

## RESEARCH NOTE

### “YOUNG LION” OR “HE FORGIVES”?: A NOTE ON THE NAME *KPR*

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The inscription *lkpr*, “belonging to *KPR*,” appears on two Phoenician seals.<sup>1</sup> Although most scholars interpret this name as “Young lion,” based on the Hebrew noun *k<sup>2</sup>pîr*,<sup>2</sup> there exists another possibility, namely, that it is a *D*-stem verbal hypocoristicon, /*kîp-pîr*/, meaning “He forgives.”

<sup>1</sup>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 *kâp*, with its “y”-shaped head, is more typical of Phoenician than it is of Ammonite, since Ammonite *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. XXXII, nos. 84, 85; Pl. XXXIII, no. 86; Pl. XXXV, no. 93; Pl. XXXVII, no. 98; Pl. XXXVIII, nos. 101, 102; Pl. XL, nos. 112, 113; Pl. XLIV, nos. 129a, 129b; Pl. XLV, no. 132; Pl. XLVI, nos. 133, 134.

The other seal was originally published by M. A. Levy, *Siegel und Gemmen mit aramäischen, phönizischen, althebräischen, himjarischen, nabathäischen und altsyrischen Inschriften erklärt* (Breslau, 1869), pp. 29-30, Taf. II.14, without a photograph. For a photograph, see E. Gubel, “Art in Tyre during the First and Second Iron Age: A Preliminary Survey,” pp. 23-52 in *Studia Phoenicia I-II*, ed. E. Gubel, E. Lipiński, and B. Servais-Soyez (Leuven, 1983), fig. 12.

<sup>2</sup>See Aufrecht, no. 107, and references there.

The name *kfr*<sup>3</sup>l, “<sup>3</sup>El forgives,” occurs on two Taymanite inscriptions;<sup>3</sup> and *šmkfr*, “*Šalm*<sup>4</sup> forgives,” on yet another.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> Thus, “He forgives” may be the more reasonable rendition for *KPR*.

<sup>3</sup>One was originally published as Thamudic by A. Jaussen and R. Savignac, *Mission archéologique en Arabie*, 2 vols. and atlas (Paris, 1909-1914), p. 604, no. 521 (Pl. CXLVII, no. 521), and later reclassified by F. V. Winnett, “The Arabian Inscriptions,” pp. 67-138 in *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, ed. F. V. Winnett and W. L. Reed, Near and Middle East Series, vol. 6 (Toronto, 1970), p. 104, discussion of no. 26. The other was published by Winnett, p. 107, no. 41 (Pl. 20, no. 41).

<sup>4</sup>For the frequent contraction of the divine name *šlm* to *šm*, see Winnett, p. 90, n. 19.

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

<sup>6</sup>See, e.g., F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1951), p. 497; J. C. Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect*, Harvard Semitic Studies, vol. 25 (Chico, CA, 1981), pp. 250-251; I. J. Gelb et al., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, vol. 8 (Chicago, 1971), pp. 178-179; E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1 (London, 1865), pp. 2620-2622; and R. Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, vol. 1 (London, 1879), cols. 1797-1798.