistines," p. 60. The Phoenician name *mksp* probably does not belong here; see N. Avigad, "Gleanings from Unpublished Ancient Seals," *BASOR*, no. 230 (1978), pp. 67-69 (at 68). It should be noted, however, that the sense of a root relevant to the onomasticon is not always evident; Northwest Semitic names involving the root *ndb* are common, but is the sense "to be noble" (so, e.g., *JAPN*, no. 17, etc.), "to grant, donate" (Stark, p. 99; Gelb, p. 27; Sivan, p. 232); or "to incite and impell" (Zadok, in *BASOR*, no. 231, p. 76).

EXCURSUS A

L. G. Herr, *The Scripts of Ancient Northwest Semitic Seals* (Missoula, MT, 1978) (hereinafter *HASS*) includes most of the seal corpus, a primary source for the names. The onomasticon is preliminarily surveyed in K. P. Jackson, "Ammonite Personal Names in the Context of the West Semitic Onomasticon," *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN, 1983), pp. 507-521 (hereinafter *JAPN*). Reference will also be made to K. P. Jackson, *The Ammonite Language of the Iron Age* (Chico, CA, 1983) (hereinafter *JAL*).

A number of texts with names have been published since *JAPN* appeared; the following list is doubtless incomplete:

(1) *ᵓbyḥy* on a 6th-century seal published by N. Avigad, "Some Decorated West Semitic Seals," *IEJ*, 35 (1985): 1-7 (at 1-3). This name is attested in a 7th-century seal; *HASS*, no. 4 (p. 60) = *JAL*, no. 40 (pp. 75-76); cf. *JAPN*, no. 1.

(2) *ᵓmṣᵓ* on a 7th-century seal published by Sabri Abbadi, "Ein neues ammonitisches Siegel," *ZDPV*, 95 (1979); 36-38. The name is a hypocoristicon comparable to the name *ᵓlᵓmṣ*, found in a 7th-century seal; *HASS*, no. 5 (pp. 60-61) = *JAL*, no. 44 (p. 76); cf. *JAPN*, no. 9.

(3) *bᶜlyšᶜ* on a seal from Tell el-ᶜUmeiri published by L. T. Geraty, "The Andrews University Madaba Plains Project: A Preliminary Report on the First Season at Tell el-ᶜUmeiri," *AUSS* 23 (1985): 85-110; see also W. H. Shea, "Mutilation of Foreign Names by Bible Writers: A Possible Example from Tell el-ᶜUmeiri," *AUSS* 23 (1985): 111-115; L. G. Herr, "The Servant of Baalis," *BA* 48 (1985): 169-172; idem, "Is the Spelling of 'Baalis' in Jeremiah 40:14 a Mutilation?", *AUSS* 23 (1985): 187-191. The name is comparable to the well-attested *ᵓlyšᶜ*, found in: (a) a late 7th-century seal, *HASS*, no. 15 (p. 64) = *JAL*, no. 46 (p. 76); (b) another late 7th-century seal, *HASS*, no. 34 (p. 70) = *JAL*, no. 54 (p. 81); (c) an early 6th-century seal, *HASS*, no. 6 (p. 61) = *JAL*, no. 58 (p. 82); and (d) an 8th-century text, J. Naveh, "The Ostracon from Nimrud: An Ammonite Name-List," *MAARAV* 2 (1979–1980), pp. 163-171, in line 11 (see p. 169). Cf. on *ᵓlyšᶜ*, *JAPN*, no. 14.

(4) *ḥmyws* (sic!) (feminine) on a seal from Tell el-Mazar of uncertain date, published by Khair Yassine and Pierre Bordreuil, "Deux cachets ouest semitiques inscrits decouvertes à Tell Mazar," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan I*, ed. A. Hadidi (Amman, 1982), pp. 192-194. The name is unknown and difficult.

(5) *ḥml* on a 6th-century seal from Tell el-Mazar, published by Yassine and Bordreuil, pp. 192-194. The name is unknown and difficult.

(6) *mlkm ᵓwr*, the first name on the seal cited sub (3), above. This name is comparable to *ᵓlᵓwr*, found on an Ammonite ostracon from Ḥisbān, of which the editio princeps has not appeared (see *JAL*, p. 54), and on a seal (*JAL*, no. 34; cf. *JAPN*, no. 8).

(7) *mlkmgd* on a 6th-century seal published by N. Avigad, "Some Decorated West Semitic Seals," *IEJ* 35 (1985): 4-6. This is apparently the first Ammonite *gd* name.

(8) *smt*, the patronymic on the seal cited sub (4), above.

(9) *ᶜzy ᵓ*, the patronymic on the seal cited sub (1), above. This name is comparable to *ᶜz ᵓ* on the Nimrud Ostracon, Naveh, p. 168; cf. *JAPN*, no. 77.

(10) *ᶜkbry*, the main name on the seal cited sub (2), above. This name also has a cognate on the Nimrud Ostracon, *ᶜkbr*, Naveh, p. 170; cf. *JAPN* no. 80.

(11) *štt*, the patronymic on the seal cited sub (5), above. The reading is difficult.

Of these eleven names, only one (no. 1) was previously attested. The names from Tell el-Mazar (nos. 4, 5, 8, 11) are all difficult, while the others are well paralleled. The Yassin-Bordreuil names are discussed further by E. A. Knauf, "Supplementa Ismaelitica," *Biblische Notizien* 25 (1984): 22-26.

EXCURSUS B

Almost all the names are plainly Northwest Semitic. There are a few exceptions: (1) **Egyptian**: *psmy*, a hypocoristicon of Egyptian *psmṯk*, found in a late-6th-century ostracon from Ḥisbān, the inscriptional first-fruits of that site, published by F. M. Cross, "An Ostracon from Heshbon," *AUSS* 7 (1969): 223-229, and in *JAL* as Heshbon 5 (p. 55); on *psmy*, see *JAPN*, no. 92. On the Egyptian god *bs*, see the main article above, sub 3.5. (2) **Akkadian**: *mngᵓnrt*, a mid-7th-century seal, *HASS*, no. 9 (p. 62) = *JAL*, no. 36 (p. 74); cf. *JAPN*, no. 62. (3) **Anatolian** (?): *ᵓwᵓ*, a late-7th-century seal, *HASS*, no. 16 (p. 64) = *JAL*, no. 47 (p. 77). Jackson (*JAPN*, no. 5) cites the Midianite name Ewi (Num 31:8, Josh 13:21) and offers a groundless gloss, "refuge." George Mendenhall has observed that the Midianite name may be Anatolian, as may be others in the list of Midianite chiefs, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 167-169. It would be naive to suppose that attestations in other Iron-Age and later Semitic onomastica constitute discomfirming evidence. The name *bᶜrᵓ*, on a 7th-century seal (*JAL*, no. 27, [p. 73]), may also be Anatolian in background, related to Luwian *paḫura*; cf. Mendenhall, pp. 109, 169.

I hope to treat various syntactic and structural difficulties in the Ammonite onomasticon elsewhere. Several names remain quite resistant to discussion, notably *ᵓlᵓ* (*JAPN*, no. 7), *bnny* (related to *bn*?, a *quṭayl* form?; *JAPN*, no. 32), *ḥṭš* (*JAPN*, no. 46), and *ṣhr* ("shield"?; *JAPN*, no. 94).