

# Remarks on the Canaanite Origin of Eve

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IN THE CREATION NARRATIVE, Adam and Eve are the primordial couple from which the human race descends. It has long been recognized that their names are unique in the Hebrew Bible and have a ring of antiquity to them. The name  $\text{ʔādām}$  and the common noun  $\text{ʔādāmā}$ , “ground,” derive from the same root and form a wordplay.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Adam is attested as a Northwest Semitic personal name (hereafter PN, plural PNN) with exact parallels in Amorite and the texts from Ebla.<sup>2</sup> Though the biblical writer saw no need to

<sup>1</sup> Note Gen 2:7, “The Lord God formed man ( $\text{hāʔādām}$ ) from the dust of the ground ( $\text{hāʔādāmā}$ ).” Throughout this study, an asterisk (\*) marks forms that are original, unattested, or reconstructed.

<sup>2</sup> Note the two attestations of the Amorite PN *a-da-mu* registered by I. J. Gelb, *Computer-aided Analysis of Amorite* (Assyriological Studies 21; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980) 555 (hereafter: *CAAA*). The name is also known at Ebla, both as a one-word name (*a-da-mu*) and as an element of compound PNN (e.g., *a-dam-ma-lik*); see A. Archi, *Testi amministrativi: Assegnazioni di tessuti* (Archivi reali di Ebla, testi 1; Rome: Missione archeologica italiana in Siria, 1985) 234. Adam is not found as a PN elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible or among the many Hebrew PNN attested in Iron-Age inscriptions. Y. Aharoni’s proposal (*Arad Inscriptions* [ed. and rev. Anson F. Rainey; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981] 68 with n. 1) to restore the PN  $*[\text{ʔ}]dm$  in Arad 39.1 must summarily be rejected in favor of the less difficult reading  $*[q]dm$ . For further discussion and examples, see Richard S. Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1–11* (AOAT 234; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993) 59–62. On ( $\text{hāʔādām}$ ) in Genesis 1–5, see Richard S. Hess, “Splitting the Adam: The Usage of  $\text{ʔādām}$  in Genesis 1–v,” *Studies in the Pentateuch* (VTSup

explain the name Adam to his readers, the name of the woman, *ḥawwâ*, is immediately followed by an etiology: *kî hiw' hāyētâ 'ēm kol-ḥāy*, “for she was the mother of all living” (Gen 3:20). In this clause, the name *ḥawwâ* is explained by the Hebrew adjective *ḥay*, “living,” forming a second wordplay in the narrative. Etiological narratives usually provide popular or folk etymologies, on the basis of Hebrew, for names whose original meanings lie at the margins of the Hebrew lexicon, or even outside it. It is the very strangeness of the names that calls for etymological explanations. Certainly *ḥawwâ* falls into this category, and it occasions no surprise that modern scholars have offered several different interpretations of this name.

In this study, I intend to bring the evidence of other Northwest Semitic PNN to determine the most probable interpretation of the biblical PN *ḥawwâ*. This comparative study will aid in evaluating various competing interpretations, thereby reducing the interpretative options and revealing relevant pieces of evidence bearing on the etymology of *ḥawwâ* that have not been cited in previous discussions.

### I. The Roots \**ḥwy* and \**ḥyy* in Northwest Semitic

Though exact parallels to the biblical PN Adam were easily identified in Amorite and in the Ebla texts, such is not the case with biblical *ḥawwâ*. Knudsen compares the Amorite PNN *ḥa-ia-tum* and [*ḥ*]a-a-ia-tum to biblical *ḥawwâ*,<sup>3</sup> but these Amorite PNN are the etymological and morphological ancestors of Hebrew *ḥayyâ*, “living thing, animal.” The absence of an earlier, morphological parallel from the same root forces us to broaden our search and trace the distribution of the roots \**ḥwy* and \**ḥyy*, both meaning “to live,” throughout the Northwest Semitic languages.<sup>4</sup> This change of strategy has the added benefit of shedding light on the exact relationship (if any exists at all) between the biblical name *ḥawwâ* and the Hebrew adjective *ḥay*.

41; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 1–15; and D. Bourguet, “L’homme ou bien Adam?” *ETR* 67 (1992) 323–27. These two writers concur that the anarthrous *ʾādām* in Gen 4:25 marks the shift from the word’s use as a title (so Hess) or a common noun (so Bourguet) to its use as a PN.

<sup>3</sup> E. E. Knudsen, “Amorite Grammar: A Comparative Statement,” *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau, on the Occasion of His Eighty-fifth Birthday, November 14th, 1991* (2 vols.; ed. Alan S. Kaye; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991) 1. 871.

<sup>4</sup> For a list of other \**ḥwy* roots, see J. A. Soggin, “La radice *ḥwh* II in ebraico con speciale riferimento al Ps. 19,3b,” *AION* 27 (1967) 9–11 (reprinted and translated in J. A. Soggin, *Old Testament and Oriental Studies* [BibOr 29; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1975] 203–5). In general, their meanings have not led scholars to connect them with the name *ḥawwâ*.

Both of these roots are attested in Amorite. In his glossary, under the entry (root) ḤYY, Gelb lists a basic (or qal) imperfect verb \**yaḥī* and the adjectives or nouns *ḥayyum* (masc.), *ḥayyatum* (fem.), and *ḥayya* (fem.).<sup>5</sup> Gelb has no entry ḤWY, because he does not recognize the root, but Huffmon and Cross are surely correct in identifying causative verbal forms of this root in such Amorite PNN as *ya-aḥ-wi-ilu*(DINGIR), *ia-aḥ-wi-ilu*(DINGIR), *ya-aḥ-wi-ili*(DINGIR-li), and *ya-aḥ-wi-na-si*, to cite only the more obvious examples.<sup>6</sup>

Both roots continue to be productive in later Northwest Semitic languages. For Ugaritic (and also Phoenician), D. Marcus has argued persuasively for the following distribution: \**ḥyy* for the G-stem (or qal), and \**ḥwy* for the D-stem (or piel) and its nominal derivatives.<sup>7</sup> The contribution of these languages should not be underestimated. While the evidence for the use and distribution of these roots in Amorite is, by the nature of the case, restricted to the onomasticon, Marcus collects and analyzes Ugaritic and Phoenician usages of these roots primarily from texts (and only secondarily from PNN) to establish this distribution.<sup>8</sup> For our purposes, it is the occurrence of these roots in PNN that is especially pertinent for the interpretation of biblical *ḥawwā*, and a brief review of some of these names is in order. For the G-stem, compare the Ugaritic PNN *ḥyʿil*, *ḥa-ya-il*, *ʿbdḥy*, *abdi*(IR)-*ḥa-ya*, *yḥṣdq*, *yḥšr*, and *ya-ḥé-šar*.<sup>9</sup> D-stem verbal forms have been found in the Phoenician and Punic PNN *ʿštrḥwt*,

<sup>5</sup> Gelb, *CAAA*, 19, for the list of Amorite PNN subsumed under this root, see his p 248

<sup>6</sup> F M Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1973) 62-63 with n 65, H B Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore Johns Hopkins, 1965) 70-73, 191-92 Gelb (*CAAA*, 19) mistakenly subsumed these names under his root entry HWY, "to be, to become" or "to desire"

<sup>7</sup> D Marcus, "The Verb 'to Live' in Ugaritic," *JSS* 17 (1962) 76-82

<sup>8</sup> An especially convincing form is the D-stem infinitive *ḥu-wu-ú* from the quadrilingual vocabulary lists The form is cited by Marcus, "Verb 'to Live,'" 81 (as *ḥu-wa-u*), see now the thorough discussion by J Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription* (HSS 32, Atlanta Scholars, 1987) 81-82, 123-24, 289-90 n 107

H Tawil ("Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zākīr, and the Nērab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions," *Or* 43 [1974] 41, 48-50) reads the end of line 4 of the Hadad inscription as *wšnm ḥwyw* and translates, "And they (the gods) kept (me) alive for years" Though disputing Tawil's interpretation, Josef Tropper (*Die Inschriften von Zincirli Neue Edition und vergleichende Grammatik des phönizischen, samʿalischen und aramaischen Textkorpus* [ALASP 6, Munster Ugarit-Verlag, 1993] 63-64) confirms the reading of the verb *ḥwyw* by reading the end of the line *wšm\*/n\*m ḥ\*wyw* (preferring the reading \**šmm* over \**šnm*) Tawil appeals to Canaanite influence to account for the verb *ḥwyw* in an Aramaic inscription, compare Tropper's discussion of the form (p 64)

<sup>9</sup> F Grondahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (Studia Pohl 1, Rome Biblical Institute Press, 1967) 137, 305, 310 On the last two names, see also Marcus, "Verb 'to Live,'" 78

*pmyhwy*<sup>2</sup>, *yhw*<sup>2</sup>, *yhw*(<sup>2</sup>)*ln* (= Neo- or Late Babylonian *ia-a-hu-lu-nu/ni*),<sup>10</sup> *yhwmlk*, and *thw*<sup>2</sup>.<sup>11</sup> The qal-stem verbal form is not widely attested in the Phoenician onomasticon, but compare the PN *yhwmlk* and its cuneiform equivalent, Neo-Assyrian *ia-ḫi-mil-ki*.<sup>12</sup>

Most discussions of the use of these two roots end at this point, failing to cite or discuss some pertinent PNN in the Hebrew Bible as well as in Hebrew inscriptions.<sup>13</sup> In the Bible, qal verbal forms are attested in *yēḫīʿēl* (borne by at least eight persons),<sup>14</sup> *yēḫīʿēli* (a patronym, 1 Chr 26:21,22), and *yēḫīyā* (1 Chr 15:24). The evidence for the root \**hwy* in biblical PNN is restricted to two names at most. The first name, *yēḫwʿēl* (2 Chr 29:14), appears as a ketib variant to the qere *yēḫīʿēl*. Considering that the consonants waw and yod are susceptible to confusion in certain scripts used during the transmission of the biblical text, and that this very name occurs many times elsewhere in the Bible with the spelling *yēḫīʿēl*, it seems unlikely that any weight can be attached to the ketib reading with waw.<sup>15</sup> The second PN, variously spelled *mēḫūyāʿēl* and *mēḫīyyāʿēl*, appears to be an ancient pre-Israelite name (Gen 4:18). Though *mēḫīyyāʿēl* is not the subject of a ketib/qere variation, one still might argue that it is the original form, and that the form with waw arose from confusion and is, therefore, textually corrupt. In this case, however, morphological considerations come into play and override that argument. The prefixed mem on the name indicates that the initial element is either a derived-stem participle or a mem-preformative noun. The first alternative is to be preferred, because the initial

<sup>10</sup> R. Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods according to the Babylonian Sources* (Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel, Monograph series 3; [Haifa]: University of Haifa, 1979) 19; idem, "Phoenicians, Philistines, and Moabites in Mesopotamia," *BASOR* 230 (1978) 61.

<sup>11</sup> F. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Studia Pohl 8; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972) 308. Benz's analysis of *hw*<sup>2</sup> as a qal perfect violates the pattern and, therefore, should be corrected to piel perfect.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 308-9.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., H. N. Wallace, "Eve," *ABD*, 2. 676: "Evidence from Ugaritic and Phoenician suggests another ancient word 'to live,' *hwy* from which *hawwā* could be derived. If this is the case, then the name itself is either borrowed or is an ancient traditional name." As I argue in this study, the root is known in Hebrew, so neither conclusion is absolutely necessary.

<sup>14</sup> Compare the Neo-Assyrian *iā-ḫi-ilu*(DINGIR) (R. Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods: An Onomastic Study* [Jerusalem: Wanaarta/Tel-Aviv University, 1977] 375).

<sup>15</sup> Note that the interchange of waw and yod is a very common ketib/qere variation in PNN (R. Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography* [Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 28; Leuven: Peeters, 1988] 7). One instance of this occurs in the immediately preceding verse (2 Chr 29:13): *yʿwʿl* ketib, *yʿyʿl* qere. Lastly, note that various transliterations in the LXX, and the Vg. *Iahihel*, confirm the reading *yēḫīʿēl*.

syllable of mem-preformative nouns is usually closed (i.e., the noun is of the pattern \*mVqtVl). In light of the Ugaritic and Phoenician or Punic evidence cited above, it is reasonable to conclude that the initial element is a D-stem (or piel) participle from the root \**hwy* and to translate “God (or) El gives life.”<sup>16</sup>

Both roots are found in Hebrew PNN from the Iron Age, and the fact that in paleo-Hebrew script distinct graphemes were employed for waw and yod means that the confusion between these two consonants in some other biblical PNN is avoided. For the qal stem, compare the PNN *ʔbyhy* (Arad 39.11), [*ʔ*]*dnyhy*,<sup>17</sup> *yhwʿhʿy*,<sup>18</sup> and *yhy*.<sup>19</sup> Identical or similar names are found in the Transjordanian dialects: Ammonite *ʔbyhy* (twice),<sup>20</sup> and Moabite *kmšyhy* and *ʔhyhy*.<sup>21</sup> The root \**hwy* is found in the prefix conjugation in the PN *yhwʿly* on the Samaria ostraca (55.2; 60.1);<sup>22</sup> for the suffix conjugation, compare the PN *hwyhw* attested on a Hebrew seal dated to the eighth or seventh century B.C.E.<sup>23</sup> The second name is particularly revealing, because it indicates that the root \**hwy* was productive in the formation of specifically Hebrew names. Since Yhwh is treated as a masculine deity, the verbal element *hw-* must be 3d masculine singular; compare and contrast the Phoenician PN *ʿstrhw* cited above, in which the feminine deity ʿAshtart requires the 3d feminine singular verbal element *-hwt*.

<sup>16</sup> Akkadian PNN formed with the D-stem *bulluṭu*, “to keep alive,” provide semantic parallels; see Knut L. Tallqvist, *Assyrian Personal Names* (Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae 43/1; Helsingfors: Finska Vetenskaps-societeten, 1914) 275.

<sup>17</sup> N. Avigad, *Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah: Remnants of a Burnt Archive* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1986) 79.

<sup>18</sup> Y. Aharoni, “Trial Excavations in the ‘Solar Shrine’ at Lachish: Preliminary Report,” *IEJ* 18 (1968) 166 (pl. 11.1).

<sup>19</sup> N. Avigad, “Two Seals of Women and Other Hebrew Seals,” *ErIsr* 20 (1989) 91.

<sup>20</sup> Walter E. Aufrecht, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions* (Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 4; Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Mellen, 1989) 55-58, 304-5.

<sup>21</sup> F. Israel, “Studi Moabiti I: Rassegna di epigrafia moabita e i sigilli moabiti,” *Atti della quarta Giornata di studi camito-semitici e indoeuropei, Bergamo, Istituto Universitario, 29 novembre 1985* (Quaderni della collana di linguistica storica e descrittiva 1; ed. G. Bernini and V. Brugnatelli; Milan: Unicopli, 1987) 108-9, 117. I suggest that the same element *yhy* is attested in all these names. It is probably to be analyzed as a qal jussive, but the imperfect cannot be ruled out entirely, because the opposition between long and apocopated forms of III-h verbs which typically, in masoretic Hebrew, distinguishes the imperfect from the jussive is not found in Hebrew PNN in Iron Age inscriptions.

<sup>22</sup> G. A. Reisner, C. S. Fischer, and D. G. Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria, 1908-1910* (2 vols.; Harvard Semitic Series; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924) 1. 237-38 (figs. 55, 60). André Lemaire (*Inscriptions hébraïques 1: Les ostraca* [LAPO 9; Paris: Cerf, 1977] 52) correctly parses the verbal form *yhw-* as a piel of the verb \**hwy*, “to live.”

<sup>23</sup> Pierre Bordreuil and André Lemaire, “Nouveaux sceaux hébreux, araméens et ammonites,” *Sem* 26 (1976) 48. Their translation “YHWH a fait vivre” indicates that they analyze the verbal form as a piel perfect.

To sum up: it was already recognized that the roots *\*hwy* and *\*hyy* were productive in Amorite, Ugaritic, and Phoenician-Punic; now Hebrew can be added to the list of Northwest Semitic languages in which both roots are attested. In Amorite, the distribution appears to be *\*hyy* for the G-stem and *\*hwy* for the causative stem. On the other hand in Ugaritic, Phoenician-Punic, and Hebrew, the root *\*hyy* is used for the G-stem (or qal), while the root *\*hwy* is used in the D-stem (or piel).<sup>24</sup>

## II. Previous Attempts at Interpreting *hawwâ*

Having completed this rough sketch of the use and distribution of these two roots in Northwest Semitic, I have now established a context for interpreting the biblical name *hawwâ*, but before this onomastic material is applied to the interpretation of the name, it will be appropriate to review and assess several interpretations that have been proposed in the past.<sup>25</sup> In particular, I will focus on proposals that appeal to Arabic, Aramaic, and Phoenician-Punic to provide the key to understanding this name.

In a study published in 1929, I. Eitan connected *hawwâ* with the Arabic root *hawâ*, "to bring forth" (of a woman); compare *hawiya*, "to be delivered" (also of a woman).<sup>26</sup> Though this derivation is semantically attractive, it

<sup>24</sup> My conclusion differs from that of F. Israel ("The Language of the Ammonites," *OLP* 10 [1979] 151; idem, "Geographic Linguistics and Canaanite Dialects," *Current Progress in Afro-Asiatic Linguistics: Papers of the Third International Hamito-Semitic Congress* [Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, series 4: Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 28; ed. J. Bynon; Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1984] 365). Israel argues that both in the Hebrew of the Samaritan Ostraca and in Phoenician the root *\*hwy* is used for the imperfect tense, while in Judaeen Hebrew, Ammonite, and Moabite the root *\*hyy* is used. To maintain this distinction, he is led to speculate that the seal bearing the name *hwyhw* may have come from clandestine excavations at Samaria. The present evidence may be accounted for better by the assumption that in Hebrew, as well as in Amorite, Ugaritic, and Phoenician, both roots were known, but that use of the root *\*hwy* in Hebrew was confined to an older linguistic stratum or dialect of the language differing from the Judaeen Hebrew dialects that are predominantly represented in Biblical Hebrew. In this scenario, the piel of the root *\*hyy* is a later development peculiar to the Judaeen dialects represented in Biblical Hebrew.

<sup>25</sup> There is neither intention nor need here to catalog and review every proposal. For summary discussions, see J. Heller, "Der Name Eva," *ArOr* 26 (1958) 637-46 (reprinted in J. Heller, *An der Quelle des Lebens: Aufsätze zum Alten Testament* [BEATAJ 10; Frankfurt: Lang, 1988] 84-93); A. S. Kapelrud, "chavvâh," *TDOT*, 4. 257-60; Howard N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (HSM 32; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985) 147-50. It is curious that the name is omitted altogether in J. J. Stamm, "Hebräische Frauennamen," *Hebräische Wortforschung, Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner* (VTSup 16; Leiden: Brill, 1967) 301-39 (reprinted in J. J. Stamm, *Beiträge zur hebräischen und altorientalischen Namenkunde* [OBO 30; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980] 97-135).

<sup>26</sup> I. Eitan, "Two Onomatological Studies," *JAOS* 49 (1929) 30-32.

cannot be reconciled with LXX transliterations of the name. In the etiology of the name Eve, the LXX translator chose Greek Ζωή, “life,” to translate *hawwâ* (Gen 3:20). This choice was intended to preserve the wordplay in Hebrew between *hawwâ* and *hay*: she was “called ‘Life (Ζωή)’ because she was the mother of all living (ζώντων).”<sup>27</sup> In Gen 4:1, however, transliteration Εῤῶν (in the accusative case) appears for this name.<sup>28</sup> J. Blau has demonstrated that in LXX transliterations outside the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah the phonemes \*h and \*ḥ are consistently distinguished by the renderings χ (for *h*) and zero or vowel mutation (for *ḥ*).<sup>29</sup> Thus, the LXX transliteration Εῤῶ indicates that the initial consonant of biblical *hawwâ* is etymological \*h, not \*ḥ as Eitan’s proposed etymology would require.

Frank Zimmerman accepts Eitan’s interpretation, but he argues that the original meaning of the word was no longer known when the biblical writer put the story into its present form. He appeals to another Arabic root, *hawā*, “to be empty, to fail,” as the one capturing the original meaning of the name: Adam named her Eve because she had brought him from Eden, a place of luxuriant growth, to a state of emptiness, deprivation, and ruin.<sup>30</sup> The appropriateness of this explanation of the name at this point in the narrative—immediately after the curse—is self-evident, but Zimmerman’s comparison fares no better than Eitan’s, because it too contradicts the LXX transliteration.<sup>31</sup> In general, these comparisons of biblical *hawwâ* with Arabic roots are problematic from the perspective of methodology. Lexical or onomastic comparisons should always proceed from the nearest language to the more distantly related ones, and to the latter only when comparisons with the

<sup>27</sup> For this example and many others, see especially N. Fernández Marcos, “Nombres propios y etimologías populares en la Septuaginta,” *Sef* 37 (1977) 251-57.

<sup>28</sup> Εῤῶν occurs also in Gen 4:25, where it has no Hebrew equivalent. Compare also the transliterations Εῤῶν (Tob 8:6), Εῤῶ(ν) (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13), and Εῤῶ in Josephus (see Abraham Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus* [A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus, Supplement 1; Leiden: Brill, 1968] 46).

As an aside, note that N. Walker (“‘Adam’ and ‘Eve’ and ‘Adon’,” *ZAW* 74 [1962] 66-67), in reconstructing the original form of the biblical name as \**hēwâ* (< Eva) on the basis of the LXX transliteration, ignores the fact that Semitic *ha-* can be, and is, rendered by Greek epsilon. On the latter point, see L. Yaure, “Elymas—Nehelamite—Pethor,” *JBL* 77 (1960) 305; to the examples he cites add the place name *hāwīlā* (Gen 2:11) and its LXX equivalent, Εῤῶλατ.

<sup>29</sup> J. Blau, *On Polyphony in Biblical Hebrew* (Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 6/2; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982) 51.

<sup>30</sup> F. Zimmermann, “Folk Etymology of Biblical Names,” *Volume du Congrès, Genève, 1965* (VTSup 15; Leiden: Brill, 1966) 316-18.

<sup>31</sup> See also Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names*, 21, who criticizes Zimmermann’s interpretation by noting that there is no “onomastic environment” for such a root in the West Semitic culture of the ancient Near East.

former have been exhausted without conclusive results.<sup>32</sup> Earlier in this study, the survey of PNN in Amorite, Ugaritic, Phoenician-Punic, and Hebrew produced an abundance of onomastic material relevant for interpreting biblical *ḥawwâ*. In short, comparison with Arabic is unwarranted in this instance.

More intriguing is the similarity between the woman's name and Old Aramaic *ḥwh*, "serpent" (Sefire I.A.31). The feminine singular absolute form *ḥwh* is found here and again in 1Q23, apparently a copy of the Book of Giants extant only in fragments from six Qumran Aramaic manuscripts of the first century B.C.E.<sup>33</sup> This similarity has inspired speculation about an earlier form of the narrative behind the present one in Genesis, in which only God, man, and a serpent-deity are involved.<sup>34</sup> Though no such protonarrative was known to exist at the time of the suggestion, it may be relevant that J. C. de Moor claims to have identified an earlier form of the paradise story in his reconstruction and interpretation of two Ugaritic incantation texts (*KTU* 1.100 and 1.107).<sup>35</sup> Perhaps it is only coincidence (and note that the second text is badly damaged), but while God, man, and a serpent are mentioned, a woman is not.

The overall argument is tantalizing but is too speculative to inspire confidence. Despite the same three consonants in the biblical name and in Old Aramaic *ḥwh*, the two terms, the biblical PN *ḥawwâ* and Old Aramaic *\*ḥiw-wâ*, are phonologically different.<sup>36</sup> The equation of these two vocables requires that the biblical PN was revocalized at some stage. To assume that the masoretic vocalization of the biblical name is a folk etymology based on the Hebrew adjective *ḥay* of Gen 3:20 is to engage in circular reasoning.<sup>37</sup> As will be argued below, one need not appeal to folk etymology to account for the pointing of the biblical name; Hebrew grammar is sufficient in itself. Far from providing supporting evidence, the alleged paradise story in the Ugaritic texts actually undermines the equation of biblical *ḥawwâ* and Old Aramaic *\*ḥwh*. The word for "serpent" in the Ugaritic texts is *nhš*, the Ugaritic cognate of

<sup>32</sup> Clearly stated by W. Röllig, "The Phoenician Language: Remarks on the Present State of Research," *Atti del primo Congresso Internazionale di studi fenici e punici, Roma, 5-10 novembre 1979* (3 vols.; Collezione di studi fenici 16; Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1983) 2. 376 n. 9.

<sup>33</sup> K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984) 266; cp. 574.

<sup>34</sup> For a summary discussion and bibliography, see Kapelrud, "chavvāh," 257-58.

<sup>35</sup> J. C. de Moor, "East of Eden," *ZAW* 100 (1988) 105-11.

<sup>36</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (BibOr 19; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1967) 48. The evidence from later Aramaic dialects points to a vowel [i] in the initial syllable; cp. Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and Syriac *ḥewyā*<sup>2</sup>, for example.

<sup>37</sup> So Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, 574.

the Hebrew *nāḥāš* used repeatedly in Genesis 3. Finally, the root *\*ḥwy*, “to live,” widely attested in Northwest Semitic languages vitiates both the need and the attractiveness of appealing to Aramaic in this instance. Though Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite influences have been seen in the biblical story of creation, there is still no compelling evidence for adding Aramaic influence to this list.<sup>38</sup>

The comparative evidence cited from Phoenician and Punic must now be considered. In a Punic inscription from Carthage (of the third or second century B.C.E.), the first line begins *rbt ḥwt ʔlt mlkt*.<sup>39</sup> The word *ḥwt* appears to be a divine name, or possibly an epithet referring to a goddess such as Tannit or Asherah. A second occurrence of this term is in a Punic inscription from Sardinia (of the sixth, fifth, or fourth century B.C.E.): *ʕrm ʔt ʔšt ḥwt bʕnm*.<sup>40</sup> The use of the roots *\*ḥwy* and *\*ḥyy* in Phoenician and Punic has already been established; therefore, the derivation of Punic *ḥwt* from the root *\*ḥwy*, “to make alive,” is a foregone conclusion. Also, it is reasonable to infer that the biblical PN *ḥawwā* and Punic *ḥwt* derive from the same root and, in all probability, share the same meaning (see the discussion below). Among the vast number of Phoenician and Punic inscriptions, we have at present but two isolated references to Punic *ḥwt*; this fact, combined with the dates and provenances of the texts in which the term occurs, renders it unlikely that the biblical writer was acquainted with the Punic term, much less that he borrowed it.

### III. *Ḥawwā* Interpreted Aright

The name of the first man, Adam, is well known from the Hebrew Bible, and it has exact onomastic parallels in Amorite and in the Ebla texts. It seems hardly fortuitous that Adapa, the hero of an Akkadian myth that has some parallels with the early chapters of Genesis, may be a phonetic variant of *\*Adam(a)*,<sup>41</sup> all the more so since the presence of the Akkadian myth in the

<sup>38</sup> For further discussion and critique of the Eve-serpent equation, see Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names*, 21-22, and A. J. Williams, “The Relationship of Genesis 3:20 to the Serpent,” *ZAW* 89 (1977) 358-74, esp. 369-70. Williams concludes that “the presumed relationship between Eve and the Serpent is based on very hypothetical evidence.”

<sup>39</sup> *KAI* 89.1.

<sup>40</sup> G. Garbini, “Note di epigrafia punica—I,” *RSO* 40 (1965) 6-8.

<sup>41</sup> Hess (*Studies in the Personal Names*, 64-65) notes that the only example of the interchange of the bilabials *p* and *m* consists of Ugaritic *špš* and Akkadian *šamaš*, which might suggest that an original *m* (in Adam) became *p* (in Adapa). To be sure, the striking literary parallels between the two stories constitute a stronger argument either for borrowing or for derivation from a common source.

Amarna archives testifies to acquaintance with this myth among Syro-Palestinian scribes.<sup>42</sup>

Excepting two isolated references in Punic texts, the name *ḥawwâ* in the Genesis tradition is unique and without parallel. If de Moor's interpretation of the Ugaritic incantation texts as a Canaanite version of the paradise story is accepted, it may be relevant that no reference is made there to a woman. Moreover, in other ancient Near Eastern myths of creation the first woman is not so named. In the wordplay between *ʾiṣ* and *ʾiṣṣâ* (Gen 2:23), S. A. Meier has identified a uniquely Canaanite contribution to ancient Near Eastern stories of creation.<sup>43</sup> The name of the woman in Gen 3:20 may be another case in point, and the widespread use of the roots *\*ḥwy* and *\*ḥyy* in Northwest Semitic PNN (and texts) forms the necessary backdrop for properly interpreting this name. From the perspectives of etymology and morphology, the symbolic name *ḥawwâ* is derived from the root *\*ḥwy*, "to make alive," and it may be analyzed as a noun of *\*qattāl* form to be translated "Life giver."<sup>44</sup> The feminine morpheme *\*-â* exhibits concord between the name itself and the sex of the name bearer. This morpheme is consistent with the proposed Canaanite origin of the name; specifically, the shift *\*-at* > *\*-â* is attested in both Hebrew inscriptions and Biblical Hebrew.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> The myth is conveniently available in English translation in S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 182-87. For various points of comparison between Adam and Adapa, see G. Buccellati, "Adapa, Genesis, and the Notion of Faith," *UF* 5 (1973) 61-66; G. Erickson, "Adam och Adapa," *STK* 66 (1990) 122-28; Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names*, 62-65; H.-P. Müller, "Drei Deutungen des Todes: Genesis 3, der Mythos von Adapa und die Sage von Gilgamesh," *Altes Testament und christlicher Glaube* (ed. I. Baldermann et al.; Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie 6; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991) 117-34; R. A. Ogden, Jr., *Bible without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (New Voices in Biblical Studies; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) 103.

<sup>43</sup> S. A. Meier, "Linguistic Clues on the Date and Canaanite Origin of Genesis 2:23-24," *CBQ* 53 (1991) 18-24.

<sup>44</sup> I arrived at this analysis independently, but the possibility that this name is a feminine *nomen agentis* was proposed at least as early as 1929 (Eitan, "Two Onomatological Studies," 32), and more recently both by J. C. Greenfield, whose remarks may be found in I. M. Kikawada, "Two Notes on Eve," *JBL* 91 (1972) 34 n. 9, and by Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia/New York/Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 29: "The vocalization suggests an intensive form, so that 'propagator of life' is also a possible meaning." This morphological analysis is also suitable for Punic *ḥwt*.

<sup>45</sup> See S. C. Layton, *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 47; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 199-239, especially 201-4. From Iron-Age inscriptions, compare the Hebrew feminine PNN *ḥnh* and *m'dnh*, which show the shift *\*-at* > *\*-â*. The presence of the feminine morpheme *\*-â* on this name renders it more improbable that the name was directly borrowed from Punic *ḥwt*, unless only its ending was Hebraized.

I suggest that the biblical writer or one of his sources constructed this *\*qattāl* form using the archaic root *\*ḥwy*. Consequently, the biblical PN *ḥawwâ* should be added to the list of symbolic names found in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>46</sup> Symbolic names form part of the rich fabric of biblical narrative by expressing their bearers' fate, character, or role in the story. The name "Life giver" epitomizes the role of the first woman in the creation story (Gen 4:1). It would appear, therefore, that the etiology of Gen 3:20 whereby *ḥawwâ* is explained by, or derived from,<sup>47</sup> (*ʿēm kol-*)*ḥāy* is firmly grounded in the use of the two related roots *\*ḥwy* and *\*ḥyy* in Amorite, Ugaritic, Phoenician-Punic, and even Hebrew.

<sup>46</sup> For lists of symbolic names, see W. Weinberg, "Language Consciousness in the OT," *ZAW* 92 (1980) 197; Zadok, *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy*, 13. Neither of these scholars cites the Hebrew PN *nābāl*, "churlish"; on this name, see J. D. Levenson, "1 Samuel 25 as Literature and History," *CBQ* 40 (1978) 13-14. I shed new light on the symbolic name *kilyōn*, "destruction," in the Book of Ruth in S. C. Layton, "Leaves from an Onomastician's Notebook," *ZAW* 108 (1996) 615-20.

<sup>47</sup> For the second alternative, see Kikawada, "Two Notes," 34, who proposes that "mother of all living" is a honorific title given to Eve and that *ḥawwâ* is an onomastic form derived from this title.



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