RESEARCH NOTE

"YOUNG LION" OR "HE FORGIVES"?:
A NOTE ON THE NAME KPR

TODD K. SANDERS
Cambridge, MA 02138

The inscription \( \text{ikpr} \), "belonging to KPR," appears on two Phoenician seals.\(^1\) Although most scholars interpret this name as "Young lion," based on the Hebrew noun \( k\text{\breve{a}}\text{pir} \),\(^2\) there exists another possibility, namely, that it is a \( D \)-stem verbal hypocoristicon, \( /\text{kip-}\text{pir}/ \), meaning "He forgives."

\(^1\)One was originally published as Ammonite by R. Hestrin and M. Dayagi-Mendels, *Inscribed Seals, First Temple Period: Hebrew, Ammonite, Moabite, Phoenician, and Aramaic* [in Hebrew] ([Jerusalem, 1978]), no. 99, and as a result it was included in W. E. Aufrecht, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions*, Ancient Near Eastern Texts & Studies, vol. 4 (Lewiston, KY, 1989), no. 107. However, as Aufrecht notes, the Ammonite identification of this seal has recently been questioned by F. Israel, "Les sceaux Ammonites," *Syria* 64 (1987): 141-146, esp. p. 145, no. VSE 441, who has suggested that it may be Phoenician. Indeed, the \( \text{kap} \), with its "y"-shaped head, is more typical of Phoenician than it is of Ammonite, since Ammonite \( \text{kaps} \) are characterized by a triangular or "v"-shaped head (see, e.g., Aufrecht, Pl. I, no. 3; Pl. VIII, no. 26; Pl. XVII, no. 54; Pl. XVIII, no. 55c; Pl. XIX, no. 56; Pl. XXII, no. 62; Pl. XXVII, no. 74; Pl. XXIII, nos. 84, 85; Pl. XXXIII, no. 86; Pl. XXXV, no. 98; Pl. XXXVIII, nos. 98, 101, 102; Pl. XL, nos. 112, 113; Pl. XLIV, nos. 129a, 129b; Pl. XLV, no. 132; Pl. XLVI, nos. 133, 134.


\(^2\)See Aufrecht, no. 107, and references there.
The name $kfr^2l$, "$2El$ forgives," occurs on two Taymanite inscriptions; and $smkfr$, "$Salm^4$ forgives," on yet another. These occurrences suggest that the concept of atonement is not unimaginable as an element in Semitic personal names.

Indeed, the root $kpr$ denotes "young lion," to my knowledge, only in Hebrew, while it is associated with the meaning "to atone, cover, wipe away" in nearly all of the Semitic languages. Thus, "He forgives" may be the more reasonable rendition for $KPR$.

---


4For the frequent contraction of the divine name $slm$ to $sm$, see Winnett, p. 90, n. 19.

5Winnett, p. 104, no. 26 (Pl. 20, no. 26), and Pl. 22, photo of nos. 25-27.