PERSONAL NAMES OF THE "VERB + DEITY" TYPE FROM EBLA[1]

CYRUS H. GORDON[*]

There are many m. PNs of the Išma‘-Damu[2] or Išma‘-Zikir[3] type, meaning "the deity (Damu or Zikir) has heard". Specifically the god has heard the prayers of the devotee who has asked for a child, and granted the plea with the birth of the boy who was accordingly given the name.

This kind of PN has long been familiar. Thus Biblical Yišma‘el "Ishmael" means "El listens".

But at Ebla when a woman bears such a name, the verb is always feminine. Tišma‘-Zikir[4] or Tišma‘-Damu[5]. The first explanation that comes to mind is that a feminine verb is natural enough in a f. PN[6]. But this is misleading because the same gods serve as subject in both m. and f. PNs. In the specific names above, the meaning could, as far as the words go, signify "She (or He) hears the god", but this type of name with other verbs show that this is impossible:

The m. PN Ir-kab-Ar[7] "The god Ar rides" reflects the god Ar as a riding deity. Gods mounted on animals are familiar from ancient Near

[*] Cyrus H. GORDON, New York University, USA.

[1] This paper was delivered before a session of the RAI in Istanbul on 8/VII/87.

The following bibliographical abbreviations are used:

> ARET: *Archivi Reali di Ebla — Testi*, I - VIII, Rome.
>
> UT: *Ugaritic Textbook*, Rome, 1967.
>
> ZA: *Zeitschrift fur Assyriologie.*

[2] E.g., *Iš-má-Da-mu* (ARET-III, p.287)

[3] E.g., *Iš-má-Zi-kir* (ARET-III, p.287)

[4] E.g., TAŠ-*má-Zi-kir* (ARET-VIII, text 233: § 4:4, p.174). TAŠ has the value *tiš* here, in accordance with the vocalic variability of CvC signs. Tišma‘-Zikir is the wife of the ruler of Hazan (line 6).

[5] E.g., TAŠ-*má-Da-mu* (ARET-VIII, text 527: § 6:VI:10, p. 132).

[6] Such is the explanation expressed by W. Lambert (following D.O. Edzard, "ᵐNingal-gāmil, ᶠIštar-damqat. Die Genuskongruenz im akkadischen theophoren Personennamen", ZA, N.F. 21, 1962), in discussing the present paper at the Rencontre on 8/VII/87 in Istanbul.

[7] E.g., ARET-II, p.108.

East art including the rock reliefs at Yazılıkaya. At Ugarit, Baal is called *rkb ʿrpt*[8] "Rider of Clouds" as is Yahweh in Psalm 68:5: *rokeb baʿarabot* "Rider on the Clouds". At Ugarit, the deified Rapi'uma ("shades of the dead") are chariot riders[9]. But the f. PN Tirkab-Damu[10] "She rides Damu" is untenable (as sacrilege) because while it is fitting for gods to ride in chariots or mount beasts, it is unseemly for mortals to ride on deities. The god must be the rider whether the PN is m. or f.

Another Ebla PN is Igriš,[11] corresponding to the Ugaritic *Ygrš,* the name given to a mace for expelling the sea-god Yamm[12]. The theme reverberates in *Yam nigraš* (Isaiah 57:20) "Sea, the expelled". The m. PNs *Ig-ri-iš-Li-im*[13] and *Ig-ri-iš-Ha-lam*[14] indicate that the gods Lim and Halam are potent deities who expel the forces of evil. But the f. PN Tigriš - Damu[15] cannot mean "She expels (the great and good god) Damu". The god must be the expeller regardless of whether the PN is m. or f.

A satisfactory explanation must be in keeping with the rules of grammar, and with the religious meaning of the PNs.

The solution may involve concepts that at first seem bizarre to us in the twentieth century A.D. Only yesterday (7/VII/87) H.Güterbock showed us that a Hittite ritual mentioning "drinking a god" means just that. I supported his literal interpretation citing a Ugaritic myth relating that Baal annihilates the Sea-god by drinking him[16]. Dr. Güterbock went on to quote the Hittite ritual which specifies drinking the god from a cup. Again we turn to Ugaritic mythology for the statement that the goddess Anath eats her victim's flesh without a knife and drinks his blood without a cup[17]. It is all too natural for us not to see that these exotic

[8] UT § 19.2331.

[9] UT text 121:II:4-6.

[10] E.g., the princess DAR- *kab-Da-mu* (ARET-IV text 1:VIII:7, p.6).

[11] *Ig-ri-iš* (ARET: II, p. 107).

[12] The meaning of *grš* "to expel" is clear not only from its Hebrew cognate but also from the Ugaritic context (UT text 68:12) which deals with expelling Yamm from his throne.

[13] E.G., *Ig-ri-iš-Li-im* (ARET-IV, p.248).

[14] E.g., *Ig-ri-iš-Ha-lam* (ARET-IV, p.248).

[15] E.g., the princess DAG-*ri-iš-Da-mu* (ARET-IV, text 1:VIII:8, p.6).

[16] UT text 68:27.

[17] UT § 19.467.

concepts in antiquity constitute the prehistory of the Eucharist whereby the wafer is the body and the wine the blood of Christ. A new spirit has been infused but the ancient rite reverberates.

Our difficulties in understanding the PNs of the type "m. Išmaʿ-Damu/ f. Tišmaʿ-Damu" are aggravated by the lack of mythological texts from Ebla. Unlike Ugarit, which has yielded a rich harvest of mythology, Ebla has not yet provided us with tablets narrating the deeds and tales of the pantheon. We must therefore draw on the mythology of the ancient Near East for the kinds of concepts that underlie the Ebla PNs with theophoric elements.

We shall start with a feature familiar from ancient Greek mythology. The death of men was attributed to arrows shot by the god Apollo, whereas the demise of women was ascribed to shafts from the bow of Apollo's twin sister Artemis. Thus a male deity controlled the destiny of men, while a goddess sealed the fate of women. Twin deities-one male, the other female-disposed of men and women, respectively.That a divine archer was responsible for the death of mortals is also reflected in the Book of Job, showing that the concept was not limited to the non-Semitic Greeks[18].

The "perfect" prototype of individuals need be neither male, nor female, but ambisexual ("hermaphroditic"). For example, Adam (actually *haʾadam* "The Man") as created by God in Genesis 2:7 was "the complete humanbeing", from whom a part was subsequently extracted and transformed into Eve, because God had decided it was not good for man to be alone, without his appropriate mate (Genesis 2:18). It appears too that individual gods embodied both male and female personalities. Thus a deity like Damu, Zikir, etc. appears as a male in men's names, but as female in women's names. Išmaʿ-Zikir or Išmaʿ-Damu contains the name of the god Zikir or Damu who has listened to the prayer that resulted in the birth of a boy, but Tišmaʿ-Zikir or Tišmaʿ-Damu[19] contains the name of the goddess (sic!) Zikir or Damu who harkened unto the plea that resulted in the birth of a girl.

[18] Job (6:4) complains that his spirit has drunk the poison of God's arrows. (Thus God's shafts are poisoned!)

[19] We know these are women's names because they are usually called someone's daughter (d u m u - m î), wife (d a m) or mother (a m a). The Ebla scribes do not prefix the determinatives ˹m˺ and ˹f˺ to PNs.

Our explanation of "m. Išmaᶜ-Damu/f. Tišmaᶜ-Damu" names satisfies both requirements: respect (1) for the grammar, and (2) for the meaning of such names. It remains to demonstrate that gods of ambivalent gender are attested in cuneiform literature.

Nin-šubur appears now as m., and now as f. Nin-gal normally appears as the wife of the lunar god Sin; but in a m. PN we find ᵐNingal-gāmil[20] in which Ningal is a m. deity.

In Ugaritic and South Arabic ᶜAttar is a male deity (UT § 19.1941). Indeed f. -t must be added to produce the f. counterpart ᶜAttart "Astarte". Accordingly, the goddess Ishtar corresponds phonetically to the male god ᶜAttar, who, in accordance with the principle we have posited, could assume either sex. In Akkadian PNs, Ishtar can be either m. or f. Edzard (ZA, N.F. 21, 1962, p. 126) cites the pair of PNs, ᵐIddin-Ištar and ᶠTad-din-Ištar, explaining the gender of the verb as conditioned by the gender of the person, without refernece to the gender of the deity. The meaning of both the m. and f. name is obviously "Ishtar has given (us this baby)". In the f. PN, Ishtar is indeed feminine. But in the m. PN, Ishtar is m. like its exact phonetic equivalent ᶜAttar in Ugaritic and South Arabic.

---

[20] Cited in Edzard's article (see above). "Nin", which usually refers to ladies, may refer to lords. A familiar illustration of the latter is the male god Nin-urta.

ZUR CHRONOLOGIE DER MITTLEREN BRONZEZEIT IN DER LEVANTE

MANFRED BIETAK*

Tafeln 79-83

1. Einleitung und relative Chronologie

Im Verlaufe der Ausgrabungen auf Tell el-Dab'a[1] wurde eine reiche Stratigraphie von Siedlungsschichten und Gräbern der syrisch-palästinensichen Mittleren Bronzezeit-Kultur im Verband mit der ägyptischen Kultur des späten Mittleren Reichs und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit in größeren Flächen untersucht. Dieser Aufschluß bringt die einmalige Möglichkeit mit sich, die Periodisierung der Mittleren Bronzezeit unmittelbar in den Rahmen der ägyptischen Chronologie einzufügen. Der Vorschlag W. DEVER die Schichten der Mittleren Bronzezeit-Kultur in Tell el- Dab'a nach der Chronologie in Palästina zu datieren, ist als unlogisch zurückzuweisen, da auch die Chronologie dieser Region von der ägyptischen Chronologie abhängig ist und der unmittelbare Kontakt auf dem Boden Ägyptens viel geringere Fehlerquellen in sich birgt[2]. Es ist außerdem darauf hinzuweisen, daß die Erforschung der materiellen Kultur Altägyptens, namentlich in der Zeit des Mittleren Reichs und in der Zweiten Zwischenzeit in den letzten Jahren große Fortschritte gemacht hat, so daß auch anhand des keramischen Materials Feindatierungen möglich sind.

In der Erstellung der absoluten Chronologie gibt es allerdings derzeit nicht nur in Vorderasien, sondern auch in Ägypten Schwierigkeiten. Während sich derzeit ein weitgehender Konsens im Sinne einer ultrakurzen Chronologie für die Zeit des Neuen Reichs abzeichnet[3], stehen wir für

---

* Prof. Dr. Manfred BIETAK, Head of the Cairo Department of the Archaeological Institute of Austria-Chairman of the Institute of Egyptology Univ. of Vienna, AUSTRIA.

[1] Lex. d. Ägyptologie VI, 321-323. - Weitere Literaturangaben in: M. BIETAK, Avaris and Piramesse². Oxford 1986, 289 f.

[2] W.G. DEVER, Relations between Syria-Palestine and Egypt, in: the "Hyksos period". Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages (Fs Olga TUFNELL), ed. by J.N. TUBB. London 1985, 69-87. - S. dagegen: M. BIETAK, AJA 88 (1984) 471-480.

[3] M.L. BIERBRIER, The Late New Kingdom in Egypt (c. 1300-664 B.C.). Warminster 1975. -W. HELCK, E. HORNUNG, K.A. KITCHEN, Beiträge in: "High, Middle or Low"?