THE AMMONITE ONOMASTICON:
SEMANTIC PROBLEMS

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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: ḫmlg² and ḫgr.³ Personal names from plants are not common, but they are attested: note simply Ugaritic names in gpn, "vine"; krm, "vineyard"; and yḥhr, "forest."⁴ The


K. P. Jackson and Philip Schmitz read an earlier draft of the present essay and thanks are due Schmitz for several comments.

²JAL, 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, no cognates are cited.

³L. 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.

more certain of the two is 'lmg, “almug”; anglice, “Juniper.” Ammonite 'lmg is apparently cognate to Biblical Hebrew 'almuggîm (so in 1 Kgs 10:11,12) / 'algiimmîm (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).” Whether these are relevant to the onomasticon is not clear.

1.2. Animal Names

Two animals are unquestionably implicated among Ammonite names. The names 'kbr7 and 'kbry8 both reflect the mouse, and 5'l reflects the fox.9 If the name b'q5 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 bê'q5, “cattle, beasts of burden,” whence bâ'qar, “to be brutish,” and Arabic ba'qar, “(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 'qîn 'îl “Il is smoke,”12 but the plethora of names in qîr, “smoke,” argues in favor

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5AHW, p. 299. Cf. nn. 21–22 below.
6For 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.
8In the seal cited in Excursus A, no. 11.
9HASS, 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.
10See Excursus B.
11In a 6th-century ostracon, JAL, p. 54; cf. JAPN, no. 37.
12Probably 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, and we may add the Murašu names mDINGIR.MES-qa-ta-ri and mDAG[nabû]-qa-ta-ri.

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, 'bd and 'bd, "servant." A more mundane occupational name is pšš, "horseman." The vexatious grgrl may be likened to supposed Akkadian gurgurru, "craftsmen," though that form may be qurqurru and so of no more relevance than the kurkurru bird. The name šwḥr is so spelled as to make unlikely reference to šahar, "dawn." If the name is a participle, gloss "caravaneer" or the like; and compare Biblical Hebrew sšrnZr and 'obZd and Epigraphic Hebrew hwrš. The text of the seal, lšwḥr hnss,

13Gelb, p. 342.
14ta sic, not ta, which is an earlier value.
15References in M. D. Coogan, West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašu Documents (Missoula, MT, 1976), pp. 14,30. For other qt/š names in first-millennium cuneiform sources, see R. Zadok's review of Coogan, BASOR, no. 231 (1978), pp. 73-78 (at p. 76).
16Reading difficult. HASS, no. 37 (pp. 71-72) = JAL, no. 39 (p. 75), and JAPN, no. 74.
17Possibly Ammonite. HASS, no. 44 (p. 74) = JAL, no. 50 (p. 80), and JAPN, no. 75.
18Reading 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.
19See above, 1.1 and n. 3.
20So CAD, G, 138.
21So AHW, p. 929.
22AHW, p. 511.
23HASS, no. 14 (p. 64) = JAL, no. 59 (p. 83), and JAPN, no. 97.
24For this name, if not for apparent congeners; e.g., Biblical Hebrew šěharyah (1 Chron 8:26); Punic šhrb (Benz, p. 180); Ugaritic īšhr, 'bdšhr (Gröndahl, p. 192).
261 Chron 7:32.
27Ruth 4:17.
28HASS, Hebrew Seal no. 90 (p. 122).
makes it impossible that šhr 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*\(^{30}\) may be associated with Arabic *jana*?, “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 groundless\(^{34}\); 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 *'l'mj*, “El is strong”; *zkr*‘l, “El remembers (or, has remembered)”; *šm* cl, “El hears (or, has heard).”\(^{36}\)

\(^{29}\)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 *jnšt*; 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 *'rgn*, “Lame,” and *'bny*, “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 *šmsḥdyt*, “Šams is (the) joy(ful) banquet”\(^{2}\); *Recherches d’épigraphie proche-orientale*. I: *Dédicaces faîtes par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiases sémitiques à l’époque romaine* (Paris, 1972), p. 381.

\(^{36}\)For these names, see *JAPN*, nos. 9, 43, 99. There is no justification for the vocalization *šama*<*>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 Huffman, pp. 226-227, and Gelb, pp. 145-146; but C. R. Krahmaln has suggested that *lim* is an aphérized form of ʾ*ilim*; see his “Studies in Amorite Grammar” (Harvard dissertation, 1965). On *'lšm*, *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, ²lybr and dblbs; one in a marked hypocoristicon, b ⁵ṣ; and the remainder in names which do not reflect their proposed status as shortened names, bṭṣ, grgr, ytb, ytyr, nqr, and ṣql.

3.1. bṭṣ, “to be strong” (?)

The name bṭṣ¹ may be a hypocoristicon from a name involving a root bṭṣ, “to be strong.” (Cf. Arabic batṣ, “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 ḫy, and, more remotely,  INTERRUPTION/zmr, nt/ṣr, smk, ḥdr, ʿqb, and tmk, and thus would not be out of line, though other Northwest Semitic onomastic uses of the root bṭṣ are lacking. If this explanation is correct, the sibilant would suggest that the name is Arabic rather than Canaanite.

3.2. b ⁵ṣ, “to descend unawares” (?) “to call forth” (?)

The Ammonite name b ⁵ṣ 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 b ⁵ṣ a verb related to the birth process. One possibility is offered by Arabic baṣaṭa, “to call forth (scil., the child).”⁴¹ A better prospect is provided by Arabic baḡaṭa, “to surprise, descend unawares,”⁴² used as a causative⁴³ 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-iḫ-IM, “Haddu made (the child) burst forth.”⁴⁴

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

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

³⁹F. M. Cross’s Ḥisbān Ostraca IV; “Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon,” AUSS 13 (1975): 1-20; see p. 6 for discussion of the name.

⁴⁰1 Kgs 15:16.

⁴¹Note Safaitic b ⁵ṭ, in Winnett and Harding, p. 559.

⁴²Also used in Safaitic, būṭ; see ibid.

⁴³Presumably a Piʿel.

⁴⁴See Huffmon, p. 180; Gelb, p. 299.
3.3. *brr*, "to purge, purify"

The name *lyb* is structurally ambiguous: It could be parsed *ly* + *br*, "my god is pure" (*br* an adjective); *ly* + *br*, "my god purges" (*br* a suffixing verb-form); or *l* + *ybr*, "El purges" (*ybr* a prefixing verb-form). The cognate evidence is not clear enough to permit certainty about the parsing, 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, 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, *gr*, in slightly different senses: *gr* + *DN*, e.g., Phoenician *grmlqrt*, "client of Melqart"; and *gr* + *GN*, e.g., Phoenician *grhkl*, "dweller of the temple."

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

46. *apnk* ǧzr ʾlhū Then as for Gazru Ilhu—
47. [m*jv*ḥḥ *yiḥd* byd He grabs his lance in his left hand, his *grgr* in his right.
48. *[g]*grḥ *bm-ymn*

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

65. ʾšu ʾdbk mdbr qdš Lift your offering in the holy desert,
66. ʾšm tgrgr lʾbnm wʾšm sojourn there amid stone and trees, for seven full years.
67. ʾšbʾ ʾšnt tmt Eight (years) you shall go round.
67. ʾṭmn ʾnqpt

45*HASS*, no. 28 (p. 68), and its obverse *HASS*, no. 29 (p. 69) = *JAL*, no. 38 (p. 75).
46So *JAPN*, no. 11, with no references to the alternatives; cf. Sivan, p. 233.
47The statement in *JAPN* that the Ammonite onomastic "corpus includes only one . . . name containing [a] prefixing verb," viz., *lydn*, is groundless. Even this supposed example is ambiguous, as *JAPN* duly notes; see *JAPN*, p. 517. Note also *byhy*, *JAPN*, no. 1; more dubiously *ly* *m*, *JAPN*, no. 13; and the *yš* names; and *ytb* and *ytyr*, below.
48For 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. *brrn?,* Benz, p. 292. For pre-Islamic Arabic, see the names s.v. *br* in Harding, p. 99.
49Neither is it obscure enough to warrant the complete omission of it in *JAPN*.
50See 1.1 and n. 3; also 2.1.
52*UT* 125 = *CTA* 16.1, lines 46-48.
53*UT* 52 = *CTA* 23, lines 65-67.
The common rendering of *tgrgr* as "sojourn" is difficult in context. 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 ṣmt 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 *rblbs*, then *dblks*, and finally *dblbs*. It has, however, resisted understanding, doubtless because both the divine name Bes 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, and his greatest popularity (and that of his female counterpart...)

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55Thus, Pope renders the beginning of the previous line, *ṣu ḏb tk*, "Up, repair to . . .," and translates *naqt*, "cycles."
58N. Avigad, "Ammonite and Moabite Seals," *Near Eastern Archaeology 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.
59G. Garbini has proposed that it is structurally comparable to names of the *m + k + ḫl* 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.
60Note the *ḥs* names in Stark, p. 11. On the lone Egyptian name in Ammonite, *ḥsmy*, 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 (*ḥbst*), Isis (*ḥs*) and Osiris (*ḥsr*), see Benz, pp. 258-259, 271-273. Schutzgötter such as the Sibitti/i and chthonic deities like Nergal, Bau, and Gula are well known in Akkadian onomastics.
61A related deity may be attested in the name *gn* (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.
62Note especially the Amarna popular graffiti; C. Aldred, "Egypt: The Amarna Period and the End of the Eighteenth Dynasty," *CAH* 5, 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, and current students prefer to speak of an inner-African origin, citing Nubia and Punt. 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. The Egyptian iconography is modified but recognizable in the Megiddo ivory forms and at Karatepe. The commanding Iron II Asiatic version of Bes is the one found at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, on the pithos with the Yahweh blessing. There are Egyptian personal names in bs.

The verbal element is dbl, cognate to Classical Arabic dabala, “to collect, shape (into lumps),” a root seen also in Biblical and later Hebrew dēbēlā, “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)”; 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 dabliin, “wilted, languid.”

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

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{10:9a.} Remember: you made me (\textit{ṣytnty}) as from clay (\textit{kḥmr}).
\item \textbf{10:9b.} Will you return me to dust?
\item \textbf{10:10a.} Did you not pour me (\textit{ttyknty}) as from milk (\textit{khlb})?
\item \textbf{10:10b.} Did you not congeal me (\textit{tqpytnty}) as from rennet (\textit{kagēbinā})?
\item \textbf{10:11a.} You clothed me with skin and flesh.
\item \textbf{10:11b.} With bones and sinews you wove me.
\end{enumerate}

The cosmological projection of these notions in Ps 139 uses some of the same vocabulary. The hapax \textit{gēbinā}, if derived from a root for, say, curdling or the like, may suggest an etymology for the Murašu name \textit{mga-ban-na-a}.\textsuperscript{78}

\section*{3.6. \textit{ytb}, “to rest” (?)}

One of the Ḥisbān ostraca records disbursements to, among others, \textit{ytb}.\textsuperscript{79} The root \textit{ytb}, “to rest,”\textsuperscript{80} is well paralleled semantically, and Phoenician and North Arabic cognates are known. The form could be either prefixing or suffixing.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{71}See, e.g., Huffmon, p. 177; Benz, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{72}Gelb, p. 28; Huffmon, p. 254.
\textsuperscript{73}Coogan, pp. 85-86.
\textsuperscript{74}MT Q \textit{šešārkā}, K \textit{šwrk}.
\textsuperscript{75}Jer 1:5a.
\textsuperscript{76}Gen 2:7; contrast Ps 22:10.
\textsuperscript{77}On the language of creation here, see F. I. Andersen, \textit{Job} (Downers Grove, IL, 1976), pp. 154, 248, and more generally pp. 228, 274, 278.
\textsuperscript{78}See Coogan, pp. 19, 70. On the hapax and apparent relatives, see H. R. Cohen, \textit{Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic} (Missoula, MT, 1978), p. 141.
\textsuperscript{79}Cross, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{80}Cognate to Arabic \textit{wataba}; so Cross, in preference to (1) \textit{tabba}, “to perish” (originally proposed by G. Ryckmans and hesitantly affirmed by Harding, p. 657), and (2) \textit{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 \textit{JAPN}, no. 55, omits all reference to it and cites only Safaitic and Thamudic cognates, implicitly rejecting Cross’s citation of \textit{ytb} \textit{ cif} (<\textit{ytb} + \textit{b cif}), Benz, p. 129, and \textit{ṣfrtty[t]b}, Benz, p. 328.
\textsuperscript{81}Pace the warrantless anti-\textit{yqt} \textit{tl Tendenz} in \textit{JAPN}. 

3.7. **ytr, “to exceed” (?)**

The name **ytyr** is difficult, but hardly beyond inquiry. Is the relevant root **ytr**, “to exceed, be surpassing,” as in Amorite (*e.g.*, *ya-te-i*-*n*-*a*-zi, *yatir-naši*, “The [divine] Prince is surpassing”), Biblical Hebrew, Phoenician-Punic, and perhaps Ugaritic names? If so, the name may be a prefixing finite verb form.

3.8. **nqr, “to pierce”**

One of the Ḥisbān ostraca includes the name **nqr**. It is possible that **nqr** is a name referring to a physical defect, 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.

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 (*hus-sa*b*tem*),
51:1d. To the pit-piercing (*maqqebet bōr*) 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 *nēqēbā*/*p*/* (female),” and in 2a the pleonasm of *hw*l (*Po*-*le*l) and *h*l, “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.
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 ḫṯḥ, “to open (here, the womb).”92 The recently published texts associated with the Nabatean queen Paṣaʿel have drawn attention to her name, which may be rendered “God has opened (the womb).”93

3.9. ṣql, “to weigh out”

The name ṣql, 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 + ṣql, “DN has weighed out.” For cognates, note Amorite ʾi-iq-li-im, ʾi-iq-la-nu(-um)/-nim, ʾu-gul-lum, and ʾa-la-aq-lum.96 Note similar names in spr, “to count” (Biblical Hebrew mistrēr,97 mistrēret,98 ʾṣperet99), in mny, “to reckon” (in Akkadian,100 and perhaps Amorite,101 and Ugaritic102), and in ḫšb, “to reckon” (in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Phoenician103).

91See the discussion of Huffman, pp. 255-256, and Coogan, p. 82.
93JAL, p. 54.
94JAPN, no. 102.
95Gelb, pp. 33, 363.
96Ezra 2:2.
97Neh 7:7.
98Neh 7:57.
99JAL, p. 54.
101Note the names s.v. mn in Huffman, p. 231; cf. Gelb, p. 25.
102See Gröndahl, p. 159.
103See Zadok, “Phoenicians, Philistines,” p. 60. The Phoenician name mks ṣ 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


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

1. byhy 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. mš 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 lyš, found in a 7th-century seal; HASS, no. 5 (pp. 60-61) = JAL, no. 44 (p. 76); cf. JAPN, no. 9.


5. hml 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\(^2\)wr, the first name on the seal cited sub (3), above. This name is comparable to \(^3l\)wr, found on an Ammonite ostracon from Hisbān, of which the editio princeps has not appeared (see JAL, p. 54), and on a seal (JAL, no. 34; cf. JAPN, no. 8).

(7) mlkm\(^gd\) 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) \(^z\)zy\(^3\), the patronymic on the seal cited sub (1), above. This name is comparable to \(^5z\) on the Nimrud Ostracon, Naveh, p. 168; cf. JAPN, no. 77.

(10) \(^c\)kbry, the main name on the seal cited sub (2), above. This name also has a cognate on the Nimrud Ostracon, \(^c\)kbr, Naveh, p. 170; cf. JAPN no. 80.

(11) \(^s\)tt, 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**: psm\(^y\), a hypocoristicon of Egyptian psm\(^t\)k, found in a late-6th-century ostracon from Hisbān, 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 psm\(^y\), see JAPN, no. 92. On the Egyptian god bs, see the main article above, sub 3.5. (2) **Akkadian**: mng\(^n\)rt, a mid-7th-century seal, HASS, no. 9 (p. 62) = JAL, no. 36 (p. 74); cf. JAPN, no. 62. (3) **Anatolian (?)**: \(^3w\)\(^2\), 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 disconfirming evidence. The name \(^c\)r\(^3\), on a 7th-century seal (JAL, no. 27, [p. 73]), may also be Anatolian in background, related to Luwian pahura; 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 ṣl (JAPN, no. 7), bnn (related to bn?, a qutayl form?; JAPN, no. 32), ḫš (JAPN, no. 46), and șhr ("shield"; JAPN, no. 94).