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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY: PHILOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROOT *HRM*

In an investigation of a particular Hebrew practice, which, like the חרם, was encapsulated in a single word, it is traditional to begin by studying its root as it is manifested in the various Semitic languages. Fortunately for the present study, C. H. W. Brekelmans, in his pioneering dissertation published under the name *De herem in het Oude Testament* (1959), has surveyed in his opening chapter a wide range of Semitic languages with a good deal of acumen. Hence it is not necessary for us to duplicate his work, but merely to supplement it and to reassess the evidence as a whole strictly in terms of the relevance of the comparative Semitic material to the understanding of the Hebrew word and practice of חרם.

In Ugaritic, there has been an interesting development since Brekelmans's monograph; the emergence of an attestation of the root חרם in a sense similar to that of the Bible. This was pointed out by J. C. de Moor in his published treatment of KTU 1.13.¹ Unfortunately, the text, which de Moor dubbed "An Incantation against Infertility" and which is addressed to the goddess Anat, is somewhat problematic (partly due to lacunae), and de Moor's translation reflects the state of the text. I reproduce here the salient lines with de Moor's translation (without his arrangement of the English lines):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(1) []xx (2)[]</p> <p>[]</p> <p>[r]hm. tld (3) [bn. lb'l.]</p> <p>(2) hrm. tn . ym(4)m.</p> <p>š(ql. tl) ymm. lk.</p> <p>(5) hrg . 'ar[b'.] ymm . bsr.</p> | <p>may the Dam(sel)
bear (a son to Baal!)</p> <p>Destroy under the
ban during two days,
th(row) down for
yourself (during
three) days,
kill in frustration
during (fo)ur days!²</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

However, de Moor's recent publication (with K. Spronk)³ of an auto-graph edition of the text shows that it should be read differently. Most impor-

¹ J. C. de Moor, "An Incantation against Infertility (KTU 1.13)," *UF* 12 (1980), 305-10.

² *Ibid.* 305.

³ J. C. de Moor & K. Spronk, *A Cuneiform Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden, 1987), *Semitic Study Series* 6, 58-9.

tant for the intelligibility of the text given above is the line, $\text{\$[ql. \underline{tl}] ymm. lk}$. It is now clear that the “q” of $\text{\$ql}$ could not be a correct rendering. The remaining part of the cuneiform sign has two horizontals, while the sign for “q” has but one. The space between horizontals is too narrow for “p” or “z”, while “w” takes up more space, and does not yield a reading that makes sense. Of the eligible letters of the Ugaritic alphabet there remains only “k.” $\text{\$kl}$ would have to be construed as an example of *kly* in shaphel (imperative), meaning “annihilate” or the like, which fits the context. The word *lk* that occurs a few words later could not only mean “for yourself,” but better (as others have also seen), probably, “go!” It would then precede the next imperative, *hrg*, “kill!” Since the occurrence of *lk* varies from the syntax of the preceding clause it might as well be construed as the verb “to go,” since “for yourself,” is difficult to understand here.

The new autograph text has one other change. Where de Moor restored *bn* (immediately after (3)) the text is now restored to read *ibr*, “bull.” This is a point to which I shall return later (ch. 4). I read as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| (1) []xx (2)[] | |
| [] | |
| [r]hm. tld (3) [’ibr. lb ^c l.] | may the Dam(sel)
bear (a bull to Baal) |
| (2) hrm. in . ym(4)m. | Devote to destruction
in(?) two days, |
| \\$[kl. \underline{tl}] ymm. lk. | Annihilate in(?)(three)
days. Go, |
| (5) hrg . ’ar[b ^c .] ymm . bsr. | kill in (fo)ur days.... ⁴ |

An important point here, which de Moor seized upon, is the parallelism between *hrm* and *hrg*, two lines later (cp. Josh 8:24-6).⁵ The parallelism and the context of the first lines of the incantation show that the meaning is close to the Heb. חרם (החרים), although its precise force here is hard to determine on the basis of this text alone.⁶ A difficulty is that חרם, which is, as de Moor deduced, an imperative, is lacking an object; but then, so is *hrg*.⁷ However, in a way, the passage, in which the goddess Anat is asked to apply the חרם to the anonymous ‘enemies,’ is a forerunner of Isa 34:5,7, where a prophet pictures YHWH applying the חרם against arch-enemy Edom. In

⁴ The last word *bsr* seems to go with the next clause. So A. Caquot & J.-M. de Tarragon, *Textes ougaritiques II: Textes religieux, rituels, correspondance*. LAPO, 22 n.9, following H. Cazelles. This work provides an excellent bibliography.

⁵ J. C. de Moor, “An Incantation,” 306.

⁶ A. Caquot & J.-M. de Tarragon, *Textes ougaritiques II*, 22, adopt the translation, “massacre,” (following G. del Olmo) which does not seem to do justice to the context and biblical parallels.

⁷ J. C. de Moor & K. Spronk, *A Cuneiform Anthology*, 140.

view of all this, and the biblical picture, where the religious use of the root predominates, and more than predominates in connection with YHWH (while Anat as war goddess is a highly appropriate analogue), it seems that de Moor's seemingly bold translation is much to be preferred.

In his article of 1980, de Moor did not say in which stem Ugaritic *ḥrm* was to be placed. Recently, though, in the glossary of his cuneiform reader, he adopted the D-stem, which is unlikely, since neither the Northwest Semitic languages nor Old South Arabic attest it, and since the evidence from syllabic Ugaritic does not support it. J. Huehnergard's recent lexical study of the syllabic texts sheds light on this problem. He offers these observations regarding *ḥa-ri-mu*:

It is likely...that two of the instances of *ḥa-ri-mu* represent a single Ugar. word glossing a single Akk. word which corresponds to different Sum. signs, viz. to both no.190 ḤUL and no.191 GUL. (...) An Akk. word...that is equated with both ḤUL and GUL is *šulputu* "desecrate(d)".... I may suggest, therefore, that Ugar. *ḥa-ri-mu* in lines 40' and 42' (of *Ugaritica* V 137) represents an adjective */ḥarīmu/* (alphab. unattested) cognate to the Hebrew verb *heḥerim*....⁸

In his glossary, Huehnergard lists this */ḥarīmu/* as meaning "desecrated(?)"⁹ The question mark is justified. Such a meaning would not be cognate with Heb. החרים, but would be a Ugaritic aberration from the Semitic use of the root, which deals with consecration, not desecration. The two signs ḤUL and GUL are listed as follows in Borger's *Zeichenliste*: a) ḤUL (#456) = *lapātu* Š, "zerstören"; *šalputtu*, "Ruin," and b) GUL (#429) = *abātu*, zerstören.¹⁰ Not only is "to destroy" a more primary meaning of *šulputu* (*CAD* s.v. *lapātu*), but "to destroy" seems to be the primary meaning of the two signs. Finally, an adjective--clearly of G- not D-stem derivation--with a meaning in the area of "to destroy" would be within the semantic field required of a Ugaritic cognate to Heb. החרים, the verbal form of which appears in KTU 1.13. The adjective */ḥa-ri-mu/* shows that the verb is most likely a G-stem. The use of the verb makes it probable that the adjective means "consecrated to destruction," (or the like) and vice versa.

This reopens the question of the primary nature of the noun in Hebrew. The Ugaritic evidence of one text can not be judged to be definitive, but if there was a regular G-stem verb equivalent to Heb. החרים in Ugaritic, that verb may well have existed once in Hebrew, and engendered the noun חרים. It might also have begotten the verb החרים and then, in Biblical Hebrew, faded away before the competition of the hiphil verb. This would pave the way for the situation found in the Bible (which, as the Ugaritic, whatever its exact

⁸ J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription*, *Harvard Semitic Studies* 32 (1987), 89. The orthography of the root, with ḥ instead of ḥ as one would expect, may be a result of cuneiform influence spilling over from the syllabic writing to the alphabetic.

⁹ *Ibid.* 126.

¹⁰ R. Borger, *Assyrisch-Babylonische Zeichenliste*, *AOAT* Bd. 33/33A (2nd ed., 1981), 174, 169.

place among the Semitic languages, makes plain, is the end-product of centuries of development), and would help explain why biblical authors occasionally used the noun חָרַם + helping verb (e.g. נתַן) instead of הַחֲרִים, drawing a subtle and elusive distinction, but that would be less likely to be drawn if the hiphil were simply a denominative from the substantive חָרַם--as had been plausibly argued by Brekelmans.¹¹ I offer this alternative as a possibility suggested by the appearance of חָרַם in Ugaritic text KTU 1.13, from which one may infer that the prehistory of the Hebrew root חָרַם is more complex than was previously imagined.

The presence of חָרַם in Ugaritic provides, then, a probable precursor to Heb. הַחֲרִים, but we must hope for new texts to add to this small amount of data.

From Ugaritic we travel eastwards to Akkadian. Brekelmans surveyed briefly the known forms in Akkadian, such as *ḥarāmu*, *ḥarimtu*, and *ḥarmu*, without reaching any radical conclusions which would be important for the understanding of the חָרַם.¹² He did not consider the word *ḥamru* (usually in *ḥamri*), defined by the CAD (H 70a) as "sacred precinct (of Adad)." This word may be derived from the root *ḥrm* by metathesis.

In a review of a book by de Vaux, K. Deller raised the possibility of the metathesis, but said that the proof was not at hand.¹³ Yet he thought another alternative to metathesis equally plausible; that the *ḥamri* was the sanctuary of a particular god, like the Old Babylonian *gagû*, the Israelite shrine at Shilo, and the Memphite Sarapeum.¹⁴ However, one has to wonder if this second alternative is really an alternative, for the *ḥamri* was not a temple, but a special precinct distinct from the temple of the same deity (and so hardly analogous to the temple at Shilo; biblical religion lacks a comparable institution to the *ḥamri*).¹⁵ However, it was only with the coming of Islam, that the *ḥaram* or "sacred territory" of Mecca (and Medina) was exclusively the domain of Allah.¹⁶ Although the *ḥamri* was associated most often with the storm god (Adad), or ^dIM, it was also a part of the cult of the god Aššur in the Old Assyrian period. Both the Kanish colony and the city of Assur had such a precinct in that time,¹⁷ which means other gods may have had one besides Adad or ^dIM.¹⁸

¹¹ C. H. W. Brekelmans, *De ḥerem in het Oude Testament* (Nijmegen, 1959), 43f..

¹² *Ibid.* 34.

¹³ K. Deller in review of R. de Vaux, *Les sacrifices de l'Ancien Testament*, *Or* N.S. 34 (1965). 385.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ KAR 154, an Assyrian ritual text, distinguishes between *ḥamri dAdad* and *ḥamri*; after a temple ritual the hierodules (NU GIG MEŠ) go out to the sacred precinct (l.13).

¹⁶ E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* I (Cambridge, England, repr. 1984, 2 vols.), 554c-555a.

¹⁷ L. Matouš, "Der Aššur-Tempel nach altassyrischen Urkunden aus Kultepe," in *Studies Presented to Professor M. A. Beek on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Assen, Netherlands, 1974). See also H. Hirsch, *Untersuchungen zur altassyrischen Religion*, *AfO* Bhft. 13/14 (1961), 48. There was also a *ḥamrum* of Ashur in the city of Aššur

Although the idea of metathesis can not, as Deller rightly remarked, be proved with the means at hand, there are a number of grounds which serve as a basis for the conclusion that this etymology is the most probable. One, Deller himself pointed out; that it would fit in well with the word *ḥarimtu*:

(5) ganz unvoreingenommen, so muss der Parallelismus zu der Gestellung von gottgeweihten Personen (^{LU/MI}MAS.^{LU/MI}SUHUR.LAL, *ḥarimtu* genannt) auf fallen.¹⁹

This parallelism is important because it places the word *ḥamru* in a philological context. Otherwise, it stands isolated (cp. *ḥemeru*, *ḥamru*, to cover, cover). In addition, the Arabic *ḥaram* in its basic signification as a holy precinct is partly analogous to the *ḥit ḥamri*. The metathesis of *r* and *m* here would form a perfect parallel to the situation of *qadāšu* and *qašdu*, where the metathesis is admitted by the *CAD*.²⁰ The verb *qadāšu* in the G-stem means “to be free of claims(?)”, (only at Ras Shamra),²¹ which is not what a Hebraist would expect (i.e. to be holy). Yet *qašdu* does mean “holy.” I would point to an analogy here: *ḥarāmu* “to separate,”²² could have the same relation to *ḥamru* as *qadāšu* has to *qašdu*. A last argument is derived from the element of *ḥamru* or *ḥamri* in toponyms and personal names from the Old Babylonian period onwards (although most of the material is from the Middle Assyrian and on).²³ Although the *CAD* is reluctant to assign any semantic value to the material it covers,²⁴ it should be noted that the term *ḥamru* would be ideal for a toponym (cp. Qedesh); Von Soden, in fact, groups together the names which the *CAD* lists apart from (*ḥit*) *ḥamri*.²⁵ On the geographical side, one may observe that toponyms with *ḥamru* are found in Assyrian and Babylonian volumes of the *Repertoire Géographique*, (e.g. near Nippur),²⁶ while the volume of the *Repertoire Géographique* which is

then, according to M. T. Larsen in *The Old Assyrian City-State and its Colonies Mesopotamia: Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology* vol. 4 (1976), 59.

¹⁸ M. I. Gruber believes that an OB Letter is best explained as speaking of such a precinct in relation to Shamash at Sippar. See his “Hebrew *Qedeshah* and her Canaanite and Akkadian Cognates,” *UF* 18 (1986), 140 n. 26.

¹⁹ See n. 11.

²⁰ *CAD* 146a.

²¹ *Ibid.* 46a.

²² *Ibid.* H 89b-90a.

²³ Cf. *Ibid.* I/J 152a *ḥamru* C; also K. Nashef, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der mittelbabylonischen und mittelassyrischen Zeit, Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes* Bd. 5 *Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients* Re. B. Nr. 7 (1982), 116, 300. In the same series: R. Zadok, *Geographical Names According to New- and Late-Babylonian Texts* Bd. 8 (1985), 149.

²⁴ *CAD* I/J 152a *ḥamru* C.

²⁵ *AHw* 318a.

²⁶ The river *Ḥamri* is mentioned by J. J. Finkelstein, “Mesopotamia,” *JNES* XXI (1962) 81.

Géographique which is devoted to Hittite (and Hurrian) toponyms lacks all reference to *hamru*,²⁷ even though both languages employed the term.

The latter point may be significant since some scholars believe that Akkadian *hamru* was a Hurrian loanword.²⁸ I may cite against this, E. Laroche, who pointed out that *hamri* was used by the Hurrians only within the Hittite sphere of influence, and in his Hurrian glossary defined *hamri* after the Hittite and Akkadian, an indication in his format that he did not consider it a Hurrian word.²⁹ The Old Assyrian colony in Kanish had a *hamru* earlier than the known Hurrian use, and it most likely was modeled on the *hamru* at Assur (rather than the mother-city modeling itself on the trading colony). From Kanish the use of the term then passed into other languages, such as Hurrian and Luwian. The Semitic etymology of the word *hamru* is thus much more likely than the Hurrian one.

The *bit hamri* was a sacred area outside the city, as KAR 154, a neo-Assyrian ritual text, vividly illustrates. The action (which involved chanting and elevating the statue of the god, as well as giving offerings) took place both at the temple of Adad proper, and at the *bit hamri* of Adad. The *bit hamri*, like the temple, was the site of varied activities, from sacral to economic.³⁰ The most interesting from the viewpoint of the study of the חרם is the penalty clause of a contract: *apilšu rabû ina d^ha-am-ri ša d^hAdad iššarap*: "His eldest son will be burned (to death) in the sacred precinct of Adad."³¹ In contrast to the *CAD*, which takes the clause literally, Deller argued that it

²⁷ G. F. del Monte & J. Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethischen Texte, Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes* Bd. 6, *Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients* Reihe B. Bd. 7 This includes Hurrian names. Although the lack of *hamri*-names is not an absolute, it is precisely in the Hittite sphere that one would expect a Hurrian name to occur. See article cited in n. 29.

²⁸ W. Haas & G. Wilhelm, *Hurritische und luwische Riten aus Kizzuwatna, AOAT Sonderreihe* Bd. 3 (1974). They list *hamri* in the Hurrian glossary. q.v.. J. Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary*, 173 also assumes Hurrian derivation, although E. Laroche, in "Glossaire de la langue hurrite I," *RHA* 34 (1976), 91, does not. Huehnergard goes beyond Laroche in connecting *hamri* with *hamarri*. He cites *UGARITICA* V 137 iv a 14, a polyglot god register: *Sara ha-ma-ar-ri qi-i (d-šu (?))*. To the first he uses an alternate reading, Sum. BARAG=Akk. *parakku* "socle, sanctuary." The Sumerian does not mean sanctuary (see A. Sjöberg et al., *The Sumerian Dictionary of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania* (Phila., 1984) B s.v. *bara*), nor need the Akkadian. The restoration is conjectural, and the meaning of *hamarri* is unknown even to Laroche. If *hamarri* is an inflection of *hamri*, that does not prove it Hurrian, since loanwords enter the grammar of the new language. The Old Assyrian *hamru* at Kanish predates the use of the term in Hurrian in relation to the storm god Teshub. Laroche does not list *hamri*, in his list of Akkadian loanwords in *RHA* 35 (1977), 315, probably because the *CAD* is noncommittal.

²⁹ E. Laroche, "Hourrite purli, purni, maison," *RA* 47 (1953), 192. In conversation, E. Reiner expressed the opinion that she was extremely dubious of the Hurrian origin of the term.

³⁰ Cf. W. G. Lambert, "An Old Babylonian Letter and Two Amulets," *Iraq* 38 (1976), 57f..

³¹ *CAD* H 70b.

was merely formulaic language, citing a still-used (c.1965) Jesuit vow-formula, *holocaustem in odorum suavitatis*.³² Following Deller's approach, M. Weinfeld collected a number of formulations that contained a verb meaning "to burn" from Assyria, the Bible, and Arabic, and insisted they were not to be taken literally.³³ The instance of taking the eldest son to the *bīt ḥamri* is unique, though, and not necessarily on a par with the other examples Weinfeld collected--even if he is correct about those.³⁴ The fact that people sentenced to 'burning' might be dedicated to the temple instead, which Deller and Weinfeld cite,³⁵ may aid our understanding of the term in the circumstance where the person was to be "burnt before Adad," i.e. at his temple. Yet in the case in which the son was to be taken not to the temple but to the *bīt ḥamri*, Deller's and Weinfeld's interpretation would seem to be lacking in application.

Whatever the case with *holocaustem in odorum suavitatis*, it is less likely the case that a legal contract would be so formulated. By nature the vow lends itself to extravagant language, as in the instance of Jephthah. Not so the contract. Surely at some time--even if not (for the sake of argument) at the time of the particular document in question--the possibility did exist of putting an *aplu rabû* to the fire in order to enforce a contract. The language reflects the crude necessity of finding a guarantee that the person who had obligated himself would indeed fulfill the terms of the contract.

The important thing to keep in mind is that the text connects the *bīt ḥamri* with the burning to death of human beings, whatever the practice was at a given date. If I am correct in connecting the word *ḥamru* with the root חרם, then this connection is noteworthy and not purely fortuitous, any more than the use of the word חרם in the Bible with the Hebrew cognate שרף, "to burn," was fortuitous. Unfortunately, documentation on this point is too limited to allow us to draw far-reaching conclusions from this coincidence of usage. It is enough to say that it strengthens my interpretation of *ḥamru* or *bīt ḥamri* as a metathesized form of *ḥarāmu*, an interpretation which has the merit of bringing coherence to what would otherwise be a random collection of linguistic and cultural facts. Among these are the degree of correspondence between Ar. *ḥaram* and Akk. *ḥamru* on the one hand, and the association with burning to death (if only on a small scale) on the other. These, as well as the other arguments, make it evident that the *bīt ḥamri* belongs in a philological discussion of the חרם. Finally, I may point out that even if it could be proved that the word *ḥamru* was borrowed, its assimilation into the Akkadian vocabulary would have been facilitated by the analogy of the word as a metathesized form of *ḥarāmu* in the manner of *qašdu*. Yet there is no evidence to show that *ḥamru* is other than a good Akkadian word.

³² K. Deller in review of R. de Vaux, 385.

³³ M. Weinfeld, "The Worship of Molech and of the Queen of Heaven and its Background," *UF* 4 (1972), 145-6.

³⁴ Cf. M. Smith's vigorous rebuttal of Weinfeld in "A Note on Burning Babies," *JAOS* 95 (1975), 477-9. Their exchange of views continued.

³⁵ See notes 31-2.

The Ebla finds have added a new dimension to Semitic philology. Already, material relevant to our topic has emerged in the published material. It is probable that further information will come to light in the course of time, but at present no Eblaite verbal form of *herem* has been found (to my knowledge). There is a good chance that an adjective has been found. M. Krebernik, in a 1983 article dealing with lexical texts from Ebla, noted a gloss 'a-mu to the equation NI.GIG=*ga-ti-sum* (normalized *qadišum*), equating it to the West Semitic root *herem*, although his identification of the one with the other is uncertain.³⁶ A meaning in the semantic field of sanctity would be indicated; it is not yet possible to narrow it down further.

More solid evidence comes from an article by G. Pettinato on the Eblaite calendar, which lists three variant names of the same month: *itu hu-lu-mu*, *itu hur-mu*, and *itu izi-gar*.³⁷ The first two, assuming they have been correctly read--unlike some other readings, these have not been impeached, to my knowledge--are examples of the "intercambiabilita di l/r" at Ebla.³⁶ The presence of the third name, *itu izi-gar*, is interesting. Pettinato translated *itu izi-gar* as "month of ascending flames."³⁸ As indicated (n.37) Pettinato's reading of *izi-gar* is not correct, but the motif of the flames remains, so that here again, in a totally fresh context (cf. above, *bīt hamri*), we see the association of the root *herem* with fire, although Pettinato, too, is not absolutely certain in his identification of the Hebrew root *herem* with the Eblaite, in this case *hu-lu-mu* and *hur-mu*.³⁶ While caution is always indicated in dealing with this new Semitic language, it seems fairly safe to affirm this particular identity; the evolution of Muharram into a month name offers a late analogy.³⁹ To be sure, there is no indication that the fire involves the death of human beings; Pettinato points to a setting in the ritual cult.³⁶ This is logical for a cultically oriented calendar like Ebla's (a majority of the month names honor the occasion of the offering to a deity),

³⁶ M. Krebernick, "Zu Syllabar und Orthographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla," ZA 73 (1983), 4.

³⁷ G. Pettinato, "Il Calendario di Ebla al Tempo del Re Ibbi-Sipiš sulla base di TM 75.G. 427," AfO 25 (1978), 30. Also cf. idem "Il Calendario semitico del 3. millennio ricostruito sulla base dei testi di Ebla," OA 16 (1977), 280f. and *Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* (Garden City, N.Y., 1981), 150f.. There he translates *itu hurmu* as "month of the fires." I should add that von Soden is of the opinion that the root of Akk. *ḥarāmu* is the same as our root (AHw 323a.), which bolsters the Eblaite identification. According to M. C. Astour, the "ḥ" in Akk. "ḥaramu" is retained (against expectations) for phonetic reasons, because of the presence of the liquid in the word (verbal communication).

³⁸ Ibid. However, Prof. W. W. Hallo has informed me that this reading is incorrect. He referred me to the glossary entry *izi-ne-ne(r) gar* "fan the fire" in his and J. J. A. van Dijk's *The Exaltation of Inanna* (New Haven, 1968), 79f., as well as to (among other references) B. Landsberger et. al., *Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon XIII: A Reconstruction of Sumerian and Akkadian Lexical Lists* 159 ll.191-3 (where the sign appears as NE-NE-gar, with the actual value left open) cf. esp. 192 (NE-N)E-gar = *ṣi-ki-in IZI* (=iṣāti), trans. by W. von Soden in AHw. 1234b as "Legen ins Feuer."

³⁹ For a short summary treatment with bibliography, see *Encyclopedia of Islam* vol. 5 (Leiden, 1960-), 698b-699a.

and it suggests fire's consecrating role in the sacrificial cult. The association of *ḥurmu* and fire at Ebla may be viewed as a harbinger of biblical chapters like Deuteronomy 13; although actual sacrifice is not involved there, as we shall see. Traditional associations in antiquity could last long in one form or another.

It is the turn now of Arabic and Old South Arabic. Here I have little to add to Brekelmans' treatment.⁴⁰ The occurrence of forms such as *mḥrm* for 'temple, sanctuary',⁴¹ (as opposed to Heb. *מִקְדָּשׁ*) shows the rather positive side of the root *ḥrm*, which is reflected in its use in personal/proper names across a broad spectrum of Semitic languages, including Hebrew (see below). It also appears in a context of war, but according to Brekelmans, *hḥrm* appears in South Arabic in a war report, not for destruction but for the sparing of a conquered city. However, he also cites the case of the Sabaen king Krb'l who:

in his wars put many cities to flames; he banned (*hḥrm*) the city of Nan, destroying it by fire, so that he might let his own folk live in the wild, and he erected a temple for Almakah (in translation).⁴²

Brekelmans remarks on this that one may at least say that the religious sense of *hḥrm* here is far from clear.⁴³ One may take note, however, of the following elements: a) the distinction of terminology which Krb'l made in introducing *hḥrm* coupled with b) the shunning of the ruined city (cf. the curse on Jericho) c) the obviously religious motive of the temple-building and d) the association of the root *ḥrm* with fire (as seen previously) as well as with the destruction of a city. All these elements add up to something not too remote from the biblical practice of the *ḥrm* although far from identical.

With regard to Arabic proper, Brekelmans pointed out the frequency of the use of the root *ḥrm* in many forms (verbal and nominal) and meanings, but that direct contact with the OT is, in spite of the broad semantic field, absent.⁴⁴

In Arabic, the unambiguously positive connotation of the root occurs in connection with the simple stem, which can mean "he (a person) was or became, sacred, or inviolable, or entitled to reverence, respect, or honour," which meanings are reflected in the VIIIth stem meaning "to reverence, re-

⁴⁰ Treated in C. H. W. Brekelmans, *De ḥerem*, 17-23.

⁴¹ Recently reaffirmed by J. C. Biella in her *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaen Dialect Harvard Semitic Studies* 25 (1982), 190. Although Biella also gives *mḥrm*, "fortified camp" (cp. A. F. L. Beeston, "Warfare in Ancient South Arabia (2nd-3rd centuries A.D.)," *QAHTAN: Studies in Old South Arabian Epigraphy* Fasc. 3 (1976), 17f.. "ordinance depot," 65, "strongpoint"), this is corrected to "temple" with the aid of additional evidence in W.W. Müller, "Sabäische Felsinschriften von der jemenitischen Grenze zur Rub' al-Kālī" in R. Degen, et. al., eds., *Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik*, Bd. 3 (Wiesbaden, 1978). The temple had a military function as a gathering place from which to launch campaigns and so on.

⁴² C. H. W. Brekelmans, *De ḥerem*, 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 22.

spect, honour"⁴⁵ In Biblical Hebrew such a purely positive aspect of the root (i.e., lacking the component of destruction, which in itself is negative) is preserved only in its use in names. The best example is the name *Ḥarim*, which was used by priests, heads of families, and a prince.⁴⁶ A DN pronounced much the same is found in the Akk. name *Isar-Ḥarim*.⁴⁷

The root *ḥrm* appears (or possibly appears) in oaths or vows in more than one language. In Arabic, Lane cites the example of a man who swears that his wife is forbidden to him (form II).⁴⁸ In Palmyran and Phoenician, votive formulae involving *ḥrm* depend on restorations of damaged inscriptions.⁴⁹ As the Arabic example shows, the mere use of the root in a vow is no proof of an ultimate connection to the *ḥrm*-vow of the Bible. In the other cases, one can not make much of connections that rest entirely on restorations.

A curious case from Elephantine (also connected with oaths) is that of *Herem-Bethel*, accepted as the name of a deity until a recent article by K. van der Toorn.⁵⁰ The sole text in which this alleged DN occurs is an enigmatic courtroom text. The text in question reads as follows:

'n' mlkyh 'qr' lk 'l ḥrmyt'l
'lh' byn (nq)mn iv l'(mr) ...⁵¹

Most of the second line is enigmatic, after *'lh'*, but that is fortunately of no consequence. *ḥrmyt'l 'lh'* had been translated as "Herem-Bethel the god."⁵² This is in keeping with the use of *ḥrm* as a theophoric element in a name such as *ḥrmntn*, which van der Toorn does not dispute.⁵³ Of course, we have at the settlement at Elephantine (see ch.2) names combining two DNs, e.g. *Anatyahu*, which is a strong argument in favor of the opinion of the majority of scholars; the debate has been over the precise meaning of *ḥrm* within the framework of the larger DN *Ḥerem-Bethel*. Van der Toorn argues that *ḥrm* is not part of the DN, but is to be construed as an "object under taboo, sacred and inviolable," citing Nabatean and Palmyran *ḥrmyn*, "inviolable objects."⁵⁴ On one such object, according to van der Toorn, an

⁴⁵ E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, I 553c, 554b.

⁴⁶ *BDB* 356b.

⁴⁷ W. C. Gwaltney, jr., "Indices of Proper Names from the *EL* Old Assyrian Texts," *HUCA* 48 (1977), 20.

⁴⁸ E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, I 554a.

⁴⁹ C. H. W. Brekelmans, *De herem*, 25,34-5. R. S. Tombback, *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon to the Phoenician and Punic Languages*, *SBLDS* 32 (Chico, Ca., 1978), does not mention the root which is found in PN *Mlḫrm*.

⁵⁰ K. van der Toorn, "Ḥerem-Bethel and Elephantine Oath Procedure," *ZAW* 98 (1986), 282-285.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 283.

⁵² P. Grelot, *Documents araméens d'Égypte*, *LAPD* 5 (1972), 93, M. H. Silverman, *Religious Values in the Jewish Proper Names at Elephantine*, *AOAT* bd. 217 (1985), 223.

⁵³ K. van der Toorn, "Ḥerem-Bethel," 285.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 283.

oath was sworn, as oaths were sworn by the Akk. *asakku* in Mari (also he points to Mt 23,16-22).⁵⁵

Passing over van der Toorn's other arguments, it is possible just to compare the different interpretations of the two lines quoted above, especially l.1. "I call to you, to/on Ḥrmbyt'l, the god," is good Semitic parallelism. "I call to you, on/by the sacred object of Bethel the god," does not read as well, and the only other example of this *ḥrm*, "sacred object," at Elephantine depends, like the votive texts mentioned above, on a reconstruction.⁵⁶ The case never amounts to more than ingenious speculation.

This brings us to the question of the meaning of *ḥrm* in Ḥrmbyt'l. One cannot be certain as to the correct answer, but Brekermans clearly chose an attractive possibility in preferring "sacred precinct,"⁵⁷ which would evoke in this context not only Ar. *ḥaram* but also, in my view, the Akk. *bīt ḥamri*. However, the presence in Egypt of names like Ḥrmntn, parallel to other theophoric names such as Jonathon, or perhaps Theodore, does not favor this view. M. H. Silverman has categorically denied the possibility of Ḥrm's representing a divine name (as Ḥrmntn seems to indicate), seeing it as a "theophorous element."⁵⁸ The existence of two divine names in Akkadian (see chart below) is a counter-argument. Another is Phoenician *Mlkḥrm*, which follows the pattern of מלכעשרהרר, which also argues for a god. The name Ḥrmntn follows an ancient and widespread pattern, known throughout the ancient Near East. Given all this, it is hard to avoid understanding the element 'ḥrm' as the name of a god.

C. H. W. Brekermans, in his "filologisch onderzoek," did not seek out the late Aramaic dialects, of which the most familiar dialect to the biblicist is Syriac. I may note in passing, utilizing the Syriac-English Dictionary edited by J. Payne Smith, the many late developments which this root is subject to in Syriac. The causative stem (aphel) was used as the equivalent to the hiphil stem of *ḥrm* in Biblical Hebrew.⁵⁹ In New Testament Syriac and later, the aphel meant "to excommunicate, to curse, ban." The ethpeel stem was used to express the passive, "to be excommunicated, anathematized." The ettaphal was used similarly to the ethpeel, with the added meaning of "to be threatened with excommunication." Its derivatives (half a dozen) include such meanings not familiar from the Bible as "accursed, execrable, savage, fierce, cruel, harsh." The multiplying of forms and meanings, although not with the fecundity of classical Arabic, witnesses to a possibility which I raised in regard to Ugaritic, viz. that more forms of the root were in use in the biblical period than are found in the Bible. Surely there were other nonreligious uses of the root (as in Late Hebrew) which were unutilized by

⁵⁵ Ibid. 283-4.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 284-5.

⁵⁷ C. H. W. Brekermans, *De herem*, 28.

⁵⁸ M. H. Silverman, *Religious Values*, 224. He defines it simply as a "theophorous element," the "subject in a verbal-sentence name." 148, with references.

⁵⁹ J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford, 1903), 158.

biblical writers. The vocabulary of the Bible is only a fraction of what was in use at a given time.

The study of the Semitic root *חרם* in relation to the Bible suggests, that the biblical usage having to do with "consecration to destruction" was not widely shared by other Semitic speakers (excepting Moabite, see ch. 2, and possibly Ugaritic). Yet it should be easily comprehended from the foregoing why this root, with meanings of sanctity and the forbidden attached to it, and possibly still-living traditional associations with fire, should have received the kind of specialization it did in Biblical Hebrew. One may add as an important thread that *חרם* in Semitic denotes separation; more than one kind of separation takes place in the *חרם*; a separation between that which is God's and that which is human is matched by a corresponding physical action or course of action making and marking the separation.⁶⁰ Although the vast majority of instances when the hiphil of the root is used, the meaning is "consecrate through destruction," there are some anomalous usages which are secular, mainly in Chronicles and Daniel but as early as 2 Kgs 19:11 = Isa 37:11, where it was presumably not used in this way for the first time. The standard derivation of this usage has been as a weakened or secularized use of *חרם* I = Ar. *ḥarama*, the root I am dealing with in this study. *חרם* II, "to perforate," = Ar. *ḥarama* has not been considered because the secular usage follows the hiphil pattern of the *חרם* I usage., and is largely late. However, the existence of an eighth form of Ar. *ḥarama* meaning "to kill, extirpate, destroy," (Lane I, 730b) raises the possibility that what in the Arabic appears in the nondescript eighth form would logically appear in Hebrew as a hiphil, producing an isomorph to the hiphil of *חרם* I, just as two identical written (we need not enter into pronunciation) nominal forms (one meaning "net") coexisted without causing much confusion. This possibility better explains the coexistence in the Book of Kings of the hiphil of *חרם* in its sacral meaning along with the secular meaning of "destroy." The Arabic VIIIth form may well be of more recent vintage than the pre-exilic period of ancient Israel, but this is not a derivation, only an analogy; what could develop in Arabic at one, possibly post-biblical time, could develop in Hebrew at an earlier time through a similar process of word formation..

This concludes the chapter, but as a final illustration of the comparative breadth of this root, I offer a look at the omnastics of this root. The chart on the next page, while necessarily incomplete, gives an idea of the breadth and depth of the "Herem Omnasticon." The fact that Semites from many places named their children using this root (as well as deities), shows the positivity which it could assume, as I noted above with Heb. Harim. This is also a good indication of the positive light in which biblical writers saw the practice of *חרם*, a point which I will have occasion to amplify in the course of this study.

⁶⁰ For a modern linguistic analysis of *חרם* along with five other verbs of separation see A. Vivian, *I campi lessicali della "separazione" nell'ebraico biblico, di Qumran e della Mishna: ovvero, applicabilità della teoria dei campi lessicali all'ebraico* (Florence, 1978).

THE 𐤇𐤓 OMNASTICON

LANGUAGE/ DIALECT	PERSONAL NAMES	DEITY NAMES	TOPONYMS/ MISCEL- LANEOUS
SOUTH ARABIC	Ḥrm, Ḥrmm, 'ḥrm, Ḥrmt, Mḥrmt, Ḥrmlh, Yḥrm, Yḥrm'l Tḥrmn, T'dḥrm, Ḥrm'l, Ḥrmtm, Mḥrmh, Mḥrmm, Ḥrmšms*	Ḥrmn, Mḥrm	'ḥrm (GN) bnw ḥr'm (tribe)
CLASSICAL ARABIC	Ḥaram		Banu Ḥaram (tribe) Ḥaram, Maḥram Muḥarram (month)
NABATEAN	Ḥrim, Ḥrmw		
EGYPTIAN ARAMAIC	Ḥrmutu, Ḥrmšzb, Ḥrmntn, Ḥrmn	Ḥrmbt'l	
LATE ARAMAIC/ SYRIAC			ḥurmana' (basilisk)
UGARITIC	Ḥrm		
PHOENICIAN	Mlkḥrm		
AKKADIAN	Ḥurruma Išar-Ḥarim	Ḥurum, Ḥarim	Til-ḥamri, ḥamri (cities), ḥamri (branch) of river, canal
HEBREW	Ḥarim		Ḥarem, Ḥormah, (towns), (Mt.) Ḥermon
EBLAITE			Ḥulumu, Ḥurmu (months)

* See G. L. Harding, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto, 1971), 185.

