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Biblical Onomasticon Speaks: An Anthroponymic and Toponymic Survey of Biblical and Epigraphic Onomasticon with Archaeological Support

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Pauli Rahkonen

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An Anthroponymic and Toponymic Survey of Biblical and
Epigraphic Onomasticon with Archaeological Support

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Preface

I want to describe my tricky path to the academic world, because I hope that it can encourage others who had similar difficulties as I have had. As a teenager, I could not have imagined that I would someday be a scientist. My studies at high school were not successful at all. I preferred to play rock & roll and was not too interested in studies. However, finally I succeeded to complete my studies with rather high marks and was accepted to study at Turku School of Economics. After some hazy years working as a DJ at the Student Union discotheque, the direction of my life changed, and I graduated in 1978. After having been involved in business for a couple of years, in 1980 I became a Baptist pastor, although I had no theological education.

In 1987 I moved to Jerusalem in order to study biblical Hebrew at the American Institute of Holy Land Studies. I was lucky to have several splendid teachers from Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) who also taught at AIHLS. It is with great gratitude that I remember such teachers of mine as Chaim Rabin, Rivka Bliboim, Ada Taggar – Cohen, Avi Hurwitz, Emanuel Tov, Gavriel Barka'i, and others. In addition, I want to thank Mirja Ronning who was in charge of the Hebrew studies at AIHLS and helped me to find my way to AIHLS. I graduated and earned MA in biblical Hebrew, focusing on Bible translation.

After several years I became interested in the Finno-Ugric substrate onomasticon of hydronyms in Central and North Russia. I began to write my doctoral dissertation on that topic. During those years I acquired a good theoretic basis on onomastics. Many thanks belong especially to my supervisor Dr. Janne Saarikivi. I successfully defended my thesis “Southeastern Contact Area of Finnic Languages in the Light of Onomastics” in 2013 at Helsinki University.

Soon I had a plan to continue my academic career and to expand it towards the biblical onomasticon. Indeed, Hebrew Language was my “first love”. I travelled to Jerusalem in Spring 2014 to become a visiting researcher at HUJ in the Department of Archaeology in order to develop the idea. I want to thank professors Yosef Garfinkel and Amihai Mazar for their friendly aid and support. I was accepted to write my second dissertation at Åbo Akademi University. Many thanks to my supervisors Antti Laato and Pekka Lindqvist.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Eija who has supported me and who was the only sponsor of the present research work and my daughter Hanna Teräs (PhD) who has been one of those who has reviewed and revised the language of my articles. Furthermore, I thank my employers Lahti Baptist Mission Church, Turku Baptist Church, and Finnish Bible Institute who gave me possibilities to do my research work in addition to my regular job.

Following the habit of the great composer J. S. Bach I want to mark the present dissertation with the same initials S.D.G, as he marked his scores.

Turku 16.11.2023

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Abstract

Personal names of the Old Testament have been more widely treated scientifically already approximately 100 years (since Martin Noth 1928). Usually scholars have been concentrated on internal structures of names, such as theophoric elements, and on semantic questions. Especially, since the last part of 1980's several studies on personal names of the Old Testament have seen daylight. The present dissertation consists of four peer reviewed articles, which have been published in publications of theological or oriental research. In addition, the dissertation consists of a so called *kappa*-section containing goals of the study, methods, earlier research and summary.

The present dissertation treats its subject largely. Compared with several other explorations the aspect is different, too. The essential method concentrates on the comparison between extra biblical epigraphic onomasticon and biblical data of names. One of the goals has been to clarify to which era the personal names of the selected biblical books belong. The selected books are the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel and Ezra–Nehemiah. One of the articles treats toponyms of the Southern Levant which can be dated to the second millennium BC. The goal has been to find out areal concentrations of different toponymic types. This, in turn, illustrates linguistic distributions in the ancient Southern Levant. These toponyms have also been compared with names outside of the studied region. Through the comparison the direction and dating of possible migrations has been possible to define. The article in question combines archaeology and onomastics.

Finally, we can briefly state that the fashion of given names has varied sometimes slowly and gradually, but sometimes even suddenly. The anthroponyms of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis resemble closely epigraphic Canaano-Amorite personal names from the Middle Bronze Age (ca 1950–1550 BC), which are found for example in the Mari archives or Egyptian execration texts. The onomasticon of the rest of the Pentateuch (Moses narratives), Joshua and Judges correspond mainly the epigraphic names originating from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I (ca 1550–1000 BC). In these books yahwistic names are extremely rare and begin to appear only in 1 and especially 2 Samuel. The Israelite epigraphic onomasticon of the Iron Age II (ca 1000–586 BC) resembles rather closely those of 1–2 Kings and Jeremiah. The high popularity of yahwistic names is a typical phenomenon during this period. Names of Ezra–Nehemiah represent mostly earlier (Late Iron Age II) types of anthroponyms, but a new fashion begins to appear, too. Ancient heroic biblical names, such as found in the patriarchal narratives, begin to emerge. They became dominant during the Hellenistic Period.

Abstrakt

Gamla testamentets personnamn har behandlats mer omfattande i vetenskaplig mening sedan cirka 100 år tillbaka (Martin Noths publikationer). Å andra sidan har fokus legat på namnens interna strukturer, som teofora elementen och å andra sidan på namnens semantiska frågor. Särskilt sedan slutet av 1980-talet har flera studier publicerats angående nomenklaturen i Gamla testamentet. Den aktuella avhandlingen består av fyra "peer-reviewed" artiklar publicerade i publikationer i teologiska eller Mellanösternstudier. Dessutom innehåller den en omfattande kappa-avdelning, som introducerar t.ex. forskningsmål, metoder, tidigare forskning och en sammanfattning.

Denna avhandling behandlar ämnet ganska omfattande. Synvinkeln är också annorlunda än de flesta i tidigare studier. Den centrala metoden kristalliseras i utombiblisk och biblisk nomenklatur för statistisk jämförelse. Målet har varit att ta reda på sambandet mellan bibliska namn i jämförelse till arkeologiskt daterade epigrafiska namn. Jämförelsen har använts för att ta reda på vilken epok personnamnen på de utvalda Gamla testamentets böcker ingår. De utvalda böckerna är 1–5 Moseböcker, Josuas bok, Domarboken, Ruts bok, 1–2 Samuelsböcker och Esras och Nehemias böcker. En till av artiklarna rör toponymer i Södra Levanten som kan dateras till 2: a årtusendet f.Kr. Det här syftet med artikeln har varit att hitta regionala koncentrationer av olika namntyper. Detta ger i sin tur en bild om Södra Levantens språkliga utbredningar. Namnen har även jämförts med namn utanför regionen. Denna jämförelses mål har varit att ta reda på riktningen och tidpunkten för eventuella migrationer. Artikeln kombinerar arkeologi och namnvetenskap.

Som ett resultat kan man kort konstatera att modet för namn har ofta förändrats långsamt och gradvis, men ibland snabbt också. Namnen på de patriarkala berättelserna i Första Moseboken liknar den mellersta bronsålderns (ca 1950–1550 f.Kr.) epigrafiska kanaanitiska-amoritiska namn, som finns t.ex. bland namnen på Mari-arkivet eller egyptiska utsöndringstexter. 2–5 av Moseböckernas, Josuas bok och Domarbokens nomenklatur motsvarar för det mesta nomenklaturen för senare bronsåldern och järnåldern I (ca.1550–1000 f.Kr). Det är typiskt för dessa böcker att de s.k. Jahwistiska namnen är mycket sällsynta och blir mer allmänt i 2 Samuelsboken. Vid Järnålder II (ca 1000–586 f.Kr.) den epigrafiska israelitiska nomenklaturen liknar i stort sett till exempel namn i 1–2 Kungaböcker eller Jeremia. Jahwistiska namns popularitet är typisk. Namnen på Esra–Nehemias böcker är påhittade mestadels från namntyper tidigare än den persiska perioden, men ett nytt mode för namn börjar redan dyka upp. Forntida bibliska hjältenamn börjar dyka upp, liksom många namn av patriarkala narrativer, som blev utbredd under den hellenistiska perioden och därefter.

Contents

Preface	iii
Abstract	v
Abstrakt	vii
List of Original publications	x
1. Introduction	1
1.1. General views.....	1
1.2. The research question and the purpose of the exploration.....	3
1.3. Sources of the study.....	4
1.4. Problems of the onomastic interpretations.....	5
1.5. Methods.....	8
1.6. Biblical onomastics and genealogical tables.....	11
1.7. Onomastics in the interdisciplinary usage	13
1.8. Earlier studies of biblical onomasticon compared with the present survey	14
1.9. A More Precise Definition of the Task.....	23
2. The Northwest Semitic Context	25
2.1. Northwest Semitic languages	25
2.2. Religions in the Northwest Semitic world.....	28
2.2.1. Aramaic material.....	31
2.2.2. Hebrews.....	31
2.2.3. Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.....	32
2.3. Ancient inscriptions.....	32
2.4. Ancient writing systems	33
3. Research results	34
4. Summary: Onomastics as a scientific discipline of biblical studies	39
References	45
Appendix	49
Original Publications	51

List of Original publications

Article 1: “A Study on some Semitic toponymic types of the second millennium BC in the Southern Levant.” *Studia Orientalia Electronica* (2016): 108–130.

Article 2: “Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study.” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testamen* (2018): 111–135.

Article 3: “Biblical Hebrew Personal Names in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1-2 Samuel. A Comparative Study.” *Svensk Exegetisk Årbok* 85 (2020): 160–179.

Article 4: “The Personal Names of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as a Turning Point in the Hebrew Naming Fashion: A Comparative Study.” *Svensk Exegetisk Årbok* 87 (2022): 308–333.

1. Introduction

1.1. General views

The present study is an academic dissertation for the degree of PhD in exegetics of the Old Testament. The outline of the dissertation consists of four peer-reviewed articles. The basic aim of the articles was to examine the correspondence between biblical names and Northwest Semitic (henceforth NWS) evidence on epigraphic onomasticon. This evidence may be valuable for studies concerning Israelite history and the development of the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, the primary aim of the study is not to form historical constructions. Its main goal is restricted to a study of the onomastica from the perspective of onomastics and, in some cases, archaeology. Biblical names have been compared with names such as those of the Amorites (~Amurru), the Amarna tablets, and the Ugaritic and epigraphic extrabiblical Hebrew personal names from the monarchic period (1000–586 BC)¹ and the postexilic Hellenistic era between 330–140 BC. A more detailed description of the research question and purpose of the study is presented below.

The dating of personal names has been evaluated by the means of statistical comparison. One of the compared onomastic materials consists of anthroponyms based on early NWS languages, such as Amorite, Amarna-Canaanite, and Ugaritic. However, no texts in the Amorite or Amarna-Canaanite tongues have been preserved. Information concerning these languages is based on the onomasticon, on loanwords, and on amorisms and canaanisms found in Akkadian texts such as the Amarna and Mari tablets. The Ugaritic language is known reasonably well through texts written in the specific Ugaritic cuneiform writing. The directions of the spreading of some toponymic types and possible ethnic migrations towards the Southern Levant are also researched.

Articles 1–4 in this dissertation are presented in the order in which they were published.

Article 1 is different from the others; it is a toponymic survey while the others are anthroponymic studies. The articles are entitled as follows.

Article 1: “A Study on some Semitic toponymic types of the second millennium BC in the Southern Levant.” *StOrE* (2016): 108–130.

Article 2: “Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study.” *SJOT* (2018): 111–135.

Article 3: “Biblical Hebrew Personal Names in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1-2 Samuel. A Comparative Study.” *SEA* 85 (2020): 160–179.

¹ In the present study, the term ‘monarchic period’ refers to the period of Hebrew kingdoms, both divided and undivided, between approximately 1000–586 BC.

Article 4: “The Personal Names of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as a Turning Point in the Hebrew Naming Fashion: A Comparative Study.” *SEA* 87 (2022): 308–333.

These articles have been written as a result of my research on different aspects of biblical onomastics. The focus of the research has largely been on the second millennium BC, but postexilic onomasticon has been studied too. The epigraphic onomasticon from the Hebrew kingdoms period (ca. 1000–586 BC) works as one counterpart for the comparison. A high level of similarity between the names connects the compared biblical onomastica to the period ca. 1000–586 BC. In contrast, a low level of similarity, or the total absence of similar names or types of names, force a different dating of the names. Because the biblical material, dated by the inner testimony of the Bible to the monarchic era (such as 1–2 Kings, Jeremiah), has been fairly thoroughly studied by other scholars (e.g., Fowler 1988; Norin 2013; Golub 2014), I have not concentrated on that topic in my dissertation.

Article 1 is concerned with toponyms dated to the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1550 BC), the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1200 BC), and the Iron Age I (ca. 1200–1000 BC). The toponyms are selected from those which, according to archaeological or ancient documentary evidence, existed between (and including) the Early Bronze Age I and Iron Age I. Two different toponymic types are studied in particular: those with the affix (topoformant) *-ôn* < **ān(u)* [cf. *Šār/ôn*] and those constructed with the element *bēt* + adjunct [cf. *Bēt Šæmæš*]. The goal has been to research early migrations to the Southern Levant, utilising spreads of different toponymic types.²

Articles 2, 3, and 4 are statistical comparative presentations. The purpose of the comparison between the extrabiblical epigraphic material and biblical data is to resolve the question of the dating of the personal names. The biblical books examined in Articles 2 and 3 are the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1–2 Samuel. The aim of the comparison has been to find out which epigraphic materials of the second or the first millennium BC resemble the studied biblical anthroponyms more closely. Article 4 investigates the onomasticon of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah compared with the pre-exilic epigraphic onomasticon of the Hebrew monarchic period (ca. 1000–586 BC; 95% of the dated material originates from 800–586 BC) and the postexilic personal names from the Hellenistic period (330–140 BC).³

First and foremost, the dissertation endeavours to shed light on the connection between epigraphic extrabiblical sources and biblical sources. Because the epigraphic material can be dated archaeologically, the possible similarity with the biblical material can reveal an approximate dating for the biblical onomasticon. Of course, several other ‘by-

² The spreading of toponymic types may sometimes be due to cultural and/or linguistic influence without any migration.

³ The timeframe is determined so that the Hasmonean period is excluded.

products' of the research also arise. As mentioned, the exploration is undertaken mainly from the perspective of onomastics.

Naming habits often depend on historical events and turning points in cultures and religions, on political situations, and on linguistic developments and contacts. They may reflect developments in religion, trade, or politics. In particular, being under political and/or cultural dominion may create conditions where linguistic influences – including names or anthroponymic types – are adopted from the ruling direction. Therefore, the Hebrew onomastic material is studied from the standpoint of a historical span of time beginning from the common NWS entity through the influence of the general Canaanite stage towards the monarchic Israelite religious, political, and cultural commonwealth and finally to the Jewish postexilic struggle to remain as a nation among nations. The latter is expressed by a certain national romanticism that was also reflected in the selection of personal names. Article 1 is intended to show why the early NWS onomastic relationship is relevant for the present research.

1.2. The research question and the purpose of the exploration

Because the present dissertation consists of four articles, a strict definition of the research question or the aim is not simple to present. Nevertheless, together the articles form a historical onomastic bridge, beginning from the common NWS era to the Jewish onomasticon during the Persian period in the Southern Levant.

Article 1 concentrates on toponyms instead of anthroponyms, thus differing considerably from Articles 2–4. The basic question is whether toponymic evidence corresponds with archaeological evidence and how the latter should be understood in the light of onomastics. The aim of Article 1 is to clarify the early linguistic situation and the directions of possible migrations in the Southern Levant. Initially, the history of the article is based on the observation that particular toponymic types were generally located in different locations, creating areal entities. This observation required further investigation and development. The conclusions are drawn from particular toponymic types and archaeological evidence which can be understood as indicative descriptors of the settlement history of the second millennium BC in the Southern Levant.

The research question of Articles 2–4 concerns the relationship between the biblical and extrabiblical epigraphic data of personal names and what this relationship can reveal. The idea has arisen out of Michael Streck's *Amurritisches Onomasticon I* (2000). The lists of personal names included there provoked a comparison of Amorite anthroponyms with biblical names. The task of Article 2 has been to statistically compare names originating from those sources and to reach a conclusion on the types of similarity and difference within the names as revealed by the comparison. Furthermore, biblical names are compared with different sources originating from the first millennium BC to find out

whether the researched biblical names have any connection with the onomasticon of the first millennium.

It is evident that in every culture, names have cycles of fashions; new anthroponymic innovations break through and old ones either disappear or partially remain (see Rahkonen 2020: 161–162). The idea of onomastic fashions has been noticed by Richard S. Hess (2016: 37; 2021: 413). In analysing such cycles, the comparison can reveal, at least approximately, the age of each collection of names because the epigraphic material is usually archaeologically datable. The aim of the studies in Article 3 and Article 4 originated from this idea. I wanted to find out about cycles in naming fashions which could be defined through the epigraphic material and compare the extrabiblical material with the biblical data to determine an approximate date for the names.

Each article has its own special emphasis. Therefore, the research questions and aims of each of the studies vary slightly and can be read in more detail within those articles. However, the articles create a historical onomastic entity that helps to identify particular turning points in naming fashions and establish what is typical during each period. This has been one of the objectives of the present dissertation. Another objective has been to date biblical personal names at least approximately and, based on the dating, to draw possible conclusions on the development of biblical text history as a by-product.

Finally, I want to state once again that initially there were different targets of academic interests for the present dissertation.

1.3. Sources of the study

The original onomastic sources treated in the four articles are so numerous that it would take too much time to read through them all. Firstly, looking at the original sources used in the present dissertation, they are written mainly in Akkadian or Ugaritic cuneiform script, Egyptian hieroglyphs, alphabetic Phoenician-(Hebrew) script, Aramaic script, and Greek letters. Furthermore, small sections of the names are written in other scripts. It would be useful to have the ability to read the original names, but to read through all of the texts would be a daunting task. Secondly, it would not have been feasible to visit all of the museums where the original sources are kept. For these reasons I had to be content with the onomastic compilations. Even these are great in number. The compilations which were used and the epigraphic sources in them are mentioned in the APPENDIX below.

The original sources have mostly been reported in the compilations. In most cases, Streck (2000) has utilised the index of Gelb (1980) plus the original site's code name. For example, *Ba-a-la-an* 997M, **Ba'ān* = in Gelb's index number 997, M means, found from Mari (see Streck 2000: 18, 252). Aḥituv (2005: 245) presents pictures of each piece of evidence and the literature related to the find in question; e.g., שר א. L. Sukenik, "Note on a Fragment of an Israelite Stele found at Samaria," *PEQ* 68 (1936), p. 156; in Aḥituv (2005: 245). In his book on Canaanite toponyms in Egyptian written sources, Aḥituv (1984) lists

the sites where the presented names are found, as well as the more precise coding of each source. Rainey and Notley (2006) present the coding of the items of the Execration Texts (e.g., e5, E11) and the tables of the Amarna texts (e.g., EA 7). In some cases, even the pictures of tables where the names are found are presented, as in the case of the List of Šišak (Rainey and Notley 2006: 188). In the Lexicon of Tal Ilan (2002), details of the presented names are found.

In a way, the biblical material presented in the articles is source material too. It is the counterpart of the comparison with the epigraphic material. However, one could describe the epigraphic material as the tool of the research, and the biblical material as the object or target.

1.4. Problems of the onomastic interpretations

As mentioned, the basic principle of my studies has been the comparison between extrabiblical epigraphic material and the onomasticon of certain biblical texts. The problematic aspects of both the source material and the target material must be observed.

One of the problems of the onomastic interpretations is the *language* of the Masoretic Bible (MT). Biblical Hebrew, as it is preserved in its masoretic form, is not precisely the same language as that spoken during the time when the first witnesses of the biblical narratives or poems, literary or oral, appeared.⁴ The difficulty is true in phonology, especially concerning the phonetic value of the vowels. It is clearly visible, for example, in how the Septuagint vocalised biblical names. One should note that many names are presented in different ways in the New Testament or Josephus than in the LXX. For example, LXX reads Tyre as Σορ but the New Testament has Τυρος and MT צֵר. As defined strictly, the Masoretic biblical Hebrew refers to the language of the text that is vocalised by the Tiberian masoretes (e.g., Codex Leningradensis).

Similar unvocalised “Proto-Masoretic” texts are found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., Tov 2015: 313–324). According to Tov, there were texts “virtually identical” to the medieval MT tradition, such as to CodexL (Tov 2018: 136), which he calls Proto-Masoretic. However, there were texts which belonged to the Masoretic family which differ in terms of minute spelling, small details in content, and language. Tov refers to these as “MT-like” texts. The genesis of the Proto-Masoretic text is linked to the point when biblical texts were not allowed to change and, according to Tov, an archetype was defined (see Tov 2020: 312–318). The Qumran society used texts originating from different traditions, such as LXX *vorlag*, SP and their combination, plus MT-like texts (Tov 2018: 137–138). In other communities of the Judean Desert, the Proto-Masoretic texts were absolutely dominant (Tov 2018: 139). The MT (e.g., CodexL) could be considered as a continuation of the Proto-

⁴ As defined strictly, the Masoretic biblical Hebrew refers to the language of the text that is vocalised by the Tiberian masoretes, e.g., Codex Leningradensis. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, more or less similar unvocalised ‘Proto-Masoretic’ texts are found (e.g., Tov 2015: 313–324).

Masoretic texts. The latter do not resolve such linguistic problems as the vocalisation of the Hebrew language. Instead, the MT-like texts may reveal many features of the vocalisation because of wider usage of *matres lectiones*.⁵

As mentioned, the problem of the language is caused by the fact that, for a long time, the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament existed only in a consonantal form. The epigraphic texts before the exile were written mostly without the help of *matres lectionis*. If we read extrabiblical non-consonantal epigraphic texts originating from the monarchic periods, we do not always know for sure how the words or the names were pronounced. We do not know the correct vowels. These inscriptions could not reveal, for example, whether the name אֵלֶזָר should be read ^ʔĒlīʿæzær or ^ʔĒlīʿāzār. Statistically, it should be reasonable to count them as one name.

In addition, some of the consonants are unclear. Did the original language in each case pronounce π as *h* or was *h* an alternative possibility? Was ϣ pronounced as *ʿ* or *g* (cf. Arabic ayin ع and gayin غ)? We do not even know whether or not Semitic final short case vowels still existed in the earliest texts. Several names in the List of Šišak from the tenth century BC still appear with short final vowels, cf. *Nagbu* > later *Nægæb* (see Aḥituv 1984: 101–102, 149; Rainey and Notley 2006: 186–188).⁶ However, this can be due to earlier Egyptian spelling. Therefore, the comparison with non-Semitic transcriptions of names, such as Greek or Egyptian, does not always offer the whole truth, although it is better than nothing. One solution to evade the problem would be to use only non-vocalised Hebrew characters in onomastic research. However, the uncertain vocalisation does not hinder the comparison considerably. The Masoretic forms of names have been widely accepted in the scientific onomastic usage.

There are other difficulties with the interpretations of epigraphic source materials. Often, texts are preserved with corrupted parts. This is true, for example, in the Karnak List of Šišak or the Meša Stela. For a scholar who is conducting a wide comparative study, it is impossible to check every name presented in the compilations. However, these types of problems being caused by different interpretations of correct readings of the original sources are not statistically significant.



The Egyptian hieroglyphic material is also sometimes difficult to interpret, particularly because the vowels are not marked in the strict sense of the word. The phonetic substitution in Semitic names can therefore be ambiguous. In early Egyptian texts, the Southern Levant was usually called *rtnw*. It has frequently been interpreted as *Retenu*. However, the first hieroglyphic sign of the name ϣ can be interpreted as *r* but is often also given as *l* (see Allen 2013: 31–32). The consonant *t* could also represent *t* (Allen 2013: 54) during the Middle Kingdom period, resulting in *Ltnw*. In that case, it might have the same

⁵ *Matres lectionis* are consonants which are meant to represent vowels; e.g., Hebrew *waw* as *u* or *o*.

⁶ In the Karnak List of Šišak, table 84 is clearly readable as *Pj-Nagbu* even though the last two signs *b* and *w* = -bu are visible only partially.

origin as the name of the River *Litani*, in Arabic *Nahr-al-Liṭāni* (see Arabic adaptation of foreign *t* > Arabic *ṭ* [Allen 2013: 48–49]). Since ca. 1300 BC, the area is often called *p³-knʿn* ‘the-Kana’an’ in the Egyptian documents.

Because of the above-mentioned problems of the (Proto)-Masoretic language, the *phonetic criteria* are difficult to utilise. This is regrettable because certain phonological features can often reveal something of the age of a name. For example, the names of Finnish rivers *Euraljoki* and *Auraljoki* can be dated on the phonetic basis. Both probably originate from the same Germanic word meaning ‘watercourse’, but from a different period. The first is older than the latter. Because biblical texts are written in almost mutually identical language, phonological criterion is difficult to utilise. That is to say, the language of the Bible in its phonological features is more or less homogenous. Therefore, we must be content to accept the phonetics of biblical masoretic Hebrew as the basis of the comparison.

The phonetics of the epigraphic names are more useful. For example, in the Egyptian texts, the so-called Canaanite shift **ā > ô* can be traced in the onomasticon of the Southern Levant. The phoneme *ô* is substituted using the hieroglyphic sign representing *w* (Allen 2013: 5). The Egyptian language probably lacked the vowel < o > (Allen 2013: 25) and Egyptians substituted it with the closest alternative. For example, in the List of Thutmose III, the toponym *Šarôn(a)* is written as *šaruna* using a hieroglyphic sign *rw*  and *Ḥāšôr(a)* as *ḥasura* using a sign *wr* . One must observe that even though strict rules for interpreting phonemic values of hieroglyphic signs are difficult to define, this is not true in the above-mentioned cases (see Allen 2013: 53–54).

There are different kinds of dialectal backgrounds, idiosyncratic habits of scribes, and irregularities arising from a long timeframe, all of these causing ambiguities. Furthermore, the cuneiform system as the Mesopotamian counterpart when comparing Egyptian and Semitic texts is in itself problematic. Written consonants can often be read in several ways. This is not a considerable problem when reading narratives in Akkadian because the rules of the language guide the reader. However, it is a difficulty if the text contains foreign names.

Sometimes there are linguistic relics in the Pentateuch reflecting the original pronunciation of names. For example, in the Edomite names occurring in the list of Edomite kings in Genesis, the old forms of the hypocoristic diminutive *-ān* are found (e.g., *Lōṭān*, *Dīšān*, Gen 36:20–21). Another relic might be found in the name *Z^eḥul/ūn*, not *Z^eḥulôn* as could be expected.⁷ This vocalisation might have parallels with the Ugaritic practice in which the hypocoristic form *-ūn* was usual alongside *-ān* (Gröndahl 1967). The original NWS form of the name might be compared with the Amorite *Zu-ba-la-an*, reflecting **Zubāl/ān* < **zubālu* ‘prince’ (Streck 2000: 331, 405).

⁷ The reason of *-ūn* may be the vowel harmony linked to the previous vowel.

1.5. Methods

The onomastic typological classification of names has played a central role in the present work. Basically, markers such as theophoric elements, epithets of deities, and hypocoristic affixes are utilised. The lexical grouping has been remarkable, especially in researching the oldest layer of the names (i.e., Amorite). Phonetic classification is used to a lesser extent. The Egyptian lists of names had only a secondary role, being valuable in interpreting the cuneiforms in such sources as the Amarna tablets. However, the lists of the Egyptian Execration Texts show how closely the names of the Southern Levant found therein resemble the Syro-Mesopotamian Amorite onomasticon. This fact strengthens the picture of the existence of the common NWS language (having certain dialects) all over the Levant and in northern Egypt during the Middle Bronze Age.

The methodology used in Articles 2–4 is discussed first. Of course, the onomastic methods used depend on the aim of the exploration. In the present dissertation, one target is to find the relationship between epigraphic and biblical onomastic material. From there, it is possible to draw conclusions and attempt to date personal names occurring in certain biblical books: the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel, and Ezra–Nehemiah (see section 1.2.). If the names are systematically datable to the same era in these books, this conclusion should be considered when discussing editing processes of the writings. Conclusions can also be drawn concerning the history of Israel.

A key concept of the method is *statistical comparison*. The names in the biblical books cannot be indisputably dated by exploring the texts of the Bible alone. Results of comparative onomastics are needed. The only absolute dating, though more or less approximate, is the epigraphic data. Therefore, biblical names must be compared with extrabiblical archaeologically dated epigraphic onomasticon. If a biblical onomasticon is comparable with the names which are typical during a certain archaeological period, there is a high probability that they both originate from the same era. One must notice that the extent of the sample determines the reliability of the comparison. A typical example is the onomastica of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis 12–50 where the number of names is sufficient for statistic comparison and it is comparable with the NWS onomastica originating from the (Middle) Bronze Age.

It is important to determine and select the onomastic elements which should be compared, which are determined by the aim of each study. Several surveys have been conducted to find out different details concerning the deities. In such work, a researcher might call his/her attention to the theophoric elements of the personal names (see, for example, Tigay 1986; Norin 2013; and Golub 2014). Another might study what the deities are assumed to do, to be, or have supposedly done. In that case, the researcher might study in particular the verbal or nominal clauses in the names which contain theophoric elements (e.g., Fowler 1988; Albertz 2012). A research aim of the present study relates to dating. As mentioned, reliable results can be achieved only through comparing the studied

biblical material with archaeologically dated epigraphic data. The first task is to define whether it is more fruitful to study lexical similarities or structural characteristics of the names. *Typological classification* is one of the most important tools in onomastics. Alterations in onomastic types can reflect the beginning of a new period in naming fashion. This classification of different types of names can be demanding. What are the criteria of grouping names? The typology can be based on phonetics or on used prefixes and affixes. Sometimes certain grammatical features must be noted. Prefixes can be theophoric elements, such as *Y^hô/šāpāt*, or prosthetic prefixes, such as *A/ṭqalāna ~ Ašqelôn* consisting of prosthetic *a* + the root **ṭql* ‘weight (money)’ + the diminutive affix *-ān*. Personal names have different hypocoristic affixes or theophoric elements, such as *Šim’ôn* < the root **šm* ‘listen, hear’ + hypocoristic diminutive affix *-ôn*.

Lexical classification is based on the fashion of naming. When researching epigraphic onomastic material from different periods of time, one can notice certain differences in lexical elements. For example, the root **‘qb* is found in Mesopotamian Amorite names, e.g., *Ia-ku-b[a]-an* < **Ya’qub/ān*, *Ya-ku-ub-DINGIR* < **Ya’qub-²el* (Streck 2000: 345). The name of a pharaoh, *Yaqub-har*, from the Hyksos period in Egypt is also found. Because this pharaoh may also be known as **Yakub-baal*, I suggest that we should read the element *-har* as *-had(du)* > **Ya’qub-hadd(u)* (Gadd et al. 1970). The reason, according to Allen (2013: 51), is that Egyptian hieroglyphs sometimes used *r* for Semitic < d > during the Middle and New Kingdom periods. Later, names based on the root **‘qb* were not used, with the exception of the passive form *‘Aq(q)ub*. Names in the form *Ya’qub* are not found among the Amarna onomasticon or in other books of the Pentateuch apart from Genesis.⁸ We can safely say that the use of the *yqtl* form of the root *‘qb* occurring in the onomasticon of the Southern Levant can probably be dated to the Middle Bronze Age.⁹ Lexical research of Semitic material usually concerns the Semitic roots. In that case, it is possible to compare names representing a sufficient number of Semitic languages. This is how Fowler conducted her 1988 survey. In the present dissertation, this research tool has been utilised to establish periods of fashions in the Hebrew naming system. In different periods of time, particular Hebrew verbal roots and their derivatives were more popular than others and in some cases their meaning might have remarkably changed. Hess (2015; 2021) has studied non-Semitic, foreign names in the books of Joshua and Judges. His work could be defined as a lexical study, too.

Structural research refers to the exploration of different elements of names, the most important of which are probably theophoric elements. This applies not only to the Semitic naming systems, but is also usual in the Egyptian system (e.g., *Thut/mose*) and even in the

⁸ However, *Ya’qub* was still fashionable in Ugarit during the Late Bronze Age, e.g., *Ya’qub-ba’al*, *‘Abdi-ya’qubu* (Gröndahl 1967). The Amorite onomastic inheritance was preserved there better than in the South. In the Hebrew naming system, the passive form *‘Aq(q)ub* is found in both the Iron Age II (Ahituv 2008: 485) and the postexilic onomasticon (Ilan 2002: 203–204).

⁹ *Ya^aqôb* became fashionable again in the Persian and Hellenistic periods among the Jews (Rahkonen 2022).

Scandinavian system (e.g., *Thor/leif*). Surprisingly, radical changes in the NWS religion are reflected in personal names. For example, the popularity of the element based on ʔĒl changed radically in favour of the element based on YHWH . In the present study, an exploration of theophoric elements has been the most important goal of the survey and comparison.

Theophoric elements have been the most important subject in other research too (e.g., Tigay 1986; Fowler 1988; Norin 2013; Golub 2014). The initial part of the first millennium BC was the era of national primary gods: the Israelite *YHWH*, the Moabite *Kēmôš*, and the Edomite *Qauš*, etc. A theophoric element could, to some extent, reveal the nationality of people. Earlier, in the second millennium BC, the pantheon in the Levant was still more or less the same as in the Common NWS era, with ʔIlu , *Baʔlu* ~ *Haddu* being the most central deities. The popularity of theophoric elements has generally been regarded by scholars of onomastics to represent a marker of the importance of different gods in each society (see section 1.7.). In my studies, the focus has been on the changes of theophoric elements. An alteration to a theophoric element indicated a change in onomastic periods, just like alterations in the types of pottery in archaeology.

Another structural element is hypocoristic affixes, such as $-\hat{o}n < *ān(u)$ (cf. *Gidʔ/ôn*) or $-\hat{i} < *īya$ (cf. *Zimr/ī*). For some reason, these elements have not attracted significant interest from scholars of onomastics. For my studies, however, their exploration has been essential. There have been obvious changes in the fashion of the hypocoristic affixes. For example, the affix $-\hat{o}n < *ān(u)$ was the most popular element in the Ugaritic naming system and in the onomasticon of the Pentateuch (Rahkonen 2019: 120–121). During the monarchic period, it disappeared completely, both from the epigraphic material and from the onomasticon of the book of Jeremiah.¹⁰

Theophoric *epithets of deities* must be taken into account, too. They are expressed as close relatives, such as *Ab(ī)*- ‘father’, *Aḥ/h(ī)*- ‘brother’, *ʔAmm(u/ī)*- ‘uncle, tribe’, *Ḥal(ī)*- ‘uncle’. The two former epithets were popular among the Israelites in all periods. The prefix *ʔAmm-* is known in the early NWS onomasticon, as in the name of the famous king *ʔAmmu-rāpī*, and in certain biblical books, mostly in the Pentateuch in Numbers and in First Chronicles, but it is totally absent from the epigraphic material of the monarchic period. This fact reveals a change of the naming fashion.

A key concept in the present study is *onomastic fashion*. As mentioned, new elements of names appear while others disappear, some of them holding their own ground permanently. For the present study, it is essential to be able to determine the points at which considerable changes happened in the naming fashion. It is clear that some gradual alteration took place all the time. However, there have been some drastic changes, like the appearance of yahwistic anthroponyms at an accelerated volume after 1000 BC and the

¹⁰ Other biblical books which might reflect the onomasticon of the monarchic period are not studied in the present survey.

comeback of ancient biblical heroic names during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The 'hinge points' of the change are crucial for dating names.

Onomastic fashion is a term used frequently in the present dissertation. As mentioned, this concept was also understood by Hess (2016: 37; 2021: 413), who defines it as dealing with time and place. Different periods of time have their own layers of onomasticon, which are typical only to them. As presented in Article 3 (Rahkonen 2020: 161), particular names have been popular in England during different periods of time, forming a fashion. At the same time, ethnic/linguistic groups may live as neighbours. Even if their respective languages are related to one another, fashions in name choice may be different. For example, the Finns and Karelians (in Russia) belong to the same Baltic Finnic group of nations and languages, but fashions in name choice are evidently different. The same is noticed in Swedish and Norwegian naming habits. Both nations can understand one another's language, but there are clear differences in their naming fashions. It is a question of popularity of names. This has been pointed out in Article 4 (Rahkonen 2022: 288–292). Popularity is sometimes connected with the valuation of names. It is notable that the names of prominent or famous individuals in society often become popular choices of name more widely, especially if the individual is well liked.

The method used in Article 1 is different to that used in Articles 2–4 in several aspects. The aim of Article 1 is to establish ancient migrations and linguistic situations in the Southern Levant during the second millennium BC. Because the goal of the exploration is completely different from that of Articles 2–4, the method is also different. The method involves examining toponymic types which differ clearly from one another. The crucial principle is the areal distribution of those toponymic types.

The article in question needs assistance from archaeology. All of the sites with names which belong to the chosen toponymic types had to exist during the second millennium. Therefore, only those settlements which were excavated, dated, and identified or mentioned in ancient literary sources were accepted. Distribution alone cannot illuminate the directions of the spreading of migrations – that is to say, from where the spreading started and in which directions; only archaeology can give answers to these questions. Earlier material is the starting point of the spread, whereas later material describes the direction. One must find the general settlement history of the second millennium, especially its beginning. Both of the basic toponymic types which are selected in the exploration had a distribution outside of historical Israel, further to the north. Archaeological evidence supports a spread from north to south. Archaeologically, there were two 'gates': one from Lebanon and the other from Syria (see below).

1.6. Biblical onomastics and genealogical tables

A fundamental question is: Can the age of names be linked to the age of biblical narratives or should they be totally distinguished from one another? One should note that I speak of

narratives (they may be oral or written) and not texts in the sense of the final version of a biblical book. Those narratives probably often function as a framework of a biblical text, however. It is true that some names in genealogical tables can be earlier than the connected narrative, as is clearly visible in Ezra–Nehemiah. This has been taken into account for example in Article 4 (Rahkonen 2022: 286). However, if the names belong to the narrative itself rather than being simply a list of names, the probability of a mutual dating of a name and the related narrative is higher. It is unlikely that a late author has randomly or even purposely selected a name from a genealogical table and then built a story around it; this would not explain the systematic use of chronologically similar onomasticon in such biblical narratives as, for example, the patriarchal section of Genesis.

In theory, a genealogical list of patriarchal names could, of course, be used for creating a story. This is how modern authors compose so-called historical novels. The internal factors of the character of biblical genealogical tables challenge the idea. Firstly, it is exceptional or never that relatives are widely mentioned in the tables. Genealogical tables usually run along the lines of father and son or vice versa, with occasional mention of wives. However, the patriarchal narrative mentions such relatives as a brother’s son (Lot), a maternal uncle (Laban), “secondary sons” (Ishmael, Esau), a couple of grandsons who died at an early age (Onan and Er), etc. Secondly, the main characters of a story are often found in the bottom, or close to the bottom, of the genealogical tables (e.g., Exod 6:14–25, Ezra 7:1–5) or in the beginning (1 Sam 1:1). The tables of 1 Chronicles 1–8 extend later than that. However, those tables are composed from several sources and there are occasionally inclusions of small details about the people listed (e.g., 1 Chr 2:22, 4:9–10, 4:17, 4:22, 4:40–43, 5:10, etc). There are mentions of the existence of different tables (1 Chr 4:33, 5:7, 5:17, 7:5). In some cases, there are mentions that several tables existed (1 Chr 7:5, 7:7, 7:9, 7:40). Finally, 1 Chr 9:1 claims that all Israel was written in a genealogical table. Without knowing the patriarchal story beforehand, how is it possible to correctly decide what names to select for the story? Taking into account all the above-mentioned matters, it is much more likely that the genetic history of the patriarchal tradition should be separated from the genealogical tables.

Furthermore, how could any late author know that, for example, ^ʔŌnān and ʿĒr (Gen 38:49), the names of Jacob’s grandsons who died at an early age, were typical Amurru names (*aw-na-ni-[im]* > *^ʔAwnāni(*m*), *aw-na-nu-[um]* > *^ʔAwnānu [Streck 2000: 174, 349, 357]), *^ʔĒru[*m*] [Execration text e1], and that these particular names belonged to the same period as the names of the other members belonging to the patriarchal family? Similarly the name *Lāḫān* is found both in the Amurru and Ugaritic onomasticon: a||-ba-nu > *^ʔA||banu (prosthetic ^ʔ*a* is usual in the Amorite onomasticon) and *la-ab-nu* > **Labnu*, *lbnn* > **Labn/ānu* (Gröndahl 1967 s. v. *lbn*; Streck 2000: 335). Relatives such as uncles are not usually mentioned in typical genealogical tables. Therefore, it is highly implausible that these names were drawn from such tables in order to compose a narrative. Thus, it is

scholarly justified to utilise these names as a fixed point of dating, at least for the onomasticon of biblical books.

1.7. Onomastics in the interdisciplinary usage

Onomastics as a branch of science has several dimensions. It has interested scientists of different disciplines. Each of them has utilised the results of their research to shed light on their own special fields of science.

There are several scholars of onomastics representing surprising disciplines and examining topics connected with biblical history. For example, the earliest was probably the theologian and church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260/265–339/340 AD), whose *Onomasticon* is still a useful aid for biblical onomastics today. Modern identifications of ancient topographic sites are often based on his notes, especially on the distances from Beit Guvrin to particular sites (Elitzur 2004: 14). Eusebius's writing has indirectly been an important aid in Article 1.

Furthermore, we can mention Knut Tallqvist, an early Assyriologist who wrote *Assyrian Personal Names*, published in 1912. Mostly he wrote of Mesopotamian religious topics, having also been a folklorist. One early scholar of onomastics was Martin Noth, who wrote *Die Israelitische Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (1928). He specialised in studies of the Old Testament and was a pioneer of biblical onomastics. The personal names of the Amorites (Amurrus) attracted the interest of scholars like Herbert Huffmon, who wrote *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study* (1965), and Ignace Gelb, a linguist of Mesopotamian languages, who collected significant data on Amorite names (1980). Michael Streck's study was based on Huffmon's and especially Gelb's previous work. In my research, Streck's book and its appendices (2000) provide the basic material of the Amorite onomasticon, and he is the teacher of the fundamentals of the early NWS language. Shmuel Ahituv, a historian, has written several books on onomastics (1984; 2005; 2008) mainly offering wide collections of the epigraphic onomasticon in the Levant.

As a result, it is clear that the discipline of onomastics has been used to aid theologians, linguists, historians, folklorists, and archaeologists. Several scholars among them have been particularly important for my studies, especially Streck and Ahituv. In my studies, the interest is on Old Testament exegetics. What is the relationship between epigraphic NWS names and biblical names? What can we say of dating the biblical names? Do the names somehow reflect the age of the biblical narratives, or at least the earliest oral or written versions of the stories?

1.8. Earlier studies of biblical onomasticon compared with the present survey

There are several types of studies concerning biblical onomasticon: 1) lexicon studies (with comments); 2) works touching on the biblical onomasticon; and 3) works analysing the names and endeavouring to find answers to biblical questions.

As mentioned, Martin Noth wrote “Gemeinsemitische Erscheinung in der israelitischen Namengebung” (1927) and *Die Israelitische Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (1928). As the titles indicate, he organised the names and compared them with the common Semitic onomasticon.

The scholars mentioned below have been especially influential for my explorations. Therefore, a short introduction to each is justifiable. The order of mention is based on the chronology of the most famous publications. The authors have published several books and/or articles, some of them more central to my research than others.

Jeffrey Tigay

Jeffrey Tigay’s *You Shall Have No Other Gods* (1986) is one of the most referenced studies in biblical onomastics. There, he challenges critical scholars who held the opinion that the Israelites became monotheistic shortly before or even after the exile, having differed only slightly from their neighbours (Tigay 1986: 1). Tigay’s method is based on the fact that ancient Semitic anthroponyms describe their bearers as servants of those deities who are represented as theophoric elements of their names. Tigay admits that the absence of gods other than the main god does not prove that society denied the existence of other gods (Tigay 1986:7).

Tigay raises a point which is an important consideration when researching epigraphic material: the epigraphic names probably represent the names of those in the upper social levels (Tigay 1986: 9–10). As to the original question, ‘Did the Israelites become monotheistic shortly before or even after the exile?’, one must ask whether the quality of the sample of names is inclusive concerning all the levels of the society. As Tigay mentions, it is the upper class that adopts international influences more readily and sooner than the “common folk,” and Tigay (1986: 17) correctly takes into account the possibility that the high percentage of yahwistic personal names does not describe the percentage of monotheists. He notes that the Ammonite onomasticon is overwhelmingly dominated by ³*El* even though we know that the Ammonites were polytheists.

According to Tigay (1986), the corpus of inscriptional names – i.e., epigraphic names – of the Iron Age II is statistically more or less comparable with the biblical data. This has been noted by most, if not all, onomastics scholars. The inscriptions suggest that YHWH really was overwhelmingly dominant as a theophoric element in the area of Israel and especially in Judah (Tigay 1986: 36).

Tigay's basic conclusion is that deities other than YHWH were not widely regarded by Israelites as sources of beneficence, blessing, protection, and justice. However, the onomastic evidence cannot dismiss possible worshipping of other deities. Tigay reminds the reader that exaggeration was a typical habit in prophetic preaching. Therefore, even low-level idolatry was laid upon all of the nation. Unlike Fowler, whose touch on the topic is almost purely statistic, Tigay's onomastic approach is more theological, possibly because he had a rabbinic ordination. He discusses widely the cases where inscriptions mention YHWH and His *ʿAšerā* (Tigay 1986: 26–27). He defends the opinion that *ʿašerā* should be understood as a cultic object or sanctuary and must be a common noun because of the possessive ending of the word. Tigay also reminds the reader that personal names in the biblical text were not extensively censored, and this fact implies that the non-polytheistic onomastic picture coming back to the beginning of the divided monarchy, and perhaps earlier, is realistic. Actually, one should remember that the biblical prophets did not resist idolatry as vehemently as they did cultic high places and especially the golden calves in Bethel and Dan, which seem to have represented YHWH in the Omride religion. According to the Bible, fighting against the worshipping of Ba'al was concentrated in the period of Jezebel and her daughter, Athaliah. In the last years of the kingdom of Judah, the prophets fought against the celestial deities (Jer 44:17; 2 Kgs 23:5). One should notice that one of the last high priests before the exile was *Paš/hūr*, 'son of Horus' in Egyptian. This name has been found in the epigraphic material as well (Albertz 2012: 323).

Jeaneane Fowler

Jeaneane Fowler has been one of the pioneers of modern biblical onomastics. Her *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew* (1988) is a comprehensive study. She has compared Hebrew names with Ugaritic, Phoenician, Amorite (Amurru), Aramaic, Old Akkadian, Akkadian, and Palmyrene in the perspective of the concept of supposed character of deities. Her conclusions present a comparison of how certain theophoric elements occur among the above-mentioned people. Fowler's results of the exploration are statistical in their character. She also concentrated on researching similarities/differences in the semantic ideas of the above-mentioned Semitic onomastica. She shows, for example, that the idea of salvation is found in all of the explored groups other than Palmyrene, but it is rare in Ugaritic, Amorite, Phoenician, and Old Akkadian anthroponyms. It is more frequent in the Aramaic and Akkadian onomastica. It is most typical in Hebrew personal names (Fowler 1988: 279).

The idea of a wide comparison of biblical and extrabiblical epigraphic material was presented for the first time to this extent in Fowler's book.¹¹ This fact increases the value of her work. Regrettably, she did not have the opportunity to utilise all the tools that we

¹¹ Noth (1928) also used comparison, but not as a tool for achieving the results of his study.

have available today. She had to lean on the Hebrew dictionary of BDB. Compared with the later published Hebrew-Aramaic dictionary of Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm [HALOT] (2000), Fowler's research is much narrower. Furthermore, the work of Streck (2000) on the Amorite language and onomasticon was not yet published at the time Fowler was researching.

Compared with my research, the most outstanding difference with Fowler's work is the aim of study. As mentioned, Fowler wanted to find out the concepts and ideas behind the naming habits. My central goal has been to create a picture of the relationship between biblical and datable epigraphic onomasticon and an approximate dating of biblical personal names through the Old Testament (Articles 2–4), and to shed light on the early migration history of the NWS nations in the second millennium BC (Article 1).

Richard S. Hess

One of the most prominent scholars of biblical onomastics is Richard S. Hess. He has concentrated particularly on the onomastics of the second millennium BC. His most widely known and referenced research is *Amarna Personal Names* (1993). There, he has analysed widely and accurately the backgrounds of every name found in the Amarna tablets.

Hess's method has often been based on comparison between biblical names and extrabiblical epigraphic NWS, Egyptian, Hurrian, and Indo-European names in mutual timeframes (e.g., Hess 2021; 2016; 2015). Similar to my own theoretic basis of studies, he has understood that personal names have their "fashions" over generations and from one geographical region to another (Hess 2016: 37; 2021: 413). This makes it possible to date – at least approximately – the names appearing in the ancient texts. Another principle of Hess's work shared with my studies is that the wider the body of data of names, the greater the number of conclusions we can confidently draw from it (Hess 2021: 413). We have both reached these conclusions independently.

We can take Hess's article, "Onomastics of the Exodus Generation in the Book of Exodus" (2016), as an example. His sample of names contained forty-two different name bearers. The names originate from West Semitic languages (i.e., Northwest Semitic). Hess mentions that there is one obscure name featuring in particular: Moses (Heb. *Móšæ*). There have been two rival opinions as to its origin. One is that the name is of Egyptian origin, *moše*, meaning 'born' from the root **msj* or **mšj*, 'give birth' (usually linked in Egyptian names with a deity, cf. *Thut/mose*). The hieroglyphic sign Ꞗ is supposed to represent *s* or *š* (Allen 2013: 23, 31). Referring to Kitchen (2003: 293), Hess states that the Egyptian sibilant *š* versus the Hebrew *š* might be a problem; at least, it is a problem if we think of the language of biblical Hebrew. However, According to Suchard (2016: 37), Proto-NWS *s* developed into *š* in biblical Hebrew. If the name *Móšæ* originates from the second millennium BC, we cannot be sure what kind of sibilant was in use among the Hebrews at that time. There is such an example as the Amarna text (EA 241:4) which, in Akkadian, is

written *ša-ru-na* (cf. BH *Šārôn*), but the Egyptian List of Thutmose III has *ś/sá-rú-na*. Furthermore, in the List of Thutmose III, the Hebrew variant, written as *Laiš*, is written with a final *ś/s*. The name *Ḥara-mašši* (EA 20) (e.g., **Ḥarmoše* ‘Horus is born’ or ‘given birth’) is found in the Amarna texts. The name shows that the Egyptian *s ~ś* could be substituted in Canaanite-Akkadian with *š*. The Egyptian alternative of the name fits the earlier era of the New Kingdom period. As Hess mentions, a second theory is that the name of Moses is derived from the Hebrew root *מִשָּׁה* < **משׁה* ‘draw (out of water)’. This could be possible if the original name was a passive form, **mušah*, ‘drawn’. If the name is of NWS origin, it is apparently a *hapax legomenon*. In his summary, Hess (2021) concludes that all the well-known personal names in Exodus have parallels in both the second and the first millennium, but none of them only in the first millennium. Hess argues that it would be strange if the scribe of the first millennium did not place in his narrative names which were in use only in the first millennium and not in the second millennium. However, there are two rare West Semitic names, *Puah* and *Hebron*, which are found only in the second millennium. There is one name, *Ithamar*, possibly based on Gt-stem, which is also traced only to the second millennium. These examples suggest that the onomasticon of Exodus should be dated to the second millennium BC.

Hess has written two recent articles (2015; 2021) discussing the onomastic background of the books of Joshua and Judges. In those articles he compares the non-NWS Anatolian and Hurrian biblical names with the available extrabiblical data. Hess has identified in the book of Joshua three Hurrian names *Šešai* (? ‘sixth child’), *Talmi* (‘great’) and *Piram* (‘free’); and one Anatolian, *Hoham*. The areal distribution of these northern name bearers is comparable with that of the Amarna age in the Southern Levant. These similarities are not found later in biblical nor extrabiblical Near Eastern texts (Hess 2016: 418–419). In the book of Judges the number of northern names diminishes. According to Hess, the names of the book of Joshua fit well with pre-1200 BC, but those in the book of Judges do not. In addition, the name of Sisera, mentioned in the narrative of Deborah, could be compared with a name *zi-za-ru-wa*, found in Ugarit. It is suspected to be a Cretan name, connecting it to the Sea People (Hess 2021: 419). This would fit better to the Iron Age I than to the Late Bronze Age.

Despite different starting points, my study and the studies of Hess have arrived at similar conclusions. The result of these onomastic explorations is that the personal names in the Pentateuch and in the books of Joshua and Judges all fit more preferably to the second millennium BC. In addition, the names of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges represent chronological order.

Rainer Albertz

The best-known publication of Rainer Albertz is his *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, written together with Rüdiger Schmitt (Albertz and Schmitt

2012). The timeframe of the study is mainly the eleventh–seventh centuries BC (2012: 19). Schmitt’s role has been involved in archaeology, cultural anthropology, and iconographic interpretation (2012: 17). The book does not consist only of onomastic research; 141 pages out of 495 (28% of the text) (the appendixes are excluded) are on onomastic research.

At the beginning of the research, there is reasoning and discussion on the family and household religion contra official state religion and the scholarly history of the subject (2012: 1–20). The methodological part concentrates on clarifying the terms ‘family’ and ‘household’ in Israelite culture (2012: 21–56). The work contains a wide archaeological review illustrating certain, probable, and possible domestic cultic items and architecture (2012: 57–244). Because the above-mentioned parts of the volume do not treat onomastics, they are not relevant to the present study.

The onomastic presentation is found in Chapter 5 (2012: 245–386). Albertz’s approach to the onomastica focuses on the motifs of namegiving. He classifies the names as follows: 1) Names of Thanksgiving (type cf. ישמעאל ‘god has heard’); 2) Names of Confession (type cf. חנניהו ‘YHWH showed favour’); 3) Praise names (type cf. אלירם ‘my god is high’); 4) Equating names (type cf. אביהו ‘my father is YHWH’); 5) Names of Birth (type cf. שאל ‘asked’); and 6) Secular Names (type cf. קרה ‘bald’). Albertz (2012: 482) writes that the grouping is a developed version of Martin Noth’s earlier presentation (see Noth 1928: 221–232).

Albertz has widely described different groups and subgroups. Because of the significant number of examples, it is not possible to introduce them in detail. As a result, according to Albertz, nearly 30% of all recorded personal names refer *directly* to experiences before, during, or after the processes surrounding childbirth (2012: 297). He develops the idea further, claiming that all the Hebrew theophoric names are always related to childbirth *in some way* (2012: 298).

Albertz has observed the problem of perfect and imperfect forms in the verbal elements of the theophoric names. If all of the names are always somehow related to childbirth, the imperfects, usually understood as present/future tenses, are problematic because the names were given after the events in childbirth. Albertz thinks that imperfect-looking verbal forms in personal names during the monarchic period (ca. eleventh–seventh centuries) represent an old NWS past tense (2012: 251). This is true in early Amorite names originating from the Middle and Late Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1200 BC). Yet, the explanation remains problematic because, for example, among the book of Jeremiah such names as ישמעאל, חנניהו, ירמיהו, יאשיהו are found. It is unlikely that in such a relatively late book, the *yqtl*-past tense was actively used.¹²

Finally, Albertz (and Schmitt) wrote a section on rites of the family and household religion, and funeral and commemoration customs. In the summary, Albertz (2012: 482–484) treats the critique presented by scholars such as Fritz Stolz (1996) and Saul Olyan

¹² In the epigraphic material originating from 1000–586 BC occur such names as ירמיהו, יקמאל, ירמיהו, יאזניהו (Ahituv 2005: 452–453).

(2008). The question is whether the personal names could be properly indicative of the personal piety of ancient Israelite families and households. He leans on the fact that a high percentage of the anthroponyms are based on theophoric elements. In addition, he introduces biblical narratives as witnesses. He reminds the reader that predicative elements connected with the exodus, conquest, or monarchy and the theology of Sinai, Zion, are not found within any names. According to Albertz, 28.4% of all the names and 29.9% of occurrences are so-called birthname – that is, they are related directly to birth processes.

However, there are factors which lead us to suspect that there were other motifs used in giving names that are not connected with the birth process.

- 1) The lists of the names of priestly or Levite families show that particular names were popular and therefore probably inherited within the clan. This can be noted, for example, in the name giving of John the Baptist (Luke 1:61) or in the list of the priests and Levites where, for example, names such as ^ʿ*Azaryāhū* and ^ʿ*Elqānā* (1 Chronicles 6) are repeated (see also Ilan 2002: 8).
- 2) Many biblical persons had second names, different from birthnames, such as ^ʿ*Abrām* > ^ʿ*Abrāhām*, *Ya^ʿqôḇ* > *Isrāʿēl*, *Hōšēa^ʿ* > *Ye^hōšūa^ʿ*, *Gidʿôn* > *Ye^rūb-baʿal*, (?) *Uzzīyāhū* ~ ^ʿ*Azaryāhū*, etc. Probably the most famous name, **Lab^ʿīya* ~ *Lab^ʿāya*, ‘lion’,¹³ which is found frequently in the Amarna texts, was not a birthname but a soldier name. In general, it seems that the second names were given based on remarkable events in one’s life.
- 3) It is clear that personal names are fashionable in different periods of time (Hess 2016: 37; 2021: 413). The anthroponyms utilised have changed radically several times in the course of history (Rahkonen 2020: 160–162; 2022: 277–278). This fact does not always correspond to the motif of birth processes but gives the impression that many names were chosen because of their popularity (Ilan 2002; Rahkonen 2022).

Albertz has used the registers of Renz and Röllig, *HAE* 1/1.55–87 and 2/2.109–456 (2003), containing 470 names from seals, bullae, and weights, and 251 names from inscriptions (2012: 249) as the basic source of names.¹⁴ Additionally, he has used such sources as: R. Deutsch, *Biblical Period Hebrew Bullae: The Josef Chaim Kaufman Collection* (2003); R. Deutsch and M. Heltzer, *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period* (1995); R. Deutsch, “A Hoard of Fifty Hebrew Clay Bullae from the Time of Hezekiah”; and R. Deutsch,

¹³ The name is reconstructed from cuneiform originals from the Amarna texts, *la-ab-a-ya* or *la-ab-a-ia*. In the Ugaritic onomasticon, the name *la-ab-ʿi-ya* is found (Hess 1993: 103).

¹⁴ Ahituv (2008) has an index of more than 300 names.

Shlomo: Studies in Epigraphy, Iconography, History and Archaeology in Honour of Shlomo Moussaieff (2003).

Stig Norin

The research which is probably closest to that of the present study is that of Stig Norin (2013). Both studies compare the epigraphic extrabiblical names with biblical names. Norin has listed and classified the epigraphic names meticulously. His interest has been in the incidences of the theophoric components based on the deities *Ba'al*, ^ʔ*Ēl* (+ ^ʔ*ʕlōhîm*) and *YHWH*. In my research I also took into account the divine epithets [e.g., ^ʔ*ḥî-*] and hypocoristic elements [e.g., *-ôn*] which are lacking in Norin's research.

As Norin (2013: 276) mentions, the component ^ʔ*Ēl*- / *-ʔēl* < **Ilū* has been used all over the NWS world. He addresses the question of whether ^ʔ*Ēl* should be understood as a name of the deity or as an appellative. In my opinion, the name of the head (**Ilū*) among the NWS gods slowly developed into an appellative ^ʔ*ēl* 'god' in the Hebrew language, probably once the yahwistic names became popular. Norin (2013: 278) notes alongside Golub (2014) that *YHWH* as a theophoric element is overwhelming compared to ^ʔ*Ēl* during the era of Hebrew kingdoms.

Norin (2013: 277) claims that the divine name *YHWH* first began to spread in the Southern Levant around the ninth century BC. I suppose that Norin meant *at the latest*. We have only six epigraphic names from the tenth century, a completely insufficient sample from which to draw any safe conclusions (Golub 2014: 630; table 4). Furthermore, there is a huge gap of non-existing epigraphic material containing anthroponyms between the fourteenth and tenth centuries.¹⁵ Therefore, we cannot say much of the existence of yahwistic names in the Southern Levant between ca. 1300–900 BC.

Norin (2013: 278) describes the ratio between *YHWH* and *Elohim* in the texts of the Pentateuch. He correctly notes that yahwistic personal names are not found in the book of Joshua. In the book of Judges, such names are found three times. In other words, the usage is rare there, but it exists (cf. Rahkonen 2020: 173).

Norin (2013: 280) mentions that in some ancient Egyptian texts the name *YHWH* is present and placed somewhere in Sinai, and linked to a pastoral tribe called *Šosu*. Aḥituv (1984: 121–122) suggests that the tribe might have been wandering Israelites. The word behind *YHWH* is often linked to the Semitic root *hwh*, 'to become, to be' as a causative 'the one who brings into being', i.e., the Creator (e.g., BDB s. v. הוה). Actually, according to the biblical tradition, the roots of the name appeared originally in the desert of Sinai (Exod 3:14, 6:2–3).

Norin (2013: 282) does not support a late dating of the Pentateuch. He shares Tengström's (1976: 14) claim that the Hexateuch had its origin before the founding of the

¹⁵ Ugaritic onomasticon cannot be counted because it was located outside of the Southern Levant.

Israelite monarchy. Norin justifies this through the distribution of the theophoric personal names in the Old Testament. Similarly, in my own studies, I have concluded that at least a majority of the onomasticon of the Pentateuch originate from the second millennium BC (Rahkonen 2019: 132–133).¹⁶ These names are not typical or simply do not exist in the later epigraphic onomasticon originating from the monarchic era (1000–586 BC).

Mitka Golub

One of the leading researchers in the area of biblical onomastics in recent years is Mitka Golub. She has been very productive in writing articles. Her article “The Distribution of Personal Names in the Land of Israel and Transjordan during the Iron II Period” (2014) is often referred to in my own publications. “Distribution of Personal Names” concentrates on the epigraphic extrabiblical material, with a specific focus on theophoric elements in the personal names. This article presents five important tables and four distribution maps. The work in question is partially similar to that of Norin (2013). It seems that Golub’s study was independent of Norin’s and she was not acquainted with Norin’s book at that point as it is not mentioned in her references. The basic observations are that yahwistic names increased cumulatively towards the end of the period and the names of other deities, including *Ba‘al*, were rare as theophoric elements in the Hebrew naming system.

Another article (2017) addressed interchanges between the theophoric elements *Y^{eh}ô-*, *Yô-*, *-yāhû*, and *-yā^h* in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. Golub’s brief conclusion is that the variation between longer and shorter forms does not result from copying errors (2017: 5). This conclusion seems reasonable. The greater number of interchanges found in Samuel–Kings compared with the Chronicles may indicate that the Chronicler used as his source a different version of Samuel–Kings from the Masoretic one. It is evident that in the earlier epigraphic material from the Iron Age II, *-yāhu*, *-yaw* were dominant while *-yā^h* was fashionable only later. *Y^{eh}ô-* occurred in two-thirds of the names and *Yô-* in one third. It seems to me that the later habit of the short form *-yā^h* infiltrated biblical texts gradually via the copyists and/or redactors, but the earlier habit still occurred sporadically. In Ezra–Nehemiah, *-ya^h* and *Yô-* are dominant. The only exceptions are *Šælxæm/yāhû* and *Y^{eh}ô/hānān* in the book of Ezra.

Golub, together with Peter Zilberg, wrote a most interesting article, “From Jerusalem to Āl-Yāhūdu: Judean Onomastic trends from the Beginning of the Babylonian Diaspora” (2018). The sample of names comes from 572–477 BCE. The majority of the tablets date to the last third of the sixth century. An important result of the study is that the onomastic trends of Iron Age II continued to prevail among the first generations of the exiles. This information is important for my article on the onomasticon of Ezra–Nehemiah which saw the

¹⁶ Genesis 1–11 are excluded. Most parts of the names are drawn from the books of Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers.

emergence of a new trend for using ancient biblical 'heroic' names. In the Hellenistic period onwards, this fashion became dominant (Ilan 2002; Rahkonen 2022).

In 2018 Golub and Shira Golani published an article on the onomasticon of the book of Jeremiah. This article comes close to my own goals and methods (Rahkonen 2019: 124). Golub and Golani compare the names of the book of Jeremiah with the pre-exilic material in order to date the names used in the biblical book. The main observation is that the names reflect well the epigraphic material just before the exile (2018: 22) and may support the historicity of the book of Jeremiah. However, there is a difference as well. In the book of Jeremiah, the suffixal form *-yā^h* is almost as common as the longer variant *-yā^hū*, which is not the case in the epigraphic material. According to the authors, the interchange of both forms was influenced by the scribes or redactors who updated the forms of names. This explanation may be due to *-yā^h* – *-yā^hū* variations occurring in names of the same person (2018: 23).

In 2019, Golub wrote an article in which she compared biblical personal names in the books describing the periods of the united monarchy and the divided monarchy. She contrasts the scholars who deny either the historicity of these books or the existence of the united monarchy with those who do not. This attempt is challenging especially because she utilises both the books of Kings and Chronicles. The onomasticon of Chronicles is peculiar, as also mentioned by Fowler (1988: 29). Personally, I would have been content with the material of Samuel–Kings alone. Golub supports the idea that Samuel–Kings is initially composed during the reign of Josiah or in the exile (2019: 58–59).¹⁷ All the sources – Samuel–Kings, Chronicles, and the epigraphic evidence – however, show a similar trend, increasing the use of the yahwistic theophoric element in comparison to the use of other theophoric elements (2019: 63).

Furthermore, Golub wrote an article concerning patronyms in Iron-Age Hebrew epigraphy (2020), particularly in stamp seals and in other official connections (2020: 39, 43). For an unknown reason, in approximately nine out of ten Judean stamp seals, patronyms were presented, while ten out of eleven Samaritan Israel stamp seals did not present a patronym. A similar tendency is visible in inscriptions, although not as keenly. There is another clear difference in the naming patterns between Israel and Judah. In Israel, the element *ba'al* is found in 19% of the names, but in Judah the percentage is almost zero. The yahwistic element is strong in Judah, but clearly weaker in Israel. The most popular element, *šlm* (such as *Šallum*, *Šælæmyāhū*), in Judah is missing in Israel (2020: 44). Golub explains the above-mentioned differences with an argument that Israel and Judah were two distinct political and cultural entities (2020: 44). According to Golub, this picture does not fit the biblical description of two states consisting of a single ethnic and cultural group

¹⁷ The author(s) of those books probably used earlier historical works written by Israelite chroniclers. This was the habit of the Near Eastern royal courts. For example, the Assyrian clerks wrote annals in the name of the ruling king. The Moabite Meša Stela belonged to the same category.

(2020: 45). Indeed, biblical books highlight the difference between those two states. It is true that the ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and origins of the two are similar. The Hebrew language probably covered several more or less close dialects of the same language (Rendsburg 1990) with a greater difference between the Deir ‘Alla dialect and other Hebrew dialects. Deir ‘Alla was likely a language of its own (Young and Rezetko [and referenced literature] 2014: 165–178).

If biblical records reflect the historical ethnic situation in Judah and Israel, we must consider the possible role of the non-Israelite population as some of the name givers, particularly in Israel (see Judg 1:21–36, 3:5–6; 2 Chron 2:17). If the Jezreel Valley was at least partially populated by Canaanites among Israel and the influence of Sidon and Tyre was strong, the *ba‘al*-names are more likely to be found in Israel than Judah and may have belonged mostly to the assumed non-Israelite population. This point of view is also noted by Tigay (1986: 16).

Others

In addition, we can mention Wilhelm Borée’s *Die Alten Ortsnamen Palästinas* (1968). It is a pedantically worked lexicon of ancient placenames. In the present study, it was helpful for Article 1. Other useful compilations used for Article 1 were Ariel Bagg’s *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der neuassyrischen Zeit*, I: Die Levante (2007); Marco Bonechi’s *I nomi geografici dei testi di Ebla* (1993); and Khaled Nashef’s *Die orts- und Gewässernamen der Mittelbabylonischen und Mittelassyrischen Zeit* (1982).

1.9. A More Precise Definition of the Task

In a wider sense, the major part of the dissertation endeavours to shed light on the onomastic, linguistic, theological, and settlement history of the second millennium BC (Articles 1–3) in the Southern Levant compared with biblical books. I have sought to date the onomasticon of the examined biblical books (Articles 2–3). Because I have studied archaeology as a secondary subject alongside my linguistic studies, I developed the idea of comparing biblical names with archaeologically dated epigraphic material, utilising results of archaeology in general (especially in Article 1).

If the biblical anthroponyms resemble closely those of dated epigraphic ones, we can more or less safely draw the conclusion that the names originate from the same period. As a by-product, it is reasonable to evaluate the extent to which the age of the names corresponds with the age of the early traditions behind the books in which they are found. Furthermore, if this period seems to be essentially earlier than the era of the monarchic Hebrew kingdoms (i.e., the second millennium BC), it is reasonable to think over the sources from which the names might originate. *For late authors or editors to have accurately selected names a long time afterwards is, in all probability, impossible.* What might be other alternatives? A possible answer is that those names originate from an

unknown early tradition. A systematic use of personal names belonging to such an early period presupposes that there has been a narrative (or narratives) behind the names. It is clear that no systematic onomasticon can hang in the balance. I have called these kinds of traditions 'core narratives'. Further research is, of course, needed.

One of the objects of the research is to find out turning points in naming fashions. In every language and culture there are cycles of fashion in the selection of personal names. In Articles 2-4, a period of approximately 1500 years is covered. I wanted to build an onomastic bridge from the Middle Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period in order to establish whether or not obvious cycles could be found.

It is important to understand that the present dissertation is onomastic research; that is to say, the results are from an onomastic point of view, often assisted by archaeology. I did not want to pay too much attention to the results of other exegetic disciplines which may have come to different results. Nevertheless, I emphasise that the results of the present study are useful and should be considered in any historical constructions.

2. The Northwest Semitic Context

It is particularly important to be acquainted with the NWS context, because the basic method of the dissertation has been a comparison between extrabiblical and biblical material. This comparison concerns languages, cultures, and religions, and the questions of the compared inscriptions and the writing systems applied to them. All of these subjects create a wider framework for understanding the NWS world and its relationship with the biblical texts.

The languages appearing in different written NWS documents show the development of the early stage of the NWS language and how it dispersed. Without this knowledge it is not possible to compare the names originating from the different stages of the NWS languages. The religious aspect is important for understanding the significance of the theophoric elements in all NWS cultures.

2.1. Northwest Semitic languages

Because of the comparison with the biblical onomasticon, it is crucial to be able to reconstruct names from the ancient inscriptions. Therefore, a short description of the most valid features of the known NWS languages is presented below.

1. *Amorite* (~Amurru). Amorite is an early NWS language from the Middle and Late Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1200 BC) that is partially known from such sources as the onomasticon of the Mari tablets. Michael Streck (2000) has endeavoured – in my opinion, successfully – to reconstruct several basics of the early language of the Amurru. Amorite was clearly a NWS language containing such a typical NWS feature as the soundshift of the initial **w > y*. The paradigm of consonants is still close to the Semitic protolanguage (see the tables presented in Streck 2000: 254–255). The original three final short vowels – *a*, *i* and *u* – are found in the names, but they could more preferably be called *anaptyctic vowels*, which do not necessarily correspond with the grammatical cases. In addition, the vowel *e* seems to have existed in specific positions (Streck 2000 2000: 152–169). It is likely that the speakers of different dialects of the early NWS language could easily communicate with one another using their own native language or, more precisely, their own dialect in the approximate area of modern Israel (+Westbank and the Gaza Strip), Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Northwest Iraq – that is to say, all over the Levant. Mimation (the final *m* in nouns) is still visible in the onomastic material of the Egyptian Execration Texts (the List of Sethe 1926: e1,22,27 and Posener 1940: E8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 25, 33, 34, 45, 47, 54) and probably sporadically in the old Amorite onomasticon (Streck 2000: 259).

2. *Early Canaanite*. Early Canaanite is known through canaanisms in the Amarna letters which were written in Akkadian in the fourteenth century BC. These letters are written in a relatively wide geographical area in the Levant. This is a problem because it means that

the language of the letters is not completely homogenous. The canaanisms appear especially in the verbal system, in (North)West Semitic glosses, and in non-Akkadian syntax (Rainey 2015: 12). Like Ugaritic, there was no definite article. The final short case vowels existed. There has been an attempt to derive different later dialects of biblical Hebrew from the dialects that are visible in the letters (Izre'el 2003). The short final "case" vowels of personal names are studied by Kossmann (1989) and, to some extent, by Hess (1993). One must take into account that the final short vowels in anthroponyms are not comparable with grammatical short vowels. This is the case in all early known NWS anthroponyms (i.e., in Amorite, Canaanite-Akkadian and Ugaritic).

3. *Ugaritic*. Ugaritic is the best-known NWS language of the second millennium BC, spoken during the Late Bronze Age until the destruction of the city ca. 1190 BC. The archives of Ugarit were at first excavated since 1928 and new material was later found. Texts are found in several different languages: Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Luwian, Hurrian, Egyptian, Cypriot-Minoan, and, of course, Ugaritic (Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 8). There are approximately fifty mythological poetic texts and 1500 prose texts written in Ugaritic (Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 9). The Ugaritic writing system is a type of cuneiform containing consonantal thirty signs. Three of them are different alephs ^ʔ*a*, ^ʔ*i*, and ^ʔ*u*. Compared with known NWS languages such as Hebrew and Phoenician, there were additional signs for phonemes *h*, *z*, *d*, *t* in the alphabet.¹⁸ It is possible to present Ugaritic as a 'grand uncle' of archaic biblical Hebrew.

The basic differences between Ugaritic and the later Canaanite languages are that an actual definite article is not found in the Ugaritic and the causative is an archaic *š*-verbal stem (Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 43). It has been presented, however, that the Canaanite definite article is derived from a similar source as the Ugaritic demonstrative pronoun *ha(n)* (Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 31). However, the same lack of definite article applies to the much later language of Deir 'Alla, too (Young and Rezetko 2014: 187).

4. *Akkadian*. Even though Akkadian does not belong to the NWS languages, it is relevant in the present study in connection with the Amorite material, the Amarna tablets, Akkadian texts from Ugarit, and Assyrian and Babylonian annals and other texts. Without knowing the basics of the Akkadian language and cuneiform writing, it would have been impossible to interpret and reconstruct the original forms of the NWS names. This, in turn, is crucial for the comparison with the biblical onomasticon.

Many personal names from the Southern Levant are mentioned in Akkadian documents, including some biblical names, such as *Ḫiṣṣāyāhû*, the king of Judah. His name is written in the Assyrian Prism Inscription as *Ḫa-za-ki-a-ú*. Akkadian belongs to the eastern branch of the Semitic family. The verbal system differs in several ways from the NWS languages. It was heavily influenced by Sumerian. This can be noticed, for example,

¹⁸ Phoneme *d* is often shifted to *d*, as in Aramaic, but unlike the Canaanite *z* (Sivan 2001: 20, 36).

in the loss of pharyngeals and laryngeals, often represented in the initial position as the vowel change into *e* in words such as **ʿabār* > *ebēr*, ‘cross over’ (Buccellati 1997: 69–70). In Akkadian texts, ayin [ʿ] is sometimes presented in foreign names using signs containing *ḥ*, but often it is ignored (Streck 2000: 158–159, 246–247). Being aware of such phonetic features is important when reconstructing the original form of any name. Compared with Old Akkadian, the most outstanding development of the later Akkadian language was probably the disappearance of mimation after the Middle Bronze Age and the blurring of case vowels in the first part of the first millennium BC (Buccellati 1997: 77–78).

5. *Moabite*. The Moabite language is known mostly through the Meša Stela, written in the ninth century BC. This language is remarkably similar to Hebrew, and the speakers of these languages could easily understand one another. The basic differences are the plural masc. sign *-în* in Moabite versus *-îm* in Hebrew and a reflexive *iphtaʿel* that was not preserved in Hebrew. However, the latter is visible in some early Canaanite placenames, such as *ʿEštaʿol* and *ʿEštəmoaʿ*.

6. *Aramaic*. There are some early texts in Aramaic from the ninth century BC. Among the early texts found from the Israelite area, the Tel Dan inscription is written in Aramaic. Aramaic differs from the Canaanite languages in that the definition is marked at the end of words. The lexicon is also different in several instances. So-called Old Aramaic (ca. 850–600 BC) probably did not differ very much from the Canaanite languages (Kaufman 1997: 115). Rahkonen (2019: 112) finds it likely that the early Aramean language possibly originates from some of the Amorite dialects or, alternatively, directly from the late NWS protolanguage.

7. *Deir-ʿAlla dialect*. A fascinating language is that of the so-called Balaam Text, found in the Transjordanian Jordan Valley. It is dated ca. 800 BC. Scholars have disputed whether the language is Aramaic with heavy Hebrew influence or Hebrew with Aramaic influence (see discussion in Young and Rezetko 2014: 186–191). Several similarities with the language of the book of Job are noticed by Rendsburg (1993: 312, 314, 316, 322). It is possible that the language of Deir-ʿAlla should be classified as its own Transjordanian NWS language with some archaic features, such as the absence of the definite article (Young and Rezetko 2014: 187, 190). The speakers may have been Transjordanian Hebrews who had been in close contact with the Arameans.

A short presentation of the language history of the NWS languages can be read in Benjamin Suchard’s *The Development of the Biblical Hebrew Vowels* (2016) and in Holger Gzella’s “Northwest Semitic Languages and Hebrew” (2013).

Personal names derived from most of the above-mentioned languages are relevant for understanding the epigraphic onomastic material utilised in the articles of this dissertation. Epigraphic data is the plinth for the approximate dating of the biblical names utilising the comparative method. There are at least two important onomastic areas where it is important to know at least the basics of these languages. The first is the usage of verbal

elements in the theophoric names. As Fowler (1988: 313–318) has pointed out, onomastic practices are not exactly equal among different Semitic linguistic groups. That is to say, verbal elements reveal how different gods were thought to work in the lives of the people who worshipped them. Verbal elements describe, for example, what kind of affections are expected from worshipped deities or how they had already worked in the lives of worshippers, for example in childbirth (Albertz 2012). Second, nominal sentences show the kind of religious conceptions held by different linguistic groups. The nouns which were attached to the theophoric elements of the names reveal how the name givers understood the character of each deity.

Both of these points are useful in analysing and classifying the researched material. As noted in Articles 2–4, there are certain periods of onomastic fashions which can be dated from the analysed and classified data. Ultimately, the better a scholar knows the languages behind the onomastic data, the deeper he/she can understand the different nuances of the names under investigation.

2.2. Religions in the Northwest Semitic world

The practices of worshipping different deities – such as offering habits, sanctuary practices, or priestly activities – are not of particular relevance when researching onomastics. They belong to the areas of folklorists, historians, and, to some extent, archaeologists, and may shed light on theological understanding, too. Furthermore, religious texts like the Ugaritic Ba‘al cycle or the Balaam Text from Deir ‘Alla are most interesting from a theological perspective, exploring the understood divine life and prophetic dimensions. However, such texts do not provide much material for onomastic studies. Onomastics mostly concentrates on used theophoric and hypocoristic elements of anthroponyms. Of course, a study of onomastics can still provide some material of value to scholars of religion and biblical theologians. Certain names of ‘foreign’ gods occurring as theophoric elements in personal names can offer something for historians describing what kind of foreign contacts existed. For example, the name of the king in Jerusalem during the Amarna period, ἱr-Ḥeba, has a name meaning ‘servant of Ḥeba(t)’. The theophoric element reveals that he was Hurrian in origin (Hess 1993: 176).

Theophoric elements in onomastics reveal the degree of popularity of each deity. The work of Tigay (1986) in particular is a good example of how a scholar endeavours to understand the religious situation among people, i.e. who were the worshipped gods and to what degree they were worshipped. Fowler (1988) and Albertz (2012) each had the purpose of excavating the motifs of namegiving. Hess (2021; 2016; 2015; 1991) and I have used onomastic material to date biblical books. Norin had some similar conclusions as we had (2013: 282).

According to Rahkonen (2019), the deities most likely to appear in theophoric elements across different time periods, ethnic groups, and NWS languages are as follows:¹⁹

Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1550 BC)

<i>Amurru material</i>	% of names
1. ʾIlū	26.2%
2. Haddū–Baʿlu	11.9%
3. Dagan	3%
4. Yarah	2.3%
5. Šamaš	2.2%

(Streck 2000; statistics according to Rahkonen 2019)

The above-presented pantheon probably describes well the popularity of deities during the early common NWS stage of the language. Two of the gods clearly stood out in popularity: ʾIlū (bibl. > ʾĒl), who was the head among gods, and Baʿlu – Haddū (bibl. > Baʿal–Hadad), the god of storm, thunder, and rain. They were followed by Dagan (bibl. *Dāgôn*), the god who oversaw crops. It is improbable that the word ʾilu in anthroponyms was already being understood to mean an appellative ‘god’ by this stage. It is clear that according to the biblical tradition, the divine name ʾĒl preceded the name YHWH (Gen 14:18; Exod 6:3). The God of Abraham was called ʾĒl. If the Bible describes patriarchs as a group of Amurru, as the personal names suggest (Rahkonen 2019: 129), this fits well with the Amorite picture.²⁰ The worship of *Dāgôn* among the Philistines, as recorded at 1 Sam 5:1–5, reflects the same reality as the language of the inscription of Eqrn. The Philistines were actually descendants of earlier Southern Canaanites who worshipped the ancient NWS deities.²¹ The upper class might have spoken the unknown Philistine language.

Yarah and *Šamaš* are not mentioned in the Bible. However, the toponyms *Bêt-Yerah* and *Bêt-Šamæš* prove that those deities were worshipped in the Southern Levant during the Amorite-Canaanite period (see Rahkonen 2016: 118–119, 130, Fig. 3). The biblical personal name ʾahīyām (1 Kgs 15:1) might suggest that *Yamm(u)*, the deity of seas and waters, was also known in Israel. This deity is mentioned, for example, in Ugaritic mythology. However, there are other explanations for the name, too. In other NWS-

¹⁹ There has been a tendency to avoid (rather than totally ignore) names of female deities as theophoric elements of anthroponyms. Most of the epigraphic personal names belonged to men. It is probable that female goddesses were more popular than presented in the tables below.

²⁰ In Gen 4:26, there is mention that in the days of Seth and Enos, YHWH began to be worshipped. Firstly, because this statement does not belong to the biblical narratives of the early Hebrews or Patriarchs, there is no reason to treat this subject in the present dissertation. Secondly, YHWH has already been mentioned several times before Gen 4:26. Therefore, it is natural that the author/editor of Genesis simply used the divine name that he knew. Thirdly, Gen 14:18 and Exod 6:3 fit with the biblical onomastic picture. Yahwistic anthroponyms are rare in the Hexateuch and Judges. See also Mark S. Smith’s *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2002).

²¹ However, an ambiguous Philistine goddess פתגיה is mentioned in the Eqrn inscription having no NSW background (e.g., Ahituv 2005: 307–311).

onomastica, a deity named *mlk* is found. I have interpreted *mlk* (a derivation from the word ‘king’ or ‘ruler’) as an epithet – probably for *Baʿlu* – rather than as the name of a deity, even though names such as *Mōlæḱ* and *Milkom* are found in the Bible.

Late Bronze Age (fourteenth century BC)

<i>Amarna material</i>	% of names
1. Baʿlu–Haddu	17.6% both of those names 8.8%
2. ʾIlu	7.8%
3. others (ʾAšir-, ʿAštar-, Dagan)	2.9%

(Hess 1993; statistics according to Rahkonen 2019)

Interestingly, the popularity of *Baʿlu–Haddu* was much greater during the fourteenth century than in the earlier Amurru stage. The fact that the percentage that both names, *Baʿlu* and *Haddu*, make an equal appearance might reflect some kind of ethnic division between Amorites and Canaanites, as I have suggested (Rahkonen 2016). The increased significance of *Baʿlu* compared to ʾIlu might be reflected in the Ugaritic poems of the *Baʿal* cycle, where *Baʿlu* is in the process of displacing ʾIlu. This development in popularity is visible in the onomasticon of Ugarit and especially in Phoenicia (see below).

Late Bronze Age (mainly late thirteenth century BC)

<i>Ugaritic material</i>	% of names
1. Baʿlu–Haddu	11.9%
2. ʾIlu	9.5%
3. Rašap	2%
4. ʿAnat	1.1%

(Gröndahl 1967; statistics according to Rahkonen 2019)

As mentioned above, *Baʿlu–Haddu* is a slightly more popular theophoric element in the Ugaritic onomasticon than ʾIlu. *Rašap*, ‘lightning deity’, might be associated with the thunder god *Baʿlu*.

1st millennium BC

<i>Phoenician material</i>	% of names
1. Baʿal	27.9%
2. Melqart	7.7%
3. ʿAštar	5.2%
4. ʾEšmun	4.2%
and ʾĒl	4.2%

(Benz 1972; statistics according to Rahkonen 2019)

In Phoenicia the decrease in the use of $\text{ʔ}\bar{\text{E}}\text{l}$ is even more radical in the first millennium BC, and *Baʿal* is overwhelmingly popular. If we think of $\text{ʔ}\bar{\text{E}}\text{l}$ as clearly the most popular theophoric element (67.8% of all names) in the Ammonite onomasticon (e.g., Albertz 2012: 341), we could draw a conclusion that the increasing popularity of *Baʿal* was a western, mostly coastal, phenomenon. Therefore, $\text{ʔ}\bar{\text{E}}\text{l}$ was not psychologically so much resisted as a theophoric element in the mountainous area of Judah and Israel. People there did not count themselves as coastal people. In the Phoenician material, a new trend becomes visible. That is the appearance of local national gods (see below).

2.2.1. Aramaic material

In the Aramaic onomasticon, the primary god is *Hadad-Baʿal*. However, the number of secondary deities is high. According to Albertz (2012: 342–343), there are theophoric elements referring to fifteen West Semitic deities, nine Mesopotamian deities, and three Egyptian deities. Among those seen relatively frequently are *Nabu*, *Šamaš*, *Sîn*, and, surprisingly, YHWH . Albertz’s opinion is that *Šamaš* is a Mesopotamian deity. I disagree. This deity was popular among the Amorite onomasticon. *Šamaš* was worshipped in the Southern Levant, as can be seen in the toponym *Bêt-Šæmæš*. *Šamaš* was a counterpart of *Yarah* and both belonged to an ancient common Semitic pantheon, not especially Mesopotamian. In any case, many of the Akkadian deities have Sumerian roots, such as *Sîn*, ‘a moon god’, but not *Šamaš*.

2.2.2. Hebrews

We could state that in the second millennium BC during the Middle and Late Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1200 BC), a common NWS pantheon existed. The biblical record reflects that in terms of religion, the ancestors of the Hebrews were much like the other inhabitants of the Southern Levant (Judg 3:5–6). After tenth century, at the latest, the political and religious development led to worshipping primary national deities. An explanation might have been the collapse of the dominion of empires in the Southern Levant, such as Egypt, Mitanni, and Hittite. New more-or-less independent national states saw the daylight, such as Israel, Moab, Edom, Ammon, Philistean city states, Aram of Damascus, Sidon and, Tyre.

The first documented mention of YHWH is found in Egyptian documents (List IX of Amenhotep III, Soleb; Lists XXVIa-b) in a term “the Land of Šosu Yāhû”. The word Šosu means wandering armed bandits, and their land has been interpreted to have been located somewhere in Sinai (see Aḥituv 1984: 121–122). Amenhotep III ruled ca. 1390–1352 BC. Yahwistic personal names became typical in a cumulative way, at least during the monarchic period of Hebrew kingdoms. YHWH was probably the official deity of the states of Judah and Israel. What happened among the common folk is disputable. The epigraphic and biblical onomasticon show, however, that other gods did not have much favour (e.g.,

Tigay 1986). However, the personal names do not describe well whether YHWH was the *only* worshipped god, though he was certainly the primary god.

2.2.3. Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites

The Ammonites remained traditional. The primary deities were $\text{ʔ}\bar{E}l$ and and after him *Hadad-Baʿal*, as the case was already among early Amurru (Albertz 2012: 342; Rahkonen 2019: 118–119). An explanation might be the location of the Ammonites in the hinterland. The national gods of the Moabites and Edomites were *Kemôš* and *Qaus*. It seems probable that these deities were inherited from former inhabitants before the NWS tribes infiltrated the areas behind the Dead Sea (see Rahkonen 2016: 121; 2019: 132). If the language of those earlier inhabitants was non-Semitic, it is possible that both *Kemôš* and *Qaus* were derived from the same original resulting $*k/q - m/w - š/s$. In onomastics, it has been shown that substrate words are often recognisable by irregular phonetic adaptations (Salmons 1992: 267). In a Ugaritic religious text, there is mention (RS 24.244:36) of a deity called *Kmt* of HRYT (HRYT ~ ??? Edom; cf. *Šeʿir ha-Ḥōrī* Gen 36:20). The connection between *Kmt* and *Kemôš* remains unclear.

2.3. Ancient inscriptions

There is plenty of epigraphic written material found in the NWS world or areas connected with it from ca. 1950–586 BC. Here, it suffices to mention a list of the most important inscriptions, texts, and the most relevant books²² discussing the original inscriptions. They are presented in the APPENDIX below.

The number of relevant texts is high. They are mostly written in Egyptian, Akkadian, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and in different Canaanite languages. It would probably be too demanding to be a specialist in all of those languages. It is reasonable for a scholar of onomastics to utilise scientific books or articles written on the above-mentioned literary sources and languages. There are good lists of anthroponyms available in them. Of course, one can benefit the more he/she has the ability and opportunity to read the original sources. However, one should know the linguistic basis of the NWS languages and understand the main differences between them. A good knowledge of biblical Hebrew is mandatory.

Numerous books of relevance are written in which personal names found in the inscriptions mentioned in the APPENDIX have been collected. Worth mentioning here are Streck (2000), Gröndahl (1967), Hess (1993), Aḥituv (1984; 2005; 2008), Benz (1972), and Avigad (1997).

²² These books are called in the Appendix “textbooks”.

2.4. Ancient writing systems

The extensive written material reveals to us that the cultures of the Levant were sophisticated and therefore could produce much literary data. Literary activities, of course, were conducted by professional scribes. There were different kinds of writing systems. Egyptian hieroglyphic writing was one of the oldest systems in the world. Different signs marked individual phonemes, phonemic clusters, and separate words or concepts. A simplified hieratic form was also in use. The number of signs in the advanced hieroglyphic system was almost 1000 (Allen 2013: 4–5; Loprieno 1995:12).

The Sumerian/Akkadian cuneiform system represents logograms, syllables, and individual phonemes. Gelb (1961) has listed 324 syllabograms. The logograms represent important words, such as god, land, house, servant/slave, etc.

The Ugaritic cuneiform system was an alphabetic system containing thirty signs. The most important peculiarity of this system is probably the inclusion of three aleph signs connected with the vowels ^ʔa, ^ʔi, ^ʔu (e.g., Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 21–22). These three aleph signs reveal partially the vowel paradigm of the Ugaritic language. However, texts written in Akkadian often help in constructing vowels of names of the Ugaritic onomasticon.

The first alphabetic writing systems alongside the above-mentioned Ugaritic consonantal cuneiform alphabets were the Proto-Sinaitic and Proto-Canaanite writing systems (e.g., Naveh 1987: 23–27). In these systems, every mark represented a consonantal phoneme. The Proto-Canaanite writing developed into Phoenician-(Hebrew) script (twenty-two signs), which has numerous daughter systems, such as Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and Slavic (Cyrillic).²³

²³ See Sinaitic inscriptions under: “Ancient writing.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved 2019.

3. Research results

Article 1: A Study on Some Semitic Toponymic Types of the Second Millennium BC in the Southern Levant.

Article 1 functions as an introduction to the early NWS world in the Southern Levant. In this article certain toponymic types are studied in order to find out what kind of settlement history, migrations, linguistic backgrounds, and ethnic groups could be distinguished in the second millennium BC in the Southern Levant.²⁴ The object of the study is toponyms. Such an exploration has, as far as I know, never been published before.

The article is interdisciplinary. The studied toponyms have been typologically grouped according to the rules of onomastics. Only toponyms of sites which could be dated archaeologically (on the basis of excavations or epigraphic mentions) to the second millennium BC were selected for the study. The distribution of each type has been placed on maps or explained in written text.

There are two larger groups of toponyms that can be geographically distinguished from one another. Toponyms containing a suffixal hypocoristic element *-ôn* are mostly situated on the coastal area (also in Lebanon) and in the Shephelah. Another group, *bêt* + adjunct (like *Bêt Šæmæš*), has been popular in Syria and in the mountainous areas of Galilee and Judea in the Southern Levant. This fact seems to buttress the Amorite Hypothesis launched by the archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon (1966) and supported by Yohanan Aharoni (1979: 139–140). Accordingly, the biblical statement says: “...and the Amorites dwell in the mountains and the Canaanites by the sea...” (Num 13:29). However, the “Amorite Hypothesis” has been disputable.

The early settlement history in the Middle Bronze Age is described archaeologically, for example, by Susan Cohen (2002), Amnon Ben-Tor (2006), Aharon Kempinski (1992), and Assaf Yasur-Landau et al. (2008). The earliest settlement area concentrated on the coastal plain (Cohen 2002: tables at 107–115). As Yasur-Landau et al. (2008: 59, 76–77) and Kempinski (1992: 166) have noted, there were two cultural, political, and probable immigration gates: the coastal Acco-Kabri gate from Lebanon and the northeastern Ḥaṣor-Laiš gate from Syria. The archaeological and onomastic evidence taken together support the idea that the first of the NWS migration waves came from the Lebanese coastal area and the second from Syria.

There are three other toponymic types that are worth of mentioning:

- 1) Toponyms with a prosthetic *a-* (cf. ²*A/šdod*, ²*A/šqelôn*). These have parallels among the Amorite toponyms (Streck 2000: 334–335). This type is early and is linguistically also found in the Arabic and biblical Hebrew lexicons.

²⁴ Mainly Middle Bronze Age migrations are studied.

- 2) Toponyms with a suffixal ending of $-\hat{o} < *ā$ (cf. *Akk/ô*, *Yeriḥ/ô*). Streck discusses this subject in connection with the Amorite onomasticon (see 2000: 287–288). This type seems to be early as well, because Acco is already mentioned in the Execration Texts [E49] during the Middle Bronze Age.
- 3) Toponyms based on the reflexive verbal stem *ephṭaʿol*, such as *ʿEšt^emoaʿ* and *ʿEštaʿol*. These toponyms are located in a relatively narrow area in the region of the Judean foothills in the Shephelah and might originate from a mutually similar dialect. This kind of grammatical stem is also found, for example, in the Meša Stela.

Article 2: Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study (2019)

Article 2 is the key exploration of the dissertation. The basic methodology of all Articles 2–4 is presented in it. The leading idea is a comparison between biblical and extrabiblical epigraphic material.

The statistic results of biblical and epigraphic names run parallel with one another to a relatively high degree. The differences are sometimes due to interpretations of names. For example, should *Yehōšuaʿ* be understood as a yahwistic name or as a verbal form close to the *hiphʿil* form of the root $\text{ywh}^?$? Both interpretations are found.

The method I have followed does not utilise theophoric elements only, but the affixal hypocoristic endings and the epithets of deities (e.g., *ʿAbî- ʿAḥî-*), too. This is something extraordinary, not found in any other research I have been acquainted with. The studied hypocoristic endings are $*-ān(u) > -ōn$, $*-īya > î$, $(?)*-āya > -ai$, and $-āʿ$.

The comparison with data that can be archaeologically dated nails the timeframe of a similar body of onomastica. The similarity must cover all of the selected biblical material in a way that no exclusively later material is found. As noted in Article 2, there is a marked difference between the anthroponyms of the patriarchal narratives of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch, which I have named ‘Mosaic books’. None of the patriarchal personal names are found in the Mosaic books – generally speaking, most of the names of the Mosaic books are found in Exodus and Numbers. Therefore, it might have been justified to compare the onomasticon of those books separately. In principle, I combined the material of both books because of the wider statistic sample. However, the results are unlikely to have suffered because the types of names seem to be fairly similar. Clearly the anthroponyms of those narratives – Patriarchal and Mosaic – describe different periods. The compared epigraphic anthroponyms are found in the archaeological material originating from the Middle and Late Bronze Age. The Amurru names have an obvious correspondence with the Patriarchal personal names of Genesis. The ‘Mosaic’ names of the

Pentateuch can be compared with the names of the Amarna anthroponyms and those found from the Ugaritic data.

In addition, the names of the Pentateuch are compared with the material of the first millennium BC, such as the Phoenician material (Benz 1972), the Judean-Israelite epigraphic material (Ahituv 2005), the archaeologically dated seals (Avigad 1997), and the anthroponyms of the book of Jeremiah. The comparison aims to examine whether the personal names of the Pentateuch have a general correspondence with the material originating from the first millennium. In other words, there is a double comparison: one with the datable material of the second millennium and another with the data of the first millennium. The result is obvious. The onomasticon of the Pentateuch is not parallel with that of the first millennium but has clear points in common with the epigraphic material of the NWS world from the second millennium.

The above-mentioned parallelism between the Pentateuch and the epigraphic material dating to the Bronze Age is impossible to explain if late authors made up the narratives, for example, doing so in the late monarchic (of Judah) period (not to mention the exilic or postexilic authors). To know the correct Bronze Age personal names for stories that are meant to describe pre-monarchic times in the second millennium BC is absolutely beyond the abilities of any late author. Of course, there have been later editors, as the text itself proves by saying *עד היום הזה* 'as it has been until this day' or by presenting comments like "...it is said in *the Book of the Wars of the Lord*" (Num 21:14, NASB). However, the onomastic evidence presents a possible, or even probable, concept of early *core narratives* – or traditions, if this term is more acceptable – originating from the second millennium BC. That is to say, the anthroponyms of the narratives of the Masoretic Pentateuch suggest that there have been early versions, oral or literary, which can be dated similarly with the personal names. Generally speaking, names cannot occur randomly and without connection to some type of narrative.

In Article 2, interesting statistic details – which are not possible to mention here – are found concerning Amorite, Ugaritic, and Phoenician onomasticon (see Article 2). In addition, an important observation is that the 'Edomite names' listed in Genesis 36 mostly cannot be credibly interpreted as NWS anthroponyms. A more likely option is that those names originate from further south.

Similar comparative studies, to an extent like the present one, have not been presented earlier. Norin (2013) has touched upon the topic. Hess has written an article on the anthroponyms in Genesis (2016), another on Joshua and Judges (2021), and one on northern foreign names (2015), but he did not present any comprehensive statistic comparison. Like me, he has compared anthroponyms with extrabiblical material originating from the second millennium but his studied material is narrower, being concentrated on individual names. The studied epigraphic onomastic material of biblical

onomastics so far has mostly been that of the first millennium BC (see, e.g., Tigay [1986]; Fowler [1988]; Albertz [2012]; Golub [2014]).

Article 3: *Biblical Hebrew Personal Names in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1–2 Samuel: A Comparative Study* (2020)

Article 3 seeks to establish whether the personal names of the biblical books in question are a closer reflection of the personal names of the Pentateuch²⁵ or the epigraphic material of the first millennium BC. I have called those books ‘Transitional Books’ due to the inner chronology of the Hebrew Bible. The structural features of the names which are studied in Article 3 are theophoric elements, the same epithets as in Article 2, and hypocoristic elements (see above). In addition, some lexical comparison has been carried out as well.

Earlier, Stig Norin (2013: 116–264) has investigated the books of the Pentateuch and the Transitional Books in connection with the appearances of three deities – YHWH , ʾĒl , and *Baʿal*– as the theophoric elements in the Old Testament. Norin’s standpoint is more theological, whereas mine is more onomastic. The basic outlines are similar. Hess (2021) concentrated on the foreign names in the books of Joshua and Judges, such as the evidently Hurrian names *Telmai*, *Šešai*, and *Piram*, and the possibly Anatolian *Hoham* and *Sisera*, which might originate, according to Hess, from the onomasticon of the Sea Peoples. In any case, these personal names are not Semitic and absolutely do not belong to the data of the first millennium BC.

The results of Article 3 are the following: 1) Elytic names are overwhelming among the theophoric names in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. 2) Yahwistic names are rare and begin to appear more widely in 2 Samuel. These two features separate the anthroponyms of the above mentioned books from those of the first millennium. 3) The old hypocoristic affix -*ôn* is still common, as in the Pentateuch and in the epigraphic NWS material from the Bronze Age.²⁶ This strengthens the picture that the names in question originate from the second millennium, because the earlier, popular hypocoristic affix -*ôn* totally disappeared in the first millennium BC from both the epigraphic and biblical material. 4) A new hypocoristic affix -*aʾ* begins to appear, differing from the earlier data and connecting with the affixes typical in the first millennium BC. 5) The lexical analysis shows that the roots used in personal names clearly separate the onomasticon of the Transitional Books from the epigraphic material of the first millennium BC.

²⁵ The anthroponyms of the Pentateuch, in turn, resemble to a considerable degree the epigraphic personal names of those found in the Amorite (Amurru), Amarna, and Ugaritic data (Rahkonen 2019).

²⁶ We do not have statistically significant onomastic epigraphic material from the Iron Age I.

Article 4: *The Personal Names in Ezra and Nehemiah as a Turning Point in Hebrew Naming Fashion: A Comparative Study*

Article 4 describes the onomastic situation among the Jews in the Southern Levant (i.e., most likely during the period of the Persian county of Yehud) during the time when Ezra–Nehemiah was written.²⁷ The period was an onomastic turning point. The naming habits inherited from the monarchic period were still clearly visible. Interestingly, the naming system of the Iron Age II continued to dominate the onomasticon of the diaspora-Jews in Āl-Yāhūdu in Babylonia (from 572 to 477 BC) to a high degree (Golub and Zilberg 2018). Ancient biblical heroic names, such as *Y^ehūdā^h*, *Šim^ʿōn*, *Yōseḫ*, began to appear after this period in Ezra–Nehemiah. Such names had been in use neither during the monarchic period nor in the exilic period. This applies to both the epigraphic and the biblical personal names. Later, these names were dominant among the Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Ilan 2000). The key conclusion of Article 4 is that the anthroponyms of Ezra–Nehemiah should be dated between the monarchic and Hellenistic periods after the exile – that is to say, they should be dated to the Persian period.

²⁷ Later possible editions hardly altered the lists of names.

4. Summary: Onomastics as a scientific discipline of biblical studies

Onomastics has seldom been regarded by theologians as a discipline relevant to biblical studies. Onomastic research has often concerned mainly theophoric elements. In those cases, the positions of different worshipped deities have been the focus of the studies (e.g., Tigay 1986; Norin 2013). Verbal and nominal elements of names have occasionally been studied. In those cases, the interest of scholars has been on motifs of worshipping (Fowler 1998; Albertz and Schmitt 2012). Generally speaking, onomastics is, however, widely neglected because it has not been regarded as a science that provides answers in explaining the evolution of biblical texts. This summary is meant to be an apology for the significance of onomastics.

Furthermore, I would like to remark that each scientific discipline has their own viewpoints from which to interpret their results. For example, linguists may study ethnic history using the tools of linguistics, but archaeologists may research the same topic utilising totally different tools, typical for that particular branch of science. It is usually accepted that linguists are not expected to take into account the results of archaeology during the research process and vice versa. Both fields present their results as to be understood linguistically or archaeologically. Later, it might be fruitful to compare one another's published works. With this in mind, I wish to emphasise that in the present dissertation, the results and conclusions are mostly presented from the point of view of onomastics; in other words, they are presented from how a scholar of onomastics sees the answers to scientific problems that might also be studied by scholars of other disciplines.

It is remarkable that almost all researchers of onomastics date the biblical names earlier than those who have dated biblical books by means of literary or source critics. Hess (2021; 2016; 2015) has dated the anthroponyms of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges to the second millennium. Norin (2013: 272–273) has also challenged late datings of the Pentateuch. My studies have also come to the same conclusion.

The onomastic material of biblical books such as 1–2 Kings or Jeremiah corresponds with the epigraphic extrabiblical material originating from Iron Age II. According to Tigay (1986: 41, 17–18), “the epigraphic evidence about the onomasticon suggests that personal names in the Biblical text were not extensively censored” and “the statistics obtained from the corpus of inscriptional names are roughly comparable with those obtained from the Bible.” Golub (2019) writes: “These similarities between Jeremiah and the archaeological record indicate that Jeremiah reflects Judean onomastic traditions. Thus they help to buttress scholarly arguments for the historicity of Jeremiah.”

When speaking of the genesis and evolution of the biblical books which are mentioned in Articles 2 and 3, it is useful to have a brief overview of the most usual scholarly theories. Konrad Schmid (2018) has presented a good, short history of different schools beginning

from Jean Astruc (1753). He has introduced streams of thinking based on Documentary Hypothesis,²⁸ Neo-Documentarian Hypothesis, and a redaction-critical approach. Documentary Hypothesis, as all theologians know, represents the widely accepted idea that sources such as Yahwist [J], Elohist [E], Priestly source [P], and Deuteronomist [D] have been used by the editors of the Pentateuch who composed the text towards the version that we know as the MT.²⁹ Not all of the scholars mentioned by Schmid believe all of them were used. Dating of the sources used by the editors varies between Solomonic times of J (see Schmid 2018: 38) to the postexilic era. One can notice that the range of opinions is surprisingly wide. Some scholars explain historical biblical narratives as being more-or-less hidden silhouettes which are actually derived from the present, or nearly present, situation of the author (e.g., Finkelstein and Silberman 2001; Levin 2007: 209–230).

I would like to add to this scholarly discussion some ideas based on onomastics. In my opinion, the evidence of the ancient biblical and extrabiblical onomasticon has not been taken into account as much as would be desirable. It goes without saying that those who explore such topics should not ignore the results of onomastics. For example, scholars ought to be able to explain why the anthroponyms of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges are so well comparable with the epigraphic material originating from the second millennium BC. As mentioned, it is highly improbable that a late editor or author could so accurately make up names originating from that period.

Onomastics can be classified as an exact, statistically measurable science. If epigraphic names are clearly readable or there is no doubt about forgery, they can be counted as reliable evidence. Therefore, it is justified to compare them with biblical names and draw conclusions on the grounds of that comparison. Those who are researching the process of the evolution of biblical texts through other disciplines – be it linguistics, source criticism, or something else – should take into account the results of onomastics. In the next passages, examples are presented to demonstrate the sorts of information that epigraphic names and, when applicable, biblical names can tell us.

Epigraphic material from the Middle Bronze Age

1) The anthroponyms of the Mesopotamian and North Syrian Amurru and Egyptian Canaanite onomasticon (e.g., the Execration Texts), originating from the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1550 BC) alongside written data show that there were Amurru connections between Syria–Mesopotamia and the Southern Levant [e.g., with *Hāṣôr*] (Rainey and Notley 2006: 51) and Canaanite-Amurru connections between the Southern Levant and northern Egypt [e.g., *Avaris*] (Bietak 1996). This evidence proves that the geographic framework of the events mentioned in the Patriarchal narratives are historically possible.

²⁸ Often called Wellhausenism.

²⁹ Even several J:s and E:s (see Schmid 2018: 22 referring to Wellhausen).

Amurru people moved from Mesopotamia to the Southern Levant and the NWS population from the Southern Levant migrated to northern parts of Egypt. The names of Abraham's family fit comfortably with this period (Rahkonen 2019: 129).

The first mention of YHWH

2) The name of YHWH, the God of Israel, is mentioned for the first time in Egyptian sources (Amenhotep III from the early fourteenth century BC; see, e.g., Ahituv 1984: 121–122) in the term “*Land of Yāhû*”. The “land” has been located somewhere in Sinai. This onomastic evidence proves that there were people in the early fourteenth century who worshipped *Yahû*, i.e., the ‘Creator-deity’ or ‘Deity of existence’. The book of Exodus reflects the idea that the name YHWH began to substitute the earlier name ^ʔĒl (-‘*elyôn*, -*šaddai*) of one and the same deity in Sinai (Exod 6:3). In that context, ^ʔĒl was not used as an appellative but as a name of the deity. This idea is well justified in Smith’s discussion of the section “Yahweh and El” (2002: 32–42).

The books of Joshua and Judges show that the theophoric element ^ʔĒl- / -^ʔel was dominant while YHWH was rare (Rahkonen 2020: 173). As to Gen 4:26, which states that worship of YHWH began in the days of Seth and Enos, one should notice that the passage is not connected with the narratives of Abraham or Moses. The name YHWH is found regularly in the texts of the Pentateuch, including in stories meant to describe periods before Abraham and Moses. However, this fact proves only that this divine proper name was known and used by the authors and/or editors alongside the common noun ^ʔlōhîm. The latter is used as a counterpart of YHWH. It is interesting that the poetry of the book of Job possibly(?) uses the pair ^ʔlōaḥ - ^ʔĒl in a similar way, or should we read it ^ʔel?

The toponyms and anthroponyms of the Amarna texts

3) When researching the names of cities and towns of the Amarna letters, one can notice that the names of these cities and areas were more or less the same as those mentioned as the unconquered settlements in Judg 1:27–36. The difference is that the Amarna letters were sent from capitals of city states, and the book of Judges also mentions smaller towns and, occasionally, larger areas.

The presence of epigraphic Hurrian names in the Amarna letters proves that there were Hurrian people living in the Southern Levant. The book of Joshua presents some with the Hurrian names *Talmi* and *Šēšai* (Hess 1993: 227–230). The king of Jerusalem, Jebus, during the Amarna period, was called ʔr-ḥeba ~ ‘*Abdi-Ḥeba*’ being a Hurrian name. The book of Judges consistently speaks of Jerusalem as a city of foreigners (Judg 19:10–12). Furthermore, the Jebusite man who sold the temple plot to David was called ^ʔrawnā (2 Sam 24:18–24). The name has had a couple of explanations. In my opinion, more preferable is the Hittite *Arauan(n)i*, ‘free man’, not a slave (Kloekhorst 2007: 238). The Hurrian *Iwri*,

'lord', is suggested, too (e.g., Koehler and Baumgartner 2001 s. v. אֲרֹנָה). Both of the explanations hint at a northern origin.

The first mention of Israel

4) The name *Yasriʿil* ~ *Israel* is mentioned in the Merneptah Stela (1207 or ca. 1210 BC) having apparently been located in historical mountainous Israel. Interestingly, the hieroglyphic determinative does not speak of the land of Israel but of a foreign nation called Israel (e.g., Miller and Hayes 2006: 40). This fact at least proves that, at that point in time, Israel was already a separate nation somewhere in the Southern Levant and a neighbour of (for example) Canaan, Gezer, and Ašqelon (mentioned in the same stela). It is evident that Israel, as an ethnic group, did not appear in that area in ca. 1210 (or 1207) when the stela was erected. This date is only *terminus ante quem*. It had taken time to settle down and to become an acknowledged nation in the eyes of foreigners. There is no available hard evidence telling of when the Israelites appeared in the area. The Amarna letters do not mention the name Israel, but they tell of considerable turbulence caused by aggressive enemies that threatened several Canaanite city states. Canaanite kings of those cities requested military aid from Egypt because of this threat. Neither onomastics nor any other discipline of science can prove that the enemies were Israelites, but neither does anything prove categorically to the contrary.

The existence of king David

5) The dynasty of David is mentioned in the Tel Dan inscription and can also be interpreted in the Meša Stela.³⁰ The name *ʿOmrī* is mentioned in the Meša Stela as well. These epigraphic inscriptions paint a more-or less similar picture of events to those described in 2 Kings. Of course, the message of these texts is probably somewhat biased, as such inscriptions usually were. One cannot expect identical descriptions from opposing sides of a conflict.

Appearance of yahwistic personal names

6) YHWH became the most popular theophoric element among the Hebrews, both in Judah and in Samaritan Israel. Because the sample of the early material from Iron Age II is narrow, we do not have an exact picture from the tenth–ninth centuries BC. However, we can say that the yahwistic element is visible in the material from the period in question. Scholars have often emphasised the significance of the yahwistic reformation of Josiah as an explanation for the popularity of YHWH's increasing presence in the onomasticon. For example, Levin (2007: 228–230) suggests that “the Yahwist” was a member of the king's court, attaching him to the program of Josiah. Regardless, the beginning of the popularity of YHWH that is visible in the epigraphic and biblical onomastic data was a phenomenon

³⁰ There is some debate concerning the meaning of the words אֲרֹנָה דָּוִד (line 12).

from before King Josiah's time, even though the tendency accelerated during his reign. The personal names of the book of Jeremiah closely resemble the epigraphic material originating from the late Iron Age II (Golub 2018:12).

Theophoric names and national primary gods during Iron Age II

It is notable that at the beginning of Iron Age II, the pan-NWS religion began to shift towards worshipping national primary deities, such as YHWH in Judah and Israel, *Kemôš* in Moab, *Qaus* in Edom, and, for example, *Melqart* in Phoenicia. This development is clearly attested in the Meša Stela (in the mid-ninth century). The stela mentions both YHWH³¹ and *Kemôš*, and it would be odd if those deities became primary national deities only recently before Meša's lifetime. At least, *Kemôš* was the theophoric element in the name of Meša's father. Furthermore, the stela speaks of David's (or the davidic) altar in the context of YHWH's (?) vessels. Both were removed to the presence of *Kemôš*. Additionally, one must remember that YHWH as a name had already been mentioned in Egyptian sources in the early fourteenth century BC. The conclusion is that YHWH existed as a deity worshipped exclusively by some people between the fourteenth–tenth centuries because it would have been unlikely that YHWH as a worshipped deity disappeared totally after the fourteenth century and returned again in the tenth–ninth century. A problem, however, is the absence of any available literary data between those dates.

As mentioned, the present study suggests that the early traditions behind the Hexateuch and Judges originated from the second millennium. In Articles 2–4, these traditions are called 'core narratives'. Exilic or postexilic authors or editors are unlikely to have systematically used names which were typical several hundreds of years before their lifetime. In particular, verified Hurrian biblical names would have been quite impossible to insert into the text later during the exilic or postexilic era. Furthermore, these foreign names could not be found in any early genealogical table available to the late authors or editors. For example, the onomastica of the Amarna letters prove that there were Hurrians living in the Southern Levant in the fourteenth century BC (Hess 1993: 227–230).

The main point of the dissertation has been to describe the relationship between biblical and archaeologically dated epigraphic material. The personal names of the Patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12–52) have several similarities with the Amorite (~Amurru) onomastic material, such as those found in the Mari tables. Many names are identical if we consider the phonetic development of biblical Hebrew, for example *Ya^aqôb* < **Ya'qub*.

The epigraphic onomastic material gives a basis for dating biblical names as well. The information presented in several tables in the articles of the dissertation is probably the most important result in this respect.

³¹ Line 18 of the stela.

It is a global phenomenon that there are layers of names belonging to different periods. They are called 'fashion of names' in the present dissertation. Certain personal names and their structures are typical and popular during particular limited spans of time. Epigraphic onomastic data shows that in the Bronze Age the most popular theophoric elements were *ʾIlu* ~ *ʾĒl* and *Baʿlu-Haddu* ~ *Baʿal-Hadad* in the NWS onomasticon. The situation was probably more or less similar in the Iron Age I, but regrettably we do not have sufficient literary material from that period. In the initial part of the first millennium, national primary gods, such as YHWH and Qaus, became the most popular inclusions. The most common epithets of deities during the second millennium BC were *ʾab(i)*, *ʾah(i)*, and *ʿamm(u/î)*. These continued to be popular in the Iron Age II, but *ʿamm(u/î)* disappeared completely from the Hebrew onomasticon as the prefixed element of personal names. During the Bronze Age, the most popular hypocoristic elements in the NWS world were *-ān(u)* ~ *-ôñ* and *-īya* ~ *-î*. In the Iron Age II, no names with *-ôñ* are found among the epigraphic Hebrew anthroponyms.

As already mentioned on several occasions in the articles and in the introduction of the present dissertation, it is highly unlikely that the late editors who lived in the mid-first century BC could correctly make up similar anthroponyms and structural elements as those that were in use during the Bronze Age. Furthermore, it is improbable that late authors could use genealogical tables systematically and correctly, connecting correct tables to one another and even using correct foreign names, such as the names of Hurrians, in composing biblical narratives.

It is a fact that the biblical books of the Hexateuch and Judges often use such personal names and their elements, which were popular in the Bronze Age and totally disappeared or lost their popularity in the Iron Age II. For example, the most popular theophoric element in those books is *ʾēl*, and the most popular hypocoristic element is *-ôñ*. In addition, *ʿamm(u/î)* exists as a prefixed epithet. All these elements changed in the Iron Age II. Therefore, it is at least possible, or even probable, that there have been early traditions of biblical narratives from the era that correspond with the personal names of those narratives. Of course, there have been editorial processes and linguistic up-dating before the final biblical books were completed.

As mentioned, there are 'by-products' of the present study based on conclusions which can be drawn from the comparative statistic onomastic data. Once again, these conclusions should be understood in the light of onomastics.

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Journal of Field Archaeology 33: 59-83.

Appendix

Amorite anthroponyms (sources are written in Akkadian)

Textbook: Michael Streck (2000)

Royal Archives of Mari
Tablets of Tell al Rimah
Texts from Chagar Bazar
Texts from Tuttul
Texts from Alalakh
Texts from Emar

Ugaritic anthroponyms (sources written mostly in Ugaritic and Akkadian)

Textbook: Frauke Gröndahl (1967)

Archives of Ugarit

Phoenician texts

Textbook: Frank Benz (1972)

Ahiram sarcophagus
Kilamuwa Stela

Texts reflecting Northwest Semitic names from the Southern Levant

Egyptian texts

Textbooks: Shmuel Ahituv (1984); Richard Hess (1993); Anson Rainey and Steven Notley (2006)

Egyptian Execration Texts – ancient Canaanite/Amorite names

List of Thutmosis III, Karnak

Soleb List. Amenhotep III

Lists of Seti I, Karnak, El-Qurne, Abydos

Lists of Ramesses II, Luxor, Karnak

Israel Merneptah Stela

List of Šišak, Karnak

Tell el-Amarna Tablets – early Canaanite/Amorite names

other material (see Ahituv 1984)

Texts from the Southern Levant

Textbooks: Shmuel Ahituv (2005; 2008)

Gezer Tablet – ?Hebrew/? South Canaanite

Ekron text of the king Akiš – South Canaanite

Mesha Stela – Moabite

Deir-‘Alla “Balaam Text” – Transjordanian dialect

Tel Dan text – Aramaic

Amman citadel inscription – Ammonite

Ostrakon from Ḥorwat ‘Uzza – Edomite

Siloam Inscription – Judean Hebrew

Samaritan Ostraca – Israelite Hebrew

Ketef Hinnom Amulet – Judean Hebrew

Kidron Cliff inscription of the royal steward – Judean Hebrew
Lakhish Ostraca – Judean Hebrew
Arad Ostraca – Judean Hebrew

Assyrian/Babylonian texts

Assyrian and Babylonian Royal Annals – Akkadian, containing Northwest Semitic names.

Textbooks: such as *The Annals of Sennacherib*, The University of Chicago Press Chicago, Illinois; the series: *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Penn State University Press (2011–2012, 2021); Nashef, Khaled 1982. *Die orts- und Gewässernamen der Mittelbabylonischen und Mittelassyrischen Zeit*. Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 5. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert.

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A STUDY ON SOME SEMITIC TOPONYMIC TYPES OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BC IN THE SOUTHERN LEVANT

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The present study is based on the onomasticon of the Southern Levant in the second millennium BC. The results from onomastics are compared with the corresponding archaeological data and with the parallel literary sources. There existed a frequently found toponymic type STEM + *-ōn* that was common in the area of Phoenicia and the coastal area of modern Israel. Another widely spread toponymic type *bēl* + adjunct appeared in the Galilee and the Judean Hill Country, the analogue of which is found in Syro-Mesopotamia. It is notable that these two particular types are not found in the Hill Country of Ephraim. As for the origin of these two toponymic types, the archaeological evidence, in accordance with the toponymic material, hints at migrations or at least at linguistic influence from the north to the Southern Levant during the first part of the second millennium BC.

1. INTRODUCTION AND TOPIC OF THE RESEARCH

The question of the toponyms in the Southern Levant originating from the second millennium BC is an interesting but complicated issue. Linguistic groups are not the primary topic of inquiry in this study, even though toponyms are always named by people. Instead, we concentrate on actual names, although we are naturally obliged to touch on linguistic groups to some extent as well.

A number of different ethnonyms are documented in several historical written sources. We find such ethnonyms as the Canaanites, Amorites (Amurru), Israelites, Hurrians, Hittites, and Philistines that are known not only from biblical texts but from various extrabiblical sources, as well (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006; Ahituv 1984).¹ In theory, all of these groups may have influenced the onomasticon of the Southern Levant. The Amurru ~ Amorites presented in this study are West Semitic people who lived in northern Syria during the Bronze Age as determined by Streck (2000; 2011: 452–453) (see Fig. 1). In addition, such ethnonyms as the Jebusites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Gergashites are listed in

¹ It is not always clear what is meant in using the ethnonym Hittite in the Hebrew Bible. In the area of the Southern Levant it could also mean Hurrians or any northern population in general.

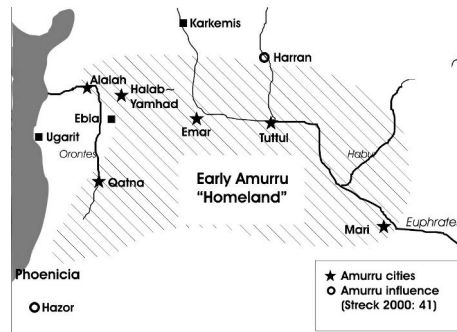


Figure 1 The traditional Land of Amurru. Amurru cities: Qatna, Halab ~ Yamhad, Tuttul, Emar, Mari, Alalah (see Streck 2000: 47–48). Associated cities: Ḥaṣor, Harran.

the Hebrew Bible (Josh. 3:10). Furthermore, such unidentified ethnic groups as the ‘Apiru and the Šasu are mentioned in extrabiblical Egyptian sources (see Aḥituv 1984).²

Some ethnonyms are used in the present article rather than technical terms, in order to avoid the disagreements of different scholarly schools: the term *Phoenicians* is meant to correspond the population of such Lebanese city states and their vicinities as Tyre, Sidon, Gebal ~ Byblos, and Arvad. *Amurru ~ Amorites* means here people whose core area consisted of such North Syrian city states as Qatna, Alalah, Yamhad, Emar, Tuttul, and Mari (see Fig. 1). The term *Southern Canaanite language* means the Northwest Semitic language of the non-Hebrew people who lived in the area of modern Israel, the West Bank, Jordan Valley, and Gaza Strip outside of Lebanon. This language is known only fragmentarily. The term (*actual*) *Canaanites* means Northwest Semitic people who lived mainly in the area of modern Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank, Jordan Valley, and Gaza Strip. They are differentiated from the Hebrews, Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites. All of them spoke tongues which belonged to the family of the Canaanite languages.

However, as stated above, the exact linguistic background or ethnicity of a toponym is not the principal focus of the present study. It is sufficient to mention that the studied *toponymic types* are, generally speaking, of Northwest Semitic origin; that they are traced back to the second millennium BC; and that some ethno-historical outlines can be found by studying the spread and origins of these toponymic models.³

It is obvious that different linguistic groups (see discussion below) left their marks in the onomasticon of the Southern Levant during the second millennium BC. As mentioned above, it is well known that many of these groups were linguistically Northwest Semitic (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 16–18). Some others possibly spoke Hurrian or Indo-European languages. At least Hurrian and Indo-European personal names of rulers are found in the Southern Levant (see, e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 63; Na’aman 2005: 4–8; Aharoni 1979: 67, 150). The Hurrians spoke

2 The term ‘Apiru may mean a social class of wandering armed bands rather than an ethnos; cf. Akk. *ḥāpiru(m)* ‘vagrant’, which according to Gelb et al. (1964) was probably a West Semitic loanword in Akkadian (Black et al. 2000 s.v. *ḥāpirum*); ~ ??? cf. Arab. ‘*ifr* ‘strong, powerful’ (see the discussion in Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. *عبر*). Šasu was probably a nomadic tribe, most likely living in the northern parts of Sinai (Rainey & Notley 2006: 93).

3 The Northwest Semitic languages are the Canaanite languages, Ugaritic, and Aramaic. Because we do not know exactly enough what the Amorite (Amurru) language was, the more general term West Semitic is used, even though Amorite could be classified as a Northwest Semitic language as well; see, e.g. Streck 2011: 452–453.

an agglutinative language that belonged to the Hurro-Urartian linguistic group (Gelb 1944). The language of the Philistines is practically unknown, although there have been attempts to identify it as an Indo-European tongue (see Shai 2006; Maeir et al. 2008). In any case, the “Sea People” Philistines may have been linguistically “canaanized” after their invasion of the Southern Levant, which took place at least in Eqrn (Gitin et al. 1997: 15). Another possibility is that the Philistine language was preserved only as a language of the upper class. The original Canaanite population probably continued to use their own Northwest Semitic language even after the Philistine invasion. It is clear that some of these ancient linguistic groups, especially those which had the status of superstrate, such as the Hurrians, did not leave many traces in toponyms. However, they may be visible in literary documented anthroponyms (Na’aman 2005: 4–8). It seems that there also exist a few toponyms that originate from some unknown linguistic source, probably from the time preceding the migrations of the Semites (see section 6.4 below).

2. ROLE OF THE DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES OF SCIENCE

Onomastics has traditionally been understood as a part of linguistics, but historians and archaeologists have been interested in it, as well (Saarikivi 2006: 7). Linguistic studies tend to focus particularly on lexical, phonetic, and morphological characteristics and structures of toponyms. Historians concentrate on distributions of different toponymic material compared with related historical documents and archaeological material. Archaeologists try to synchronize archaeological data with the results of onomastics. It is often archeologists who have found ancient inscriptions containing toponyms. Because of the disciplines’ differences in research foci and methods, their possibilities for obtaining results also vary. Onomastics is valid in determining the linguistic background of toponyms, but its weakness is often in dating the material. Archaeologists, on the other hand, have proper instruments for classifying and dating material cultures, but not much possibility to independently say anything about linguistic or ethnic groups (see, e.g. Shennan 1989; Trigger 1994).⁴ One should also remember that ancient literary documents are often not fully reliable from a historical perspective. Historians need the aid of other disciplines in order to evaluate their sources. In any event, if archaeological evidence and the results of onomastics agree with each other, the archaeological evidence might be considered a relevant proof, especially for dating purposes. In such cases, results of these two disciplines support each other. Because there exist many literary sources, such as the Amarna letters, Egyptian inscriptions, and the tablets from Mari and Ugarit; and because archaeological investigation has been widely conducted since the days of Charles Clermont-Ganneau in the nineteenth century and continues with the work of modern scholars (see, e.g. the authors of NEAEHL 1992–2008), the history of the Southern Levant is especially suitable for comparing these different approaches. All three disciplines are utilized in the present study.

From the point of view of the present article we can define an *ethnic group* to be something that has influenced the history and culture of the Southern Levant and a *linguistic group* to be something that has formed its onomasticon. Therefore, linguistic groups are more relevant than ethnic groups for our study. As for ethnicities, Barth (1969) has written that ethnic identities can be considered as *boundary identities* defined by members of a group and its neighbors. This

4 Ethnonyms are often problematic. The English word *Dutch* means Neatherlanders, but in German *Deutsch* Germans. Medieval Russians used the ethnonym *nemets* in the meaning ‘Germans’ and ‘Scandinavians’. The ethnonym *French* originates from a Germanic tribe called *Franks*.

makes it difficult for modern scholars to determine ancient identities, because we are neither members nor neighbors of the groups in question.

Because the definition of ethnicity is complicated and often overlaps with linguistic identities, we do not treat this subject and do not try to define the exact ethnoses or linguistic groups behind the toponyms in this study. Furthermore, because the Semitic languages in the Southern Levant were apparently rather closely related to one another, and some of them are poorly known, we neither distinguish nor name those different Semitic linguistic groups who were the name givers of the toponyms.⁵ It might be possible to do so, but in that case the justifications would need to be presented to such an extent that it could not be done in one limited article.

On a technical note, the Hebrew transliteration used in this article is a simplified version of ISO 259. Consonants are fully transliterated according to ISO 259, but long \bar{e} , \bar{i} , \bar{o} , \bar{u} and short e , i , o , u are not always distinguished. However, \bar{a} , a , semivowels and diphthongs usually follow the system of ISO 259.⁶ It is notable that the vowel length of the Masoretic Bible sometimes is complicated and even irregularly expressed (Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 35–36, 41–50). Some widely known biblical names as Jerusalem, Ephraim, and so on are written in their common English forms.

3. BRIEF REVIEW OF RESEARCH HISTORY

The toponyms of the Southern Levant are well documented, and are listed by various scholars (Aharoni 1979; Borée 1968; Rainey & Notley 2006; Monson 1979). From the point of view of the present article, the large study of Anson Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 9–224, see especially 14–21) is very useful. Yohanan Aharoni (1979: 105–129) has presented the principles of onomastics rather widely. Yoel Elitzur (2004: 11–12) has pointed out the importance of proper linguistic analysis as a tool of onomastics, especially concerning phonetic substitutions when toponyms were adopted from one language into another. He also convincingly presents principles for identifying ancient names of archaeological sites. Although Mitka Golub (2014) examines personal names, not toponyms, her study is important to mention here because of both its methodological suitability for toponymic onomastics and its results. Various scholars have examined West Semitic personal names, including Tigay (1986), Fowler (1988), Zadok (1988), Layton (1990), Hess (2007), Albertz & Schmitt (2012), Avigad & Sass (1997), Ahituv (2008), and others. There have also been several relevant toponymic studies of Egyptian and Syro-Mesopotamian sources, such as Shmuel Ahituv (1984) (Egyptian sources), Juan Marin (2001) (Syro-Mesopotamian sources), Khaled Nashef (1982) (Middle Babylonian), and Brigitte Groneberg (1980) (Old Babylonian). However, the toponyms of the present research area have not been examined to a satisfactory degree; that is, not all the methods of onomastics have been fully utilized.

5 Such Canaanite languages as Edomite, Ammonite, and South Canaanite dialects (e.g. the language of the Ebron inscription) are not very well known.

6 Usually, the phonetic history of the Semitic languages reveals the length of vowels in biblical texts, but it does not necessarily do so in the case of all the West Semitic toponyms. Therefore, vowel length is not always distinguished in the present study (see Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 38–50).

4. METHODS AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS

4.1 Methods

One should study toponyms utilizing the following linguistic methods (see Rahkonen 2011: 215–219 and the literature cited therein):

1) *Lexicon*: Sometimes even within the same language, different words, typical of different dialects, are used in place names. Especially when studying closely related languages, it is important to note that different synonymic words in toponyms may appear regularly, creating distinguishable limited areas of distribution. For example, within the Northwest Semitic languages the word for ‘town’ is in Hebrew *‘ir*, Phoenician *‘r* (עַר), Ugaritic *‘r*, but in Moabite *qīr* seems to be used (see Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. עַר and s.v.; קִיר the Stele of Meša). Therefore the word *qīr* ‘town’ can be understood as a Moabite marker in the historically defined areas of the Moabites and their vicinities.⁷

2) *Phonetic characteristics*: For example, in the Canaanite language family, the sound shift **ā > ō* occurred. It is called “Canaanite shift” (e.g. Moran 2003: 206; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 36). In Hebrew and Phoenician, *o* and *e* developed from the diphthongs **au* and **ai* (Moran 2003: 206; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 31).⁸ There also were differences in the phonetic history of consonants within the Northwest Semitic languages; cf. Proto-Semitic **ḏ > Ugaritic d, ḏ ~ Hebrew, Phoenician z ~ Aramaic d* (Sivan 2001: 36, table). The phonetic history of old toponyms may reveal something of the original language behind the name or give some suggestions for dating. Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 16) has proposed that the toponym *‘Edre ‘i* in Bashan and Naphtali (Num. 21:33; Josh. 19:37) should be derived from a language in which there was the phonetic development **ḏ > d* (or *~ ḏ*) in contrast to Hebrew and Phoenician **ḏ > z* (Sivan 2001: 36).⁹ In that case, the word behind the name is, according to Rainey, ‘arm’, in this case ‘branch of wadi’ (with a toponymic prosthetic aleph; see section 6.4); cf. Arb. *ḏirā* ‘, Heb. *zēroa* ‘arm’. The name might originate from an Amorite or Aramaic type of language. Streck (2000: 194) has suggested that Proto-Semitic **ḏ* was preserved in Amorite and in Aramaic **ḏ > d* (Bordreuil & Pardee 2009: 25; Sivan 2001: 36). One must remember that, most probably, all the Northwest Semitic languages were very close to one another at the beginning of the second millennium, having only dialectal differences of some kind of common Proto NW Semitic.

3) *Morphology*: For example, such toponyms as *‘Ešta ‘ol* and *‘Eštāmoa* ‘ reveal that in the language behind the names, *ephta ‘ol* (< *iphta ‘el*) verbal structure was found. This structure was non-existent in Biblical Hebrew, but existed in Moabite and probably in the Canaanite dialect that was spoken in the most southern parts of the Southern Levant. Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 16) interprets it as belonging to an earlier stage of the language, but does not say which language (possible candidates might be Hebrew or Southern Canaanite).

4) *Structure of toponyms*: In different languages there are different structural ways to construct toponyms. For example, in some languages, the word for ‘lake’ is placed in front of the actual name, as in *Lago Maggiore* (Italian) and *Loch Laomainn* (~ Eng. Lomond) (Gaelic).

⁷ In Hebrew there is a word *qiryā* ‘town, village’ that necessarily is not a derivative of עַר (*qīr*); cf. Ph. *qrt* and Ug. *qrt* or *qryt* < **qar-*; cf. *Carthago* (see Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. קִיר).

⁸ Some Egyptian inscriptions seem to support the idea that the diphthong *-au* still existed in Hebrew as late as in the tenth century BC; cf. *Ḥawrōn* (*Bi-ta Ḥa-aw-rū-n*) instead of *Ḥorōn* in the Shoshenq list (Rainey & Notley 2006: 186–188).

⁹ In Egyptian sources *‘Adura* ‘ and *‘Ud(u)ra* ‘ (Ahituv 1984: 90–91).

In other languages, it is placed after the name, like *Baden See* (German) or *Stor|sjön* (Swedish). Accordingly, in personal names the yahwistic theophoric elements were used as prefixes or suffixes in the Hebrew naming models during the Iron Age II (Golub 2014: 626). Suffixes are sometimes used to mark toponyms, as in the Finnish naming system with *-la* as the marker of settlements. These kinds of suffixal elements are called (*topo*)*formants* (e.g. Matveev 2001: 186). They serve as markers of toponyms. Formants often originate from so-called generics of names or from derivational affixes.¹⁰ Later they become obscured, losing the transparency of their original meaning. In Great Britain such suffixal elements exist in names of settlements ending in *-ton* < Anglosaxon **tun* ‘enclosure, estate’ (Everton, Kingston), *-ham* < Anglosaxon **ham* ‘farm’ (Nottingham, Birmingham), and *-bury* Anglosaxon **burg* > *bury* ‘fortification’ (Salisbury, Sudbury); see the etymologies of Hellquist 1922 s.v. *borg, hem, Tuna*. All of these originate from generics. The Anglosaxon words **tun*, **ham* and *bury* are no longer used in modern English in the same way they were used at the time of the naming, and can therefore be considered to be formants.

In the Canaanite languages, such formants as *-ōn* < **-ān* (Šid|ōn, Ašqel|ōn) and *-ō* < **-ā* (Yerih|ō, Məgidd|ō) are used both in toponyms and in personal names (Šim|ōn, Šəlom|ō). Another way to create toponyms in Semitic languages is to use so-called construct states of such nouns as *bayit* : *bēt* ‘house’ (Bēt-Leḥem), ‘ayin : ‘ēn ‘spring’ (‘Ēn-Geb), *may(im)* : *mē* ‘water’ (Mē-Neḫtoah). Names that are formed using the above-mentioned elements can be classified and distinguished in groups of *toponymic types*.

Many successful attempts have been carried out to determine correct etymologies of individual toponyms of the Southern Levant (see above in section 3). However, the research of *toponymic types* and their *distribution* has not always been fully utilized. To some extent it is visible, for example, in Wilhelm Borée’s (1968) and Anson Rainey’s (2006) works. Tigay (1986), Layton (1990), and Golub (2014) have paid attention to the structures of personal names. Different kind of toponymic types have been “in fashion” among various linguistic groups in different periods, even in different dialects of the same language. The notion of toponymic types has been an especially important tool in examining toponyms which originate from now extinct, mutually cognate languages (e.g. Matveev 2001; Rahkonen 2011). Due to the fact that the Northwest Semitic languages in the Levant were closely related to one another, the language itself does not always reveal the exact linguistic background of individual toponyms. Therefore, one must conduct a survey of toponymic types.

Alongside toponymic types, another important tool is the *distribution* of these various toponymic types. Distribution may offer useful hints at original “homelands” of toponyms and directions of their spread. Of course, linguistic peculiarities in lexicon, phonetic characteristics or morphology may also reveal much of the etymological background of ancient names. A narrow distribution may reflect a dialectal area. Good examples of a narrow distribution could be the above-mentioned toponyms constructed out of a rare *ephta’ol* stem not occurring in standard Biblical Hebrew (Kutscher 1982: 58).

Archaeological data should be utilized in order to confirm that the sites whose names are used as the research material really existed in the second millennium BC; that is, that the sites were populated in the Middle/Late Bronze age or in the Iron Age I. Secondly, those archaeologically confirmed sites should also be identified as well as possible (see Elitzur 2004: 12–13;

10 A generic answers the question of the characteristics of a place; i.e. lake, river, village, hill, mountain.

Appendix 2).¹¹ Thirdly, the general archaeological picture of the second millennium must be comparable with the toponymic distribution on a large scale.

The leading methodological principle in the present article is that of Malcolm Ross (1998: 141, 158, 162) who speaks of *reconstructed linguistic and cultural events* as manifestations of change in human societies. Ross stresses the importance of finding sequences of linguistic events comparable with sequences of material-cultural events. It is true that archaeological finds alone cannot reveal much about ethnic or linguistic groups. But to totally ignore archaeology may significantly reduce the possibility of interpreting the settlement history of the Southern Levant. For example – although a dogmatic, extremely formal scholar might repeat the mantra that the ethnicity or linguistic background is never possible to determine by means of archaeology – even just the archaeological picture of the Middle Bronze Age II in the Southern Levant alone, combined with common sense, can reveal at least that people behind the new culture were not Egyptians or Europeans. The characteristics of a material culture can therefore give possible guidelines, but they must be confirmed by historical literary sources and/or onomastics.

The dramatic change in the material culture in the first half of the second millennium BC (Yasur-Landau et al. 2008; Ben-Tor 2006: 66–76) and the obvious appearance of new toponymic types (see below) are the sort of linguistic and cultural events meant by Ross. These events may reflect migrations, and not merely the spread of a new language or linguistic influence.¹² Directions of the spread of new archaeological cultures should correspond to the spread of parallel toponyms/toponymic types. In addition, ancient literary sources may confirm at least *terminus post quem* the existence of those toponyms which do not have an archaeological dating.

4.2 Research material

In choosing toponyms for the present study, the first criterion is that the selected toponyms must be located in the Southern Levant. The second criterion is that the names already existed in the second millennium BC (archaeologically, the Middle and Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I). The first criterion is simplified by determining the Southern Levant to be the area of modern Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip regions. The toponyms of the Southern Levant presented below are drawn from the Hebrew Bible and have extrabiblical archaeological or documentary support (see Appendix 2 below).¹³ The archaeological support means that a MB, LB or IA I site must be identified to a sufficient degree. The extrabiblical literary support relies on various Egyptian sources such as the Execration Letters, the lists of Thutmose III and Amenhotep, the papyrus Anastasi I (pAn I), and the list of Shoshenq ~ Shishak (see Appendix 2). Other sources have been utilized, too, for example other Egyptian materials from the second millennium BC collected by Shmuel Ahituv (1984), as well as Syro-Mesopotamian sources, such as those collected by Bonechi (1993), Groneberg (1980), Nashef (1982), and

11 The identified archaeological sites presented in this study are as follows: 'Ašqelōn, 'Eqrōn, Gibāōn, Hebrōn, Hešbōn, Qišyōn, Šarōn, Šim'ōn, Šidōn, Beṭ 'El, Beṭ ha-'Emeq, Beṭ Ḥorōn, 'Eṭrat(ā) (~ Beṭ Lehem), Beṭ Šə'an, Beṭ Semeš, Beṭ Šur, Beṭ Yerah.

12 Languages can wander and be adopted not only through migrations, but, for example, through cultural and/or political influences, as in the case of Latin in Gaul and Spain. Languages often accompany migrating people, especially if they become a majority in their new home country. A good example is the Hungarian language, which crossed over the Southeastern European Steppe from the southern Urals to eastern Central Europe.

13 Biblical toponyms without extrabiblical support usually show similar distributions with the supported ones, suggesting that at least a majority of those names originate from the second millennium BC.

Marin (2001). The comments of various stray mentions of various sources have been observed as well (see References).

One may consider it problematic that the utilized toponyms are drawn from the biblical record. How reliable are those names? Of course, if a name has extra-biblical literary support (for example, Egyptian inscriptions), as these toponyms often have, the certainty is almost 100%.¹⁴ Some of the toponyms presented here have only archaeological support. Elitzur (2004: 16–18) has presented more than 150 examples of how originally Northwest Semitic names underwent Hebrew, Aramaic, Hellenistic, and Arabic linguistic periods. However, the modern Arabic names are usually still relatively easily recognisable variants of the original ones. On this basis, one can assume that the toponyms originating from the Northwest Semitic linguistic period (c.1900–300 BC and sporadically even considerably later), when nearly the same type of language was uninterruptedly spoken in the Southern Levant, the overwhelming majority of the toponyms stayed almost unchanged. Even the Philistines did not change the Semitic names of their five central cities. In consequence of this, we assume that majority of the sites which were established in the MB II, LB, or Iron Age I period in all probability still bore the same name in the latest editorial phase of the biblical records. Therefore, archaeological support of properly identified sites is necessary, but is also sufficient in cases where we do not have documentary support. Of course, the certainty is lower, but the evidence is reliable enough for our purposes. If a site according to the results of archaeology is established later, one must consider the name to be late as well.

4.3 Question of adaptations of toponyms

A major problem in onomastics is always determining the original forms of toponyms. It is obvious that the language of the Hebrew Bible adopted names previously used in the Southern Levant and in many cases slightly modified them.¹⁵ A special difficulty is the mutual similarity of the Northwest Semitic languages, especially the Phoenician, Hebrew, and Moabite languages. In addition, at least within Hebrew and Phoenician, different dialects are attested as well (Kutscher 1982: 70). The earliest Hebrew probably consisted of the alphabet of 25–27 consonants instead of the later 22. The changes may have begun c.1400 BC (Moran 2003: 204–207). The vowels changed because final short vowels – namely the case endings (vowels *-a*, *-i*, *-u*) – were eventually lost in Hebrew. According to William Moran (2003: 204–207), this happened after the Amarna period. Furthermore, the softening of the so-called *begadkefat*-consonants can have originated no earlier than approximately 1000 BC, according to some studies, but no later than 700 BC (e.g. Kutscher 1982: 21; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 46). The phonetic characteristics of different languages in different phases must be accurately observed whenever possible (cf. Elitzur 2004).

4.4 Non-Semitic languages

An even more serious question is the role of the non-Semitic languages that have influenced the onomasticon of the Levant, some of them Hurrian and Indo-European (Na'aman 2005: 3–13) and some of totally unknown affiliation. For example, in the Jerusalem district, the etymological background of such toponyms as *Yəbus* (~ Jerusalem) and *'Eḫrāṭa* (~ Bethlehem), *Luz* (~ Bethel) (see

14 Sometimes the interpretation of the Egyptian sources is controversial, lowering the reliability.

15 Another problem is that the biblical texts following the Masoretic tradition do not always reflect the spelling of earlier manuscripts or textual variants (e.g. Tov 2015: 157–158; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 76–104). This is true especially regarding the vocalization.

Rainey & Notley 2006: 16) is opaque, even though there have been attempts to derive the names in question from Semitic roots (Koehler & Baumgartner 2001: s.v. *יְבוּס*, *אֶרְוָה* and *לְוָה*). The name of the Jebusite man who according to the Hebrew Bible sold the plot for the temple in Jerusalem is spelled rather differently in the book of Samuel, as *Arawna*, compared with *Ornan* in Chronicles. Both of them might be adopted from a word which is related to Hittite *arayan(n)i* ‘free man’ (that is, not a slave) (Kloekhorst 2007: 237–238 s.v. *āra-*). This has also been suggested, for example, by Rosen (1955: 318–320), Görg (1988: 151), and recently Gass (2012: 352).

The king of Jerusalem in the Amarna period was called *‘Abdi Heba*. According to Gelb (1944: 69), this name is Hurrian. Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 85) correctly notes that the structure of the name is Semitic but the theophoric element is Hurrian. The conclusion is that although the king might have had a Semitic background, the Hurrian influence in Jerusalem was obvious in the Amarna period (fourteenth century BC). As for Jerusalem, the local scribe of the Amarna letters was more proficient in Akkadian than most of the Canaanite scribes, as evidenced by the lack of canaanisms and in his tendency to write in Assyrian Akkadian. These tendencies may hint at close connections between Jerusalem and Mesopotamia. The conclusion is that the scribe possibly was not a native speaker of the local Canaanite language (see Izre’el 1998: 3; Moran 2003: 249–274). The name of the king, the linguistic quality of the scribe and the name *Arawna* could hint at a Mitanni and later Hittite influence in Jerusalem ~ *Yəbus*.

Furthermore, we know practically nothing of the Philistine language with the exception of some possibly Philistine anthroponyms mentioned in the Hebrew Bible; for example *‘Akiš*, *Golyaṭ*, and such toponyms as *Šiqlag*. It bears mentioning that for phonetic reasons, it is problematic to derive *‘Akiš* in the Bible, *‘kyš* in the Eqrn inscription, from the word **Akhaiwos* ‘Greek’ as it was spelled in the Greek language during the Early Iron Age (Petri Kallio, pers. comm Apr. 2014). According to the Hebrew Bible, *Golyaṭ* was not a native Philistine but a *Rephaite*, and *Šiqlag* may be Semitic in origin and composed of two roots **šwq* ‘pour’ and **hwg* ‘measure (for oil)’.¹⁶ In addition, the inscription on a sherd *‘lwt wlt...[text is broken]* found from Tell es Safi (ancient Gath) is not the Philistine for the name *Golyaṭ* (*g < *x* is phonetically impossible) (see, e.g. Maier 2014: 3). In my opinion, the language of the inscription is not of Greek or Anatolian origin as suggested by Maier et al. (2008, see the discussion of the study). A possible interpretation could be that the text was a religious dedication of the vessel in a Canaanite type of language, and it should possibly be read *‘elōt we-lota[n]* ‘goddesses and Lota[n]’ (the Canaanite dragon deity) even though *‘elōt* in that case is written in *mater lectionis*.¹⁷ Plene spelling was rare in the Iron Age IIA period (cf. the Eqrn, Siloam, and Meša inscriptions). However, in the Eqrn inscription there is plene spelling, with *yod* in the name of *‘Akiš*. As a proof that vessels were dedicated to deities, we may mention a famous analogue called *Lachiš ewer* containing the text: *mtn šy[-] [-]ty ‘lt*. It seems to be a dedication, an offering to *‘elat* ‘goddess Elat’ or *‘elōt* ‘goddesses’ (e.g. Smith 2002: 28–29). The conclusion to be drawn is that we have no indisputable evidence of the linguistic background of Philistine onomastic material.

16 If the ethnic origin of *Golyaṭ* as a *Rephaite* is denied, one should also deny the real existence of the name itself as an imaginary legend, and refrain from using the name in reconstructing the Philistine language.

17 The language might be the same as in the Eqrn inscription.



Figure 2 Toponyms of the type STEM + *-ōn* from the second millennium BC.

5. TOPONYMIC TYPES

At first, as already stated above, it is necessary to mention that the toponyms presented below have been selected because the sites, and most likely their names as well, already existed in the Middle/Late Bronze Age or in the Early Iron Age at the latest.¹⁸ The studied toponyms have extrabiblical archaeological or/and documentary support. Names which are structurally similar types but from later periods (that is, the first millennium BC) are not examined in this study.

5.1 Type stem + *-ōn*

Hebrew and Canaanite shared the sound shift **-ān > -ōn* (e.g. Kutscher 1982: 24; Moran 2003: 206). The Egyptian versions of the name of the city *Šidōn* ~ *Ši[d]una* (Papyrus Anastasi I from the Early Iron Age) and the district of *Šarōn* ~ *Šārūna* (Thutmose III list from the fifteenth century BC) prove that the aforementioned sound shift had occurred at the latest in the fifteenth century BC.¹⁹ It is remarkable that the toponymic type STEM + *-ōn*, also observed by Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 17), is especially found both in Phoenicia and in the coastal area of modern Israel (Fig. 2).²⁰

Therefore, one can hypothesise that the type in question originates from some early Phoenician type of Canaanite language. The areal distribution of such toponyms that existed already in the second millennium BC supports this idea (Fig. 2).

The affirmative *-ōn < *-ān* also serves in forming nouns (Joūon & Muraoka 2013: 240–242), for example Hebrew *ḥāz|ōn* ‘vision’ < *ḥāzā* ‘see’ (Brown et al. 1999; Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. חזון). The affix **-ān* found in the Amurru personal names is explained as a diminutive marker (Streck 2000: 342). There are a few examples of *-ōn* diminutives in the Hebrew vocabulary as well (Joūon & Muraoka 2013: 241–242). The particular type STEM + *-ōn* is very common in Hebrew anthroponyms, as well; we find such biblical names as *Šim|ōn*, *Gerš|ōn*, *Šamš|ōn*, *Gid|ōn*, and so forth. This type was especially productive in the early history of the Hebrew language. It is also found in Phoenician-Punic anthroponyms: for example *brqn* (*Baraqōn*; cf. Heb. Baraq), *gršn* (?*Geršōn*; cf. Heb. Geršōn), *mrn* (*Omrōn*; cf. Heb. ‘Omri) (Benz 1972: 244) and in Ugaritic with the suffix **-ānu* (final *-u* is the marker of nominative); for example *Dan|ānu* (cf. Heb. Dan), *Šidq|ānu* (cf. Heb. Šidqiyahu) (Gröndahl 1967: 17–18, 52). Gröndahl (1967: 77) states that the suffix in question has served in building *abstracts* and *diminutives* in the Ugaritic language.

There are two pieces of evidence supporting the hypothesis that the toponymic type *-ōn* should be derived from Canaanite languages: 1) the principal areal distribution of this topo-

18 Most of the presented names are mentioned in literary sources (Appendix 2).

19 The main rule is that the lack of the sound *o* was substituted in Egyptian hieroglyphs with *w* and in Akkadian cuneiform with *ú, ù* or any syllable sign containing *u*-sound.

20 A number of biblical STEM + *-ōn*-names exist without documentary or archaeological support. Many of them are located, according to the Bible, in the western parts of modern Jordan and most likely already existed in the second millennium BC.

nymic type and 2) the Canaanite sound shift $*-ān > -ōn$ itself. Archaeological evidence suggests that the earliest settlements of the MB IIA in the area of historical Israel were concentrated in the Mediterranean coastal area and in some inland valleys (Cohen 2002: 107–110, fig. 13; Mazar 1990: 176–178). Accordingly, early toponyms which belong to the type STEM + $-ōn$ are located mainly in the Mediterranean coastal area (Fig. 2), both in the territory of modern Israel and in Lebanon. It is possible that some of the Transjordanian $-ōn$ names may reflect a later Biblical Hebrew pronunciation of original $*-ān$ toponyms. Alternatively, it is possible that the “Canaanite Shift” occurred in Moabite and Ammonite as well (see Elitzur 2004: 90–92 s.v. אַמּוֹן). The sound shift $-ōn$ separates the Hebrew-Phoenician names from Ugaritic $*-ān(u)$ and Amurru $*-ān$ names (see above).

5.2. Type *bēt* + adjunct

The toponymic type *bēt* + adjunct has analogues in Syro-Mesopotamia. The meaning of the topoforment *bēt*- in some cases has been ‘temple’, sometimes ‘place of a clan’ (see Nashef 1982: 52); later, it served merely as a marker of a place name (see below). In the Old Babylonian Era (c. 2000–1550 BC) we find in Syro-Mesopotamia such identified sites as *Bīt-Akkaka* (riv. Ḥabur), *Bīt-Jaetim* (riv. Ḥabur), *Bīt-Japtaḥarna* (riv. Išim-Jaḥdunlim), *Bīt-Kapān* (riv. Ḥabur), *Bīt-Zarḥan* (riv. Ḥabur). In addition, there are 20 unidentified “*bīt*” sites in the list of Groneberg (1980: 42–45). In Syria, in the second millennium BC, such sites have been identified as *Bīt-Ḥilu* (between Ugarit and Alalāḥ), *Bīt-Ilu-Abūma* (close to Ekalte, Upper Euphrates), *Bīt-Rašap-Qulla* (Upper Euphrates), *Bīt-Šūli* (Upper Euphrates), and *Bīt-Tenni?* ~ *Tannūnā* (Marin 2001: 57–59). The only unidentified site on this list is the name *Bīt-Ari*. It is remarkable that only one *Bīt-/Bēt*- name of the second millennium BC has been found in Lebanon, namely *Bīt-Arḥa* close to Byblos (Marin 2001: 57), and none has been found in the Ebla archives (Bonechi 1993). This means that the type in question most likely does not originate from coastal Lebanon or coastal Syria. During the Old Babylonian period the spread of Amurru population in Syro-Mesopotamia began, as is proved especially through the evidence of personal names (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 50–51; Streck 2000: 23–24). It seems that this particular toponymic type may be connected with these West Semitic people.

Later in the Middle Babylonian Era (approximately 1550–1200 BC), the distribution of this toponymic type expanded to a remarkable degree, especially to the south and east; for example *Bīt-Ada* (NE Tigris), *Bīt-Bāzi* (Tigris), *Bīt-Bēlāni* (riv. Namkar-Bēlāni), *Bīt-Bēltija* (Babel reg.), *Bīt-Bēri* (Nippur reg.), *Bīt-Enlil* (riv. Nāru-ešsetu/Nippur reg.), *Bīt-Ḥabban* (riv. Nār-šarri/Idiqla/Mê Kalkal, Middle Euphrates), *Bīt-Ḥanbi* (riv. Sumundar), *Bīt-Imbijati* (close to Bīt-Ḥanbi), and dozens of others as listed by Nashef (1982: 52–74).

Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: Index) has listed in the Mesopotamian region such sites as *Bīt-Adini*, *Bīt-Agusi*, *Bīt-Akiti*, *Bīt-Baḥiani*, *Bīt-Burutas*, *Bīt-Dayukku*, *Bīt-Gabbari*, *Bīt-Hairi*, *Bīt-Ḥalupe*, *Bīt-Hazail*, *Bīt-Sin-Magir*, *Bīt-Yakin*, *Bīt-Zamani*. These are supposedly names from the Early Iron Age. At least some of them might be of Aramaic origin; cf. *Bīt Adini*, *Bīt Agūsi*, *Bīt Gabbāri*, *Bīt Ḥazail* (Bagg 2007: 44–49).

It is possible that the spread of this toponymic type to the Southern Levant in the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age II took place in the context of cultural waves and/or migrations from north to south (Rainey & Notley 2006: 52, 55; Cohen 2002; Mazar 1990: 188–189; Kempinski 1992: 166, 168, 209). Because we know the principal area of the toponymic type *bēt* + adjunct (in the MB II period) in the Upper Euphrates, we are able to state at least that the origin of this particular toponymic type can be found in Syro-Mesopotamia. It seems that the sites having

this type of name appeared in the Southern Levant slightly after the first coastal MB IIA settlements from Lebanon (see Cohen 2002: 123, 125, fig. 26). Ben-Tor (2006) has shown that many of the urban settlements mentioned in the Egyptian Execration texts developed in the coastal area of the Southern Levant during MB IIA, but several of them in the Galilee and Judean Hill Country developed later during MB IIB. In our research area, the *bêṭ*-type of toponyms is concentrated mainly in the Judean Hill Country and the Galilee (Fig. 3).²¹

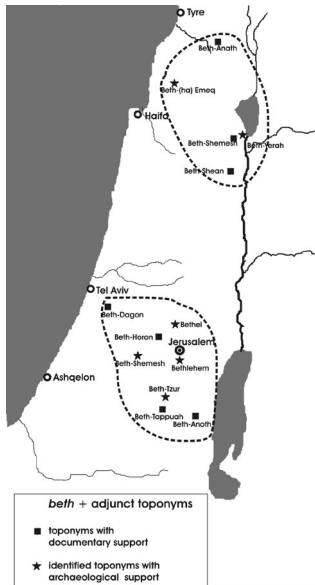


Figure 3 Toponyms of the type *bêṭ* + adjunct from the second millennium BC.

This toponymic type later became very productive among the Israelites, who named many places according to this model: *Bêṭ-Guḇrin*, *Bêṭ-Ha-Kerem*, *Bêṭ-Ḥesda'* (Bethesda), *Bêṭ-'Ani* (Bethany), *Bêṭ-Še'arim*, and so on. A hypothesis has long existed that this type developed from names of sites where deities were worshiped (Nashef 1982: 52). It is true that some toponyms exist that were named on the basis of temples like *Bêṭ-El*, *Bêṭ-'Anat*, *Bêṭ-Šemeš*, and *Bêṭ-Yerah*. However, the model *bêṭ* + adjunct is found in other connections as well. There are plenty of very old *bêṭ*-names in the Southern Levant which are most probably not derived from names of deities or clans: *Bêṭ-Ha-Gan* 'house of the garden', *Bêṭ-'Emeq* 'house of the valley', *Bêṭ-Gader* 'house of the fence or wall', *Bêṭ-Markaboṭ* 'house of chariots', *Bêṭ-Pelet* 'house of escape', *Bêṭ-Šur* 'house of rock', and so forth. I would interpret the structure *bêṭ* + adjunct to mean at its later stage simply 'place of something', not necessarily a temple of a deity. It is clear that in the Southern Levant, the habit of using the construct state *bêṭ*- as a marker of a clan (Nashef 1982: 52) was rare in toponyms. In the Hebrew Bible there are only a few examples, such as *Bêṭ-Yoab* (1. Chron. 2:54). In

contrast, this model was usual in Mesopotamia (Nashef 1982). However, in biblical texts this structure existed (for example in the names of clans *Bêṭ-Ya'āqoḇ* Gen. 46:27, *Bêṭ-Ša'ul* 2. Sam. 3:1, *Bêṭ-Dawid* 2. Sam. 3:1) even though it is not frequently visible in toponyms.

5.3 Additional remarks

We notice that the district centered on Jerusalem has been an area where both the toponymic type *-ōn* and the type *bêṭ*- existed side by side. However, one can see that the *-ōn*-type was located in areas further west of Jerusalem alongside the route Jerusalem–Yaḇo (Fig. 2). This corresponds with the Middle Bronze Age IIA settlement history as presented by Cohen (2002: 125, fig. 26, 126–127; index 1). In turn, the *bêṭ* + adjunct -type is found everywhere in the regions of the biblical tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Fig. 3).

It is very important to take account of the negative evidence as well. Toponyms formed according to both of the above-mentioned models are totally absent in the Hill Country of

21 Several biblical toponyms of this type, probably originating from the second millennium BC, are found in the Transjordanian Dead Sea region close to the estuary of the river Jordan. They are not listed here, because they do not have extrabiblical or archaeological support.

Ephraim and Manasseh. Is there any explanation for this? Was this area perhaps sparsely populated in the second millennium? In any event, the toponyms in the Hill Country of Ephraim and Manasseh show that the inhabitants, who were according to Gass (2012: 324–326) Perizzites, spoke a Northwest Semitic language. The names of Shechem, Gərizim, and ‘Eḅal have reasonable Semitic etymologies (Koehler & Baumgartner 2001), but these Semitic people did not use such toponymic models as STEM + *-ōn* or *bēt* + adjunct.

6. SOME DIALECTAL TOPONYMIC TYPES

Some of the existing toponymic types will not be analysed in detail; instead, we will content ourselves simply to mention them with some comments. These types represent dialectal toponymic types with relatively restricted distributions. The toponyms demonstrate that the spoken Northwest Semitic language in the Southern Levant was not exactly homogenous, but consisted of different dialects.

6.1 Toponymic type stem + *-ō*

A toponymic type STEM + *-ō* (see also Rainey & Notley 2006: 17) is found in such names as ‘*Ak(k)|ō*, ‘*Yəriḥ|ō*, ‘*Šil|ō*, ‘*Məgidd|ō* and ‘*Yap|ō*. In addition, there is an unidentified site which is called in the Hebrew Bible ‘*Šokō* (1. Sam. 17:1) and in the list of Thutmose III ‘*s~k*’ (Rainey & Notley 2006: 73). It is unclear whether the toponym ‘*Šeku* is connected to this site (see Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. שֶׁכּוֹ). The obviously very old toponymic type STEM + *-ō* may originate from some Northwest Semitic language/dialect spoken mainly in the Jordan and Jezreel Valley.²² Amarna tablets (fourteenth century BC) show forms like *‘*Akka* and *‘*Magidda* (Kutscher 1982: 24; Koehler & Baumgartner 2001: 823). Aḥituv (1984: 48) interprets the Canaanite form *‘*akā* and Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 58) reconstructs the Execration list E *‘*-k-ya* > *‘*Akkā-ya*. Those forms suggest that these particular toponyms participated only later in the “Canaanite shift” **ā* > *ō*. However, there is a contradiction. The list of Thutmose III proves that the Canaanite shift had already developed in the fifteenth century (see above). Possibly, the spelling still varied in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries. The type STEM + *-ō* might be a dialectal form, possibly from *-ōn* < **-ān* as suggested by Brown et al. (1999) (s.v. הַלֵּשׁ), but Kutscher (1982: 59) notes that on the contrary, there was a tendency in the period of Late Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew to add *-n* after original *-o*. If the Execration list’s ‘*-k-ya* can be interpreted as *‘*Ak(k)a*, Kutscher seems more likely to be right.

6.2 Toponymic type *epht* ‘*uol*

Some Northwest Semitic toponyms show forms that contain certain peculiarities. For example, there is a type of *ephta* ‘*ol* ? < **iphta* ‘*el*, that is not found in regular Hebrew: the oikonyms ‘*Ešta* ‘*ol*, constructed on the basis of a reflexive form of the root √אשׁ ‘ask’, and ‘*Eštāmoa* ‘, which results from a reflexive of the root √שמע ‘hear, listen’ (e.g. Kutscher 1982: 37). The above-mentioned forms show the absence of an initial *h* that appears in Hebrew and early Aramaic, being in this sense similar to Imperial Aramaic *ithpa* ‘*al* or Phoenician *yitpa* ‘*il*. However, these examples might

²² All of these properly identified sites were already populated in the EB or MB II era.

also be compared with Moabite *iphta'el* found in the stele of Meša.²³ Borée (1968: 69) and Kutscher (1982: 58) have thought that the toponym *'Eltāqe'* belongs to this toponymic type as well. The site is located not far away from *'Ešta'ol*, close to Timna, offering some evidence that *iphta'el* occurred in the Canaanite dialect spoken in the region of the Judean foothills in the Shephelah. On a papyrus (pLeiden) from the Egyptian Ramesside period, an unidentified toponym *'Il(i)qān ~ 'Eltāqōn* is found, which could belong to the same toponymic group (Ahituv 1984: 92–93).

6.3 Toponymic type 'a + stem

Such names as *'A|šqelon*, *'A|šdod*, *'A|kzib* (close to Tyre), *'A|rwad* (Phoenician town), *'A|kšaq̄* (close to Acco) and possibly *'Edre'i* [עֲדְרַעִי]? < **'A|dra'i* with initial prosthetic aleph are found. This type seems to have a coastal Canaanite spread and origin.

6.4 Pre-Semitic toponyms

Finally, it should be mentioned that some most probably archaic, non-Semitic toponyms exist, such as the names of the mountains *Gil|boa'* and *Gil|'ad*. These names are possibly not Semitic because of their four root letters and an unknown etymology of the words behind the names. Very likely, these names of mountains consist of a word **gil* 'mountain' and of an unknown element of the name (*bo'a* < ? **boya* and *'ad* < ? **yad*).²⁴ Ayin (*ḡ*) might be a Semitic substitution for the original **y*. The name of the ruler in Ḥaṣor, *ḡti*, from the time preceding MB IIA was probably non-Semitic (Ben-Tor 2006: 75). One could also suggest that in this archaic language a word such as **yar* 'river' was found; cf. the rivers *Yar|den*, *Yar|muq*, *Yar|muṭ*, and even *Yar|qon*. However, *Yarden* may originate from Semitic *Yard|on* < ירדו 'flow down' (thus Brown et al. 1999) and *Yarq|on* from ירקו 'green, yellow'. However, the Egyptian loanword *yə'or* 'big river, the Nile' in Hebrew should not be forgotten. It may be somehow linked with the stem *yar-*; cf. Eg. **yrw*, cuneiform **yaru'u* 'Nile, stream, canal' (see Brown et al. 1999; Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. יאור).

7. ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPONYMIC TYPES

Languages or linguistic elements may “wander” from one geographical area to another. The reasons may be 1) migrations, 2) strong cultural impacts (trade, political submission, etc.), or 3) especially in a bilingual situation, the influence of a prestige language (language changes, sound shifts, linguistic adoptions, and so forth) on a less valued language. Spread of toponyms may reflect directions of linguistic movements. However, even if a spread of a certain toponymic type exists on a north-south axis, it is difficult to define whether the movement took place from north to south or vice versa. The reason is that the dating of toponyms is often problematic. In such cases, the direction of the spread must be reasoned out utilizing the results of archaeology or documentary sources. Linguistic influences usually do not move against cultural tides. Literary sources can

23 The Meša text says in lines 11 and 15 ואלתום 'I fought'. *Iphta'el* occurred in Arabic, early Canaanite, and Ugaritic (Kutscher 1982: 58). The initial *waw* in the Meša text could probably be understood as a marker of *waw-consecutive* combined with Moabite reflexive *iphta'el* (see Kutscher 1982: 37), because the context shows that the verb was used in the past tense. Some type of *waw-consecutive* appeared in Byblos Canaanite during the Amarna period as well (Moran 2003: 215–216).

24 Instead of *gil*, the original form might have been **gal*. The soundshift **a > i* is fairly common in the masoretic tradition; cf. Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 84.

define the existence of sites *terminus post quem*, but not necessarily their earlier phases. However, archaeological finds can often be dated rather reliably: it is at least possible to distinguish archaeologically earlier and later material. If an archaeological picture fits well with a toponymic spread, then it is probable that they together reflect a mutual *linguistic and cultural event* in a society as described by Ross (see section 4.1). In that case it is possible to define earlier and later strata of toponyms utilizing the results of archaeology. Accordingly, the purpose of presenting the results of the archaeological studies in this section is to clarify the basic directions of cultural movements and corresponding linguistic influences.

One may wonder why the work of Susan L. Cohen (2002) plays such an essential role in the present study. The hypothesis presented in this article is not meant to be proved on the basis of her research work. It is necessary to highlight here that even though the results of her archaeological study correspond almost exactly to the results of the toponymic study presented here (Appendix 1), the toponymic evidence supports the archaeological evidence considerably more than vice versa. Cohen has convincingly determined four archaeological phases of settlement history during the MB IIA period (cf. also Yasur-Landau et al. 2008). Ben-Tor (2006: 66–82) has presented later datings (MB IIB) for some sites accepted afterwards by Cohen herself as well (pers. comm. 22 Jan. 2016).²⁵ Cohen's definition is based on the architecture and ceramic sequence identified at Tel Aphek (see also Kempinski 1992: 166). Using the sequence, together with the additional ceramic evidence from other MB IIA sites, it is possible to determine in which phase the sites were founded for the first time. Her work concentrated particularly on the issue of the dating of the Middle Bronze Age IIA and on the development of settlements during MB IIA in the Southern Levant. Later, Manfred Bietak (2015) presented more accurate datings of MB IIA. From the point of view of the present study, the relatively small difference in datings is not a pertinent question, because the span of time of the present study is all of the second millennium BC. For us, the principal focus is the order of the events, not the exact dating.

Cohen did not pay much attention to the origin of the population. She briefly mentions that population estimates indicate a movement of peoples from the north. In addition, she states that ceramic and other evidence points to cultural influence coming from Syro-Mesopotamia (Cohen 2002: 15). She supports the idea of local continued growth according to the model of an economic dendritic system (Cohen 2002: 137). No doubt, this model might have worked in the Southern Levant during the Middle Bronze Age. However, one should remember that during the course of history, new economic possibilities have always attracted immigrants, especially if the economy of the homeland has worsened (lack of arable land or pasture, famine, wars, trading difficulties); cf. the Hyksos Period in Egypt. The Southern Levant offered free land for agriculture and cattle. Kempinski (1992) asserts more strongly that the new population arrived in the Southern Levant from two regions during the MB II period. An earlier group came from coastal Lebanon and another, slightly later, group came from northern Syria. Yasur-Landau (Yasur-Landau et al. 2008: 66, 74, 77) writes that the beginning of the land settlement during MB IIA period in the western Galilee took place in arable lands and close to available water sources. Later, rapidly developing urbanization and fortified cities offered good opportuni-

²⁵ MB IIA sites mentioned in the Execration texts according to Ben-Tor (2006) are Ashkelon, Aphek, Acco, and Laish. According to Ben-Tor, fortified towns or minor sites without fortification from the MB IIB period are: Jerusalem, Shechem, Rehov, Pehel, Hazor, Achshaph, and Beth-Shean. There was an occupation gap in Beth-Shean between circa 2000 and 1700 BC (Mazar 2003: 323–339). That is to say, the coastal areas were, generally speaking, populated or at least urbanized earlier than the mountainous ones.

ties for craftsmen and traders, too, especially during MB IIB (see Ben-Tor 2006: 77). In my opinion, both migrations and internal growth were reasons for the spread of settlements. The growth of the economy even makes it probable that there was some sort of immigration. Even though the so-called “Amorite Hypothesis” is ruled out by many scholars (see, e.g. Bunivomitz & Greenberg 2006), migrations from the north to the Southern Levant in the first part of the second millennium BC should be considered as one of the possible events.

The archaeological evidence connected with the wide picture of toponymic types in all the Levant shows quite indisputably that the new population or/and at least new cultural influences came to the Southern Levant in the Middle Bronze Age IIA–B (c. 1900–1550 BC), particularly from the north (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 60; Mazar 1990: 188–189; Kempinski 1992). From the point of view of the present article, it is enough to understand the north-to-south direction of the principal cultural movements. There existed two “gates” of cultural, political and, possibly, immigration activities. Yasur-Landau (Yasur-Landau et al. 2008: 59, 76–77; see also Kempinski 1992: 166) describes the nature of two major urban poles of political and economic forces in the Galilee: western *Acco-Kabri* (the gate of Lebanon) and eastern *Hašor-Laiš* (the gate of Syro-Mesopotamia). The other movement that is important to understand is the internal settlement from coastal areas to the Judean mountains in the Southern Levant. The population seems to have initially reached the Coastal Plain of the Southern Levant – phases 1–2 in Cohen’s definition; see Figure 4 below (Cohen 2002: 107–115, Figs 12 & 13). Slightly later, the first phase of settlement and urbanization of the hill countries began (Cohen 2002: phases 3–4; Ben-Tor 2006: 66–76). (See Figs 5–8 below.)

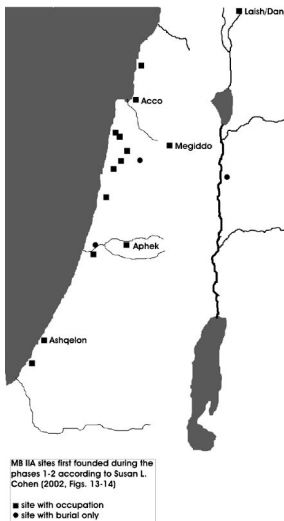


Figure 4 MB IIA sites, phase 1–2 according to Susan Cohen.

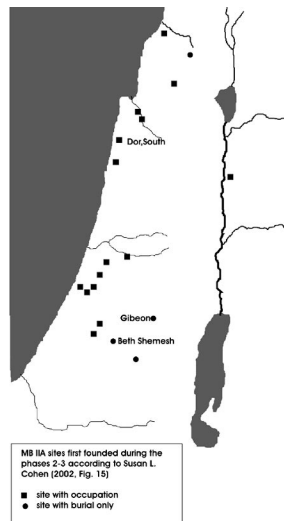


Figure 5 MB IIA sites, phase 2–3 according to Susan Cohen.

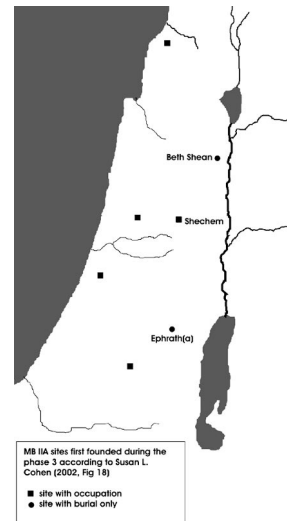


Figure 6 MB IIA sites, phase 3 according to Susan Cohen. Some of them MB IIB (Ben-Tor 2006).

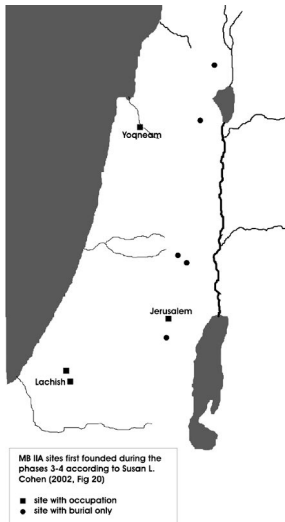


Figure 7 MB IIA sites, phase 3–4 according to Susan Cohen. Some of them MB IIB (Ben-Tor 2006).

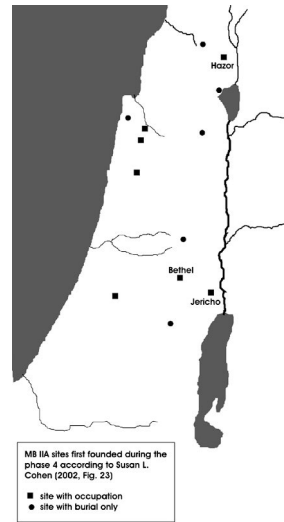


Figure 8 MB IIA sites, phase 4 according to Susan Cohen. Some of them MB IIB (Ben-Tor 2006).

8. DISCUSSION

The toponymic type STEM + $-\bar{o}n < *ān(u)$ bearing the Canaanite shift $\bar{o} < *ā$ is spread mostly on the Lebanese (*Šid|ōn*, *Leḥan|ōn* etc.) and Israeli (*ʿAšqel|ōn*, *Šar|ōn* etc.) coastal plains, with the exception of a wedge towards Judean Hill Country and Jerusalem (See Fig. 2 above). This affixal element, having originally a diminutive and/or abstract meaning (see section 5.1 above), is also known in Phoenician and biblical Hebrew personal names and vocabulary (Benz 1972: 244, 292). The affix $*-ān(u)$ is known in the Northwest Semitic language family in Ugaritic and Amorite personal names as well (Gröndahl 1967: 52; Streck 2000: 342–347; Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 241–242).

The affix $-\bar{o}n$ itself alone does not prove that a term originates from Phoenician Canaanite, because the Canaanite sound shift most probably developed after MB II during the Late Bronze Age. For example, the name of Ashkelon in an early Egyptian Execration text is written in the form *ʿAšqalānu*, and in some Qadesh Inscriptions *ʿAšqalāna*, but later *ʿAskalūna* (pLen, KRI V); *Hyon* is written *ʿAyyānu* in a later Execration text (Ahituv 1984: 70, 120). Toponyms STEM + $-\bar{o}n$, after the sound shift $*-ān > -\bar{o}n$, reflect the Canaanite linguistic reality after *c.* 1300 BC (see section 5.1).

However, the distribution of this toponymic type is very typically Canaanite and no toponyms bearing the earlier form, STEM + $*-ān(u)$, are found in the Southern Levant. This leads us to believe that the Canaanite sound shift touched all of the $-\bar{o}n(u)$ toponyms in the Southern Levant. The distribution of this toponymic type in the Southern Levant corresponds rather well to the first phases of settlement history presented by Susan L. Cohen (2002: Figs 13–15). (See Figs 4 & 5.) The toponymic spread, and Cohen’s archaeological picture support each other.

The type *bēt-* + adjunct has a different distribution. It is almost unknown in Phoenicia and on the Israeli coastal plain, but the type *bīt-* + adjunct is typical in the traditional North Syrian Amurru area (Fig. 1) during the Old and Middle Babylonian period in the second millennium

(Fig. 1; see section 5.2). In the Southern Levant, the distribution of the type is concentrated in the hill countries of the Galilee and Judah-Benjamin (see Fig. 3 above). The naming tradition shows mutual connection between Syro-Mesopotamia and the Galilean and Judean hill countries. The possible reasons are 1) migrations, 2) cultural, commercial or political connections influencing the language, and 3) early tradition from the common NW Semitic Proto Language. As mentioned above (section 5.2), the type *bēt* + adjunct could not spread from the coastal plain to the hill country, because the model on the coastal plain was practically unknown. The only possibility is that it was adopted from the north. One should keep in mind the two above-mentioned political and economical power poles during the MB II period in the Galilee (section 7): the western *Acco–Kabri*, the gate of Lebanon and the eastern *Ḥaṣor–Laiš*, the gate of Syro-Mesopotamia. Possible linguistic influences most probably came through these gates. The type *bēt* + adjunct had to come through the eastern *Ḥaṣor–Laiš* gate through migrations or cultural/commercial/political influences. The possibility of the tradition originating from the common proto-language is possible, but does not explain the difference between the coastal and inland naming models.

If one compares the areas of the above-mentioned toponymic types, it is possible to find some clear contrasts: STEM + *-ōn* vs. *bēt* + adjunct toponymic types, coastal versus mountainous settlements, and agricultural versus semi-pastoral economy. In both areas there were important Bronze Age cities: western *Sidon, Tyre, Acco, Megiddo, Ašqelōn* and eastern *Ḥaṣor, Beth Shean, Shechem, Jerusalem*. Through both of them lead important north-south oriented commercial routes: the western coastal road *Egypt–Ašqelōn–Acco–Tyre–Ugarit*, and the eastern one *Ḥebrōn–Shechem–Ḥaṣor–Syro-Mesopotamia*.

Four known main branches of the (North)west Semitic languages were spoken in the Levant in the second millennium BC: Canaanite, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Amorite. It is hard to compare them, because the basic informative literary sources are from different periods: Canaanite and Aramaic mostly from the Iron Age II, Ugaritic from the Late Bronze Age, and Amorite from the Middle Bronze Age. The last one is known mainly through personal names only (Streck 2000). When comparing the Ugaritic and Amorite personal names with each other, Bordreuil & Pardee (2009: 10) group Ugaritians with the Amorite entity. However, in the Middle Bronze Age, all the Northwest Semitic languages were most probably very close to one another linguistically; those tribes supposedly spoke dialects of the common Late Proto NW Semitic language. The different toponymic types suggest that there were different dialects and linguistic innovations. Finally the proto-language likely split during the first part of the second millennium BC, and different distinct Northwest Semitic languages began to appear. We should not underestimate the heavier Akkadian cultural and linguistic influence on the Syro-Mesopotamian Amorites compared with the coastal Canaanites as the separating cultural and linguistic factor. Even though the linguistic difference was not very remarkable, some sort of cultural and linguistic differentiation no doubt already existed between the Canaanite coastal and Syro-Mesopotamian inland populations during the MB II period.

Some areal dialectal differences are visible in the Southern Levant in such early toponyms as the type with *initial prosthetic aleph*, the type of final *-ō < *ā* and the type based on *iph̄ta 'el* (sections 6.1–3). A possible dialectal difference may be visible in the mountainous area of Ephraim, because both of the above-mentioned toponymic types (*-ōn* and *bēt-*) are absent there. The same linguistic difference may be reflected in the famous biblical passage describing the Ephraimites, who were not able to pronounce correctly the sibilant of the word *šibboleṯ* (Judges 12:6).

The similarity between the archaeological results of Cohen (2002) and the toponymic results of the present study (sections 5.1 and 5.2, Appendix 1) is remarkable, and it gives proof that the two approaches mostly illustrate the same cultural and linguistic events, thereby offering a justification for utilizing the theory of Malcolm Ross (1998: 141, 158, 162).

ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeological:

EB = Early Bronze Age	late third millennium
MB = Middle Bronze age	c. 1900–1550 BC
LB = Late Bronze Age	c. 1550–1200 BC
IA I = Iron Age I	c. 1200–1000 BC

Egyptian documents:

Ex = Execration inscriptions	early second millennium
Th = List of Thutmose III	fifteenth century BC
Am = List of Amenthotep II	fourteenth century BC
Ram II = Ramesses II	thirteenth century BC
An = papyrus Anastasi I	twelfth–thirteenth century BC
Ram III = Ramesses III	twelfth century BC
Sh = List of Shoshenq I (Shishak)	tenth century BC

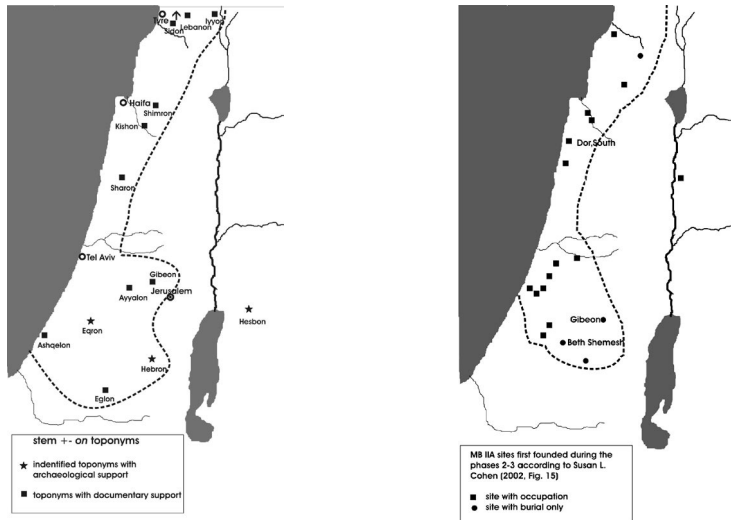
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APPENDIX 1: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TOPONYMIC COMPARISON TO THE MAPS OF SUSAN L. COHEN (2002)



Comparison 1: Phase 2–3 of new settlements according to Susan Cohen and STEM + -ōn-toponyms supported by archaeological or documentary evidence from the second millennium BC (Fig. 2 in section 5.1).



Comparison 2: Phase 3–4 of new settlements according to Susan Cohen and bêt + adjunct-toponyms supported by archaeological or documentary evidence in the second millennium BC (Fig. 3 in section 5.2).

APPENDIX 2: LISTS OF THE NAMES IN FIGURES 2 AND 3

Biblical names without archaeological or documentary support are located similarly to the supported toponyms in Cis-Jordan.

Fig. 2	Archaeological evidence	Documentary evidence
<i>Ayyalon</i>		Sh
<i>Ashkelon</i>	MB IIA	Ex ¹ , Am
<i>Eglon</i>		Ex
<i>Ekron</i>	MB II, IA I	
<i>Gibeon</i>	MB I	Sh
<i>Hebron</i>	EB, MB, IA I	
<i>Hesbon</i>	LB	
<i>Iyon</i>		Ex ² , Th
<i>Kishyon</i>	EB, MB II, IA I	Th
<i>Lebanon</i>		pCh Beatty I
<i>Sharon</i>		Ex ² , Th, Am
<i>Shim(r)on</i>		Th, Am
<i>Sidon</i>		Am, pAn I

Biblical stem + *-ōn* toponyms without archaeological or documentary support:

Abdon, Ammon; Rabbath, Arnon, Atzmon, Chesalon, Dibon, Ephron, Evron, Etzion-Geber, Gibbethon, Gihon (Jerusalem), Hammon, Hannathon, Helbon, Hermon, Holon, Yarkon, Kidron, Kitron, Pirathon, Shikkeron, Zion (Jerusalem), Yardon ~ Yarden (Jordan).

Fig. 3	Archaeological evidence	Documentary evidence
<i>Beth-Anath</i>		Th, Sh, Seti I, Ram II
<i>Beth-Anoth</i>		? Sh
<i>Beth-Dagon</i>		Ram III
<i>Bethel</i>	EB, MB I	
<i>Beth-(ha)Emek</i>	EB I–IIA	
<i>Beth-Horon</i>		Sh
<i>Bethlehem ~ Efrat(a)</i>	B	
<i>Beth-Shean</i>	EB I	Th, Sh, An
<i>Beth-Shemesh</i> (Judea)	MB	
<i>Beth-Shemesh</i> (Issachar)		Ex ²
<i>Beth Tappuah</i>		Sh
<i>Beth Tzur</i>	EB, MB IIB	
<i>Beth Yerah</i>	EB	

Biblical *bēṭ* + adjunt toponyms without archaeological or documentary support:

Beth-Araba, Beth-Arbel, Beth-Ashbea, Beth-Aven, Beth-Azmaveth, Beth-Baal-Meon, Beth-Bamoth, Beth-Biri, Beth-Car, Beth-Diblathaim, Beth-Eglaim, Beth-Gader, Beth-Gamul, Beth-Haccerem, Beth-Haggan, Beth-Hanan, Beth-Haram, Beth-Hoglah, Beth-haYeshimoth, Beth-Lebaoth, Bethlehem (north), Abel Beth-Maaca, Beth-haMarcaboth, Beth Nimrah, Beth Pazzez, Beth Pelet, Beth-Peor, Beth-Rehob, Beth-Shemesh (Naftali), Beth-haShittah.

“Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study.” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testamen* (2018): 111–135.

Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT: The personal names of the Pentateuch (the first 11 chapters excluded) have not very often been under systematic scientific investigations. The topic is interesting from the points of view of linguistics, onomastics, theology and ethnohistory. The anthroponyms of the Pentateuch are compared with personal names found from the 2nd millennium BCE (from Amorite, Ugaritic and Amarna Canaanite sources) and with anthroponyms from extrabiblical and biblical Hebrew sources, as well as with Phoenician sources of the first half of the 1st millennium. The conclusion is that the anthroponyms of the Pentateuch reflect the onomasticon of the second millennium, having slightly modified typological and lexical roots in the same Northwest Semitic entity as Amorite, Amarna Canaanite and Ugaritic personal names.

Key words: onomastics, Pentateuch, Northwest Semitic, Old Testament exegesis

1. *Introduction*

Our knowledge of the ancient Northwest Semitic world and the languages belonging to this branch of Semitic tongues has increased remarkably during the last century.¹ Especially the discoveries of the archives in Tell El-Amarna [originating from 14th century BCE], Ugarit [ca 1300-1190 BCE] and Mari [18th century BCE] have not only revealed archaeological material cultures, history and religion of the ancient inhabitants, but also shed new light on the Northwest Semitic languages. The Amarna and Mari texts are written in the Akkadian language and cuneiform script but the canaanisms and amorisms combined with the personal names provide good possibilities to reconstruct those ancient languages. In Ugarit the situation is even better because the

1. Occasionally scholars have used a somewhat misleading term “West Semitic” instead of “Northwest Semitic.”

archives there consisted of a wide selection of texts written in the Ugaritic tongue. 2000 found texts are written in the Ugaritic indigenous cuneiform script that does not reveal used vowels, with the exception of the vowels connected with three different aleph-signs. Fortunately, more than 2500 texts are written in the Akkadian language and cuneiform system. This can be partially helpful in order to resolve the mystery of used vowels of Ugaritic personal names (e.g. Bordreuil & Pardee 2009: 8, 21-22; Sivan 2001: 1).² Otherwise one must be content with the methods of comparative Semitic linguistics in reconstructing the vowels.

It is evident that the Amorite language originating from the Middle Bronze Age, and to some extent even Ugaritic from the Late Bronze Age, cannot differ very much from Late Proto-Northwest Semitic. The consonantal system presented by Streck (2000: 194-196) shows a relatively high similarity of Amorite to Proto-Semitic. According to him there occurred such sound shifts differing from Proto-Semitic as $*d > \text{ʃ}$, $*z > \text{ʃ}$, $*t > \text{ʃ}$ and $*š > \text{ś}$. Bordreuil and Pardee (2009: 19) most probably are right in stating that Ugaritic is highly archaic and probably descends directly from a Levantine “Amorite” dialect. In Ugaritic the sound shifts are $*d > \text{ʃ}$, $*z > \text{z}$ or g , $*š > \text{ś}$ or s and sporadically $*d > d$ (Sivan: 2001, 36).

Streck (2000: 30) distinguishes three phases of the Amorite language: Old Amorite [*Altamurritisch*] (before 1940 BCE), Middle Amorite [*Mittelamurritisch*] 1940-1500 BCE and New Amorite [*Neuamurritisch*] after c.a. 1500 BCE. The Amorites disappeared after 1200 BCE and the Arameans replaced them in Syria. I find it likely that the early Aramean language possibly originates from some of the Amorite dialects, or alternatively, directly from the late Northwest Semitic protolanguage, because in practice those are the only possibilities. The earliest history of the Aramaic language before its appearing in the Levant has not been widely discussed. The reason might be the lack of early Aramaic linguistic material from the second millennium BCE. The only method to study this question is comparative linguistics. Generally speaking, Aramaic is classified to be one of the Northwest Semitic languages (e.g. Yildiz 2000). For example, Lipiński (2000) has attempted to describe the early history of the Arameans and their spread but did not write of the linguistic roots.

There are some inscriptions and texts preserved from the second millennium that illustrate the Canaanite political and cultural background. The most important are the Amarna texts (written in Akkadian) from the 14th century BCE, which also contain rather many personal names (Hess 1993a; Moran 2003). There exist some short inscriptions written in the Proto-Canaanite script, but they are not very informative neither for onomastics nor linguistics (e.g. Naveh 1987: 23-27; Ahituv 2008: 1-2). The earliest Phoenician inscriptions are the text of Aḥiram from ca 1000 BCE (e.g. Lehmann 2005) and the Byblos inscriptions from the 10th century BCE (see the discussion in Rollston

2. The Ugaritic cuneiform script is consonantal (27 signs) but the Akkadian one is mostly syllabic or based on logograms (more than 200 signs).

2008). Early inscriptions in the area of modern Israel are the Gezer Calendar (e.g. Ahituv 2017; 2008: 252-257), Eqrone Inscription (e.g. Gitin & *et al.*: 1997; Ahituv 2008: 335-340) and Siloam Inscription (e.g. Rendsburg & Schniedewind 2010; Ahituv 2008: 19-25) originating from the first half of the 1st millennium BCE. The Moabite Stele of Mesha (e.g. Rollston 2010: 53-55; Ahituv 2008: 389-418) and the Balaam text from Deir Alla (e.g. Rendsburg 1993; Ahituv 2008: 433-466) represent Transjordanian texts from approximately the same period. The earliest Aramaic inscriptions are dated to the 10th century. None of them contain much onomastic material. Finally, we should also mention such texts as the Samarian ostraca, the Lachish letters, the Arad ostraca etc. (e.g. Ahituv 2008; 2005).

According to the modern knowledge we may divide the Northwest Semitic language family into:

- 1) *Northeastern branch*: Old and Middle Amorite especially in modern North-Syria and sporadically in modern Iraq, Late Amorite in Central West-Syria.
- 2) *Northwestern branch*: Ugaritic in coastal Syria.
- 3) *Southwestern branch*: Canaanite languages: Phoenician-Punic, southern Canaanite dialects (e.g. Eqrone inscription), Hebrew, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, ?Transjordanian dialect (i.e. Deir Alla).³
- 4) *Eastern branch*: Aramaic and its daughter languages. (see Fig 1)

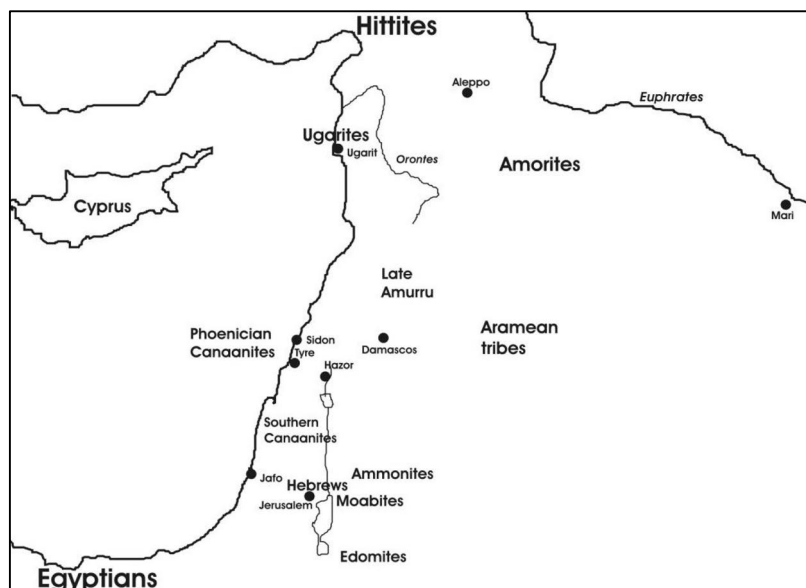


Figure 1. Northwest Semitic ethnic groups in the 2nd millennium BCE drawn by P. Rahkonen

3. Southern Canaanite is not necessarily exactly identical with Phoenician. The Balaam text from Deir Alla has both Hebrew and Aramaic features (see Ahituv: 2008, 434-435).

I would like to state clearly that the present research examines the dating of the personal names in the Pentateuch, not the dating of the Masoretic Pentateuch. If the results of the investigation hint at any direction of the existence and/or age of “biblical core stories,” it should be considered as a “by-product” of the research.⁴ I have limited the source of the names from the Pentateuch to the Masoretic text of *Biblia Hebraica*, even though there exist early variants of manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls and, of course, the Greek Septuagint. This I did in order to simplify the task. However, this limitation does not lead to any statistical invalidity in the investigation. The present study is intended to be the first part of a wider research work. The second part will examine the onomasticon of the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and 1-2 Samuel, using the same extrabiblical comparative material that was utilized in the first part.

2. Research question

The principal topic of the present study is the onomasticon of the Pentateuch in the context of the Northwest Semitic entity. Generally, the dating of the final edition of the Pentateuch is thought to be relatively late originating from the Persian Period after the Exile around the fifth century BCE (see e.g. Enns: 2012, 5). The Hebrew Bible itself seems to presume that the “Patriarchal” (Gen 12-50 chapters) and “Mosaic” (Exod, Lev, Num and Deut) narratives describe events that should be dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Age. The archaeologist Finkelstein (see 2001, 22-23, 35-38) has presented the idea that the Pentateuch was written during the late period of the Judean monarchy. The Masoretic texts [MT] are thought by different scholars to originate from 550-100 BCE and the earliest MT-like manuscripts began to occur from 250 BCE onwards (Tov: 2015, 321). Within MT, the orthography of the Pentateuch and the book of Kings are most conservative (Tov: 2015, 244).

As already mentioned above, I have endeavored to examine the dating of the personal names in the Pentateuch. There are hypothetically several alternatives, which could explain the origin of the names in the “Patriarchal” and “Mosaic” narratives. Such might be: 1) the author(s) of the stories made up imaginary names, 2) the author(s) tried to imitate old names or 3) the names reflect in reality ancient anthroponyms in their lexical and structural features. Our preliminary assumption before the study is that the personal names in the Pentateuch may or may not reflect early traditions of the narratives. Therefore we compare those anthroponyms both with extrabiblical names originating from the Bronze Age and extrabiblical and biblical names that can be dated to the first half of the 1st millennium BCE. If the names bear closer resemblance to the style, lexicon and structure which were in use among the Northwest Semites in the second millennium than those of the first millennium, we conclude that the personal names of the “core stories” of the Penta-

4. The term “core stories” means in the present study early traditions before the last edition of the Masoretic Pentateuch.

teuch cannot originate from the Persian Period or from the period of the Judean/Israelite monarchy, but from the second millennium BCE.

3. Earlier studies and research sources

3.1. Earlier studies

Earlier studies can be classified as follows: 1) *Elementary examines* which produced source material or 2) *Derived studies* which utilize any material of elementary studies. Research works in the first category are large collections of personal names combined with the authors' linguistic analyses based on an onomastic material. Such works are Streck's (2000) study *Das Amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit*. He has utilized e.g. Gelb's *Computer-Aided Analysis of Amorite* (Gelb et al. 1980). This study is most useful as a reconstruction of the Amorite language and as an index of Amorite anthroponyms. One of the basic research works is Frauke Gröndahl's (1967) *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*. However, this book awaits updating because of the new material that has been revealed (see Bordreuil & Pardee 2009: 74). An important collection and analysis of Canaanite names is presented in Hess' book (1993a) *Amarna Personal Names*. As for the onomasticon of the first millennium, Benz's (1972) book *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* and Ahituv's (2005) *Ha-ketav weha-mikhtav: asuphat ketovot me-Erets Israel umi-mamlehot `ever ha-Yarden mi-yeme bayit rishon* are remarkable.

Hess (1993b) has written a book *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*. In his attempt to date the names he states that the studied anthroponyms fit most comfortably to the early part of the second millennium. Probably the closest research work compared with mine is Fowler's (1988) *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew. A Comparative Study*. She has compared biblical and extrabiblical Hebrew theophoric personal names with Ugaritic, Phoenician, Amorite, Aramaic, Akkadian and Palmyrene ones. In addition, she has classified thoroughly the typology of biblical and extrabiblical Hebrew theophoric anthroponyms. However, the Amorite corpus she utilized was not as accurate as I have had, thanks to the later work of Streck (2000). For some reason Fowler did not distinguish the different Semitic phonemes *h*, *ḥ*, *ḥ*, *ḥ*, *ḥ*, *ḥ* or sometimes even *ḥ*, which were represented by Akkadian cuneiform signs containing *ḥ* (*ḥ*+vowel, vowel+*ḥ* or a three-letter syllable containing *ḥ*). Furthermore, she did not have the aid of Koehler & Baumgartner's HALOT edition 1-5, 1994-2000 or Koehler & Baumgartner's lexicon (revised by Baumgartner & Stamm) 1-2, 2001 which contain much more etymological and onomastic material than BDB that she had to rely on. The principal difference between her and my studies is the aim. I endeavored to date the names of the Pentateuch using comparative material that have a relatively certain dating (see below) and she concentrated primarily on the typology of the biblical names. There is a dating in her work, but it is mostly based on the periods drawn from the internal testimony of the Hebrew Bible. The periods she used are Pre-Monarchy, United Monarchy, Divided Monarchy and Exilic & post-Exilic (e.g. 1988, 39).

Tigay (1986) concentrated on the religious situation of the divided Israeli monarchies utilizing theophoric elements of biblical names. Albertz & Schmitt (2012) treated the same subject from the point of view of family and household religion. Golub (2014) presented statistics of occurrences of theophoric elements mostly originating from the first half of the 1st millennium BCE. Norin (2014) conducted a wide comparison of extrabiblical and biblical names with one another. Norin's index of the utilized names contains only anthroponyms with the theophoric elements *ba'al*, *el* and *YHWH*. Therefore his collection is not comparable with my research material (see below).

3.2. *Research sources*

The oldest layer of the Northwest Semitic anthroponyms is found in Amorite names. Most of the names originate from the Middle Bronze Age (approximately 1900-1550 BCE). Gelb (1980) has a corpus of 5922 Amorite names. It has been the principal source for Streck (2000), who painstakingly analysed Amorite names phonetically, grammatically and lexically in order to reconstruct the basic features of the Amorite language and to present the original phonetic forms and meanings of the anthroponyms. He also arranged names according to onomastic types. I have utilized his index of Amorite personal names studying 1721 names. Questionable or incomplete names are not accepted. It is evidently a sufficient statistical sample.

The second collection is that of Hess (1993a) containing names picked from the Amarna letters (Late Bronze Age, 14th century BCE). They are anthroponyms from different parts of the Levant. I separated 102 Northwest Semitic names from the others⁵; i.e. Egyptian, Hurrian, Anatolian and Indo-European names.⁶ Hess analysed rather thoroughly all the names, presenting occurrence, case, identification and linguistic analysis plus occurrences elsewhere. The third collection from the second millennium BCE is Gröndahl's work of Ugaritic names (1967). I have studied altogether 1903 anthroponyms from her corpus, which is a statistically sufficient amount.⁷

It was necessary to find the best possible biblical and extra-biblical Hebrew sources from the first millennium BCE in order to compare those names with the onomasticon of the Pentateuch. I utilized 332 names from Aḥituv's (2005, 450-455) corpus of ancient extrabiblical inscriptions or texts that contains anthroponyms from the area of Judah, Israel, Philistea, Edom, Ammon

5. According to Hess' evaluation.

6. During the Amarna period the superstratum often had non-Semitic names because it was the era of the multilinguistic Mitanni Empire (see. e.g. Na'aman: 2005). The Pentateuch reflects the same situation presenting a couple of leaders from the Hebron district who had Hurrian names *Šešai* and *Talmi* [Num 13:22] (Koehler & Baumgartner: 2001 s. v.

יִשְׁשַׁי and תַּלְמִי).

7. The names in the utilized collections are sometimes treated twice because one name may contain two different researched elements. This has increased the above informed number of the studied names. Thus the real number of anthroponyms is lower.

and Moab plus names from the Balaam Inscription from Deir Alla. For the present study I utilized only the names originating from the territory of Judah and Israel. Furthermore, I selected the anthroponyms of the biblical Book of Jeremiah and the dated names from Avigad's (1999) collection of seal stamps. Because the attested origin of several seals is unknown and the possibility of fakes is obvious, I tried to reduce the risk by accepting only those seals which Avigad had dated (see Ahituv 2008: 9-11). The grounds for dating have apparently been a) the original archaeological site is reliably enough known or 2) the orthography and appearance of a seal seems to be authentic. I accepted 181 names out of 691 total from this collection. I also selected for the present study Benz's (1972) collection of Phoenician-Punic anthroponyms studying 710 relevant names from his corpus. He had separated certain names from questionable ones, and I accepted only the certain names according to his evaluation.

As a summary, we can state that the sources originating from the second millennium BCE are not problematic even though there are minor shortcomings. Not all of the, until now, known Amorite or Ugaritic names are represented, but the number we have in the present study is statistically valid enough. Among the sources from the first millennium BCE the Phoenician-Punic corpus is not problematic. Ahituv's index may awaken some questions because of those names which are restored from incomplete or interpretative originals. The data from the Book of Jeremiah is rather narrow but no doubt represents biblical Hebrew anthroponyms on the eve of the Exile. The most questionable is Avigad's collection. However, its names resemble rather closely the names of the biblical Book of Jeremiah as well as the names in extrabiblical inscriptions and texts presented by Ahituv; i.e. the fashion of naming motifs originating from the first half of the 1st millennium.

4. *Method*

The method of the present research is based on comparison and statistics. The compared factors are 1) theophoric and hypocoristic elements and 2) Semitic roots utilized in forming personal names.

The personal names of the Pentateuch are compared with the Northwest Semitic material from the second millennium; i.e. Amorite, Amarna Canaanite and Ugaritic. The Pentateuch has been divided into "Patriarchal" (Gn 12-50) and "Mosaic" (Ex., Lev., Nu. and Dt.) parts. Sometimes it has been difficult to understand whether some of the similar names belonged or did not belong to the same person. However, I have tried to avoid repeating the same names. The Mosaic names are found mostly in the books of Exodus and Numbers. Because of the peculiarities of the "Edomite" names in the 36th chapter of Genesis, I have compared the roots behind those names with different languages (Sabaic, Safaic, Old South-Arabic, Arabic, Minean) from the Arabian Peninsula as well. I also compared separately the names of Abraham's family with other Northwest Semitic material.

Furthermore, I compared the anthroponyms of the Pentateuch with the names originating from the first half of the 1st millennium BCE; i.e. names in

Phoenician-Punic sources (Benz 1972), in the inscriptions and texts presented by Aḥituv (2005: 450-455), in the Book of Jeremiah and in Avigad's collection of seals (1999). After the comparison I have endeavoured to evaluate statistically which one of the compared two poles—the one of the 2nd or the one of 1st millennium—is stylistically, structurally and lexically closer to the names of the Pentateuch.

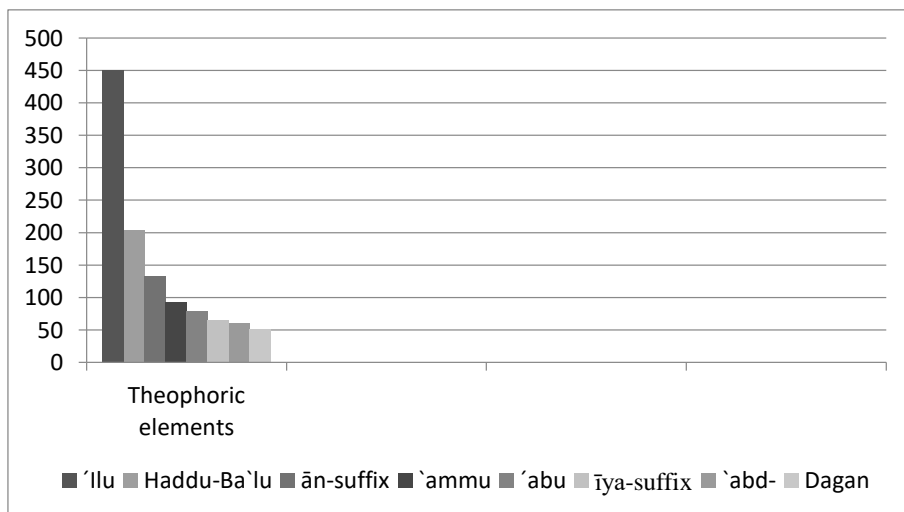
The biblical onomasticon is picked from the texts of the Pentateuch, not from the Chronicles. Fowler (1988) has thought considerably about the problems of the names in the Chronicles. She finds the pre-monarchic names with the ending *-yāh* (1988, 32-33) as one of the difficulties. However, it is possible that the element *-yā^(h)* in several early names in the Masoretic Text should not be interpreted as the yahwistic element *-yāh(u)*, but rather as an early Northwest Semitic hypocoristic suffix *-īya* found in Amorite, Amarna and Ugaritic onomasticon (Streck: 2000, 350-351; Hess: 1993a, 202; Gröndahl: 1967, 49-51). This suffix shortened later and became in biblical Hebrew *-ī*.⁸

5. Statistical analyses: Statistics of the Northwest Semitic theophoric and hypocoristic elements

The results of the statistical analyses are illustrated in the diagrams and tables presented below. The diagrams and tables each contain at most 10 most popular anthroponymic types of each linguistic group.

Amorite anthroponyms:

The list of Streck; 1721 studied names

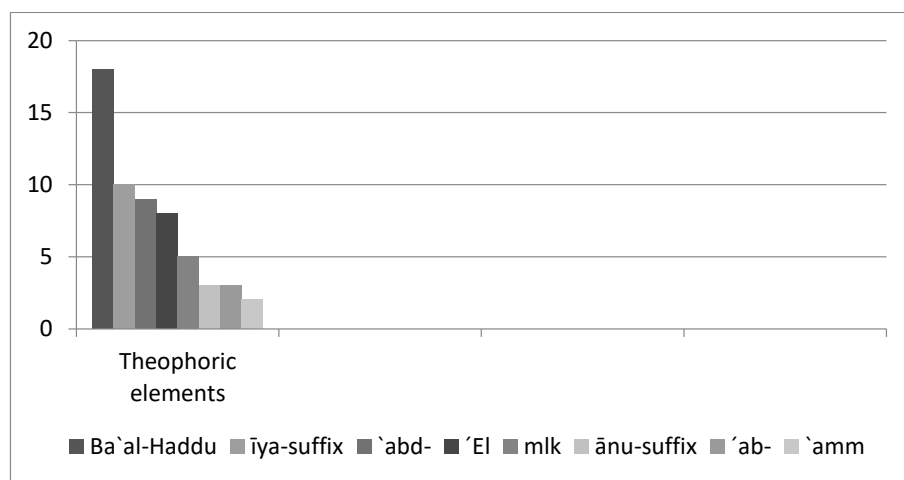


8. The hypocoristic suffix *-īya* would have been written in an unvocalized Hebrew text as *י*- even though the final *a* is not long.

ʿĪlu-/ʿīlu	451	26,2 %
Haddu-/Baʿlu-/haddu/-baʿlu	204	11,9 %
-ān	133	7,7 %
ʿAmmu-/ʿammu	93	5,4 %
ʾAbu-/ʾabu	79	4,6 %
-īya; -āya	65	3,8 %
ʿAbd-	60	3,5 %
Dagan-/dagan	52	3,0 %
Yaraḥ/-yaraḥ	39	2,3 %
Šamaš/-šamaš	38	2,2 %

Amarna Canaanite anthroponyms:

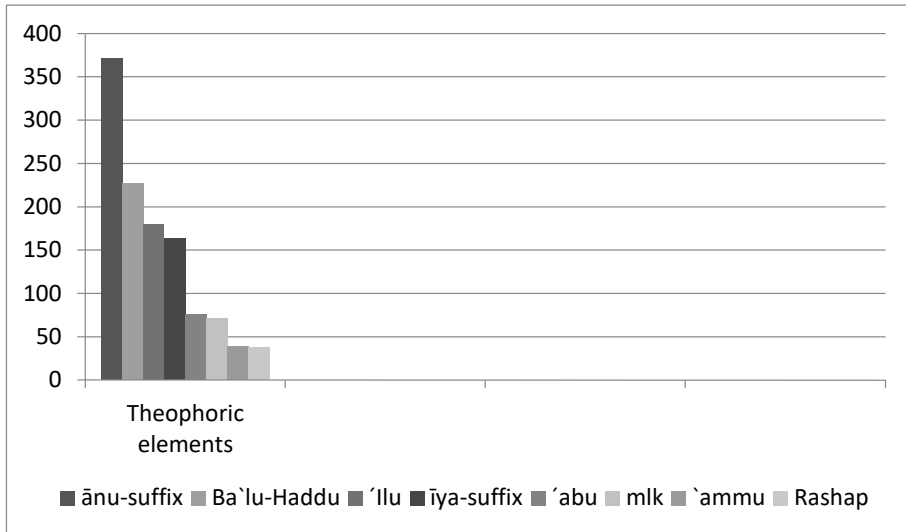
The list of Hess; 102 anthroponyms



Baʿal-Haddu	18	17,6 %
(Baʿal-/baʿal)	9	8,8 %
(Haddu/-haddu)	9	8,8 %
-īya	10	9,8 %
ʿAbd-	9	8,8 %
ʿEl-/ʿel	8	7,8 %
<i>mlk</i>	5	4,9 %
-ānu, -ūnu	3	2,9 %
ʾAb-/ʾab	3	2,9 %
ʿAmm-/ʿamm-	2	2,0 %
other deities (Ašir-,Aštar-,Dagan)	3	2,9 %

Ugaritic anthroponyms:

The list of Gröndahl; 1903 names

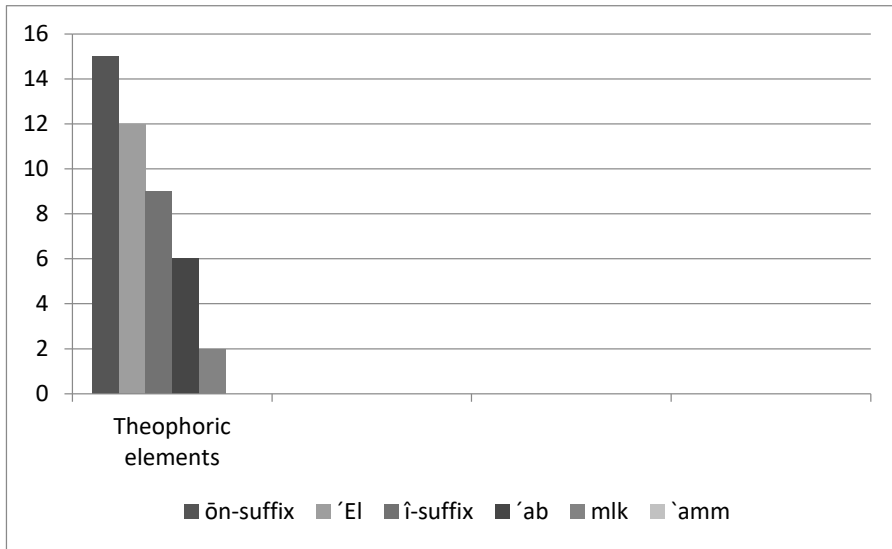


-ānu + -yānu	371	19,5 %
Ba'lu-Haddu	227	11,9 %
'Ilu-/-'ilu	180	9,5 %
-īya, -āya, -ūya, -yaya ⁹	163	8,6 %
ʾAbu-/-'abu	76	4,0 %
<i>Mlk-/mlk</i>	71	3,7 %
ʿAmmu-/-'ammu	39	2,0 %
Rašap-/rašap	38	2,0 %
ʾAḥu-/-'aḥu	32	1,7 %
ʿAnat	21	1,1 %

Patriarchal Hebrew-Canaanite anthroponyms:

Hebrew Genesis 12.-50. chapters; 151 anthroponyms excluding "Edomite" names (36th chapter)

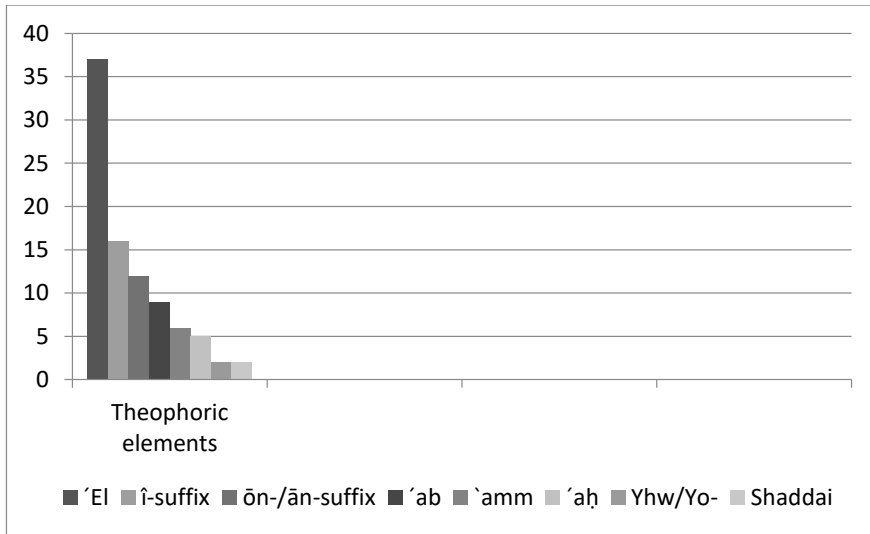
9. There was a certain vowel harmony in Ugaritic (Bordreuil & Pardee 2009: 27; Gröndahl 1967: 17).



-ōn, -ān, -ūn	15	10,0 %
ʿEl-/ʿel	12	7,9 %
-î	9	6,0 %
ʿAb-/ʿab	6	4,0 %
<i>mlk</i>	2	1,3 %
ʿAmmi-/ʿammi	1	0,7 %
other deities:		
? <i>Hadad</i> 1, ? <i>Gad</i> 1, ? <i>Aššer</i> 1, <i>Sîn</i> 1	4	2,6 %

Mosaic Hebrew anthroponyms:

Hebrew Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; 146 anthroponyms

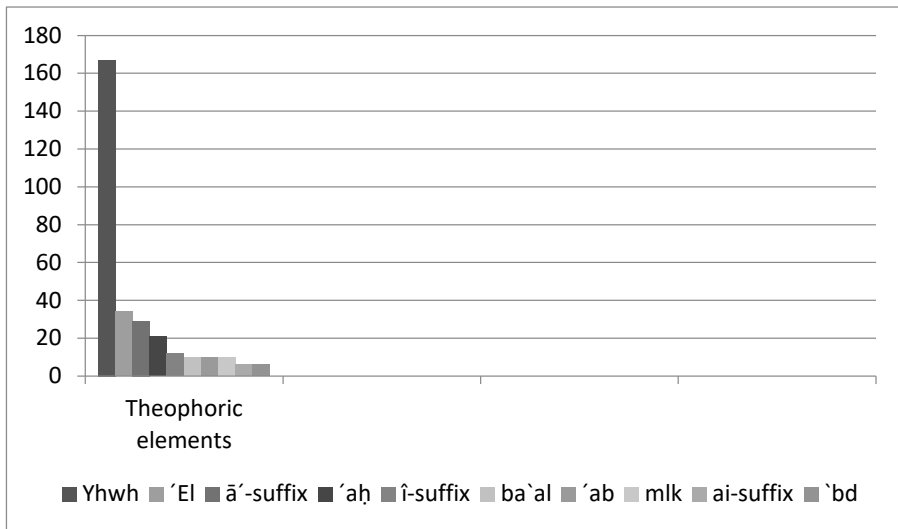


ʿEl-/-ʿel	37	25,3 %
-î < -īya	16	11,0 %
-ōn, -ān	12	8,2 %
ʿAb-, -ʿab	9	6,2 %
ʿAmmi-/-ʿammi	6	4,1 %
ʿAḥ-/-ʿaḥ	5	3,4 %
Yhw-/Yô-	2	1,4 %
Šadday	2	1,4 % ¹⁰
Others:		
?Assir < Osiris 1, Hur ? < Horus 1, mlk 1	3	2,0 %

10. The number is three (3) if we accept the name *Šēḏey/ʿûr* (Nu 2:10).

Anthroponyms of the inscriptions and texts listed by Ahituv:

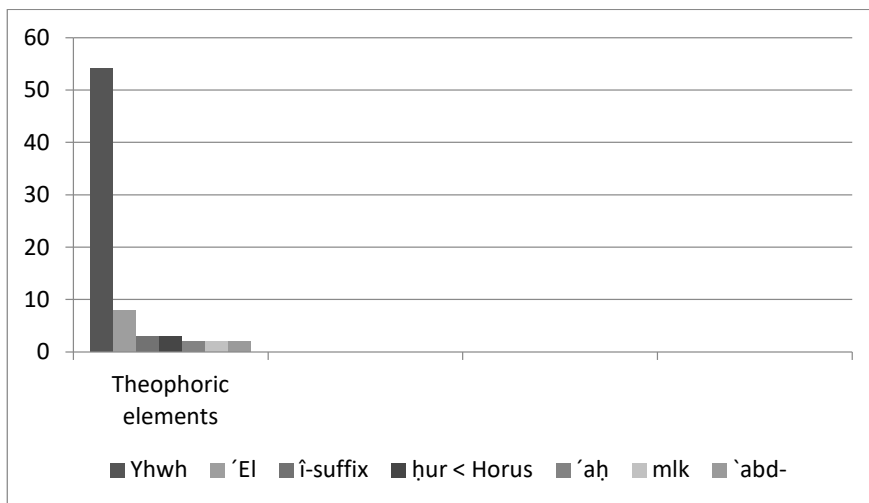
Studied 332 anthroponyms



Yĕho-, -yahu, yaw- Yô-	167	50,3 %
ʿEl-, -ʿel	34	10,2 %
-āʾ	29	8,7 %
ʿAḥ-	21	6,3 %
-î	12	3,6 %
Baʿal-, -baʿal	10	3,0 %
ʿAb-, -ʿab	10	3,0 %
mlk	10	3,0 %
-ai	6	1,8 %
ʿbd	6	1,8 %

Anthroponyms of the Book of Jeremiah:

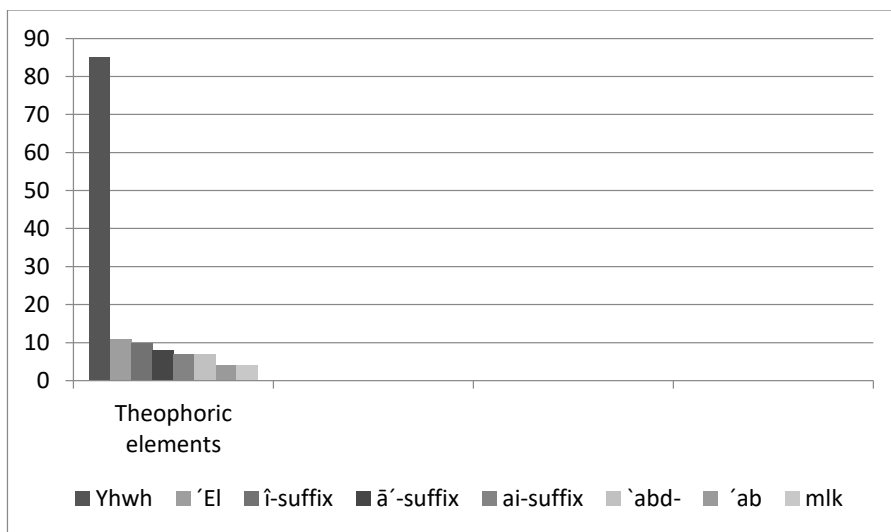
Contains 87 anthroponyms



Yĕhō-/Yô-/yāh(u)	54	62,1 %
'El-/-'el	8	9,2 %
-î	3	3,4 %
-ḥur < Horus	3	3,4 %
'Aḥ-/-'aḥ	2	2,3 %
<i>mlk</i>	2	2,3 %
<i>'bd</i>	2	2,3 %
'Ab-/-'ab	1	1,1 %
Ba'al	1	1,1 %

Anthroponyms on the dated seals by Avigad:

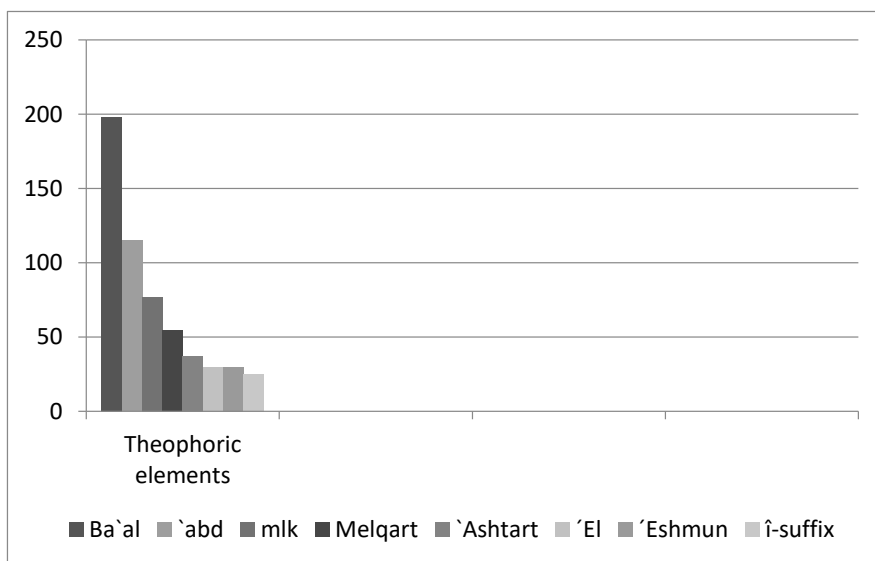
Contains 181 anthroponyms



Yĕhō-/Yô-/yah(u)	85	47,0 %
ʕEl-/ʕel	11	6,0 %
-î	10	5,5 %
-āʕ	8	4,4 %
-ai ? < *-āya	7	3,9 %
ʕbd	7	3,9 %
ʕAb/-ʕab	4	2,2 %
mlk	4	2,2 %
ʕAḥ-/ʕaḥ	3	1,7 %
-ḥr < Horus	?3	?1,7 %

Phoenician-Punic anthroponyms:

According to Benz (1972), 710 studied anthroponyms



Ba ^{al} -/-ba ^{al}	198	27,9 %
ʿAbd-	115	16,2 %
<i>mlk</i>	77	10,8 %
Melqart-/-melqart	55	7,7 %
ʿAštart-/-ʿaštart	37	5,2 %
ʾEl-/-ʾel	30	4,2 %
ʾEšmun-/-ʾešmun	30	4,2 %
-î	25	3,5 %
ʾAḥ-	21	3,0 %
-āʾ	19	2,7 %

6. Discussion

Theophoric and suffixal hypocoristic elements in the Northwest Semitic onomasticon have a shared tradition. The most frequent elements of the early onomasticon are a couple of principal deities, hypocoristic suffixes $-\bar{a}n(u) > -\bar{o}n$ and $-\bar{y}a > -\hat{i}$ plus divine relatives $ʾab(u)$ “father,” $ʾaḥu > ʾaḥ$ “brother,” $ʿamm(u)$ “paternal uncle” and the words based on the roots *mlk* “rule” and $ʿbd$ “serve”. Especially the main god of each ethnic group is usually dominating highest percentages of the elements. In the Amurru onomasticon it is $ʾIlu$, in the Amarna and Ugarit register *Ba^{al}/Haddu*, in the Pentateuch $ʾEl$, in the material from Judah/Israel, in the Book of Jeremiah and in the dated seals *YHWH* and in the Phoenician-Punic onomasticon *Ba^{al}*.¹¹

However, certain tendencies are visible during the time span of centuries. In the Bronze Age the hypocoristic suffix $-\bar{a}n(u) > -\bar{o}n$ was one of the most popular elements in the Amorite and especially in the Ugaritic onomasticon. It is clearly visible in the Amarna letters as well, but not as frequently as in those two.¹² In the “Patriarchal Narratives” it is the most popular element. In the “Mosaic texts” it is the third in popularity, but behind the suffix $-\bar{y}a > -\hat{i}$. If Ugaritic was a direct descendant of a “Levantine” Amorite as thought by Bordreuil & Pardee (2009: 19), the popularity of $-\bar{o}n/-\bar{a}n (< -\bar{a}n(u))$ could be explained as a common North Levantine feature. It is possible that in the southern Levant the suffix $-\bar{y}a > \hat{i}$ was more frequent than $-\bar{a}nu$, which might be reflected in the onomasticon of the Amarna letters and possibly in the Mosaic narratives as well. The tendency continued later and $-\bar{o}n < -\bar{a}nu$ practically disappeared from the Hebrew onomasticon of the first millennium (Aḥituv 2005; Avigad 1999; Jeremiah) and is rare in the Phoenician-Punic personal names (Benz 1972).

The most radical change took place in the Hebrew anthroponyms, because the yahwistic element increased from zero of the Patriarchal and from two possible examples of the Mosaic narratives to approximately 2/3 of all the

11. Ba^{al} and Haddu are understood to have been the same deity. In the Akkadian cuneiform script both are frequently marked with a logogram *dIM*. Therefore it is statistically impossible to separate them in the cases when their occurrences are based on the Akkadian cuneiform logograms.

12. However, the statistical sample of the Amarna letters is narrow and may show to some extent incorrect figures especially if the percentages are low.

names in the 7th-6th century BCE (Golub: 2014, 630).¹³ In the Phoenician-Punic names it is interesting to notice that the goddess *ʿAštart* is the fifth in popularity. This is absolutely different compared with the material of the second millennium, because in earlier times female deities were not so popular in anthroponyms. The element *ʿbd* “servant” is especially frequent in the Amarna letters and in the Phoenician-Punic material. In the Hebrew onomasticon it is not found in the Pentateuch, but becomes visible in the 1st millennium collections. A clear change in the later material is the radical diminishing of the initial theophoric element *ʿAmm(i)-* as well. These three changes; the radical increasing of the yahwistic element, total disappearing of the hypocoristic element *-ōn* and diminished occurring of divine paternal uncle *ʿAmm(i)-* still being found in the Mosaic narrative, undoubtedly show that the anthroponyms of the Pentateuch do not originate from the first millennium BCE.¹⁴ The anthroponyms of the Pentateuch clearly reflect an earlier onomastic stratum, relatively similar with the other Northwest Semitic sources from the second millennium BCE.

7. Comparison of the Semitic roots in anthroponyms

The collections the Amorite (Streck 2000), Amarna (Hess 1993a) and Ugaritic (Gröndahl 1967) personal names no doubt represent the usage of certain Semitic roots among the Northwest Semites in the Middle and Late Bronze Age; i.e. in the second millennium BCE. The register of the Phoenician-Punic personal names (Benz 1972) is rather unique having their local deities *ʿEshmun* and *Melqart* as usual elements of the anthroponyms and containing several indigenous Semitic roots in forming anthroponyms. The dated material of seals (Avigad 1999), the names presented by Aḥituv (2005: 450-455) and those of the Book of Jeremiah show several mutual similarities, together giving a reliable impression of the Hebrew naming motifs during the first half of the 1st millennium BCE. In order to study the dating of the personal names of the Pentateuch (excluding 11 first chapters), it is relevant to compare the Semitic roots used in the studied names both with the Bronze Age material and the collections roughly dated to the first half of 1st millennium BCE. The following features can be noted.¹⁵

13. Those two yahwistic names in the Pentateuch are *Yôkəḇəd* and *Yěhōšua*^c. Fowler (1988, 348) has interpreted the latter one to be derived from the verbal root *yšc*, not from theophoric *Yěho-* (+ *šúa*^c). Norin (2014: 135) has considered that *Yěhōšua*^c might possibly be an unregular hiph'il of *yšc*. In his opinion, it is questionable to derive *Yôkəḇəd* from a yahwistic origin.

14. The divine paternal uncle is visible in some names of the first millennium as a final element *-am*.

15. In the sections 7.1-7.3 the names of the Pentateuch are excluded.

7.1 Common Northwest Semitic onomastic lexical inheritance in the 2nd and 1st millennium BCE

The following roots or elements were found in almost all the studied sources: ʔb “father,” ʔh/ʔh “brother,” ʔl “god, ʔEl,” b^{el} “lord, Ba^{el},” dkr/zkr “remember,” dmr/zmr “protect,” $\text{y}^{\text{c}}/\text{y}^{\text{s}^{\text{c}}}$ “help, save,” kwn “be reliable, be,” mlk “ruler, king,” nwr “light,” $\text{n}^{\text{h}^{\text{m}}}/\text{n}^{\text{h}^{\text{m}}}$ “consolate, comfort,” $\text{n}^{\text{c}^{\text{m}}}$ “favorite,” ntn/ytn “give,” ʔbd “servant,” $\text{c}^{\text{d}^{\text{r}}}/\text{c}^{\text{z}^{\text{r}}}$ “help,” qwm “rise,” $\text{s}^{\text{lm}}/\text{s}^{\text{lm}}$ “well-being,” $\text{s}^{\text{m}^{\text{c}}}/\text{s}^{\text{m}^{\text{c}}}$ “hear”.¹⁶

These roots or elements represent the common Northwest Semitic inheritance of the naming motifs that survived from the second millennium BCE at least till the mid-first millennium BCE.

7.2 Early Northwest Semitic data

Some of the roots or elements are found only in the studied Bronze Age material of Amurru, Ugaritic and sporadically Amarna anthroponyms.

ʔyl “deer,” ʔrnb “hare,” hll “praise,” hbb “beloved,” hwy “live,” h^{sn} “protection,” h^{zr} “pig,” hr^{s} “gold,” yp^{c} “appear (in glory),” $\text{y}^{\text{s}^{\text{c}}}$ “go out,” yqr “dear,” krb “bless,” l^{im} “folk, deity *Lîm*,” mwt “death, deity *Môt*,” mt “man,” ngh “shine,” n^{sb} “erect,” nqb “make hole,” g^{zl} “gazelle,” $\text{qd}^{\text{s}}/\text{qd}^{\text{s}}$ “holy,” r^{b} “revenge,” ryb “compensate,” $\text{s}^{\text{rk}}/\text{trk}$ “give, donate”.¹⁷

These roots or elements represent an old stratum of the Northwest Semitic naming motifs that disappeared sometime during the second millennium BCE after the destruction of Ugarit 1190 BCE (see Bordreuil & Pardee 2009; 19).

7.3. Coastal Northwest Semitic inheritance

There are several anthroponyms which especially have been constructed utilizing mutual Semitic roots in Ugaritic and Phoenician but which are rare or absent elsewhere:

ʔbn “stone,” ʔbr “strong, bull,” ʔd “father,” ʔdr “powerful,” ʔr^{s} “request, ? deity,” glb “barber,” $\text{g}^{\text{tr}}/\text{g}^{\text{s}^{\text{r}}}$ “strong,” h^{rm} “holy, wedded,” hr^{s} “craftsman,” $\text{y}^{\text{c}^{\text{r}}}$ “woods,” kbr “great,” ksy “cover,” mhr “soldier,” mrr “strong, bitter,” skn “govern, take care,” c^{d} “?eternal, ?witness,” c^{ny} “?answer,” “?miserable,” $\text{p}^{\text{c}^{\text{l}}}$ “do, work,” $\text{p}^{\text{c}^{\text{r}}}$ “open mouth,” s^{nr} “strong voice,” r^{sp} “lightning, Rašap,” s^{hr} “dawn,” tmm “complete”.

These roots or elements represent the shared coastal Northwest Semitic inheritance of the naming motifs. It seems to indicate that there were strong cultural ties between Ugarit and Phoenician city-states influencing one another’s languages and vocabulary.

16. ʔEl and Ba^{el} are accepted on the list, because they are not only names of gods but proper nouns ‘god’ and ‘lord’ as well. It is often difficult to know which one of those two meanings was in the minds of name givers.

17. It is not always possible to know whether the root *mwt* was to be read ‘death’ or *Môt* (deity).

7.4 The Pentateuch and the Northwest Semitic onomasticon during the Bronze Age

Various roots or elements in the names of the Pentateuch have parallels especially in the anthroponyms of the Amorite, Amarna and Ugaritic origin from the second millennium BCE: *ʔwn* “strength,” *ʔy* “where,” *bqq/bwq* “plentiful, luxuriant,” *gmn* “shelter,” *dd* “beloved,” *hws* “hasten,” *hmr* “donkey,” *hbr/hbr* “nomadic clan,” *ymn* “south, right(hand),” *ytr* “splendid,” *lbn* “white,” *npš/npš* “life,” *nšʔ* “accept,” *ʔqb* “protect,” *šgr/šʕr* “small,” *qdm* “in front, east,” *škr* “reward”.¹⁸ Several names of Abraham’s family have parallels in the Amorite [A = Streck: 2000] and Ugaritic [U = Gröndahl: 1967] names, but they are totally absent in the onomasticon of the first half of the 1st century BCE with the exception of *Yišmaʕel*.

Abraham’s family	Amorite or Ugaritic personal names ¹⁹
<i>Abram</i>	<i>a-bi-ra-mi</i> < <i>Abi-ram(i)</i> [U]
<i>Yišmaʕel</i>	<i>ia-áš-ma-aḥ-i-el</i> < <i>Yašmaʕ-el</i> [A]
<i>Yaʕqob</i>	<i>ia-ku-ub-DINGIR</i> < <i>Yaʕqub-ʔel</i> [A]
<i>Šimʕōn</i>	<i>ša-am-ú-nu</i> ~ <i>šmʕn</i> < <i>Šamʕūnu</i> [U]
<i>Lewi</i>	? <i>li-ú-um</i> [A] < * <i>Liwu</i> + <i>m</i> -mimation (see Hess 1993a: 104; Gelb 1980: 213,314)
<i>Zebulun</i>	<i>zu-ba-la-an</i> < <i>Zubalān</i> [A]
<i>Yiššakar</i>	<i>ia-áš-ku-rum</i> < <i>Yaškuru(m)</i> [A]
<i>Dan</i>	<i>dn/il</i> < <i>Dan</i> + <i>ʔilu</i> [U]
<i>Gad</i>	<i>ga-ad-ya</i> < <i>Gad</i> + <i>-īya</i> [U]
<i>Ašer</i>	<i>a-šar-na-šir</i> < <i>ʔAšar</i> + <i>nāšir</i> “Fortunate is the protector” [A]
<i>Benjamin</i>	<i>bi-ni-ia-mi-na</i> < <i>Bin-yamin</i> [A]
<i>Leʔā</i>	<i>la-i-im</i> < <i>Lāʔim</i> < * <i>Lāʔiya</i> + <i>m</i> -mimation [A]
<i>Laban</i>	<i>la-ab-nu</i> ~ <i>lbn</i> < <i>Labnu</i> [U]

7.5 Coastal Northwest Semitic influence on the onomasticon of the Pentateuch

Some of the roots or elements in the Pentateuch have parallels especially in the Ugaritic/Phoenician onomasticon:

ʔbr “strong,” *ʔsr* “bind (?Osiris),” *gml* “pay back,” *dlp* “sleepless,” *dtn* “warlike,” *hr* “free (?Horus),” *yšr* “potter,” *yqš* “birdhunter,” *krm* “vineyard,” *srd* “reins,” *prš* “break through,” *šhr* “shine,” *qht* meaning unknown.

It is remarkable that some of the names are linked with economical or social activities such as the words for *potter*, *bird hunter*, *vineyard*, *free* (not slave), *warlike*, *reins*. Such terms can easily be borrowed as loanwords.

18. The names under the title “common Northwest Semitic inheritance” (see above) are ruled out of this list.

19. The names on the list are only examples, several others could be found, too.

7.6 *Phoenician parallels with the later Hebrew onomasticon*

There are a few roots or elements that are typically common in the Phoenician-Punic and 1st millennium (BCE) Hebrew onomastic data:

ʾsp “gather together,” ḥld “mole,” smk “support,” ʿkbr “mouse,” špn “rock hyrax”.

It is remarkable that three of them are names of small mammals.

7.7 *Late innovations in the Hebrew onomasticon*

A considerable number of the roots in the late Hebrew onomasticon, which are found on the list of Avigad and Aḥituv or in such later books of the Bible as Chronicles, Nehemiah and Ezra, do not have parallels in the 2nd millennium data, Pentateuch or Phoenician-Punic register. They might be considered as new innovations. In some cases if the meaning is unknown they might be names of foreigners:

ʾdtʾ (Avig) meaning unknown, Aṣal/yahu “noble YHWH” (Avig, 2K 22:3, 2C 34:8), bšm (Avig) meaning unknown, Bilgai/Bilgā “cheerful” (Avig, Neh 12:5-18, Neh 10:9, 2C 24:14), Gašmi “rain” (Avig, Neh 2:19), Domla/ʾel meaning unknown (Avig); cf. dmlʾ (Aḥituv), Deraš|yahu “seeking for YHWH” (Avig), Haggobē “the lifter” (Avig), Ḥabli “sailor” (Avig), Hasad/yahu “merciful YHWH” (Avig, Aḥituv, 1C 3:20), Ḥaši “half” or Ḥiši “arrow” (Avig), Yiddô the root unclear (Avig, 1C27:21, Ezr 10:43) Maʾaš meaning unknown (Avig), Maḥse/yahu “YHWH is a refuge” (Avig, Aḥituv, Jer 32:12), Netib/yahu “path” (Avig), Peʾrat “head decoration” < Eg. In.w. (Avig), Qela|yahu meaning uncertain (Avig, Neh 12:20, Ezr 10:23), Šeban|yahu, Šebnaʾ [hypocor.] “?? YHWH is near” (Avig, Aḥituv, Is 22:15, Neh 9:4), Tanʾel “?God stretches himself out”.

7.8 “Edomite” names in Genesis 36th chapter

Several personal names in Genesis 36th chapter have linguistic roots that might be derived from different southern (geographically) Semitic languages Arabic (Arb), Old South-Arabic (OSArb), Safaic (Saf), Sabaic (Sab) and Minean (Min). The etymologies presented here follow those of Koehler & Baumgartner (2001).

List of the “Edomite” names which may possibly be derived from languages which were spoken in the Arabian Peninsula

Ethnical background according to Genesis: Canaanite [C], Horite [H], Edomite [E], “Proto-Edomite” [PE]

ʾĀlifaz	E	Gn 36:4	~ Saf. אֵלִיפָז ; Arb <i>fāza</i> “triumph”
Omār	E	Gn 36:11	cf. OSArb, Arb ʾmr “order”
ʾĀšbān	H	Gn 36:26	< ʾšb; Arb ʾĀšbān
Bilhān	H	Gn 36:27	cf. Arb <i>Blēhi</i> ; Arb <i>Baliha</i> “be carefree”
Bælaʿ	PE	Gn 36:32	cf. Arb <i>balīg</i> “eloquent”
Bāšmaṭ	C	Gn 36:3	< bšm; Arm <i>bsum</i> “be sweet,” OSArb p.n. <i>Bšmt</i>

Ga ^c tām	E	Gn 36:11	? Arb <i>ju^ctumat</i>
Hādar	PE	Gn 36:39	Arm, OSArb <i>hdr</i> “ornament, splendour, majesty”
Zærah ʔdrh	E	Gn 36:17	< <i>zrh</i> “rise, shine”; cf. OSArb a name
Zærah ʔdrh	PE	Gn 36:33	< <i>zrh</i> “rise, shine”; cf. OSArb a name
Yōbāb	PE	Gn 36:33	? < Arb <i>wabba</i> “to arm oneself for battle”
Yē ^c īs~Yē ^c ūs	E	Gn 36:14	< Arb <i>gwl</i> “help,” proper n. <i>gawl</i>
Mibšār	E	Gn 36:42	? < Arb <i>bašara</i> “shine”; Hb <i>bæšar</i> “gold”
Matređ	PE	Gn 36:39	< Arb <i>tarada</i> “flow constantly”; Hb, Arb, Arm <i>trd</i> “drive away, hound”
ʕEibāl	H	Gn 36:23	? < Arb <i>ʕabl</i> “thick”
ʕĀdā	C	Gn 36:2	Min. <i>ʕddat</i> , Saf. <i>ʕd</i> , Ug <i>ʕdy</i> “adorn”
ʕŪ ^w š	H	Gn 36:28	Arab <i>ʕwd</i> “give as a substitute”; Arb <i>ʕūd</i> , OSArb <i>ʕwd^m</i>
ʕAlwā	E	Gn 36:40	Arb <i>ʕlw</i> ~ <i>ʕly</i>
ʕAlwān	H	Gn 36:23	cf. Arb <i>ʕalwān</i> and <i>ʕalyān</i>
ʕĀqān	H	Gn 36: 27	? OSArb, Saf. <i>ʕqn</i>
Pinōn	E	Gn 36:41	? Arb <i>finā</i> “free, empty place”; √* <i>pan</i>
Šib ^c ōn	C	Gn 36:14	Arb <i>ḏib^cān</i> , Minaean <i>ḏb^c</i> , Sab. <i>ḏb^c</i> “hyena”
Šib ^c ōn	H	Gn 36:24	Arb <i>ḏib^cān</i> , Minaean <i>ḏb^c</i> , Sab. <i>ḏb^c</i> “hyena”
Šēfō	E	Gn 36:15	? Arb <i>šafw</i> “purity, luck”
Šamlā	PE	Gn 36:36	? < Arb <i>šamlat</i> “clothing”
Šōbāl	H	Gn 36:20	< In.w. Sab. and Saf. <i>šbl</i> “lion,” Arb <i>šibl</i> “lions cub”
Šēfō	H	Gn 36:23	parallels in Arb personal names
Timna ^c ^f	E	Gn 36:12	<i>Timna^c</i> place in OSArb < Arb <i>manu^ca</i> “strongly fortified, protect”
Timna ^c ^f	H	Gn 36:22	loc. Sab. <i>mn^c</i> , Saf. <i>mn^cy</i>
Timna ^c ^m	E	Gn 36:40	see above

8. Conclusions

The anthroponyms of the Pentateuch indicate that they have deep North-west Semitic roots. The name of the principal deity was ʔEl (< ʔIlu). Similarly, ʔIlu was the most important theophoric element in the Amorite onomasticon in contrast to Ba^cal/Haddu in the Ugaritic, Amarna Canaanite and Phoenician material. The hypocoristic suffixes -ōn/-ān < -ān(u) and -î < -īya were very popular in the Pentateuch, just as among the Amo-

rites, Canaanites (Amarna) and Ugarites. In the Münster biblical text of the Pentateuch the Canaanite shift $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$ had taken place in several names, but in many others the previous form $-\bar{a}n$ was preserved. The divine relatives $\bar{a}b(i) < \bar{a}bu$ “divine father,” $\bar{a}h(i) < \bar{a}hu$ “divine brother” and $\bar{a}mm(i) < \bar{a}mmu$ “divine paternal uncle” belong to 10 most popular anthroponymic types in all the sources originating from the second millennium and in the Mosaic narratives as well. The divine relative $h\bar{a}l$ “maternal uncle” is present only in the onomasticon of the Amorites (Streck 2000). The structural anthroponymic similarity between the collections from the second millennium BCE and the Pentateuch is obvious. The relatively high lexical similarity is visible for example in the names of Abraham’s family. Most of them have lexical parallels in the Amorite and/or Ugaritic onomasticon, but they are almost totally absent in the names from the sources of the first half of the 1st millennium BCE.

As mentioned above, many of the “Edomite” personal names being found in the 36th chapter of Genesis might possibly be derived most naturally from geographically more southern languages. Compared with the names originating from the Northwest Semitic tradition the difference is evident. This fact points to early connections with languages spoken in the Arabian Peninsula. Could it be that the pre-Northwest Semitic population in the bottom of the Red Sea area spoke a language related to Old Southern Arabic and/or early Arabic? In the light of archaeological and toponymic data, the Northwest Semites appeared in the Southern Levant from the north in the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (Mazar 1992; Kempinski 1992; Rahkonen 2016). Some of the population of the earlier period of the Bronze Age might have been Semites from the south.

The data originating from the first half of the 1st millennium BCE proves that many radical changes had taken place. A new deity YHWH became dominant in the Hebrew onomasticon. The old hypocoristic suffix $-\bar{o}n < -\bar{a}n(u)$ practically disappeared and some new ones became popular, such as $-\bar{a}i$ [e.g. *Haggai*] and $-\bar{a}^{\bar{a}}$ [e.g. *Šebnā^{\bar{a}}*]. The divine relative $\bar{a}mm(u)$ as an initial element almost disappeared, too. Many new Hebrew roots became elements of personal names.

Our final conclusion is that the personal names of the Pentateuch resemble the Amorite, Canaanite (Amarna period) and Ugaritic onomasticon much closer than those of the first half of the 1st millennium BCE. Stig Norin (2014, 282) believes that the Hexateuch possibly originates from the era before the Israelite monarchy because of the lack of yahwistic personal names in those books. On the grounds of all the evidence presented above, we can state at least that the personal names of the Pentateuch most probably originate from the second millennium BCE. It is highly unlikely that the later editors of the Patriarchal and Mosaic narratives made up the names of the stories or imitated ancient names. If they did so, they should have been experts in the Northwest Semitic onomastics and in the Amorite, (Amarna) Canaanite and Ugaritic naming systems. This means that the names in the “core stories” describing the patriarchs and Moses reflect the reality of the

second millennium BCE. One extra piece of evidence is the mention of two Hurrian anthroponyms, *Šešai* and *Talmi* in the Mosaic narrative (Nu 13:22) reflecting the Mitanni period in the Late Bronze Age. The evidence presented above proves that even though the last edition of the Pentateuch might be rather late, the earliest “core stories” reflect the onomasticon of the second millennium BCE.

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Biblical Hebrew Personal Names in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1–2 Samuel: A Comparative Study

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INTRODUCTION

The present article is intended to be a continuation of my previous article “Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study.”¹ In that article I compared personal names in the Pentateuch with Amorite, Ugaritic, and Amarna Canaanite data,² as well as with extrabiblical Hebrew names from the first half of the first millennium BCE,³ personal names in the Book of Jeremiah, and Phoenician anthroponyms.⁴ I showed that the personal names of the

¹ Pauli Rahkonen, “Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study,” *SJOT* 33/1 (2019): 111–135.

² For more detailed studies of these anthroponymes, see Michael Streck, *Das Amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit, Band I*, AOAT (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000); Frauke Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (Roma: Päpstliches Bibelinstitut, 1967); and Richard Hess, *Amarna Personal Names* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993).

³ The latter gathered by, in particular, Shmuel Aḥituv, *הכתב והמכתב: אסופת כתובות וממלכות עבר הירדן מימי ביתרראשון* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byaliq, 2005); and Nahman Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997).

⁴ For these, see esp. Frank Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*, *Studia Pohl* 8 (Rome: Biblical Intitute Press, 1972).

Pentateuch differed almost totally from the extrabiblical anthroponyms originating from the first half of the first millennium BCE. The difference could be seen especially in the theophoric elements, the hypocoristic suffixes, and in some of the names' popular stems. Instead, the names in the Pentateuch resembled the Amorite, Ugaritic, and Amarna Canaanite anthroponyms to a relatively high degree.

If following the internal chronology of the Hebrew Bible, the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1–2 Samuel are to be placed in what could be called a “transitional period,” that is, after the events described in the Pentateuch, but before the period of the monarchies of Judah and Israel. However, the actual age of these texts cannot reliably be assessed by investigating biblical language only, simply because these texts have been edited, and as a consequence, the language of the biblical narratives has been modernized. What is needed is a closer look at the onomasticon of the Bible, since they would, most probably, have been preserved in a way that would be very close to the original ones.⁵ So put, they could provide an indication of the age of the texts.

In all societies, motifs and models used in the act of naming are quite typical for each period. This is clearly visible in, for example, English personal names. Looking at Anglo-Saxon personal names, although quite fitting in their own time, a majority of them are no longer in use (see, e.g., *Æthelstan*, meaning “noble stone”; *Godwine*, meaning “God’s friend”; or *Wulfsige*, meaning “victory of wolf”). The following Norman conquest in 1066 then had an effect that many Norman names were adopted into the English onomasticon (see, e.g., *Arnold*, “eagle-ruler”; *Fulk*, “folk,” or *Theobald*, “bold people”). Although popular in the Middle Ages, they too are no longer in use. Instead, it is even later names, especially those related to Christianity (see, e.g., *John*, *George*, *Paul*, or *James*), that have now become the most popular ones.

⁵ It is evident that in many names, the onomastic short vowels disappeared. So, for example, **Abi-malilku* > *ʾAbîmalēk*.

To be added to these observations is that within every linguistic group, the onomastic typology is in constant alteration and modification. This means that the way names are constructed is changing. Consider, for example, the fact that the ancient Germanic habit of using the element **rīkia*⁶ (Swedish: *-rik*, German: *-rich*) is no longer common, although visible in a few individual names as, for example, in the popular English name *Eric* (Swedish: *Erik* < **Ein|rik(r)*).

Consequently, if turning our attention to the Northwest Semitic material, corresponding developments should be able to be detected. For example, anthroponymic types should be expected to be altered. Admittedly, such changes can often be rather slow, but there are indications that they were sometimes sudden, like in the appearance of the theophoric element *-yāhûl/Yěhō-* in the Hebrew naming system, which will be seen to partially displace the earlier *-’ēll’El(i)-* to become the most popular theophoric element in the first half of the first millennium BCE.⁷

RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of these preliminary observations, the present study compares the personal names found in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and 1–2 Samuel (books described above as belonging to a “transitional period,” hence designated as “transitional books”) with the names of the Pentateuch (“Mosaic” names) and extrabiblical Northwest Semitic data (from Mari, Ugarit, and the Amarna Tablets), on one hand, and extrabiblical names found in the area of ancient Judah and Israel dated to the first half of the first millennium (below referred to as “Monarchic material”) on the other.⁸ The purpose is to provide an approximate date for the

⁶ Elof Helquist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1922), s. v. “rik.”

⁷ For this, see, e.g., Mitka Golub, *Distribution of Personal Names in the Land of Israel and Transjordanian During the Iron II Period*, *JAOS* 134/4 (2014): 621–642; cf. Stig Norin, *Personennamen und Religion im alten Israel: Untersucht mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Namen auf El und Ba’al* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); see also Figure 1 below.

personal names of the “transitional” books, and it will be shown that the names found in these books do indeed represent a kind of transition stage by having features from “both sides.” Observe that I am not here speaking of the age of the *books* in question, although the analysis below could provide an interesting avenue of research into this question, since the biblical narratives and their onomastics are at least to some degree related to each other. But before turning to the analysis proper, I will comment briefly on various methods used to date the biblical language as to show the validity of using onomastics.

Linguistic Analysis

A well known method used by scholars to estimate the age of different parts of the Hebrew Bible is linguistic analysis. However, as pointed out by Ian Young and Robert Rezetko in their comprehensive presentation and evaluation of scholarly approaches, there are many problems with this approach.⁹ One of the most fundamental ones is that the best available source for biblical Hebrew is the Masoretic text, and since most scholars date the (proto-)Masoretic versions of the biblical books to somewhere between 550–100 BCE,¹⁰ it provides a relatively late material, thus not necessarily overlapping with the original biblical language. On one hand, many of the portions of the Hebrew Bible—even entire books—are thought to be written in a language that could be classified as pre-exilic (that is, before 586 BCE) and these books were not necessarily entirely overlapping with the Masoretic consonantal form. Some archaic elements could be found as well, for example in the Song of Deborah in Judg 5, or in Gen 15.¹¹ On the other hand, there are fea-

⁸ For this period, see אֲחִיטוּב, *ההכתב והמכתב*; idem. *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta Jerusalem, 2008).

⁹ Ian Young and Robert Rezetko, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 321.

tures of biblical Hebrew that seem to be relatively late. However, several factors make the using of such features as a basis for dating of the biblical language problematic: there has been editorial work; the language has possibly been modernized; different sources have been combined; and a transition from oral traditions into literary form can also be observed. In addition, our knowledge of daily language and different dialects is too vague.¹² Consequently, features that are understood to be late may have appeared earlier as features of dialects, although they are not preserved as such in the Hebrew Bible.

To illustrate these problems, an extreme example would be the problematic poetic language of the book of Job. Numerous *hapax legomena* are found, as well as several (seeming?) Aramaisms. But since it is obvious that the language is not Standard Biblical Hebrew, but a Transjordanian(?) dialect,¹³ do the aramaisms originate as loanwords from Aramaic, or did they belong to the Hebrew dialect? These and similar questions make linguistic analysis insufficient for dating biblical language, and consequently biblical books.

Archaeology

Turning to archaeology, it is clear that archaeological and historical sources can confirm or render implausible the depictions of historical events in ancient narratives. As an example, several archaeological literary finds—such as the Stela of Mesha, the Siloam Inscription, Tel Dan text, and the Assyrian Annals—appear to have views that overlap with

¹¹ See, e.g., Young and Rezetko, *Dating*, 298–299; David A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972), 149; Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2015), 11.

¹² Young and Rezetko, *Dating*, 165–182, with referred literature.

¹³ For an argument that the language of Job parallels the language of the Book of Balaam, see Gary Rendsburg, “Dialect of Deir ‘Alla Inscription,” *BO* 50 (1993), 309–329. This text, originally written on a wall plaster, is dated to the eighth century BCE (so, e.g., Aḥituv, *Echoes*, 434).

the way events in the monarchic period of Judah and Israel are retold in 1–2 Kings or 1–2 Chronicles.¹⁴ This would indicate that these historical books are based on earlier, written sources. This is also what we find on several occasions in these books, for example when it is written “as it is even today” (עד היום הזה), or when literary sources are explicitly mentioned, such as the chronicles of Nathan and Gad respectively in 1 Chr 29:29, or the midrash of the prophet Iddo in 2 Chr 13:22. Nonetheless, it is still difficult to date biblical language on archaeological grounds.

Textual Criticism

Last, I argue that textual criticism is not a good tool for dating the biblical language, simply because the earliest found manuscripts are too late. More specifically, they can be dated to approximately 250 BCE.¹⁵ Highlighting this problem is that passages found in the biblical books have been found much earlier. For example, a silver scroll was found in Ketef Hinnom that contained the so called “Priestly blessing.” Since it was dated to the seventh(!) century BCE, one would have to conclude that some part of the Pentateuch was known at this time.¹⁶ In any case, it seems quite plausible that biblical written texts would have existed earlier than the one on the silver scroll, and, consequently, much earlier than the earliest known manuscripts.

Onomastics

As for onomastics, we can prove scientifically at least an approximate dating of the personal names, since the biblical names can be compared

¹⁴ So Aḥituv, *Echoes*; cf. Anson Rainey and Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 225–249.

¹⁵ For an overview, see Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 315.

¹⁶ See Aḥituv, *Echoes*, 49; cf. Gabriel Barkay, “The Riches of Ketef Hinnom: Jerusalem Tomb Yields Biblical Text Four Centuries Older than Dead Sea Scrolls,” *BAR* 35 (2009): 22–28.

to extrabiblical ones, which have been dated archaeologically. As seen in the introduction, every era has its typical onomasticon—popular only during certain specific periods—and as for the period of time when the Hebrew Bible was formed, this can be investigated thanks to the fact that much comparative material is available: 1) an extensive collection of Northwest Semitic names based on, among others, the archives in Mari, Ugarit and Tell el-Amarna (in all, there are thousands of names originating from the second millennium); and 2) a large collection of extrabiblical Jewish anthroponyms from the monarchic periods.¹⁷ Although what can be dated scientifically is, at best, only the names, and not the text or the language of the Bible, it would nevertheless be possible to use such a dating of names to discuss the date of (possible) oral—or in some cases textual—traditions that would have featured the onomasticons. What is in focus, then, would be the so-called “core narratives.”

Applied to the focus of this article—the possibility of providing an approximate date for the personal names of the “transitional” books—the following can be suggested: since it is not probable that “storytellers” of “core narratives” were able to accurately make up names that would have been popular in the time of the setting of the story, while no longer in use in their own time, and since there would be no real personal names if there were no narratives connected with persons and their names, the approximate date for the personal names can in fact tell us something about the original period of the biblical “core narratives.”

METHODS

In this study, the anthroponyms are categorized into the following periods: Mosaic, transitional biblical, and monarchic extrabiblical. The following aspects have been considered, observations relevant for all research into toponyms and anthroponyms:

¹⁷ For these sources, see, e.g., Aḥituv, *הכתב והמכתב*; idem. *Echoes*.

- 1) *Lexical Elements*: When looking at names, different lexical elements can be observed as popular in relation to their linguistic group. More specifically, regarding Semitic anthroponyms, these elements can be verbs or nouns related to theophoric elements, names of animals, professions, etc.
- 2) *Phonetics*: Such features may be very decisive when distinguishing names in closely related languages or dialects from one another.
- 3) *The Structure of Names*: In several languages, certain onomastic affixes are important in classifying names. In Northwest Semitic languages, the most popular are *-ān > Hebrew -ōn, and *-īya > Hebrew -î. Different theophoric elements are important as well.
- 4) *Semantic Typology*: In all linguistic groups, names have their own semantic motifs. Sometimes, however, a name may have an outward form of a known word that does not fit the semantic motif of the name itself. If so, it is reasonable to doubt the real meaning of the word behind the name. This goes especially for popular names, since its motif would then be usual. A good example is the name *ʾIyyôb* (Job). Traditionally, it has been derived from the root אִיב "enemy."¹⁸ However, the construction אִיב־אֵב *Ay-âb(u) is much more plausible (cf., e.g., *a-ia-ab* from the Amarna tablets, the Ugaritic *ayab*, or the Amorite *a-ia-a?-bu?*) thus pointing to the meaning "where is father."¹⁹ If this is the case, an earlier Canaanite long *â* would have changed into an *ô*. Such an explanation may also situate the narrative in an ancient Northwest Semitic context.
- 5) *Comparative Linguistics*: In researching onomastics of extinct languages, comparative linguistics become most important. This is the case in studying names of several disappeared Northwest Semitic languages, such as Amorite, Ugaritic names, etc.
- 6) *The Predominance of Onomastic Types*: The popularity of various onomastic types vary in relation to time periods. For example, the Jewish anthroponyms of the Pentateuch are totally different from those of the monarchic period. To consider this aspect is important in the attempt to date the names.
- 7) *The Problem of Adaptation*: If Northwest Semitic names are found in Egyptian or Greek sources, it is important to know the rules of adapta-

¹⁸ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *HALOT* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 39.

¹⁹ Hess, *Amarna*, 23–25.

tion—that is, how the Egyptian or Greek languages substituted phonemes that may have been alien to their own language.

Apart from these seven aspects, the current article is based on comparative statistics. The procedure has been the following: First, I have collected and classified certain types of anthroponyms based on their theophoric and hypocoristic elements, etc. This stage can be called the “research of models,” and the types are presented in Figures 1 and 2. Second, I compare Semitic roots that are used in forming names, roots such as **dwd* > *Dāvîd*, **šlm* > *Šelomō*, and **ḥzq* > *Ḥizqîlyāhû*. This stage can be called the “research of motifs.” Taking both structural and lexical elements together in this way, much information regarding the change in naming fashions will be gathered.

EARLIER STUDIES

The topic of change in models and motifs for naming has been the subject of some recent scholarly work.²⁰ Both Mitka Golub and Stig Norin have, for example, studied theophoric elements utilizing extrabiblical material.²¹ Interestingly, their results are rather similar. According to Golub, the percentage of Yahwistic anthroponyms out of all theophoric elements in the extrabiblical material is 51 percent during the tenth to eighth centuries BCE, while it is 67 percent during the seventh to sixth centuries.²² Correspondingly, Norin, who focused on the extrabiblical elements *YHWH*, *’Ēl*, and *Ba’al*, found that the percentage of Yahwistic elements was 75.4 percent.²³ In a helpful summary of the names in 1–2

²⁰ I have already mentioned my own work above, in the introduction, and will thus not repeat these findings here.

²¹ Golub, “Distribution”; Norin, *Personennamen*.

²² Golub, “Distribution,” 630.

²³ Norin, *Personennamen*, 77.

Samuel, 1–2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemia, and 1–2 Chronicles, Norin further highlights an increasing difference between *YHWH*-elements and *'Ēl*-elements from the Books of 1–2 Samuel to the Books of 1–2 Kings.²⁴

Apart from these studies, the work of Jeaneane Fowler also deserves to be mentioned.²⁵ She has conducted a very comprehensive investigation into both structural and lexical elements, and compared Hebrew names to Ugaritic, Phoenician, Amorite, Aramaic, Akkadian, and Palmyrene onomasticon. In her study, the names are very thoroughly classified according to their theophoric elements and grammatical forms. However, her categorization of the names into “pre-Monarchial,” “the United Monarchy,” “the Divided Monarchy,” “Exilic,” and “post-Exilic” periods is not very successful, since she runs the risk of presupposing a date without having conducted a real scholarly discussion of the dating of the names.

Nonetheless, Fowler poses a highly relevant question: what are the differences between the features of the anthroponyms in 1–2 Chronicles and the rest of the books of the Hebrew Bible?²⁶ As an answer, she argues that the compound names with forms of *YHWH* that are used in 1–2 Chronicles to describe the pre-monarchic period differ markedly from the way the same compound names are found in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. She also notes that 58 of 62 names are mentioned in Chronicles only, although she states that the reason for this is unclear.

Last, as mentioned above, I have studied the personal names of the Pentateuch and suggested that in light of the extrabiblical material from Mari, Ugarite, and the Amarna tablets, the anthroponyms of the Pentateuch must originate from the second millennium BCE.²⁷

²⁴ Norin, *Personennamen*, 173.

²⁵ Jeaneane Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew: A Comparative Study* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988).

²⁶ Fowler, *Names*, 32–33.

²⁷ Rahkonen, “Names.”

A COMPARISON OF THEOPHORIC AND HYPOCORISTIC ELEMENTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

In Figure 1 below, I present an overview of theophoric and hypocoristic elements in the Hebrew Bible. Accounted for is a selection of five of the most common theophoric elements and four of the most common hypocoristic elements. These are, then, compared to each other, and the results will be discussed below. More specifically, the theophoric elements are *Yhwh* > *Yĕho-*, *Yô-*, *-yāhû*, *-yaw*,²⁸ *'El* > *'El(i)-*, *-'ēl*, *'Āb* > *'Āb(i)-*, *-'āb*, *'Amm* > *'Amm(i)-*, *-'am*, and *'Āḥ* > *'Āḥ(i)-*, while the hypocoristic suffixal elements are *-î* < *-*īya*, *-ôṇ* < *-*ān(u)*, *-ai* ? < *-*āya*, and *-ā'*.

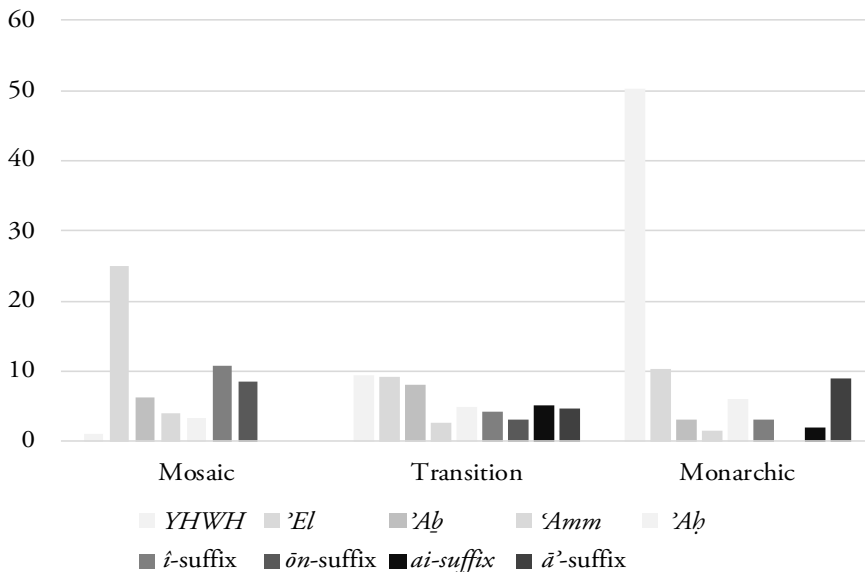


Figure 1: *The Comparison of Naming Models in Different Biblical Books*

²⁸ The theophoric *-yaw* occurs only in extrabiblical material originating from the area of the northern Israelite kingdom. It is possible that the sound *h* in “YHWH” was so weak in the spoken northern language that it was dropped in writing.

Mosaic Pentateuch

Figure 1 makes clear that there have been obvious changes in the use of the studied elements. In the Mosaic Pentateuch, *'El* is the most frequent theophoric element occurring in the personal names: it features in 25.3 percent of all the names. The second most popular element is, then, *'āb*, featured in only 6.2 percent of the names, and then follows *'am(m)* (4.1%) and *'āb* (3.4%). The predominance of *'El* becomes especially clear in relation to the fact that in the Mosaic Pentateuch, only two Yahwistic names are found, *Yōkəbəd* and *Yehōšua'*, and both of them have been questioned.²⁹ Last, it can be observed that the elements *-ai* and *-ā'* are not found at all in the Mosaic Pentateuch.

Transitional Books

In the transitional books, a clear increase in the popularity of Yahwistic anthroponyms can be observed: they now constitute 9.5 percent of all the names. The previously noted dominance of the theophoric element *'El(i)/-'ēl* is now erased, and it now in second place with 9.2 percent, just behind the Yahwistic one. In these books, the elements *-ai* and *-ā'* begin to appear.

Monarchic Period³⁰

In the last category, the extrabiblical, monarchic names, the trends observed in the transitional books have continued, so that the percentage of the Yahwistic theophoric elements is now 50.3 percent, while the popularity of *'El(i)/-'ēl* remains around 10.2 percent. This indicates a stability in the use of the *'El(i)/-'ēl* component, while the Yahwistic element has increased radically. The anthroponyms composed using divine relatives have reached the following percentages in the transition period: 8% for *'Ab(i)/-'āb*; 5% for *'Ab(i)/-'āb*; and 2.7% for *'Amm(i)/-'am*. The

²⁹ Norin, *Personennamen*; Fowler, *Names*.

³⁰ The extrabiblical names are picked up from Aḥituv, הכתב והמכתב.

corresponding monarchic figures are: 3.0% (*ʿAb*); 6.0% (*ʿAb*); and 1.5% (*ʿAmm*) respectively. It is worth noting that the *ʿAmm(i)*-element almost disappeared in the monarchic record, and of the six attested occurrences, five feature the final component *-ʿam*.

A final observation is that the hypocoristic suffix *-ōn*, which was very popular in the Pentateuch, disappears completely in the monarchic period. In the transition period, it occurs mainly in the Book of Judges.

TRANSITIONAL BOOKS

It was observed above that the hypocoristic suffixes changed. *-āʾ* and *-ai* were not found at all in the Mosaic register, while they appeared in the transitional books and the extrabiblical record of Aḥituv. But what does the internal distribution in the transitional books look like? Figure 2 gathers this data.

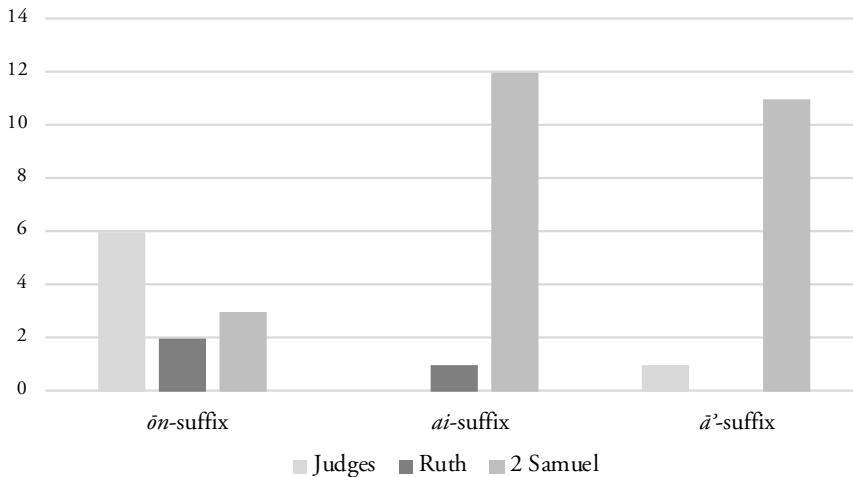


Figure 2: *The Frequency of the Hypocoristic Elements -ōn, -ai, and -āʾ Within the Transitional Books*

The trend is evident. The popularity of *-ōn* is diminishing in this material, only to disappear totally in the monarchic onomasticon (cf. Figure 1). The element *-ai* appears first in Ruth (1x) and then becomes popular

in 2 Samuel (12x). The element $-ā'$ is found once in the Book of Judges, does not exist in Ruth, and then becomes popular in 2 Samuel (11x). Both $-ai$ and $-ā'$ were seen to be popular in the monarchic register.

As for Yahwistic anthroponyms (see Table 1), the following are found in Judges: *Mīkayāhu*, *Yēhonātān*, and *Yō'ās̄*. All other occurrences (21x) are in 1–2 Samuel, and its increasing presence (7x in 1 Samuel and 14x in 2 Samuel) confirms the trend observed in Figure 1, that the amount of the Yahwistic elements within the Hebrew onomasticon increases towards the monarchic period.

	Joshua	Judges	Ruth	1 Samuel	2 Samuel
<i>Yēho-</i>	-	1	-	2	5
<i>Yō-</i>	-	1	-	2	2
<i>-yāh(ū)</i>	-	1	-	3	7
Total	-	3	-	7	14

Table 1: The Distribution of the Yahwistic Element Within the Transitional Books

LEXICAL COMPARISON

Moving to lexical comparison, I have, in the table that follows (Table 2), gathered lexical connections between extrabiblical anthroponyms, the personal names of the Book of Jeremiah, and the transitional books.³¹ The main reason for selecting names expressly from the book of Jeremiah is that the number of names in it is high. In addition, the book of Jeremiah can be dated approximately to the period of the exile. In the table, the first column presents the extrabiblical monarchic data from which I have selected names that have parallels either in names from the Book of Jeremiah (column 2), or in names from the transitional books (column 3), or both.

³¹ In the table, an asterisk (*) means that the root is a shared element in all the sources. The vocalizations of the proper names in the monarchic columns follow the presentation in Ahituv, *Echoes*, Appendix 2.

MONARCHIC		JEREMIAH		"TRANSITIONAL"	
Hebrew	Vocalization	Hebrew	Reference	Hebrew	Reference
אֲבִיהוּ	¹ <i>ʾbyāhū</i>			אָבִיהוּ	1 Sam 8:2
אֲבִיעֵזֶר	¹ <i>ʾbyʿezer</i>			אָבִיעֵזֶר	Judg 8:31; 2 Sam 23:27
אֲבִינָן	¹ <i>ʾbyān</i>			אָבִינָן	Judg 12:8
אֲדִנֹו	¹ <i>ʾdnyāw</i>			אָדִנִיָה	2 Sam 3:4
אֲדִנֹו-אֲדִירֹו*	¹ <i>ʾdnyāhū</i>	אֲדִירֹו	Jer 26:20	אָדִירֹו	2 Sam 11:3
אֲהִבּוּ	¹ <i>ʾḥbū</i>	אֲחָב	Jer 29:22	אָחִיבּוּ	1 Sam 14:3
אֲחִיקִים	¹ <i>ʾḥqīm</i>			אָחִיבּוּ	2 Sam 6:3
אֲחִמֶלֶךְ	¹ <i>ʾḥmleq</i>	אֲחִיקִים	Jer 26:24	אָחִיקֶלֶךְ	1 Sam 21:1; 26:6; 2 Sam 8:17
אֲכִישׁ	¹ <i>ʾākš</i>			אָכִישׁ	1 Sam 21:10
אֲלִנָּן	¹ <i>ʾlḥān</i>	אֲלִנָּן	Jer 26:22	אָלְעָנֶר	1 Sam 7:1
אֲלִעֵזֶר	¹ <i>ʾlʿzr</i>	אֲלִשְׁמַע	Jer 36:12		
אֲלִשְׁמַע	¹ <i>ʾlšmā</i>	אֶמֶר	Jer 20:1		
אֲמִיר-אֲמִירֹו	¹ <i>ʾmryāhū</i>	אֲשִׁירֹו	Jer 1:2		
אֲשִׁירֹו	¹ <i>ʾšryāhū</i>				
בְּנִינֹו	¹ <i>ʾbnynū</i>	בְּרִיד	Jer 32:12	בְּנִיָה	2 Sam 8:18; 23:30
בְּרַק	¹ <i>ʾbrq</i>			בְּרַק	Judg 4:6
גְּדִי	¹ <i>ʾgdjāw</i>			גָּד	1 Sam 22:5
גְּדִיָה	¹ <i>ʾgdjāhū</i>	גְּדִיָה-גְּדִיָּה	Jer 35:4; 38:1; 39:14		
גְּמִירֹו	¹ <i>ʾgmryāhū</i>	גְּמִירֹו	Jer 29:3; 36:10		
גֵּרָא	¹ <i>ʾgrā</i>			גְּרָא	Judg 3:15; 2 Sam 16:5
דָּוִד	¹ <i>ʾdāwīd</i>			דָּוִד	Ruth 4:17
דְּלִיָהוּ	¹ <i>ʾdljāhū</i>	דְּלִיָהוּ	Jer 36:12	דְּוִד	2 Sam 23:9; 23:24
הַשְׁעֵרֹו	¹ <i>ʾḥšʿryāhū</i>	הַשְׁעֵרָה	Jer 42:1		
חַגִּי	¹ <i>ʾḥggj</i>				
חַלְצִי	¹ <i>ʾḥlczj</i>			חַלְצִית	2 Sam 3:4
חַלְקִי	¹ <i>ʾḥlqj</i>	חַלְקִיָהוּ	Jer 1:1; 29:3	חַלְקִי	2 Sam 23:26
חַנְנֵל, חַנְנֵלִי	¹ <i>ʾḥnān, ḥnānī</i>	חַנָּן	Jer 35:4	חַנָּן	2 Sam 10:1

MONARCHIC		JEREMIAH		"TRANSITIONAL"	
Hebrew	Vocalization	Hebrew	Reference	Hebrew	Reference
חנניהו	<i>Hānanyāhū</i>	חֲנַנְיָהוּ	Jer 28:1; 36:12; 37:13		
יָאֵר	<i>Yā'ir</i>	יֵאֵר	Jer 40:8	יָאֵר	Judg 10:3
יְהוֹאָב	<i>Yehō'āb</i>	יְהוֹאָב		יְהוֹאָב	1 Sam 26:6
יְהוֹיָאָדָא	<i>Yehōyādā'</i>	יְהוֹיָאָדָע	Jer 29:26	יְהוֹיָאָדָע	2 Sam 8:18
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	<i>Yehōshū'a</i>	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ		יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	1 Sam 6:14
יִזְבָּח	<i>Yōzāḥān</i>	יִזְבָּח-יְהוֹנָתָן	Jer 37:20; 40:8	יְהוֹנָתָן	Judg 18:30; 1 Sam 13:2; 2 Sam 15:27; 23:32
יִרְמְיָהוּ	<i>Yirm'yaḥū</i>	יִרְמְיָהוּ	Jer 1:1; 35:3		
כְּנִיזוּ	<i>Kōnyāhū</i>	כְּנִיזוּ-כְּנִיזוּ	Jer 22:24		
מַחְסִירוֹ	<i>Maḥṣērō</i>	מַחְסִירוֹ	Jer 32:12		
מִכְּבִירוֹ*	<i>Mikḥāyāhū</i>	מִכְּבִירוֹ	Jer 36:11	מִכְּבָא	2 Sam 9:12
מַלְכִּירוֹ	<i>Malḥiyāhū</i>	מַלְכִּירוֹ	Jer 21:1	מִכְּבִירוֹ-מִכְּבָא	Judg 17:1-5
מַתָּן	<i>Mattān</i>	מַתָּן	Jer 38:6		
נַעֲמָל	<i>N'am'el</i>	נַעֲמָל	Jer 38:1	נַעֲמָל	Ruth 1:2
נְרִיָּה	<i>Neriyāhū</i>	נְרִיָּה		נֶר	1 Sam 14:50
נָתָן	<i>Nātān</i>	נָתָן	Jer 32:12		
נְתַנְיָהוּ	<i>N'tanyāhū</i>	נְתַנְיָהוּ	Jer 36:14; 40:8		
עַבְדָּאֵל, עַבְדִּי, עַבְדֵי*	<i>'Abd'el, 'Oḇdāyāhū, 'Oḇdāyāw</i>	עַבְדָּאֵל עַבְדֵי-מֶלֶךְ	Jer 36:26 Jer 38:7	עַבְדֵי עַבְדֵי-מֶלֶךְ	Judg 9:28 Ruth 4:17
עֹזָא	<i>'Uzza'</i>	עֹזָא		עֹזָא	2 Sam 6:10 2 Sam 6:3
עֹזַר	<i>'Azar, 'Ezer</i>	עֹזַר	Jer 28:1		
עֹזְרָאֵל	<i>'Azar'el, 'azar'el</i>	עֹזְרָאֵל	Jer 36:26		
עֹזְרִיָּהוּ	<i>'azariyāhū</i>	עֹזְרִיָּהוּ	Jer 43:2		
עֶבֶר	<i>'Akbor</i>	עֶבֶר	Jer 26:22		
עֵלְיָאֵל	<i>'El'y'el</i>			עֵלְיָאֵל	1 Sam 1:3
עַמְנָב	<i>'Ammināḡāb</i>			עַמְנָבָל	2 Sam 9:4
				עַמְנָבָר	2 Sam 13:37

MONARCHIC		JEREMIAH		"TRANSITIONAL"	
Hebrew	Vocalization	Hebrew	Reference	Hebrew	Reference
עפי, עפי*	'Opay?, 'Epay	עפי?	Jer 40:8	עֲפִיאוֹל	2 Sam 2:18
עשדוהו*	*'šayāhū	קִישָׁה	Jer 21:1; 29:22; 35:4	קִישָׁה	1 Sam 25:44
פליטוהו	P ^l lityāhū	פִּשְׁחוֹר	Jer 20:1; 21:1; 38:1	פִּדְוֹן	2 Sam 8:17
פשוהו	Pashūr	צִדְקִיָּה	Jer 1:3; 29:22; 36:12		
צדקיהו*	*šidqiyāhū	צִפְנִיָּה	Jer 21:1		
צפניהו	*š'panyāhū	קוֹלִיָּה	Jer 29:22		
קלו	Qālāyāw	קָרוֹ	Jer 40:8		
קרו	Qorāh, Qērē-ḥ				
שבי	Šobī, Šobay			שְׁבִי	2 Sam 17:27
שבע	Šēbā'			שֶׁבַע	2 Sam 20:1
שוא	Š'wā'			שָׂוִי	2 Sam 20:25
שלים*	*Šallum, Šillēm	שָׁלֵם	Jer 22:11; 32:7; 35:4	שְׁלֵמָה	2 Sam 5:14
שלמיהו	Šelemyāhū	שְׁלֵמִיָּהוּ	Jer 36:14; 36:26; 37:13; 38:1		
שמירע	Š'middā'			שְׁמוּאֵל	1 Sam 1:20
שמעיהו, שמעיהו*	*Š'mayāhū, Š'mayāw	שְׁמַעְיָהוּ	Jer 26:20; 29:24; 36:12	שְׁמוּעָה	2 Sam 5:14
		שְׁמַעְיָאֵל	Jer 40:8	שְׁמוּעָה	2 Sam 13:3
שמטאל	Šimsī'ēl			שְׁמוּעִי	2 Sam 16:5
שפטיהו*	*Š'pacyāhū	שְׁפַטְיָהוּ	Jer 38:1	שְׁמוּשָׁן	Jugd 13:24
תהום	Tanūm	תַּנְחֻמָּה	Jer 40:8	שְׁפַטְיָהוּ	2 Sam 3:4
72/72		44/86		43/262	

(of all the names collected from Jeremiah)

(of all the names collected from the "Transitional books")

Table 2. *Lexical Connections*

The lexical comparisons made in Table 2 can now be analyzed in two directions:

- 1) First, the extrabiblical material can be compared with data from the Book of Jeremiah and the transitional material to calculate how many percent of the names in the Book of Jeremiah and transitional books respectively overlap with the names in the monarchic data. The result is that the lexical similarity with the extrabiblical material is higher in the Book of Jeremiah (51.2%). For the transitional register, it is only 16.4 percent.
- 2) Second, the material from the Book of Jeremiah and the transitional material can be compared with the extrabiblical material, so that the percentage of the extrabiblical monarchic names found in the books of Jeremiah and in the transitional books can be calculated. The results are that among the personal names of the Book of Jeremiah, 72 percent have lexical analogies with the extrabiblical material. Regarding the transitional books, this figure is much lower, only 22.9 percent.

An outstanding feature is that the data of the Book of Jeremiah and the transitional books agree with one another only in 10 cases out of 72 possible. Taken together with the two points of analysis above, it indicates that the transitional material is earlier than Jeremiah's anthroponyms. Moreover, the extrabiblical names collected from the first half of the first millennium BCE fit only partially (approximately 1/5 of the total data) with the material of the transitional books, which means that the names of the transitional books most probably originate from an even earlier period.

CONCLUSIONS

The onomastic data shows that the personal names in what I have called the transitional books of the Hebrew Bible (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1–2 Samuel) can be placed chronologically between the anthroponyms found in the Mosaic Pentateuch on one side, and the extrabiblical monarchic names on the other. The conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the result is similar in both the structural (focusing on theophoric and hypocoristic elements) and the lexical analysis: Some

older Mosaic elements, such as the theophoric *'El(i)-l-'el*, *'Amm(i)-*, and *-ʿam*, are preserved in the transitional books, but the latter two (the ones based on $\sqrt{ʿmm}$) almost disappeared in the monarchic extrabiblical material. In a reverse development, the Yahwistic theophoric elements *Yĕho-*, *Yô-*, *-yāhû*, and *-yāw* did not become widely used until 1–2 Samuel. As for hypocoristic elements, *-ōn* was seen too occur in the transitional books (primarily in Judges), while it disappeared completely in the monarchic extrabiblical material. The hypocoristic elements *-ai* and *-ā'* became popular in 1–2 Samuel, while absent in the Mosaic texts.

The use of theophoric elements in Mari, Ugarite, and Amarna records dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Age corresponds to some extent with what is found in the books of the Pentateuch (as I have argued elsewhere),³² Joshua (see Figure 1 and Table 1), Ruth (see Figure 1 and Table 1), and Judges. The most conspicuous feature is the overwhelming frequency of the element *'El-l-'el*, if compared with the other theophoric elements, including YHWH. This corresponds to the Amorite onomasticon as well, where *'Ilu* (*~'El*) is the most common theophoric element.³³ Outstanding is also the scarcity of names using the element *BaʿallHadad*, that is, in contrast to the onomasticon of the Ugaritic and Amarna records.

When comparing the hypocoristic elements in the other Northwest Semitic material with those of the books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth (see Figure 2), a high similarity can be observed, especially concerning the most popular elements *-ān(u)-ōn*, and *-īyal-î*.³⁴

The conclusion of the lexical analysis is clear. The comparison between different sources reveals an outstanding disagreement between the transitional books and the book of Jeremiah. The only roots of words which are common in all sources are אור “light,” ידע “know,” נתן “give,” מכ “who is like,” עבד “servant,” עשה “do,” צדק “righteous,” שלם “well-

³² See Rahkonen, “Names,” 121–122.

³³ So Rahkonen, “Names,” 119.

³⁴ Cf. Rahkonen, “Names,” 119–120.

being, peace,” שמע “hear, listen,” and שפט “judge, rule.” Conversely, it was seen that the similarity between the monarchic extrabiblical personal names and those in the Book of Jeremiah was high. The monarchic extrabiblical material is thus much closer to that of Jeremiah than to the roots of words in the transitional books (see Table 2).

In line with the argument made above, the most reasonable scenario is that the authors of the books under consideration did *not* themselves make up the personal names of the onomasticon. For them to have been able to do so, they would have had to be specialists of ancient Bronze Age and Early Iron Age onomastics.

A final conclusion is that the personal names in the transitional books most apparently do not originate from the same era as the monarchic names. Their features instead hint at an earlier period. However, they also show a different distribution of theophoric and hypocoristic elements when compared to the anthroponyms in the Pentateuch. In addition, some new elements which are not typical in the Pentateuch—such as the affix *-ā'*—begin to occur in the books of 1–2 Samuel (see Figure 2). We can hence suggest that the names in the transitional books are later than those in the Pentateuch, but earlier than the monarchic material. As stated in the introduction, the names in these books do indeed represent a kind of transition stage by having features from both sides.

“The Personal Names of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as a Turning Point in the Hebrew Naming Fashion: A Comparative Study.” *Svensk Exegetisk Årbok* 87 (2022): 308–333.

The Personal Names in Ezra and Nehemiah as a Turning Point in Hebrew Naming Fashion: A Comparative Study

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INTRODUCTION

At any historical period, in every language and society, there is always a certain fashion pertaining to personal names. It is not unusual that cycles follow one another regarding naming trends and practices. Names almost forgotten may come back into use for different reasons. Such cycles may be rapid or slow, and last for a couple of generations or hundreds of years. Even when the language that the names are based on becomes extinct or nearly extinct, names may remain in use or come back into fashion again. This is evident, for example, in Irish and Cymric naming systems: even though English has become the dominant language in Ireland (*Éire*) and in Wales (*Cymru*), the giving of personal names reflects strong support for national emotions, that is, in a political situation where local languages are threatened.

In a previous study, I have pointed out that already in the Mosaic books (Exod; Lev; Num; Deut)¹ the Patriarchal names of Abraham's family had completely disappeared from the Hebrew naming system. This fact proves that the Mosaic books describe a time different from

¹ The term "Mosaic books" is used here to refer to books that recount the narrative of Moses. Consequently, the term "Mosaic names," as used below, refer to personal names found in these books.

Genesis chapters 12–50. The Patriarchal anthroponyms are, in turn, comparable with those found in the Mari and Ugaritic records, indicating common Amorite roots—or, more precisely, common Northwest Semitic roots—originating from the Middle or Late Bronze Age (c. 1950–1200 BCE).² Based on these observations, I concluded that at least the names of the Pentateuch (if excluding Genesis 1–12), must originate from the second millennium BCE.³

Moving on, I observed that the anthroponyms of epigraphic sources from the Judahite and Israelite Monarchic period (ca 1000–586 BCE, 95% of the dated material originate from the period 800–586 BCE) differed considerably from the Mosaic and early extrabiblical Northwest Semitic naming fashion (the second millennium BCE).⁴ To me, this indicated that the fashion of anthroponyms was altered. This could be seen in particular in the usage of yahwistic theophoric elements (*Yehô-*, *Yô-*, *-yāhû*, *-yāw*), that increased significantly and in a cumulative way after 1000 BCE,⁵ while the previously popular Northwest Semitic hypocoristic affix *-*ān(u) > -ôn* disappeared.⁶ A couple of new hypocoristic affixes, such as *-ā'* and *-ai*, became more common.⁷ Nonetheless, I observed that the basic idea of constructing anthroponyms by utilizing

² The structure of personal names in the Mosaic books resembles the onomasticon of the Amarna tablets to a certain extent. The most popular theophoric element in the Hebrew personal names mentioned in the Mosaic books was based on the deity *'Ēl* < **'Ilū*, not YHWH.

³ Pauli Rahkonen, “Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study,” *SJOT* 33/1 (2019): 111–135, 120–122; cf. Richard S. Hess, “Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible with Second-Millennium B.C. Antecedents,” *BBR* 25 (2015), 5–12.

⁴ Rahkonen, “Personal names,” 131–133. These sources are, for example, Egyptian execration texts, Mari and Ugaritic texts, or the Amarna letters.

⁵ Mitka Golub, “The Distribution of Personal Names in the Land of Israel and Transjordan During the Iron II Period,” *JAOS* 134/4 (2014), 630, table 4.

⁶ Rahkonen, “Personal names,” 126.

⁷ Pauli Rahkonen, “Biblical Hebrew Names in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1–2 Samuel: A Comparative Study,” *SEÅ* 85 (2020), 160–179, 172.

the names of deities, relatives representing epithets of deities (such as *'ab*, “father,” or *'abl'ah*, “brother”), and hypocoristic affixes, persisted at least from the Middle Bronze Age (ca 1950–1550 BCE) until the exile in 586 BCE,⁸ and partially even later still, although popular epithets, such as *'Amm(u)-* (“divine uncle”) as a prefixed element, disappeared after the Early Iron Age.⁹

In sum, these observations suggested that certain radical changes in the Hebrew naming fashion had taken place before the time of Ezra-Nehemiah. It is usually the case, however, that earlier naming habits remain, while new fashions slowly infiltrate the old ones. In this article, the onomasticon of Ezra-Nehemiah will be studied from such a perspective, exploring what is inherited from the earlier (Late) Monarchic period and what new elements are becoming dominant in the Hellenistic period.

EARLIER STUDIES AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE PRESENT STUDY

Tal Ilan's *Lexicon*

The work of Tal Ilan forms a significant foundation for the present investigation. The lists of names from the period 330–140 BCE (that is, from the conquest of Alexander the Great until Hasmonean times), here referred to as “names of the Hellenistic period,” are drawn from her onomastic book *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE*.¹⁰ Of special importance for our subject are her notes in the section called “The Biblical Heroes.”¹¹ There, she lists alto-

⁸ Shmuel Ahituv, *Echoes From the Past* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 472.

⁹ Rahkonen, “Biblical Hebrew Names,” 172.

¹⁰ Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* (TSAJ, 91; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

¹¹ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 5–6.

gether 2826 names to which she has attaches metadata, including the source and background of these names. Since she has gathered this data in a most detailed way, it is not necessary to repeat here. An overview of her main observations will suffice. More specifically, in her book, Ilan suggests that ...

- (1) ... the principles regarding giving personal names changed from the ones in use in biblical times so that the meanings of names were no longer essential;¹²
- (2) ... the names of several biblical heroes were reinstated, except for the greatest ones—Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, and Elijah (these names might have been “too powerful” and therefore dangerous for the bearers). The names of what she calls “secondary heroes”—such as Jacob, Judah, Joseph, Benjamin, Joshua, Samuel, Elisha, and Jonathan—were taken into use, however, as were some names derived from individuals with a questionable reputation—Simon, Levi, Saul, Absalom, Manasseh, Menahem, and even the Arab-related Ishmael;¹³
- (3) ... the names of the first Hasmoneans, Mattathias and his sons, became popular; and¹⁴
- (4) ... the names of priestly clans were in use.¹⁵

Some comments are in place. Related to the first point (1), it can be said that while her premise that the principles in giving personal names changed is correct, she makes no attempt to explain the *causes* of the development more thoroughly. Moreover, she builds up no comparative bridge to earlier habits. In relation to the second point (2), the real reason for avoiding names such as Moses and David was most probably the “holiness” of these individuals (as Ilan also notes). However, those names *did in fact become popular among Jews later*, especially in the Middle Ages. It can also be noted that Ilan’s conclusions regarding the favor-

¹² Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* (TSAJ, 91; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 2.

¹³ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 5–6.

¹⁴ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 6–8.

¹⁵ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 8.

ing of names derived from biblical characters with a “questionable reputation” is not persuasive.¹⁶ Ishmael, for example, was in use among Jews without connotation to Arabs already during the late biblical period (Jer 40:8, 14–16; Ezra 10:22). Moving on, related to the third point (3), and as will be pointed out below, the Hasmoneans had names which were popular already before their time. This means that their personal popularity was not necessarily the main reason for the subsequent popularity of the “heroic” names, although it may well have increased it.

Of course, one must remember that the basic aim of Ilan’s study was to compose a lexicon rather than explore the reasons contributing to the new situation more deeply. In fact, one of the differences between Ilan’s work and my own is that the starting point of my study is the names of Ezra-Nehemiah, and that my interest is related to issues of when the new types of names appeared, what their connection to pre-exilic anthroponyms and trends further developing between 330–140 BCE were, as well as what the historical reasons for the change might have been.

Shmuel Aḥituv’s *Echoes From the Past*

Shmuel Aḥituv’s book *Echoes From the Past* is also important for this study. Aḥituv introduces a comparison of the names of Ezra-Nehemiah with names from the Hellenistic period, as well as epigraphic extra-biblical Hebrew names from the Monarchic period (ca 1000–586 BCE, mostly 800–586 BCE). Furthermore, the list of Monarchic anthroponyms is adopted from Aḥituv’s other book *הכתב והמכתב: אסופת כתובות מארץ-ישראל ומממלכות עבר הירדן מימי בית-ראשון* (Eng. *Handbook of Ancient Inscriptions from the Land of Israel and the Kingdoms beyond the Jordan from the Period of the First Commonwealth*).¹⁷ In this book, Aḥituv presents the material in a way that allows one to work out how many occurrences of a name in the list might belong to the same

¹⁶ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 5–6.

¹⁷ Aḥituv, *הכתב והמכתב*, 450–457.

person. Ahituv has attached all the used sources and references to each archaeological finding containing personal names. Consequently, as with Ilan above, it is not necessary to add and repeat all the numerous archaeological identifiers of the original sources in this article.

As already mentioned above, 95% of the names of the Monarchic period are from 800–586 BCE.¹⁸ More specifically, they are dispersed as follows: (1) tenth to ninth centuries, 27 names; (2) 800–586 BCE, 642 names; (3) undated, 43 names. A further division would show that within the latter period, 66% of the names are dated between 700–586 BCE. These figures thus illustrate that the overwhelming majority of the anthroponyms in the corpus are dated in the Later Monarchic period.¹⁹

MAIN SOURCE AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

In the present study I am especially interested in examining the changes in Jewish naming habits reflected in Ezra-Nehemiah. Most scholars date these two books to the later Persian period. Hugh G. M. Williamson, for example, suggests around 400 BCE, based on, among others, the name of the high priest Yoḥanan (who was on duty in the late fifth century BCE), as found in the Aramaic papyri from Egypt (AramP 30),²⁰ and Isaac Kalimi considers Ezra-Nehemiah as the most important source for research on religious, social, and political matters in the Persian period.²¹ Consequently, this will be the foundation for the diachronic arguments below. Although the *historicity* of these texts has

¹⁸ Cf. Golub, “Distribution”, 630, table 2.

¹⁹ Extrabiblical epigraphic material from the Persian period is scarce. One of the sources is Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987). This onomastic material, however, does not offer significant statistical benefit, as the names in it are few and the bearers of those names did not live in Judea.

²⁰ Hugh G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC, 16; Waco: Word, 1985), xxxvi.

²¹ Isaac Kalimi, *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

been challenged,²² this does not pose any major problem, since the focus of this study is not the *narratives* in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but the *personal names* in them. It will thus be of greater importance to note, for example, that there are no names of Greek origin in Ezra-Nehemiah, even though such anthroponyms became popular in the Hellenistic period.²³ In fact, this hints that the names in Ezra-Nehemiah originate from the Persian period and not from the Hellenistic period.

As for material itself, we do unfortunately not have much extrabiblical epigraphic material from the Persian period for comparison. Even the material from the first century of the Hellenistic period is relatively poor.²⁴ However, there are several long lists of names found in both Ezra and Nehemiah. In Ezra, they include the anthroponyms of the returnees from Babylon to Judea with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2–60; cf. Neh 7:7–63) and Ezra (Ezra 8:2–19), and the list of men who married foreign wives (Ezra 10:18–43). In Nehemiah, they include the names of the builders of the wall (Neh 3:1–31), the list of those returning with Zerubbabel (Neh 7:7–63; cf. Ezra 2:2–60), the list of those who confirmed the covenant with God (Neh 10:1–27), the list of people who agreed to live in Jerusalem (Neh 11:4–24), and the list of priests and Levites who returned to Judea with Zerubbabel (Neh 12:1–26).

²² See Israel Finkelstein, “Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder,” *JHS* 9 (2009), 2–13 (cf. idem, *Hasmonean Realities behind Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles* [Atlanta: SBL, 2018]), who challenges the historicity of the so-called Nehemiah’s city walls during the Persian period, as well as the lists of toponyms (Ezra 2:1–67; Neh 7:6–68). He has been opposed by Gavriel Barkay, “Additional View of Jerusalem in Nehemiah Days,” in *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region II*, ed. D. Amit D and G. D. Siebel (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority and the Hebrew University, 2008), 48–54. See also Benedikt Hensel, “Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles: New Insights into the Early History of Samari(t)an-Jewish Relations,” *Religions* 11/2 (2020): 1–24, who dates Ezra-Nehemiah to the Late Persian or Early Hellenistic period, based on a conflict between the Jewish community in Jerusalem and the Samaritans.

²³ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 257–324. Altogether 50 Greek names originating from the third to second centuries BCE are listed in Ilan’s register (including eleven names from Aristean).

²⁴ See Ilan, *Lexicon*.

In sum the central research task of this study is *to analyze the most common anthroponyms of Ezra-Nehemiah and offer a comparison with names of the previous pre-exilic Monarchic Hebrew period (ca 1000–586 BCE, mostly 800–586 BCE) and the following Hellenistic period (330–140 BCE)*. I will ask which of these two periods show the greatest overlap with the names in Ezra-Nehemiah, as well as to what extent old naming habits persisted, when the new ones began to appear, and what rationales may have laid behind these developments. To answer these questions, the anthroponyms of Ezra-Nehemiah will also be compared to epigraphic extrabiblical material dated to both prior to the exile (in practice 800–586 BCE) and after the Persian period (330–140 BCE).

METHODS

The main questions will be answered in light of a study of onomastics. The methods of this discipline are based on the research of onomastic structural typology, linguistic phonology, and statistics.²⁵ More specifically, the methodology of this study is based on typological classification and comparative statistics. The popularity and general occurrences of different onomastic types have been sorted out and compared with one another, and this comparison revealed similarities and differences in the onomastic fashion of different periods. One might criticize the comparison of two different types of sources per se. The reliability of biblical data is often questioned. Here, Ezra-Nehemiah offers biblical data,

²⁵ See, for example, Joe Salmons, “Northwest Indo-European Vocabulary and Substrate Phonology,” in *Perspectives on Indo-European Language, Culture and Religion: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé, volume 2*, ed. Roger Pearson (Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph Series, 9; Washington: Institute for the Study of Man, 1992), 265–279; Janne Saarikivi, *Studies on Finno-Ugric Substrate in Northern Russian Dialects* (Substrata Uralica; Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2006), 15–16; Pauli Rahkonen, *South Eastern Contact Area of Finnic Languages in the Light of Onomastics* (Jyväskylä: Bookwell, 2013), 13–17.

whereas epigraphic texts or inscriptions represent an extrabiblical register. There are, however, two reasons for using this method.

Firstly, there is not enough epigraphic material for a reliable statistical use originating from the Persian period. However, I have wanted to bind and anchor the biblical names to extrabiblical sources in order to have as a reliable dating as possible for them. Because there is not usable data from the Persian period, I had to use such a detour.

Secondly, as noted above, the dating of biblical texts is quite uncertain. Extrabiblical epigraphic record, in contrast, is undeniable and generally well dated. If the names of Ezra-Nehemiah would be similar to the names indisputably originating from those from the Hellenistic period, we should conclude that the anthroponyms of Ezra-Nehemiah are considerably later than from the Persian period. Alternatively, if they were mostly comparable with the names of the Late Monarchic period, one could either claim that the names of Ezra-Nehemiah are counterfeit artificial biblical names from later periods or that they are authentic, but that no change took place in the naming fashion after the exile. In any case, they cannot be dated earlier than to the Persian period. If the names of Ezra-Nehemiah fit between the anthroponyms from the Hellenistic and Late Monarchic period, having typical features from both sides, we can conclude that the names in Ezra-Nehemiah are most probably to be dated to the Persian period.

As a byproduct, the ratio of the similarity and difference between Hellenistic and Monarchic data within the onomastic material of Ezra-Nehemiah tells us what is inherited from earlier periods and what are new onomastic innovations. It is true that the epigraphic material of the Late Monarchic period is similar to, for example, the personal names of the book of Jeremiah.²⁶ However, I have preferred a comparison with

²⁶ Rahkonen, "Personal Names," 124; cf. Nahman Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanity, 1997); Jeaneane D. Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew: A Comparative Study* (SJOTSup, 49; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988).

the epigraphic extrabiblical material because of the reasons mentioned above. To repeat, the periods considered are:

- (1) The Monarchic period of the Hebrew kingdoms (ca tenth century to 586 BCE). As noted above, the source of the names is Ahituv's register (95% of the material can be dated to 800–586 BCE).
- (2) The period of Ezra-Nehemiah (which according to most of the scholars is the Persian period). Names are retrieved from the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In this study I have limited the chains of genealogical trees to individuals who are mentioned as real people living in the time after Zerubbabel, excluding earlier names. I have attempted to find out the popularity of each name by counting the number of people who bore these names. This evaluation follows *HALOT*, albeit not slavishly. In addition, I have utilized the internal context of the text itself.
- (3) The Hellenistic period. Biblical names from 330–140 BCE are retrieved from Tal Ilan's book, as discussed above. The time frame of the period is the pre-Hasmonean, post-Persian era. The reason for ruling out the Hasmonean and Roman periods is to determine whether the popularity of the Maccabees influenced the naming fashion (before the year 140 BCE any adult person could hardly have had a name adopted from the Maccabees).

The sources of the three periods thus cover a span of approximately 660 years. By utilizing this literary material, it has been possible to analyze types of alterations or permanencies. Above all, the studied points are: (1) the percentages of mutually similar names; (2) the frequency of different elements in constructing names; and (3) the appearance of new anthroponymic types and the disappearance of others.

Before presenting the statistics, it is important to note that because the post-Persian period was characterized by Hellenistic culture, many Hebrew names also appeared in Greek form. This is familiar to those who are acquainted with, for example, the Septuagint. In the present study, as in Ilan's work, the names are classified according to the Hebrew form of the names. Names found in the Greek form are thus, for statistical purposes, placed under the title of their Hebrew forms. *Zαχαρίας*, is, for example, presented and statistically counted under the Hebrew

זכריה. In some rare cases, the interpretation of the Greek form may be somewhat complicated. However, the most usual biblical names are found in the Septuagint, Josephus, or the New Testament, and these early literary sources determine the rules of how the originally Hebrew anthroponyms were transformed into Greek form.²⁷ It should also be noted that several (probably) fictitious names are found in Ilan's lexicon.²⁸ These are statistically uncertain—although not impossible—and therefore not counted in the lists of the present investigation.²⁹

STATISTICS

Anthroponyms in Ezra-Nehemiah, Compared with Monarchic Names

The record of the Monarchic names presented by Aḥituv, consists of altogether approximately 700 names, including a relatively low percentage of Ammonite, Edomite, and Moabite anthroponyms. It must be observed that among those names there are several that belong to one person. Ezra contains 114 and Nehemiah 186 statistically accepted names, many of which overlapped with one another. I have counted 89 bearers of names among the 18 most popular names within all the Ezra-Nehemiah data.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of the rules of transliteration and orthography, see Ilan, *Lexicon*, 16–32; cf. B. P. Kantor, *The Second Column (Secunda) of Origen's Hexapla in Light of Greek Pronunciation* (PhD diss.: University of Texas, 2017).

²⁸ They are seen as fictitious also by Ilan.

²⁹ A considerable amount of these names are of the names of the translators of the Septuagint listed by Aristéas. Ilan, *Lexicon*, 47, suggests that they possibly represent names from the author's own lifetime, that is from the late second century BCE (the translators are said to have been Alexandrians, not Judeans), an explanation I find credible. However, several Greek names in the list of Aristéas are found in other literary sources from the early second century (e.g., Dositheos, Theodosios, Theodotos, and Jason). Thus, it is reasonable to think that these names might have existed among the Jews already in the third century.

For methodological purposes, it is important to be aware of the popularity of anthroponyms. If only individual occurrences are considered, the total picture may be skewed. When speaking of Monarchic names, it is no straightforward task to track down which names belonged to one and the same person. The main criterion is to know the geographic archaeological site where the name was found. In addition, it is most useful to know the character of the object bearing a name as well as its date. For example, if similar names are found, both being written on jar handles originating from the same chronological stratum from the same site, these most probably belonged to the same person.

It is most demanding to separate different bearers of the same name from the data of Ezra-Nehemiah as well. Sometimes the fathers or sons of these individuals are mentioned, which aids the identification. Sometimes the status—such as priest, Levite, or other occupations—is helpful. The groupings of names may also provide clues. In a few cases, some uncertain names are accepted as belonging to different bearers.

Popularity of Anthroponyms in Ezra-Nehemiah

Among the eighteen most popular names, 61,1% have parallels with the extrabiblical names originating from the Monarchic era (see Table 1 below). This result means that there was still a relatively strong connection to the old pre-exilic habits of giving personal names. The structural distribution of the Ezra-Nehemiah names are as follows:

Yahwistic names	total of Ezra-Nehemiah: 32% among the most popular names: 50%
<i>el</i> -based names	total in Ezra: 18%; total in Nehemiah: 7% among the most popular names: 0%

This shows that the significance of the *yahwistic* element in names was generally weakened. Among the Monarchic names, the corresponding percentage is 67% (see Table 2, below). However, among the most popular names of Ezra-Nehemiah, it was still strong. Among the total number of the *el*-based names, the quantity is rather similar to the pre-exilic

situation, but radically different among the most popular names. This indicates that a considerable change was taking place, although old habits were still alive.

Name	Individuals	Attested in the Monarchic epigraphic register
<i>Mešullām</i>	8	yes
<i>Šema'yā</i>	8	yes
<i>Ḥananyā</i>	6	yes
<i>Mattanyā</i>	6	yes
<i>Ma'asēyā</i>	5	no
<i>Malkīyā</i>	5	yes
<i>'Ēlyāšīb</i>	5	yes
<i>Zekaryā</i>	5	yes
<i>'Azaryā</i>	5	yes
<i>Bānī</i>	4	no
<i>Binnūy</i>	4	yes
<i>Zakkūr</i>	4	no
<i>Ḥānān</i>	4	yes
<i>Yehūdā</i>	4	no
<i>Mallūḳ</i>	4	no
<i>Šādōq</i>	4	no
<i>Šebanyā</i>	4	yes
<i>Šerebyā</i>	4	no

Table 1: *The Most Popular Names in Ezra-Nehemiah*

(All of these names are found in the LXX as well)

Popularity During Different Periods

The popularity of the anthroponyms in Ezra-Nehemiah changed radically compared with those of the pre-exilic names. Among the 21 most popular anthroponyms in the Monarchic record, five of them remained among the 18 most popular names in Ezra-Nehemiah: *Šema'yāhū*, *Zekaryāhū*, *Zakkūr*, *Ḥānān*, and *Ḥanānyāhū* (see Table 2). Among the most popular 21 monarchic names, 67% included the theophoric element *-yāhū*. In comparison, the corresponding percentage in the most popular names of Ezra-Nehemiah is 50%, but among the total data of Ezra-Nehemiah only 32%. This indicates the decreasing importance of

theophoric elements during the Persian period compared with the Monarchic period.

Name	Location ³⁰	Individuals
<i>Menahē̄m</i>	3J, 1I, 1A	5 (probably)
<i>'Elīšā'</i>	2J, 1I, 1A	4
<i>Šema'yāhū</i>	4J	4 (probably)
<i>'Ezer</i>	3J, 1A	4 (probably)
<i>Šelemyāhū</i>	4J	4 (probably)
<i>Benāyāhū</i>	4J	4 (probably)
<i>Zakkūr</i>	2J, 1I, 1A	4 (probably)
<i>Gemaryāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Nehemyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>'Elnātān</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Semakyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>'Iššiyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Gērā'</i>	1J, 1I, 1M	3
<i>Hōšā'yāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Hiššilyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>-Zekaryāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>-Ḥānān</i>	1J, 1I, 1A	3
<i>-Ḥanānyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Yā'azanyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Yirmeyāhū</i>	3J	3 (probably)
<i>Nēriyāhū</i>	3J	3

Table 2: *The Most Popular Names of the Monarchic Period*³¹

Among the 15 most popular names of the Hellenistic period, only three names are found in the list of 18 most popular anthroponyms of Ezra-Nehemiah: *Mešullām*, *Zekaryā*, and *Ḥananyā* (see Table 3). Compared with the Monarchic extrabiblical names, three of the 22 most popular names are found in the list of 15 most popular names of the Hellenistic period: *Šelemyā(hū)*, *Zekaryā(hū)*, and *Ḥananyā(hū)*. One can notice

³⁰ J = Judea, I = Israel, A = Ammon, M = Moab.

³¹ There is a difficulty in knowing if the names in Aḥituv's list belong to different or the same individuals. The figures here are analyzed on the basis of archaeological data.

that the names *Zekaryā(hû)* and *Ḥananyā(hû)* appeared in all the lists. Most probably they were the usual names used by priests (cf. Luke 1:5 and Acts 23:2).

Name	Individuals
<i>Yôḥānān</i>	7
<i>ʾĒlʾāzār</i>	5
<i>Ḥananyāh</i>	5
<i>Šimʾôn</i>	5
<i>Yehūdāh</i>	4
<i>Yônātān</i>	4
<i>Yôsēf</i>	4
<i>Teḥinnāh</i>	4
<i>ʾAbšālôm</i>	3
<i>Mattatyāh</i>	3
<i>ʾAqqub</i>	3
<i>Zekaryāh</i>	2
<i>Yēšuaʿ</i>	2
<i>Mešullām</i>	2
<i>Šelemyāh</i>	2

Table 3: *The Most Popular Names in the Hellenistic period*

Nine of the twelve most popular names in Ilan's total list (330 BCE–200 CE) are found among the fifteen most popular names from the period 330–140 BCE (see Table 4). This suggests that the change after the year 140 BCE was considerably slow.

Name	Individuals
Simon	257
Joseph	231
Judah	179
Eleazar	177
Yohanan	128
Jeshua	103
Hananiah	85
Jonathan	75
Mattathias	63
Menahem	46

Jacob	45
Hanan	39

Table 4: *The Most Popular Hebrew Male Names in Ilan's Total Register*³²

In Table 5, all the data is gathered. This comparison does not measure the popularity of names during different periods, but rather the general occurrences of different anthroponyms. One can observe that the popularity changed much more radically than the general occurrence. Roughly one half (51,6%) of the names in the Hellenistic register have parallels in the onomasticon of the Hebrew Monarchic period. The equivalent number is 83,9% for parallels with personal names in Nehemiah.³³

Hellenistic Period	Nehemiah ³⁴	Monarchic Period
(3) אבשלום ≈ 'Abšālôm	–	–
(1) אלנתן ≈ 'Ælnātān	–	x (Ammonite)
(5) אלעזר ≈ 'Æl'āzār	x	x
(2) זכריה ≈ Zekaryāh	x	x
(1) חור ≈ Hūr	x	–
(1) חנן ≈ Hānān	x	x
(5) חנניה ≈ Hananyāh	x	x
(1) טוביה ≈ Tōbîyāh	x	x
(1) יאזניה ≈ Yā'azanyāh	–	x
(1) ידוע ≈ Yaddua'	x	x
(4) יהודה ≈ Yehūdāh	x	–
(1) יהורם ≈ Yehôrām	–	–
(2) יהושוע / ישוע ≈ Yehôšua'/Yēšua'	x	x
(1) יואחז ≈ Yō'āhāz	–	–
(7) יוחנן ≈ Yōhānān	x	–
(4) יונתן ≈ Yōnātān	x	–

³² The names are presented in their English form since the list follows Ilan.

³³ The reason why not to present both the names of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is practical. It would have been troublesome to separate names that are overlapping in those books. Because the register of Nehemiah is considerably wider, I utilized that. Statistically the sample is still sufficient.

³⁴ [x] means that the name was found and [–] that it is absent.

(4) יוסף	≈ <i>Yōsēf</i>	x	–
(1) יועזר	≈ <i>Yō‘āzār</i>	–	–
(1) יקים	≈ <i>Yāqīm</i>	–	–
(1) מנשה	≈ <i>Menassāb</i>	x	–
(2) משלם	≈ <i>Mešullām</i>	x	x
(3) מתתיה	≈ <i>Mattatyāb</i>	x	–
(1) נריה	≈ <i>Nērīyāb</i>	–	x
(1) עבדי	≈ <i>‘Abdī</i>	x	–
(1) עזריה	≈ <i>‘Azaryāb</i>	x	x
(3) עקוב	≈ <i>‘Aqqub</i>	x	x (Ammonite)
(1) פדיה	≈ <i>Pedayāb</i>	x	x
(2) שלמיה	≈ <i>Šələmyāb</i>	x	x
(5) שמעון	≈ <i>Šim‘ōn</i>	x	–
(1) שמעיה	≈ <i>Šemayāb</i>	x	x
(4) תחנה	≈ <i>Təḥinnāb</i>	–	x?
Total: 31 names (71 individuals)		26	16
		83,9%	51,6%

Table 5: *Onomasticon from the Hellenistic Period, Nehemiah, and the Monarchic period*

“HEROIC” ANCIENT BIBLICAL NAMES

Returning to the issue of “biblical heroes,” it was noted above that Tal Ilan claimed that names like Moses, Aaron, David, or Solomon were not used at all during 330 BCE–200 CE, while names of what she called “secondary characters” (e.g. Jacob, Judah, Joseph, Benjamin, Joshua, Samuel, Elisha, and Jonathan), as well as biblical characters with controversial or questionable reputations (e.g., Simon, Levi, and Absalom) were reused during this period. Some objections were raised above, and considering the data, some additional points can be made.

First, it is hard to believe that parents naming a child were thinking of a questionable reputation or secondary character of the name. For example, the name *‘Abšālôm* simply followed a more traditional naming system. Similarly, *Yišmā‘ēl* is an archaic name, known already in the an-

cient Amorite onomasticon, and was in use in the Monarchic period as well.

Second, it is doubtful that *Ya'aqōb* was seen as a secondary character for the Israelites. *Isrā'el* was the second name of *Ya'aqōb* and those names frequently occur as a pair in biblical parallelism. It seems more plausible that all ancient biblical names—except the holiest ones—were considered possible. Moreover, since there are, in every society, influential leaders—nobles, high ranking priests, famous scribes etc.—who initiate trends and make things popular, it is more likely that the reason for choosing only certain biblical names from a wider cluster during the Persian and Hellenistic period was a question of fashion (see more below).

Third, it can be noted that some ancient biblical “heroic” names begin to appear already in Ezra and Nehemiah:

<i>'Āsāp</i>	one of David's chief musicians
<i>'Ēl'āzār</i>	a son of Aron
<i>Binyāmin</i>	ason of Jacob
<i>Gērsōm</i>	a son of Moses
<i>Ḥūr</i>	an assistant of Moses
<i>Yehūdā</i>	a son of Jacob
<i>Yēšūa' < *Yehōšūa'</i>	a war marshall and follower of Moses
<i>Yōnātān</i>	a son of Saul and best friend of David
<i>Yōsēp</i>	a son of Jacob
<i>Yišmā'ēl</i>	a son of Abraham
<i>Šim'on</i>	a son of Jacob

In light of the fact that *'Abšālōm*, *Yehūdā*, *Yēšūa' < *Yehōšūa'*, *Yōnātān*, *Yōsēp*, and *Šim'on* are also found in the lexicon of Ilan, dated to 330–140 BCE, and that additional ancient heroic names from the period 140 BCE–200 CE found in this lexicon are *'Abrāhām*, *'Elīšā'*, *Benyāmin*, *Ḥeṣrōn*, *Yā'ir*, *Yō'āb*, *Ya'aqōb*, *Yišḥāq*, *Yiššākār*, *Lēwī*, *Mošā(?)*³⁵, *'Ēlī*, *Re'ūbēn*, and *Šā'ul*, it can be concluded that the fashion of using names

³⁵ According to Ilan, *Lexicon*, 190 (who refers to Clermont-Ganneau), the reading of the name is questionable.

of ancient biblical “heroes” began already in the times of Ezra-Nehemiah, increased considerably between 330–140 BCE, and continued to expand further after 140 BCE.

REASONS FOR THE OBSERVED CHANGES IN GIVING PERSONAL NAMES

The names used in the Hellenistic period have a ratio of 83,9% overlap with the total number of names in Ezra-Nehemiah, but only 51,6% overlap with the total number of names in the Monarchic anthroponyms (as shown in Table 5 above). Furthermore, among the most popular names in Ezra-Nehemiah, 61,1% overlap with names from the Monarchic Era (see Table 1). Even though the number of parallels—to both names used in the Hellenistic period and in Ezra-Nehemiah—is relatively high, the percentage is much lower when comparing their popularity: in the Hellenistic period, the ratio to Ezra-Nehemiah is 3 out of 18 names (16,6%, see Table 3), and in Ezra-Nehemiah, the ratio to the Monarchic personal names is 5 out of 21 (23,8%, see Table 1 and Table 2).

It is thus evident that the theophoric elements of anthroponyms lost their original sense over time. This can be seen in the percentage of *yah-wistic* elements in the total number of personal names: from 50,3% in the Monarchic material to 32% in Ezra-Nehemiah.³⁶ The reason for this may be that the theophoric elements of pre-exilic anthroponyms were usually combined with (a wide range of) verbal or possessive expressions giving a reasonable meaning to names. It is well known that among Semitic nations, the original meaning of a name was used to express religious hopes and expectations. If the name was *ʾilī-milku* (Canaanite for “El is my king”), for example, the parents were likely choosing that name to confess that El was the highest god and king of

³⁶ Rahkonen, “Personal Names,” 123.

the baby. As another example, the name of the Assyrian king Sennacherib [Ass. *Sîn-abhī-erība*] contains the idea “Sîn (moon god) is my brother, who enters.”

As was seen above, names that overlap with “heroic” names began to appear during the period of Ezra-Nehemiah and then became even more popular during Hellenistic, Hasmonean, and Roman periods. Why is this? To what extent did biblical tradition influence naming habits? If not central, who were pioneering in using these names? What were their roles in spreading the fashion to a wider use? What was the role of the struggle between Hellenism and traditional Judaism?

Below, I will note what I argue are three of the most significant influences: (1) Changes in language; (2) Changes in religion (and culture); and (3) Changes in political situation, followed by a discussion of how these changes relate to the statistics.

Changes in Language

Jewish society and culture were greatly impacted by the exile on several levels. Aramaic began to make its way into the language. It is unclear what the position of Hebrew as an everyday language was in Judea. Most probably it was widely spoken at least in the fifth century BCE, as can be seen in the way Neh 13:24 describes the situation: “And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod(?), and could not speak the language of Judah (יהודית).” Elsewhere in the biblical text, יהודית (“the language of Judah”) is clearly separated from אַרַמִּית (“Aramaic,” cf. Isa 36:11). It has been estimated that a certain Hebrew dialect survived as a living language until ca 200 CE.³⁷

The Elephantine papyri from the fifth century are written in Aramaic, but this does not prove that the native tongue of the people was Aramaic. Furthermore, those papyri are not written in Judea. However, the ratio between Hebrew and Aramaic as everyday languages among the

³⁷ Ian Young and Robert Rezetko, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2014), 204.

Jews in the Southern Levant during the Persian and Hellenistic periods remains vague. Personal names which could have been derived from Aramaic did not become popular until after the beginning of the Common Era. Moreover, one should observe that many of the Aramaic-based names listed by Ilan seem to have belonged to Arabs or Nabateans.³⁸

Changes in Religion (and Culture)

First, it can be noted that after the time of Ezra-Nehemiah, the Jewish religion began to change. Scribes became appreciated as biblical scholars and theological leaders. This can be noticed, for example, in early scribal activities such as the earliest biblical manuscripts found at Qumran, originating already from the third century BCE.³⁹ The ministry of prophets faded and ceased to exist. However, as the temple was rebuilt and continued to be the mainstay of continuity in the religion, the importance of scribes seems to have increased. As noted by most scholars, much of the editorial work of the biblical books was conducted in the fifth century BCE by Jewish scribes,⁴⁰ and this development may be hinted already in Jer 8:8: “How can they say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us’? Look, the false pen of the scribes (ספריים) certainly works falsehood.” Nehemiah 8:2–3 also includes a description of how the Torah was read to the common people by Ezra, the Scribe, and Priest. These early scribes were probably priests and Levites,⁴¹ as reflected in Neh 8:7: “... the Levites explained the law to people.”

Second, it can be observed that the need to understand the language of the Bible motivated the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek.

³⁸ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 359–417.

³⁹ Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays, Volume 3* (Leiden, Brill 2015), 3.

⁴⁰ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 247–249.

⁴¹ Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 246.

The translation work likely began with the Torah in the third century BCE, followed by the copying of other Old Testament books later in the third century BCE.⁴² Then, the Pharisaic movement appeared in approximately 200 BCE, probably bringing biblical matters even closer to the common folk.⁴³ Taken together, these factors may indicate that Old Testament personal names became relatively familiar among Jews.

Changes in Political Situation

At this time, the Persian county of Yehud had become politically subdued, and the independent Jewish governmental power had come to an end. A slowly increasing Greek influence in Jewish societies can be noted after the conquest of Alexander the Great.⁴⁴ At first, this Hellenistic influence was visible primarily among the higher social classes;⁴⁵ Ptolemaic rulers were not interested in Hellenizing the Jews. That pressure rather began under Seleucid dominion. Greek was a living spoken language in several parts of the Southern Levant, and Greek culture came to have significant influence on Jewishness, including the Jewish onomasticon. Interestingly, one of the Hasmonean rulers called himself *Philoellene* (“lover of Hellenes”).⁴⁶

Diachronic Developments

One of the most central observations in the present study is the date when “heroic biblical names” were taken back into use in the Jewish community. The beginning of this process is found in the onomasticon

⁴² Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 51; Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 270.

⁴³ See, for example, the foreword by James C. VanderKam in Saldarini, *Pharisees*, xii.

⁴⁴ Glen W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴⁵ Louis Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 72–101.

⁴⁶ James Aitken, *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 15–36.

of Ezra and Nehemiah where names such as *Binyāmin*, *Yehūdā*, *Ḥūr*, *Yōsēp̄*, and *Šim'ôn* are found. This process continued during the Hellenistic period, where anthroponyms such as *Yônātān*, *Yōḥānān*, *Yōsēp̄*, and *Šim'ôn* became especially popular, while names like *Ya'aqōb*, *Lēwî*, *'Elīša'*, *Yiṣḥāq*, *Re'ūben*, and *Šā'ul* appeared later. One might suggest that names like *Yehūdā*, *Yōsēp̄*, *Šim'ôn*, or *Binyāmin* were originally derived from the names of the tribes to which those persons belonged. This seems unlikely, however, because other “heroic” names, such as *'Āsāp̄*, *Yônātān*, and *Gērsōm*, names not referring to tribes, are also found in Ezra-Nehemiah.

One of the causes for change noted above related to the exile. Ancient Hebrew names supported the national spirit among the Jews who returned to their ancestral land after the exile. Having been displaced among gentiles, it was important to maintain and emphasize their own religion and national identity. In a way, this is visible even in the modern history of the Jews. Many of those who have moved to Israel have abandoned their old names (often based on *Yiddiṣh*) and taken a Hebrew name. Those who had returned to Judea in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah belonged to the Persian Empire with only limited independence. The Jews turned their minds to the past, to ancient times. It should also be noted that at the same time, knowledge of the Old Testament seems to have increased, and that during the Hellenistic period, the battle against Hellenization became even more furious.⁴⁷ It thus seems evident that the principles of giving names changed after the exile.

In earlier periods, theophoric elements were important and evidently closely linked to the religion of the Northwest Semitic people,⁴⁸ and a

⁴⁷ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 253.

⁴⁸ Amorite names, originating from the Middle Bronze Age, were often constructed as follows: *'Abi-yarah* (“my father is *Yarah* [a moon god]”), *Mutu-ila* (“God’s [Ilū’s] man”), *Ba’li-haddu* (“Haddu is my lord”), *Ḥiṣni-dagan* (“Dagan is my protection”), *'Aštar-kabar* (“*'Aštar* is great”), or as verbal sentences such as *Yamlīk-'el* (“El has become a king”) or *Ya'qub-el* (“El has protected”). These names expressed confession, faith, and hope in different deities.

strong faith in the power of gods can be observed,⁴⁹ since having a name of a deity as an element in a personal name was a kind of confession of faith.⁵⁰ It is even possible that the name itself witnessed to a kind of superstition among ordinary people. At this point in time, then, the nations of the Levant showed great trust in their gods, and so, we can safely assume that the Israelites did so too.

During the Monarchic period, the *yahwistic* theophoric elements—the prefix *Yehô-* or affixes *-yāhû* (later > *-yāh*), and the northern Israelite *-yaw*—became the most popular among the theophoric names. More specifically, 50,3% of all the Monarchic extrabiblical Jewish names represented this anthroponymic type.⁵¹ During the seventh to early sixth centuries BCE the percentage of *yahwistic* names among all the extrabiblical theophoric names was 67%.⁵²

How can the increased popularity of old biblical names best be explained? It was noted above that Hellenistic influence likely started with the elites. In fact, is typical in all cultures and societies that fashion and trends “flow” from the upper classes towards the lower social strata of the population. It can, thus, be presumed that old biblical personal names were first adopted by the intelligentsia and the upper classes, and subsequently spread from there into common use. One should notice that the majority of anthroponyms mentioned in Ezra-Nehemiah was most probably the names of prominent people in the Jewish society,

⁴⁹ For example, the stela of *Meša*, erected by a Moabite king, proves that he held the help of the Moabite main deity *Kemoš* in high esteem. The second row of the stela reads: “I made this high place for *Kemoš* ... because he has delivered me from all kings”. This was obvious even though *Kemoš* was not included in *Meša’s* name, only in his father’s name. Having conquered a region, the Assyrian rulers carried the images of the local deities to captivity. The reason must have been the belief that the conquered lands would thus lose the protection of their gods (see, e.g., the king prism of Sennacherib).

⁵⁰ Jeffrey Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (HSS, 31; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986).

⁵¹ Rahkonen, “Personal names,” 123.

⁵² Golub, “Distribution,” 630.

such as priests, Levites, and principals. If this period was the starting point of a change in giving names, it is understandable that the process began here, and the fashion was later adopted by the common folk.

It is clear, however, that the Maccabees or Hasmoneans did not have any major role in initiating this fashion (although it is possible that they invigorated the trend). Even if roughly one third of all the male names listed by Ilan are shared with the first Maccabees,⁵³ the onomasticon of Ezra-Nehemiah show that the habit of using “heroic” biblical names had begun already in the Persian period. The names taken by the Maccabees were thus popular in the Hellenistic period before them, that is, before 140 BCE (see Table 3 above).

After the exile, the most popular heroic names were simply adopted or copied from the Scriptures. The original meanings of the names were no longer important. When giving the name *Šim’ôn* [from the root *šm’, “listen,” “hear”] to their child, parents did, most likely, not connect the name to a wish that God would listen to this newly born baby, for example. The weakening of the meaning of the names may also reflect the decreased vitality of the Hebrew language.

	Persian Period (537–330 BCE)	Hellenistic Period (330–140 BCE)
Language	Hebrew/Aramaic	Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek
Religion	temple, prophets, scribes	temple, scribes, Bible translation and copying, activities (LXX, DSS), wisdom literature (Ben Sira), Pharisaic movement
Politics	Persian dominion	Egyptian/Syrian Hellenistic dominion

Table 6: *Cultural Impacts in Jewish society 537 BCE–140 CE*

⁵³ Ilan, *Lexicon*, 7.

CONCLUSIONS

The main findings of the study can be summarized as follows. A first conclusion is that the period of Ezra-Nehemiah was the turning point in the giving of personal names. The earlier fashion originating from the (late) Monarchic period was still clearly visible. However, new practice began to infiltrate. Most likely the names of Ezra-Nehemiah can be dated between those two periods—Hellenistic and Monarchic. This means that these names most probably originate from the Persian period.

A second conclusion is that there was a cycle of sorts in the fashion in Jewish naming tradition: several ancient Jewish biblical anthroponyms became fashionable again. The first sprouts of the new trend began to appear in the Persian period and reached its heyday during the Hellenistic period.

Third, there are several reasons for this resurgence of old names: (1) dramatic developments in political situations, where pressure from Persian and especially Hellenistic cultures produced a spirit of national romanticism; (2) the focus of Jewish religion changed in that the God of Israel was no longer bound to the land of Israel and to its harvests, peace, possible victories in wars etc. Instead, Jews increasingly became a people of the Book and began to perceive their own ancient history in a new way.

Last, the Hebrew language did not bring in new onomastic innovations because its position among the Jews was weakened. Although Hebrew was spoken to some extent, and some of the Jews spoke Greek as their first language, most spoke Aramaic. This fact produced several Greek personal names and directed people into rediscovering ancient Hebrew names as well.

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