

Patriarchal Names in Context¹

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Abstract

Observing similarities between some Amorite and patriarchal names, scholars have suggested that they indicate that the patriarchal narratives themselves reflect the Middle Bronze Age. Others have observed that names of the same form were current in later times, so could not point to any specific period for the patriarchs' life setting. Further study of Amorite names can strengthen the case for the early date for the patriarchal names.

1. Purpose

Ancient Hebrew personal names, like others in Semitic languages, were often formed from a finite verb and a divine name or title, such as Jonathan (יהונתן, *yahô-nātān*), rendered 'the Lord has given', and Zechariah (זכריה, *zəkar-yā*), 'the Lord has remembered', with perfective verbal forms (grammatically indicated as suffix conjugation, QTL-perfective), or with verbal forms traditionally termed 'imperfective', such as Jehoiarib (יהויָרִיב, *yəhō-yārīb*, 1 Chr 9:10), 'the Lord strives', or Igdaliah (יִגְדָּלִיָּהוּ, *yigdal-yāhū*, Jer 35:4), 'God is great' (grammatically indicated as prefix conjugation, yQTL). Yet in certain circumstances 'perfective' and 'imperfective' appear to be reversed. Grammarians discuss these features endlessly, seeking logical reasons behind

1. It is with sadness for the passing of Professor Alan Millard, mixed with profound gratitude for his life and work, that we publish one of his last articles. Productive right to the end of his life, Alan submitted this article and it was reviewed and accepted for publication before his death. The editors have brought it through copy editing to publication, and we hope that he would be pleased with the result. As we are sure Alan would think, *solī deo gloria*.

them in the historical development of the language.² The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships of personal names borne by people in the early part of Israel's history, particularly those containing such verbal forms, with names recorded in other ancient records.³

2. Amorite Names

2.1 Amorite Names in Cuneiform Texts

During the twentieth century multitudes of documents in cuneiform have made known thousands of personal names which throw light on name-giving in West Semitic Hebrew. Assyriologists reading cuneiform tablets written in the early second millennium BC noted numerous names with characteristics showing that they did not belong to East Semitic Babylonian, but to a West Semitic language which Babylonian scribes labelled 'Amorite'. Hardly any documents survive in this Amorite language, which certainly embraced varieties and dialects, so most knowledge of it is derived from the names.⁴ The number of those names has been enormously increased by the archives of tablets unearthed since 1933 at Mari, the capital of an 'Amorite' kingdom destroyed by Hammurabi of Babylon in 1760 BC. The names in cuneiform have been studied and analysed, notably by Herbert Huffmon, most compendiously by Ignace Gelb, who listed some 6,000 names in 1976, and now most thoroughly by Michael Streck and Viktor Golinets, building on Gelb's analysis.⁵

2. E.g. Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd rev. English ed., SubBi 27 (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2006); T. David Andersen, 'The Evolution of the Hebrew Verbal System', *ZAH* 13.1 (2000): 1–66; Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose*, JBS 10 (Jerusalem: Simor, 2012).

3. The author thanks the Editor and two reviewers for helpful notes and references.

4. In 2022 Andrew George and Manfred Krebernik surprised scholars by publishing two tablets of unknown provenance from the Old Babylonian period which list for the first time some words and phrases in 'Amorite' with equivalences in Babylonian and added a tablet of later date from Nippur with other words: 'Two Remarkable Vocabularies: Amorite–Akkadian bilinguals!', *RA* 116 (2022): 113–166, <https://doi.org/10.3917/assy.116.0113>.

5. Herbert B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965); Ignace J. Gelb, with the assistance of Joyce Bartels, Stuart-Morgan Vance, and Robert M. Whiting, *Computer-Aided Analysis of Amorite*, AS 21 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980); Michael P. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit, Band 1: Die Amurriter. Die onomastische Forschung. Orthographie und Phonologie. Nominalmorphologie*, AOAT 271/1 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000); 'Amorite' in *Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger with Geoffrey Khan, Michael P. Streck, and Janet C. E. Watson

2.2 Amorite Names in Egyptian Texts

Amorite personal names also occur in Egyptian documents from about the same time (the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties, c. 1963–1633 BC). These are the Execration Texts listing rulers of foreign places and a papyrus registering names of ninety-five workers, forty-five of them West Semitic.⁶ Neither the cuneiform script nor the Egyptian could represent the sounds of the Amorite words precisely, so some names are open to more than one interpretation. (For example, cuneiform signs for syllables with *ḥ* may represent West Semitic *ḥ*, *h* or *ʿ*; signs for *g* may also represent *k* or *q*. Hieroglyphic signs for *n* or *r* may stand for *l* while *t* may stand for *d*.)

3. The Debate over Amorite Origins for Patriarchal Names

Biblical scholars in the middle of the last century drew attention to similarities between some Amorite and patriarchal names, taking them to suggest that the Hebrew names belonged to the same period, so indicating that the patriarchal narratives themselves reflected that time, the Middle Bronze Age or Old Babylonian period. Among names similar to names of the patriarchs in Genesis there are some in the ‘imperfective’ form (yQTL), like Ishmael (יִשְׁמָעֵאל),

(Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011): 452–459; Viktor Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit, Band 2: Verbalmorphologie des Amurritischen und Glossar der Verbalwurzeln*, AOAT 271/2 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018); ‘Amorite’ in *A Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Languages*, ed. Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2020), 185–201, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119193814.ch10>.

6. Execration Texts: Kurt Sethe, *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefässcherben des Mittleren Reiches*, Abhandlungen der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 1926.5 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926); Georges Posener, *Princes et pays d’Asie et de Nubie* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1940); Anson Rainey helpfully tabulated the names in Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 58, cf. 52; John A. Wilson, ‘The Execration of Asiatic Princes’, *ANET*, 328–329; Robert K. Ritner, ‘Execration Texts’, *CoS* 1 (1997): 50. For execration, see Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1993), 136–147. Brooklyn Papyrus: William F. Albright, ‘Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.’, *JAOS* 74.4 (1954): 222–233, <https://doi.org/10.2307/595513>; Thomas Schneider, ‘Die semitischen und ägyptischen Namen der syrischen Sklaven des Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 verso’, *UF* 19 (1987): 255–282; Robert K. Ritner, ‘Semitic Slaves on a Middle Kingdom Estate’, *CoS* 3 (2002): 35–36; Bernadette Menu, ‘Le papyrus du Brooklyn Museum n° 35.1446 et l’immigration syro-palestinienne sous le Moyen Empire’, *Égypte nilotique et méditerranéenne* 5 (2012): 19–30; James E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 492–495, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400863884>, on Egyptian.

yišmā'ēl < **yišma'-'ēl*), stating the subject of the verb, traditionally rendered 'God hears', and others which have only the verbal form, like Isaac (יִצְחָק, *yīṣḥāq*), 'he laughs'.⁷

In reaction, other authors observed names of the 'imperfective' form (yQTL) were current in later times, down to the present era, so they could not point to any particular period for the patriarchs' life setting.⁸ In reviewing comments to that end by Kyle McCarter,⁹ Kenneth Kitchen set out statistics to show the proportions of that type of name to other types were far higher in the early second millennium than in later times. He reasserted his case in his essay 'The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?' in 1995 and in his *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* in 2003.¹⁰ Restating his position in the revised edition of Shanks's *Ancient Israel* (2010), McCarter affirmed,

We can no longer argue, for example, that the patriarchal names fit best into the early second millennium. Names similar or identical to the names found in Genesis are attested from a number of different periods ... Moreover, names with the same structure [as Abram] are exceedingly common, attested in almost all periods. Similarly, the name-type to which 'Isaac,' 'Jacob' and 'Joseph' belong is widely distributed across the history of the ancient Near East. It is especially well known from Middle Bronze sources and, in fact, is the most characteristic type of Amorite name. But there is no reason to believe that its use diminished significantly after the

7. William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 245; John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1981), 77–78; Roland de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), 198–200; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1966), 48.

8. John van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1973), 39–42; Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, BZAW 133 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), 22–51.

9. P. Kyle McCarter, 'The Patriarchal Age', in *Ancient Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks (London: SPCK, 1988), 1–29, see 11.

10. Kenneth A. Kitchen, review of *Ancient Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks, *Themelios* 15.1 (1989): 25–28, see 25, 26; 'The Patriarchs: Myth or History?', *BAR* 21.1 (1995): 48–57, 88–95; *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 341–342. See also his 'New Directions in Biblical Archaeology: Historical and Biblical Aspects', in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology; Jerusalem, June–July 1990*, ed. Avraham Biran and Joseph Aviram (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 34–52, see 45–46. For a summary of the evidence of the personal names, see Richard S. Hess, 'The Ancestral Period', in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament*, edited by Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 187–193, see 189–90.

Middle Bronze Age;¹¹ in the Late Bronze Age, it is well attested in Ugaritic and Amarna Canaanite names; and in the Iron Age it occurs in Hebrew inscriptions as well as in the Bible. While it is true that the name ‘Jacob’ is very common in the Middle Bronze Age, it is also found in Late Bronze sources [a footnote adds ‘also as a place name’], and related names occur in both Elephantine (fifth century B.C.E.) and Palmyrene (first century B.C.E. through third century C.E.) Aramaic.¹²

Ronald Hendel also attacked Kitchen’s reply, stating

Kitchen is linguistically mistaken when he calls these names Amorite imperfectives. The verb form is not specifically Amorite, nor is it accurate to call it imperfective. This verb form (Proto-Semitic *yaqtul*) is found in various guises in all Semitic languages. Names compounded with this verb form are found in all Northwest Semitic languages, early and late.¹³

Note that, according to the available sources, the far higher proportion of this name type in the Middle Bronze Age than in later ages is a matter of statistics, not of the large number of names attested from that age, as Kitchen emphasised. Nevertheless, the apparent continuity of the name type means the case cannot be decisive; the patriarchal names could belong to the early second millennium, or they could belong to later centuries.¹⁴

3.1 Distinctive Verbal Features of Amorite Names

Examination of currently known Amorite names has now established major elements of the basic grammar of the language to which they belong, while allowing that the names may not reflect the language current when they were given.¹⁵ This makes clear that it represented an early branch or stage

11. His footnote here contests Kitchen’s statistical analysis, suggesting that it is ‘dependent on random archaeological finds and cannot claim any kind of scientific consistency’, citing William G. Dever in Hershel Shanks, ‘Is This Man a Biblical Archaeologist? BAR Interviews William Dever – Part One’, *BAR* 22.4 (1996): 30–39, 62–63 (63).

12. Hershel Shanks, ed., *Ancient Israel from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2010), 13, 25–34, and 326, n. 23.

13. Ronald Hendel, ‘Finding Historical Memories in the Patriarchal Narratives’, *BAR* 21.4 (1995): 52–55, 58–59, 70. In using the term ‘imperfective’, Kitchen followed Gelb.

14. For continuing use of names, see the examples at Alalakh from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages presented by J. Caleb Howard, ‘Amorite Names through Time and Space’, *JSS* 68 (2023): 19–67, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jss/fgac027>.

15. See J. Caleb Howard, ‘Some of What’s New in the Study of Amorite’, in ‘Now These Records are Ancient’: *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History, Language and*

of West Semitic in which the ‘imperfective’ (yQTL) verbal form carried a past or preterite sense (see below). Names like *ya^cdir-³il* (*ia-aḥ-zi-ir-i-il*) meant ‘god helped’, not ‘god helps’; Ishmael meant ‘God heard’, not ‘God hears’ or ‘May God hear’.¹⁶ Beside this is a QTL form with a stative meaning: *’abī-yatar* (*a-bi-ia-ta-ar*), ‘My father (deity) is excellent’ (Abiathar). The verbal stem can be modified with an infix /t/ to denote the passive verb (*yantaqim*, ‘he has been avenged’) or a stative form (QtTL: *bataḥrum*, ‘Chosen’), while QTTL and šQTL may indicate intensity and causation, all with participial and adjectival forms. Some names present precative and imperative forms: *laḥun-dagan* (*la-ḥu-un-^dda-gan*), ‘May Dagan be gracious’; *šima^cni-³ila* (*si-ma-aḥ-ni-i-la*), ‘Hear me, god’. While none display any verbal form with a future sense (‘god will hear’), the Amorite language itself can hardly have functioned without one!¹⁷ Names composed of a finite verb and a divine name may be shortened (hypocoristica), having only the verb, so Amorite has *yaškurum* (*ia-aš-ku-rum*), ‘he rewarded’, beside *yaškur-dagan* (*ia-aš-ku-ur-^dda-gan*), ‘Dagan rewarded’.¹⁸

Ancient names frequently refer to the circumstances of birth or a feature of the child, a custom seen in several patriarchal names, which sometimes play on current forms.¹⁹

3.2 Patriarchal yQTL Names

Six of Israel’s patriarchs bore names of the yQTL type:

- *Ishmael* (יִשְׁמָעֵל, *yīšmā^cēl* < **yīšma^c-³ēl*): ‘The angel of the Lord said to her, “... you will call him Ishmael (‘God heard’), because the Lord has heard your distress ... Then Hagar bore Abram a son and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne’ (Gen 16:11-15); cf. Amorite *yašma^c-³el*

Culture in Honor of K. Lawson Younger, Jr., ed. James K. Hoffmeier et al., ÄAT 114 (Münster: Zaphon, 2022), 213–242.

16. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 23–50, 140–157 sets out the case. Godfrey Driver already noted this meaning, *Problems of the Hebrew Verbal System* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936), 143–144; Johann Jakob Stamm recognised it in ‘Hebräische Erstaznamen’, in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday: April 21, 1965*, ed. Hans G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen, AS 19 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 413–424, see 414–415; see also Anson Rainey, ‘The Barth-Ginsberg Law in the Amarna Tablets’, *Eretz Israel* 14 (1978), 8*–13*.

17. Now George and Krebernik, ‘Two Remarkable Vocabularies’, identify verbal forms with future sense according to their Akkadian renderings, e.g. 128, lines 24–25: *a-li-ku-na* = Akkadian *allakam-ma*; *am-si-qu* = Akkadian *anaššiq*.

18. See Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 117–118, summarised in ‘Amorite’, 192–195.

19. For modern Arabic examples, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, I. *Social Institutions* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1961), 44.

(*ia-áš-ma-aḥ-i-el*).²⁰

- *Isaac* (יִצְחָק, *yīṣḥāq*): The promise of Isaac and his birth involved laughter, so Isaac is ‘he laughed’: ‘Sarah laughed to herself ... The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh ...?”; Sarah bore a son to Abraham ... Abraham gave him the name Isaac ... Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me ...”’ (Gen 18:12,13; 21:3,5; cf. 17:17); cf. Amorite *ia-aṣ-ḥa-qī⁷-im*.²¹
- *Jacob* (יַעֲקֹב, *ya‘āqōb*): ‘The first to come out was red and the whole of his body was like a hairy garment, so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel, so he was named Jacob (he was at heel)’ (Gen 25:25,26).²² Numerous examples of names from ‘QB are recorded, cf. Amorite *ia-aḥ-qú-ub-DINGIR*, *ia-aḥ-qú-bu-um*.²³
- *Issachar* (יִשָּׂשכָר, *yīśśākār*): Leah named her fifth son Issachar, saying ‘God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband’ (Gen 30:18). The root ŠKR appears in Amorite names: *yaškur-’il* (*ia-áš-ku-ur-DINGIR*), ‘god has rewarded’,²⁴ and in Egyptian (Brooklyn Papyrus) as *sk-ra-3iw*. Albright explained biblical יִשָּׂשכָר (*yīśśākār*) as a development of an Š causative form, *yšškr*, with two initial sibilants reduced to one by assimilation, giving *yašāškur*, ‘May (deity) grant favour’.²⁵ The name may better be explained as *yīstakar*, a Gt passive form, with assimilation of *t* to *ś*, as Albright proposed earlier²⁶ (although no forms with infixed *t* are listed). The verb is given the meaning ‘to hire out’ in Ugaritic.
- *Joseph* (יוֹסֵף, *yôsef*): At Joseph’s birth, Rachel said “‘God has taken away my disgrace.” So she named him Joseph, and said “May the Lord add to me another son”’ (Gen 30:23,24), which allows the preterite sense, ‘He has added’, with an interpretation following the later, imperfective or precativ sense. Although no example of the verb *ysp* is known among Amorite names in cuneiform, the Execration Texts include *asp-hdu*, ‘Haddu gathered, received (me)’. The form is seen in other initial *y/w* verbs

20. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 119.

21. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 122.

22. Names formed from the root ‘QB apparently have the idea of protecting as being close behind.

23. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 103, 375–376.

24. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 446–447.

25. Albright, ‘Northwest-Semitic Names’, 227, fn. 32.

26. William F. Albright, ‘The Topography of the Tribe of Issachar’, ZAW 44, no. Jahresband, (1926): 234, n.4, <https://doi.org/10.1515/zatw.1926.44.1.225>. For the Gt form see Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 187–189. Such an explanation seems preferable to the long-standing *ʾīś śākār* GK, §47b, n.1.

yawšibu (*ia-aw-ši-bu*), yawšī²-il (*ia-aw-ší-DINGIR*)²⁷ and so need not be taken as originally a Hiphil (causative) form *yāhōsēp* with *h* elided in the light of the rarity of the Hiphil from Amorite names.²⁸

- Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל, *yisrā'ēl*): Jacob's name was changed to Israel 'because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome' (Gen 32:29; cf. Hos 12:3). If the base is ŠRY 'protect, guard', Amorite *yašrā* (*ia-as-ra'*), *yašrā-dagan* (*ia-ās-ra-da-gan*) may be compared,²⁹ with the meaning as established by Leonid Kogan.³⁰

The contexts for Isaac and Joseph might imply a future sense at first sight, but they permit a past equally – Sarah had laughed, and God had added a son to Rachel.

4. Other Patriarchal Names

Some of the patriarchal names of other types also find cognates in the Amorite onomasticon and of those that do not most still fit into its range. (This is not the place to discuss all the names in Gen 46.)

4.1 Abraham's Family

- Abram (אַבְרָם, *ab-rām*, Gen 11:26; 17:5) is one of numerous names based on RWM, '(my) father is exalted', cf. Mari *abī-rām* (*a-bi-ra-am*), etc., with *brm*, *a-bi-ra-mi* at Ugarit,³¹ and many later occurrences. The form אַבְרָהָם, *abrāhām* is usually explained as an expansion of Abram. Were it to appear in cuneiform, it might not be distinguished as the syllable /ha/ could be elided.³²
- Sarai, 'princess' (שָׂרַי, *śāray*, Gen 17:15), may show -ay as an old feminine ending, 'she is the princess', replaced in שָׂרָה, *śārâ*, or it may be a hypocoristic for *śārāy-X*, 'X is princess', with both possibilities existing in

27. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 212–216.

28. For the absence of an H-prefix causative in Amorite, see Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 336–337; Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 59–62 and 'Amorite', 193. Note, however, the recognition of three H-prefix causative forms in the Amorite–Akkadian bilingual tablets, George and Krebernik, 'Two Remarkable Vocabularies', 134.

29. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 313, 455.

30. Leonid Kogan, 'The Etymology of Israel', *Babel und Bibel* 3 (2007): 237–242, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781575065823-011>.

31. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 304, 443–444.

32. See Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 242–243, §20.2. Note that Rainey, *Sacred Bridge*, 58 read name E55 in the Posener Execration Texts as *'a-b-u-l₂a-h-n-a*, Abu-la-hana', not as *'bwrhn'*, which Albright had compared with Abraham, 'The Land of Damascus between 1850 and 1750 B.C.', *BASOR* 83 (1941): 30–36, see 34.

names at Ugarit.³³ The noun *šarratum*, ‘queen’, was current in Akkadian names from the third millennium onwards and could produce a stative form *šarrat*, becoming *šārâ* in Hebrew, but no comparable Amorite name has been noted.

- *Qeturah* (קֶטֹרָה, *qəṭûrâ*, Gen 25:1), ‘dusky’, or ‘fragrant’ as ‘smoked’, the name of Abraham’s third wife, is not attested among personal names, nor are other derivatives from QTR, but its form as a passive participle is present in Amorite names.³⁴
- *Esau* (עֵשָׂו, *‘ēšāw*, Gen 25:25) remains unidentified among the ancient onomastica prior to possible Nabataean or South Arabian forms from Hellenistic and Roman times. However, very few names associated with people living in Transjordan at earlier times have been preserved.
- *Rebecca* (רִבְקָה, *ribqâ*, Gen 24:15) Two Old Babylonian texts concerning an activity with cattle contain a verb with the root RBQ,³⁵ although the precise meaning is unclear. Ran Zadok registered the names *ri-ib/p-qa(-tum)* on a seal from Bahrain and *ra-b/pi-qa(-nu)* at Mari.³⁶ These early attestations can be added to the name’s commonly adduced link to the mediaeval Hebrew ‘team’ and the Arabic verb meaning ‘tie, link’, making explanation of it as metathesis from **baqārâ* ‘cattle’ – a female form unknown in Hebrew – unnecessary.³⁷ Animal names are common throughout Semitic name-giving, as seen in Jacob’s wives’ names: לֵאָה, *lē’āh*, ‘cow’, רָחֵל, *rāḥēl*, ‘ewe’.³⁸

33. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 352–353, §5.80; cf. Frauke Grondahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, StPohl 1 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 50–51; Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography*, OLA 28 (Louvain: Peeters, 1988), 148, 162.

34. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 330, §5.28; Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 140. Streck (160, n.2; 206, n.1) marks as uncertain Gelb’s claim for occurrence of the base QTR (in ‘La lingua degli Amoriti’, *Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, (ser. 8, vol. 13, fasc. 3–4, 1958): 143–164, see 151), preferring to read QTR.

35. CAD R (1999) 9–10.

36. Zadok, *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy*, 91. These names in cuneiform are not included in the compilations by Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, or Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, who, perhaps, consider them Akkadian.

37. See Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1928), 10; Hans Rechenmacher, *Althebräische Personennamen*, *Lehrbuch orientalischer Sprachen*, II: Canaanite 1 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (2012), 171.

38. See Annemarie Frank and Hans Rechenmacher, *Morphologie, Syntax und Semantik Althebräischer Personennamen* (Munich/Würzburg, 2020) 155–156 §4.2.2, <https://doi.org/10.5282/ubm/epub.73364>. For some animal names in Amorite, see Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 348, § 5.70.

4.2 Names of Jacob's Family

The narratives about Jacob's children famously explain their names with wordplay.

- *Reuben* (רְאוּבֵן, *rəʾû-bēn*, Gen 29:32): 'Leah bore a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "It is because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; surely now my husband will love me."' Amorite names do not have the verb R³H, 'to see', using ³MR, as in Akkadian. The noun *binu* or *bunu*, 'son' appears in several Amorite names.³⁹
- *Simeon* (שִׁמְעוֹן, *šimʿôn*, Gen 29:33): '... when she gave birth to a son, she said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son, also"; and she called his name Simeon.' The root ŠM^c yields many names in Amorite, but not a form *šmʿn* which occurs later in Ugaritic.⁴⁰ The suffix *-ān*, Hebrew *-ōn*, may mark a diminutive or an adjectival form.⁴¹
- *Levi* (לֵוִי, *lēwî*, Gen 29:34): 'Again she [Leah] conceived and bore a son, she said, "Now this time my husband will be joined to me, because I have born him three sons"; therefore his name was called Levi.' The root LWY 'to surround, accompany' was current in Babylonian from the third millennium onwards. In 1980 Gelb attributed several names to the base LWY, 'to surround, accompany', e.g. *la-i-im*, *la-wu-DN*, *li-ú-um*.⁴² Martin Noth had already linked *la-wi-il* with Levi in 1956, and Ran Zadok followed in 1988.⁴³ However, Streck and Golinets prefer to interpret some of these names as forms of L³Y, 'to be strong, conquer', (*la-e*, *la-ú*, *la-i-tum*) and others as forms of HY³, 'to live', with assimilation of the /h/, as in *ia-wi* beside *ia-aḥ-wi* and precative *la-wi* beside *la-aḥ-wi*. They do not find cases of LWY in Amorite names.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, a form *la-wi* could still be understood as a participle from LWY.
- *Judah* (יְהוּדָה, *yəhûḏâ*, Gen 29:35): 'And she conceived again and bore a son, and said "This time I will praise the Lord"; therefore she called his name Judah.' Judah, *yəhûḏâ*, remains problematic. In Hebrew the root YDH/WDY 'to praise' produces Hophal (III theme passive) verbal forms which are

39. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 170–171, §2.38.

40. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 449–451: Ug. *ša-am-ú-nu*.

41. For the ending *-ān/ōn*, see Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 341–345, §§ 5.51–5.63; Frank and Rechenmacher, *Morphologie, Syntax und Semantik*, 55, §0136.

42. Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis*, 24, 314.

43. Martin Noth, 'Remarks on the Sixth Volume of Mari Texts', *JSS* 1 (1956): 322–333, see 327, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jss/1.4.322>; Zadok, *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy*, 71; cf. Rechenmacher, *Althebräische Personennamen*, 163.

44. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 244–245, §2.168; Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 308–310, 314–316, 395–397.

similar but not identical.⁴⁵ While the ending -â is rare for a man's name, except as an abbreviation of YHWH, בְּרִיעָה, *barî'â* is a son of Asher (Gen 46:17, etc.) and others occur in 1 Chronicles (e.g. צִבְבָּה, *ṣōḇḇâ*, 4:8; רִנָּה, *rinnāh*, 4:20). Among Amorite masculine names some short forms end in -at,⁴⁶ so it seems unnecessary to treat Judah as a place name, following Albrecht Alt, who compared it with the place name Jogbehah (יִגְבָּהּ, *yogbāh*), an explanation widely adopted. Hans Zobel has presented a comprehensive survey of attempts to explain Judah.⁴⁷

- *Dan* (דָּן, *dān*, Gen 30:5,6): '... she bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and also has heard my voice and given me a son"; therefore she called his name Dan.' The root DYN produces the participle *dān*.⁴⁸
- *Naphtali* (נַפְתָּלִי, *naṣṭālī*, Gen 30:7,8): 'She bore Jacob a second son. Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed"; so she called his name Naphtali.' The Babylonian verb *patālu* means 'to twine, twist', but no personal names formed from it are listed in the dictionaries. The name *pa-da-la-an*, which appears among 955 slaves at Mari, might be related.⁴⁹
- *Gad* (גָּד, *gād*, Gen 30:10,11): 'Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, "Good fortune!" so she called his name Gad.' From the base GYD, 'to be good', derive Amorite verbal forms (*yagīd*, etc.) and Ugaritic has names *gd*, *ga-ad-ya*.⁵⁰
- *Bilhah* (בִּלְהָה, *bilhā*, Gen 29:29): 'Rachel ... gave him her maid Bilhah.' No name comparable to Bilhah has appeared in the Amorite onomasticon.
- *Zilpah* (זִלְפָּה, *zilpā*, Gen 30:9): 'Leah gave Zilpah to Jacob.' The form of

45. My attempt to explain Judah as a Hophal of YDH, 'may he be praised' ('The Meaning of the Name Judah', *ZAW* 86 (1974): 216–218) would fall in the face of the absence of Hophal forms in Amorite known hitherto. Cf. n.28 and Rechenmacher, *Personennamen als theologische Aussagen*, Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 50 (St Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1997), 60, n.172, but the Amorite–Akkadian bilingual tablets show H-causative forms were current, George and Krebernik, 'Two Remarkable Vocabularies', 134.

46. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 315–316, §4.9.

47. Hans J. Zobel, 'יהודה', *ThWAT* 3:511–533 (English translation: *TDOT* 5:482–499); cf. Bob Becking, 'Yehud', in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 925; Raymond de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context*, OTS 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 117, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004497658>.

48. *da-ni*: Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 301, 382, cf. Ugaritic X-dn.

49. Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis*, 338; Georges Dossin, 'Deux listes nominatives du Règne de Sûmu-Iamam', *RA* 65 (1971): 37–66, see 51 ix 33.

50. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 387–388.

Zilpah's name echoes Bilhah's. Both share the form of short names with feminine suffix found in Amorite,⁵¹ but neither finds a clear analogy. Gelb listed one name at Mari, *zi-li-b/pu-um* from ZLB, without further note.⁵²

- Asher (אֲשֵׁר, *ʾāšēr*, Gen 30:13): 'Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. And Leah said, "Happy am I! For the women will call me happy"; so she called his name Asher ("happy").' Albright equated the feminine *ʾš-ra* in the Brooklyn Papyrus with Asher, meaning 'happy'. Based on the Hebrew, Streck interpreted Amorite *an-nu-a-aš-ri* (Mari), *ʾannu-ʾašrī* '(god) Annu is my happiness';⁵³ cf. Ugaritic *išryt* n. f. 'happiness'. Golinets has argued that the base is *ʾšR*, 'protect, guard', which he sees also in Israel (see above).⁵⁴
- Zebulun (זְבֻלֹן, *zəbūlān*, Gen 30:20): 'Leah ... bore Jacob a sixth son. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good dowry, now my husband will honour me ..."; so she called his name Zebulun.' The root ZBL, 'carry, rule', occurs in the name *ziblānum* and Amorite *zubālān* (*zu-ba-la-an*).⁵⁵ Cf. Ugaritic *zbl* 'prince'.⁵⁶
- Dinah (דִּינָה, *dīnā*, Gen 30:21): 'Afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.' The form of the name may be compared with Amorite short forms, e.g. *binatum*.⁵⁷
- Ben-oni (בֶּן-אוֹנִי, *ben-ʾōnī*, Gen 35:18): Amorite has *binu*, 'son' (see Reuben), and many names call on a god to 'hear the humble' (*ʾanê*), e.g. *Šima-ʾīla-ʾanê*

51. Cf. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 314–315, §4.7.

52. Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis*, 371. In Arabic the root *ḌLF* 'hard, rugged' gives *ḍalifat* 'a woman avoiding unseemly behaviour' (Arabic *ḍ* = Babylonian and Hebrew *z*) which might lead to a personal name Zilpah. Noth, *Israelitischen Personenamen*, 10, followed by Zadok, *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy*, derived it from ZLP 'to drop, drip, sprinkle' and mentioned *DLP* 'to be small (of nose)', 88.

53. Albright, 'Northwest-Semitic Names', 229, 231; Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 320–321, §5.5.7 n.3. Note Gelb, *Computer-Aided Analysis*, 14, cf. 53, rendered *ʾšR* 'to provide food'.

54. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 364–365.

55. Albrecht Goetze, 'Diverse Names in an Old-Babylonian Pay-List', *BASOR* 95 (1944): 18–24 [23–24], <https://doi.org/10.2307/1355171>; Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 122, §1.95, *zubūltu* 'prince', and 331, §5.32; cf. Ugaritic *zbl*, 'prince'.

56. Kurt Sethe, *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten*, identified *ṭb3nw* in the Execration Texts with Zebulun (no. 6), which Albright accepted ('The Egyptian Empire in Asia in the Twenty-first Century B.C.', *JPOS* 6 (1926): 223–256, see 239), followed by John A. Wilson, 'Execration of Asiatic Princes' and Ritner, 'Execration Texts'. However, the initial *ṭ* does not correspond to West Semitic *z*, but to *s*, so the equation is no longer accepted, see Benjamin Sass, *Studia Alphabetica*, OBO 102 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 18; Rainey, *Sacred Bridge*, transcribed the name as *Subūlunu*.

57. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 314–316, §§4.7–4.9.

(*si-ma-aḥ-i-la-a-ni-e*).⁵⁸

- *Benjamin* (בִּנְיָמִין, *bin-yāmîn*, Gen 35:18): ‘Son of the right(hand)’ i.e., ‘favoured’. This name mirrors the name of a major tribe in the Mari documents, the *binū-yamīna*, ‘southerners’, opposite to the *binū-sim’āl*, ‘northerners’.⁵⁹ However, the identity of the names should be treated as coincidental, the circumstances of his birth justifying the name of Rachel’s son and, one may suppose, of the man *bini-yamīna* (*bi-ni-ia-mi-na*) recorded in one text from Mari.⁶⁰
- *Manasseh* (מְנַשֶּׁה, *mənaššê*, Gen 41:51): ‘Joseph said, “God has made me forget all my hardship.”’ The root NŠH/Y, ‘to forget’ (Akk. *mašû*), has not been found among Amorite names, but the form of the name, a participle of the D, intensive or second theme, is seen in several and in the slave-girl’s name *munahḫima* (*mnhm*’, Wilbour Pap. 11a⁶¹).
- *Ephraim* (אֶפְרַיִם, *ʿeḫrayim*, Gen 41:52): Joseph said ‘God has made me fruitful.’ Neither the form nor the meaning of this name is clear. The root conveys the idea of fruit, with the noun פֶּרִי, *pārî* ‘fruit’, yet no form has the initial *aleph*, nor the apparent dual ending. That is contained in some place names (e.g. אֶדְרַיִם, *ʿăḏōrayim*, 2 Chr 11:9; רָמַתַּיִם, *rāmāṭayim*, 1 Sam 1:1) hence the common deduction that Ephraim was at first a place name.⁶² Yet the personal names אֶפְיִם, *ʿappāyim*, and שְׁחָרַיִם, *šahārayim*, seem to indicate a condition (‘double nose’? – 1 Chr 2:30,31) and time of birth (twilight, 1 Chr 8:8). The initial *aleph* may be treated as an adjectival marker, which apparently acts as an elative in Amorite names.⁶³ However, at present it is wise to accept the verdict of Siegfried Herrmann in 1992: ‘a reliable translation of “Ephraim” would seem impossible’.⁶⁴

Just as some of the patriarchal names have no equivalents among the Amorite names in cuneiform texts (Levi, Manasseh), so the contemporary Egyptian

58. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 124–126.

59. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 170–171, §238. See the discussion by Daniel Fleming, ‘Genesis in History and Tradition: The Syrian Background of Israel’s Ancestors, Reprise’, in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 216–219, 221–222.

60. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 301, §3.60.

61. Albright, ‘Northwest-Semitic Names’, 227; Schneider, ‘Die semitischen und ägyptischen Namen’, 261–262.

62. Noth, *Israelitischen Personenamen*, 64; Zadok, *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy*, 163; Rechenmacher, *Althebräische Personennamen*, 76–77; Frank and Rechenmacher, *Morphologie, Syntax und Semantik*, 1.

63. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 334–335, §5.41.

64. See Siegfried Herrmann, ‘Ephraim’, *ABD* 2:551b.

Execration Texts present ‘Amorite’ names absent from cuneiform sources, e.g. *yanki-ʾilu* (root NKY, Posener List E9), *yakmis-ʾummu* (root KMS, E57). No sources can offer a complete list of ‘Amorite’ names!

5. West Semitic Linguistic Changes

The patriarchal names exemplify a stage in the history of West Semitic names. Information from various texts and personal names, although discontinuous, shows that major changes took place in the West Semitic language family during the second millennium BC. The QTL stative form took on a past sense (QTL-perfective), and a yQTL form appeared with present-future, ‘imperfective’, sense.⁶⁵ (That form had had a final vowel, *yaqtulu*, which was lost. These are simple definitions, all that are needed here.)

5.1 Appearance of QTL-Perfective in West Semitic Names

The El-Amarna letters sent from Levantine towns to Egypt in the fourteenth century BC contain rare examples of QTL-perfective names, such as *da-ga-an-ta-ka-la* for *Dagan-takala*, ‘He trusted Dagan’,⁶⁶ while tablets written in the local language from Ugarit reveal the process nearing completion in the next century,⁶⁷ although there the alphabetic consonantal writing system makes

65. For discussions, see Peter Gentry, ‘The System of the Finite Verb in Classical Biblical Hebrew’, *HS* 39 (1998): 7–39, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hbr.1998.0003>; Tania Notarius, ‘Narrative Tenses in Archaic Hebrew in the North-West Semitic Linguistic Context’, in *Neue Beiträge zur Semitistik: Fünftes Treffen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Semitistik in der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft vom 15.–17. Februar 2012 an der Universität Basel*, ed. Viktor Golinets, Hanna Jenni, Hans-Peter Mathys, and Samuel Sarasin, AOAT 425 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2015), 237–259; Joseph Lam and Dennis Pardee, ‘Standard/Classical Biblical Hebrew’, in *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew, 1: Periods, Corpora, and Reading Traditions*, ed. W. Randall Garr and Steven E. Fassberg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 1–18 [14], <https://doi.org/10.5325/j.ctv18r6rnv.4>; Alexander Andrason and Juan-Pablo Vita, ‘Amorite: A Northwest Semitic Language?’, *JSS* 63.1 (2018): 19–58, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jss/fgx035>; Aren M. Wilson-Wright, ‘The Canaanite Languages’, in *The Semitic Languages*, ed. John Huehnergard and Na’ama Pat-El, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 509–532, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429025563-20>. The yQTLu forms have now been recognised in George and Krebernik, ‘Two Remarkable Vocabularies’.

66. Richard S. Hess, *Amarna Personal Names*, ASOR Dissertation Series 9 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 64–65, no. 59.

67. Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 45–47, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781575066523>.

it difficult to be certain whether QTL forms in personal names are stative or adjectival, rather than perfective.⁶⁸

Egyptian transcriptions of West Semitic names show Amorite types in the Twelfth Dynasty Execration Texts (e.g. *yaqir-‘ammu*, *yap‘anu*⁶⁹) and in the Brooklyn Papyrus (e.g. *munahhima*, *‘immī-sukru*⁷⁰), whereas hieroglyphs on an Eighteenth Dynasty statuette from Deir el-Medineh appear to have a QaTaL Perfective, *‘āb-nāṭān*, ‘father has given’.⁷¹

5.2 QTL-Perfective: a Late Bronze Age Innovation

Having analysed the recorded names, Michael Streck could state ‘Qatal penetrates the West Semitic onomastica on a larger scale only in the first millennium BC’ while admitting that it may have appeared in Amorite before that language went out of existence.⁷² (A shift of meaning for the verbal forms is likely to have taken place in the language well before it affected personal names.) Texts from the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries BC written in the Levant are too few to provide a clear picture.

6. The Context for the Hebrew Names

As a result of these changes, by the Iron Age, Classical Hebrew exhibits names of the QTL-perfective form beside names of the yQTL-perfective form. This had been noted but not applied consistently to studies of Hebrew names until Hans Rechenmacher set out the case in 1997 and again in 2012, followed by his complete analysis of Hebrew names with Annemarie Frank in 2020.⁷³

Translating the patriarchal names of yQTL type as perfectives reveals how well the narrative fits them with the Middle Bronze Age onomastic style. As observed earlier, the occurrence of some of those names down to Roman times precludes them from serving as signals of a specific historical setting, while, of course, not ruling out a Middle Bronze Age date.

68. Golinets, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 2, 407.

69. Wilson, ‘Execration of Asiatic Princes’, and Ritner, ‘Execration Texts’.

70. Albright, ‘Northwest-Semitic Names’.

71. Thomas Schneider, *Asiatische Personennamen in ägyptischen Quellen des Neuen Reiches*, OBO 114 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 18, no. 10; 137, no. 292 *my-t-r-š3-m-‘* may be *mēter-šāma‘* ‘The excellent one heard’ cf. *mēterānum* (YTR), Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 192, §2.89, 347, §5.68.

72. Michael P. Streck, ‘Namengebung. F. Westsemitisch in Keilschrifttexten des I. Jt.’, in *RLA* 9 (1998): 131–134 [132] and ‘Amorite’, 452–459 [457]; cf. *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 143–144, §1.126.

73. Rechenmacher, *Personennamen als theologische Aussagen*, 41–53; *Althebräische Personennamen*, §§192–201; Frank and Rechenmacher, *Morphologie, Syntax und Semantik*.

However, the onomastic context of the names strongly indicates a Middle Bronze Age date for them, for many are clearly consistent with the Amorite name patterns of that era, not only in the use of the prefix conjugation (yQTL), but also in the absence of QTL-perfective names. The names of Jacob's family of seventy migrating to Egypt, listed in Genesis 46, show ten men with yQTL names (e.g. יִשְׁוָה, *yīšwâ*, יַחְזָאֵל, *yahṣa-ʿēl*, Gen 46:17,24), but none at all having names formed with the QTL-perfective.⁷⁴ In contrast, when the Israelites left Egypt, of the thirty-seven men listed in Exodus 6:14-25, four in the fourth and fifth generations bore QTL-perfective names, אֶלְעָפָן, *ʿel-ṣāpān*, אֶלְעָזָר, *ʿel-ʿāzār*, אֶלְקָנָה, *ʿel-qānâ*, אַבְיָאֶסֶר, *ʾābî-ʾāsāp̄*. Similarly, at the census in the second year of the Exodus, the twenty-four tribal leaders named in Numbers 1:5-15 include six with QTL-perfective names, נַתָּנָאֵל, *naṭan-ʿēl*, אֶלִישָׁמַע, *ʿēlî-šāmāʿ*, גַּמְלִיאֵל, *gamlî-ʿēl*, פַּדְהָצוּר, *paḏâ-ṣûr*, פַּגְעִיָּאֵל, *pagʿî-ʿēl*, אֶלִיָּסָפ, *ʿel-yāsāp̄*. To be noted also is the absence of QTL-perfective names among descendants of Keturah and Esau (Gen 25; 36).⁷⁵ This difference agrees with attested changes in the pattern of naming between the Middle Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age. While the earlier period provides a far greater number of sources, there are sufficient sources from both periods to establish this as an onomastic pattern. Whereas cases of the transitive conjugation QTL with perfective sense are absent from the extensive Amorite onomasticon, they begin to occur, as noted, in the El Amarna letters. At Ugarit the yQTL form and the QTL form apparently conveyed senses of completion and incompleteness, without implying time. This accords with evidence from other extra-biblical sources which led Michael Streck to state, as cited already, 'Qatal penetrates the West Semitic onomastic on a larger scale only in the first mill. BC.'⁷⁶

7. Conclusion

Sources from the second millennium BC show that the patriarchal names agree in type with Amorite names, notably, but not only, of the yQTL form, and in context. There are no QTL-perfective conjugated forms among them. This conclusion suggests that the composer(s) of the patriarchal narratives,

74. The name of Naphtali's fourth son, שִׁלֵּם (*šillēm*, Gen 46:24), may be explained as a stative or adjectival form.

75. The sons of Midyan, son of Keturah include אֶלְדָּעָה (*ʿel-dāʿâ* (Gen 25:4), a name which has puzzled commentators (Rechenmacher, *Personennamen als theologische Aussagen*, 104), since Hebrew knows no root DʿY. However, Streck notes an Amorite name *i-la-da-ḥa-at* 'god is knowledge' from YDʿ, which could yield this name (Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon* 1, 319, §5.4, n.1.)

76. 'Amorite', 457, see n.59.

whether writing during the Hebrew monarchy, or even, as some aver, after it, drew on reliable ancient traditions and showed in their narratives that they were aware that those names had past reference by explaining them with QTL-perfective verbs (e.g. Rachel's exclamations in Gen 30:6,8). The Exodus narratives, on the other hand, introduce QTL-perfective forms which became common in later generations. The alternative, less likely conclusion would envisage those composer(s) in the monarchy or later having such accurate knowledge about onomastic patterns of the second millennium BC that they avoided the anachronism of giving QTL-perfective forms, well established in their time, to the patriarchal characters, but, in contrast, did give them to some of the Exodus generation.⁷⁷

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77. Annemarie Frank and Hans Rechenmacher asked 'Is it feasible to assume that wholly fictional literature from much later times could produce such a high degree of linguistically plausible naming?' ('Wie plausibel ist die Annahme, rein fiktive Literatur aus sehr viel späterer Zeit könnte ein so hohes Maß an sprachhistorisch plausibler Namengebung produzieren?'; Frank and Rechenmacher, *Morphologie, Syntax und Semantik*, §0016). Pauli Rahkonen's recent study argues that the patriarchal names come from the second millennium BC, for largely different reasons: 'Personal Names of the Pentateuch in the Northwest Semitic Context: A Comparative Study', *SJOT* 33.1 (2019): 111–135, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09018328.2019.1600259>.

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