The search for Noah and the Flood in ancient Egypt—part 4

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It is reasonable to assume Ham took with him into Egypt the names and knowledge of Noah's family and their first-hand experience of the Flood. Part 4 of this series asks, were the names of the Flood survivors Noah, Japheth, and Shem known in Ancient Egypt? And can they be successfully compared to the names of the Ogdoad? Parts 1 and 2 of this series began to establish this, focusing in part 3 on Ham as the first test case. Building on this evidence, part 4 demonstrates that Noah, Japheth, and Shem are comparable to ancient Egyptian personal and divine names. Furthermore, comparisons of these Flood patriarchal names with the Ogdoad reveal linguistic connections supporting the hypothesis of Noah and sons' deification within Egypt's polytheistic culture.

Basic premise of this study

It is well known within Egyptian scholarship that pharaohs, priests, and ancestors were apt to be deified and worshipped by the Egyptians. Imhotep, the 3rd Dynasty priest, architect of Djoser's step pyramid, is the parade example of a man who became a god.[1] This study will focus on the names of Noah, Japheth, and Shem, which were likely deified via Ham's influence. I will seek to establish the following relationships between their names and Egyptian personal and divine names and the Ogdoad:

Hebrew Noah (sound + meaning) ≈ Egyptian 'Nu' (sound + meaning) ≈ Ogdoad member (equivalent religious meaning).

Hebrew Japheth (sound + meaning) ≈ Egyptian 'Japheth' (sound + meaning) ≈ Ogdoad member (equivalent religious meaning).

Hebrew Shem (sound + meaning) ≈ Egyptian 'Shem' (sound + meaning) ≈ Ogdoad member (equivalent religious meaning).

Second test case: Noah—an Egyptian-sounding name?

The Egyptian lexicons were consulted in order to discover the nearest phonetic equivalent personal names to Hebrew Noah (נֹחַ). The following phonetic considerations are taken into account in order to narrow down word search parameters by considering what sounds are equivalent in Egyptian and Hebrew. Loprieno points out that 'dental consonants' such as "Afroasiatic [Hamito-Semitic] *n were kept as Egyptian /n/,"[2] and the Coptic ⲛ,[3] is a descendant of this strong consonant. The Hebrew vowels pointed in the MT

as ōᵃ correspond to Egyptian vowels /w/ and /u/ (It should be noted that *w = u* within different conventions of transliteration). The 'terminal voiceless pharyngeal fricative' (*ḥ*) of Hebrew Noah is expressed as Egyptian /ḫ/. From these phonetic considerations, constraints to the following search phonemes are applied and used as test cases: specifically, the tri-consonantal root *nwḥ* and its fundamental bi-consonantal root *nw*.[4] The following data was retrieved from Egyptian Lexicons as representative examples in table 1.

Discussion of results

From the lexicons, 18 personal and 146 divine names, prefixed by the bi-consonantal root '*nw*' were counted, examples of which are in table 3. These names occur as early as the OK Pyramid Texts (PT). 10 examples of exact phonetic equivalent names compared to Hebrew Noah, '*nwḥ*', which were found typically prefix to divine epithets, dating from the 6th Dynasty. A similar name, *nwy*, occurs in the 6th Dynasty, PT-1525. Most Nu names lack the fricative '*ḥ*' that Hebrew Noah possesses, a phenomenon also observed in Greek (Νῶε). Nu is the nearest common bi-consonantal phonetic Egyptian name comparable to Hebrew Noah.

Noah: meaning of the biblical name

The biblical text is our first port of call to comprehend the meaning of 'Noah', which is derived from phonetic clues within the Flood narrative. Garsiel states:

"Scholars have noted that a variety of [midrashic name derivations, MNDs] are attached to the name of Noah in the story of the Flood [establishing the meaning of Noah's name]".[5]

Within the Flood narrative, Noah's name is reflected on at key stages, a phenomenon commented on by Umberto

Table 1. Noah 'sound-alike' personal and divine names

RPN#	Personal Name	Hieroglyph	Date
I, 182.20	*nw*		OK (6th Dyn. Giza)
I, 182.25	*nwi*		OK (6th Dyn. Saqqara)
I, 206.7	*nwnw*		OK (5th Dyn. Saqqara)
I, 182.29	*nwḥ-kȝ.w*		OK (6th Dyn. Saqqara)

Wörterbuch#	Divine Name	Hieroglyph	Date
II, 215.15–16	*nw.w.wr* ("The great Nun")		Roman
II, 215.19	*nwy*		OK (PT 1525)
II, 215.5–6	*nw.w*		OK (PT)
II, 218.18	*nw*		NK

Cassuto, which he termed an "extended paronomasia" (play-on-words).[6] Polak states:

> "The name Noah, then, stands at the centre of a broad set of similar vocables which permeate the entire Flood tale."[7]

The key texts in the Genesis narrative that are significant to this point are the following 5 passages:

… וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ נֹחַ לֵאמֹר זֶה יְנַחֲמֵנוּ מִמַּעֲשֵׂנוּ

"Lamech … called his name Noah (*nōᵃḥ*), saying, 'This same shall comfort (*naḥăm*) us concerning our work …'" (Genesis 5:29).

… וַיִּנָּחֶם יְהֹוָה כִּי־עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ

"…it repented (*nā́ḥem*) the LORD that he had made man on the earth …" (Genesis 6:6).

… וַתָּנַח הַתֵּבָה … עַל הָרֵי

"… the ark rested (*naḥ*) on the mountains …" (Genesis 8:4).

… וְלֹא־מָצְאָה הַיּוֹנָה מָנוֹחַ לְכַף־רַגְלָהּ

"… the dove (*yônā*ʰ) found no rest (*mānô*ᵃ*ḥ*) for the sole of her foot …" (Genesis 8:9).

…וַיָּרַח יְהֹוָה אֶת־רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ… וַיִּבֶן נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ

"Noah (*nōᵃḥ*) built an altar … the LORD smelled a sweet savour (*nîḥōᵃḥ*) …" (Genesis 8:20–21).

Within Lamech's prophetic naming speech of Noah (Genesis 5:29) *naḥăm* (a piel imperfect) is utilized, demonstrating Lamech drew upon the 'comfort/ restful' aspect of the verb's root. This is repeatedly observed in the direction of the Flood narrative paronomasia: "the ark rested", "the dove found no rest" and YHWH smelled a "sweet savour". (*BDB*-5967 translates *nîḥōᵃḥ* as "soothing, tranquillizing odour of sacrifices acceptable to God"—thereby causing YHWH to rest from his work of judgment. At Genesis 6:6 the niphal imperfect (*nā́ḥem*) is drawn upon to indicate YHWH's 'sorrow' for creating humanity. (*BDB*-6037 translates this as "be sorry, moved to pity, have compassion ... [by extension care for]".)

The biblical text provides the semantic range for understanding Noah's name. *TWOT*-1323f commentary on the etymology of Noah's name is noteworthy:

> "Our root [shared with Noah] signifies not only absence of movement but being settled in a particular place … *mānôaḥ*, resting place … . This noun denotes a place of *nûaḥ* (motionless, security) for animals or people, i.e. a place to settle down, a home."
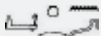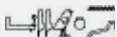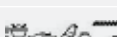
With these biblical concepts in mind, table 2 tabulates the biblical semantic range for 'Noah'. *TWOT* lists 5 words related by root, see table 2.

Having established the semantic range for Noah's name, Egyptian words of equivalent meaning and sound (semantic

Table 2. Noah's semantic range, by phonetic root

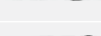| *TWOT#*	Translit.	Translation	Ref.	Text Example
1344	*nāḥām*	"be sorry, repent, regret, be comforted, comfort" [care for]	Gen. 6:6	"And it repented (נחם) the LORD that he had made man on the earth …"
1322b	*nāweh*	"dwelling, abiding"	Exo. 15:13	"guided them … unto thy holy habitation (נָוֵה) …"
1323c	*nîḥōaḥ*	"quieting, soothing, soothing aroma"	Gen. 8:21	"… the LORD smelled a sweet savour (נִיחֹחַ) …"
1323f	*naḥ*	"resting place, rest"	Gen. 8:4	"And the ark rested (נח) in the seventh month …"
854a	*yônā*ʰ	"dove, pigeon"	Gen. 8:9	"… the dove (יוֹנָה) found no rest …"

Table 3. Egyptian vocabulary containing phonetic 'nw' root words

Wörterbuch#	Egyptian	Translit.	Translation	Date
(*RPN* II, 182.20)		*nw*	(assumed root of the following)	
II, 223.4		*nwr*	"Creator's concern for the world"	OK
II, 220.5–14		*nwi*	"take care of"	OK
III, 369.16–370.14		*ḥnw*	"place of residence"	OK
III, 373.5		*ḥnw*	"home affairs; place of residence; (inner)"	OK
III, 287.3–288.3		*ḫni*	"settle down; alight; stop; rest"	OK
II, 275.2–8		*nni*	"be weary; be inert; to subside"	OK
II,15.5–6		*nw.w; nn.w*	"Nu/Nun (divine name)"	OK
II, 226.1–5		*nwd*	"an aromatic ointment"	OK
II, 2, 275.9–12; II, 203.2		*nnw;* *niwy*	"weariness, inertness, tiredness" "to come to rest (the Flood)"	MK Ptol.
III, 288.12–15		*ḥnw*	"resting place, abode"	SIP
II, 69.8		*mn.w*	"abode"	OK
II, 79.3–5		*mnw.t*	"dove, pigeon"	OK
II, 214.18–215.4		*nw.w; nn.w*	"primeval waters"	OK

and phonetic counterparts) were searched for in *TLA*. Table 3 lists the results of this search.

Discussion of results

A *TLA* search for words containing *nw* phonetic roots was made, returning 116 words. Table 3 lists 17 words, equivalent to the Genesis Flood extended paronomasia vocabulary. The phonetic root *nw* (symbolized by the N35 'water ripple' and W24 'nu pot') was taken as the bi-consonantal root, or nearest phonetic equivalent. Of these, 13 words date from the OK, and 4 from MK and later. The *TLA* data presented in table 3 reveals strong phonetic and semantic connections with the semantic range of Noah's biblical name. Particularly noteworthy are OK Egyptian parallels to the Hebrew piel imperfect verb 'consolation/sorrow' (*naḥăm*) drawn upon by Lamech's naming of Noah in Genesis 5:29; and 6:6 niphal imperfect (*nāḥem*) describing YHWH's 'sorrow/ repentance' for creating humanity. A strikingly equivalent concept occurs in OK '*nwr*', translated "Creator's concern

for the world" (*Wb* II, 223.4), and OK '*nwi*', "take care of" (*Wb* II, 220.5–14). Furthermore, the 'restful' and 'homely' aspects inherent in Noah's name are reflected in OK *nni*, *ḫni*, and *mn.w* meaning 'resting place', 'rest', and 'abode'. Notably, the *Egyptian Wörterbuch* translates *niwy* "to come to rest (referring to the Flood)" (*Wb* II, 203.2).

Table 3 offers words directly equivalent to, or which share equivalent meanings with, 'Noah', spread across OK to later dates. The OK divine name Nu is the chief male deity of the Ogdoad—the group of eight gods discussed in parts 1–3, whom the Egyptians believed emerged from the Primeval Flood, itself named *nw* and *nn*.

Representative OK text examples sharing *nw* roots in context

Listed below are five representative Egyptian texts that reveal, in context, how root words associated with *nw* are used (many more could be cited). The examples chosen represent key vocabulary associated with the meaning of Noah's name, and the Ogdoad member whose name possesses the
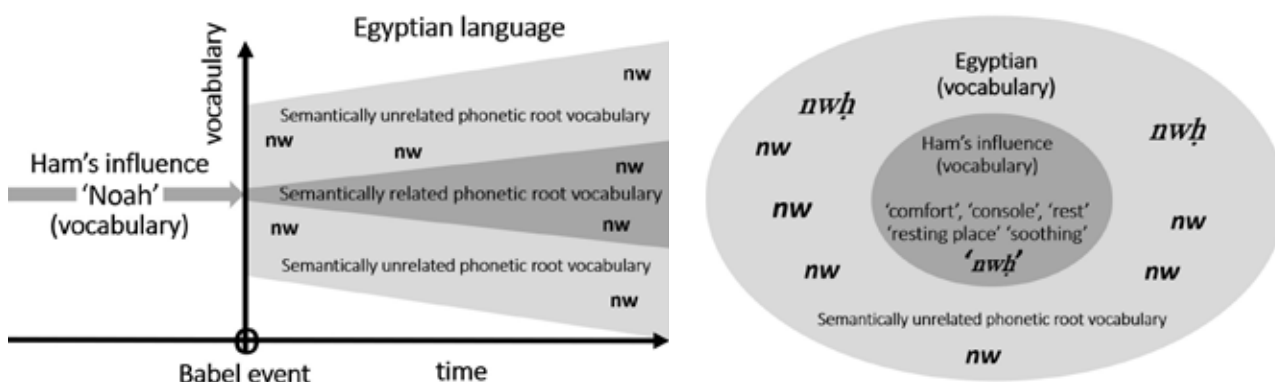
Figure 1. Influence of Ham on Egyptian language (vocabulary)

phonetic root *nw*. (Hypertext links are accessible after log-in—username and password 'user' are sufficient to get past login-screen).

MK. Inscription of Sesostris I, Month-temple of El-Tod, col. 7.

... wbn m sbꜣ wꜥ, tj ḥr = s ḥr wn (n) ḥr nw, t tꜣ pn

"… the one who rises as a lonely star with them ... while being full of concern for this land."[8]

c. 518 bc, Darius I. Hybis Temple, Creator Hymn, Birth of Amun Re, cols. 22 and 23.

nwi.n꞊f p.t tꜣ dwꜣ.t

"having cared for the heavens, earth and underworld."[9]

OK. From Papyrus Berlin P 10474 AB recto, 92A–93A, line b3–6/7.

šmi r ḫnw r jni.t ḥtp-nṯr

"Going to the residence to bring the sacrifice of god."

OK. Pyramid Pepis I, PT 578§1534a.

jn ṯwt j ś ḫ (w) i nni.w = śn m- ḫnw ꜥ = k

"Because it is you who prevents them from getting tired/weary [resting] in your arms."

OK. Pyramid Pepis II, PT 486§1040a-c.

{i:} mi.w m nw, w n ḫpr.t p, t n ḫpr.t tꜣ n ḫpr.t

"I (?) was born in the Nu / (water) before the sky came into existence before the earth came into being."

c. 518 bc, Darius I. Hybis Temple, Great Amun Hymn of Karnak, cols. 40–42.

ntk Nwn-wr, nni sw ḥr ꜣḫ.t

"You are Nun the Great, who settles upon the fields ..."

The idea of *nw* as restfulness is brought out in this pun from the Great Amun Hymn. Klotz points out "The verb *nni*, literally 'to become inert', has a secondary meaning, 'to subside' or 'to settle', when describing the inundation"[10] (i.e. 'rest').

Summary

From the linguistic evidence discussed above, the following comparison can be made:

Hebrew Noah ('console', 'home', 'rest') ≈ Egyptian Nu ('console', 'home', 'rest') ≈ Ogdoad Nu ('console', 'home', 'rest').

Egyptian personal and divine names are phonetically equivalent to Hebrew Noah and form flood epithets. Vocabulary with *nu* roots share an equivalent semantic range in the OK with the meaning of Noah's name, offering support for the hypothesis that these names were understood in the same way, and that Noah and his wife became deified ancestors as the Ogdoad couple Nu and Nu.t. (figure 1).

Third test case: Japheth—an Egyptian-sounding name

The biblical name 'Japheth' is anglicized in its pronunciation—containing English consonants 'j' and 'th'. From Hebrew *yā́p̄eṯ* to English, 'j' is substituted for 'j' and 'th' for /t/; such is the case for Egyptian consonants also. Regarding the initial vowel in 'Japheth', Loprieno's comment is relevant: "the semiconsonantal, or semivocalic glides /j/ [pronounced 'i'] and /w/, vowels, remain ... for the most part unexpressed",[11] and "in later Egyptian were dropped."[12] Loprieno comments regarding Egyptian labial "homorganic sounds" /p/ and /b/, that they were known to "coalesce" (i.e. /p/ > /b/ and vice-versa).[13] It has also been noted that the 'interdental fricative' phonemes ḏ and ṯ likely merged from OK Egyptian into Late Egyptian /t/ and /d/.[14] With these phonetic considerations in mind, personal and divine names containing tri-consonantal phonetic roots *ipt/ibt/wpt/wbt* will be used as search terms. Table 4, below, presents the results of this search within Egyptian lexicons.

Table 4. Egyptian personal and divine names phonetically equivalent to Hebrew Japheth

RPN#	Personal Name	Hieroglyph	Date
I, 24.16	*ipt* (Ipet)		NK
I, 21.20	*ib.t* (Ibet)		?
I, 78.4	*wp.t* (Wepet)		OK (Giza)
I, 77.14	*wbḫ.t* (Webket)		NK

Wörterbuch#	Divine Name	Hieroglyph	Date
I, 68.7	*ip.t* (Ipet)		NK (Karnak)
II, 359	*wp.t-wꝫ.wt* ("which Opens the Ways")		OK (PT)
II, 360	*wp.t* ("The Opener")		MK
II, 360	*wpt-nt-mw* ("Divider of the Waters")		NK

Discussion of results

From *RPN*, 6 *ipt*; 7 *ibt*; 6 *wpt*; 1 *wbt* personal names were found, *LGG* records 19 *ipt*; 1 *ibt*; 0 *wbt*; 41 *wpt* divine names; representative examples of which are shown in table 4. These names are phonetically equivalent to Hebrew Japheth, found from OK–NK periods, and also occur as a flood epithets. However, only 2 variants appear as divine names *ipt* and *wpt*.

Japheth: meaning of the biblical name

יַפְתְּ אֱלֹהִים לְיֶפֶת …

"God shall enlarge (*yapt*) Japheth (*yépet*) …" (Genesis 9:27).

The biblical meaning of 'Japheth' is derived from the text of Gen. 9:27. Noah drew upon the meaning of Japheth's name to formulate his personal blessing upon Japheth's discretion recorded in Gen 9:21–27. The Hebrew word 'יַפְתְּ' (*HALOT*-3882) is clearly being drawn upon by Noah. In the qal 1 stem it means "to be simple"; in the niph'al and puel "to be deceived"; and piel "to entice". However, none of these aspects make sense in the context in which Japheth is blessed. Alternatively, 'יַפְתְּ' in the qal 2 stem means "to be open" and in the hiphil it means "to make wide". An analysis of the verb reveals it is hiphil imperfect and jussive in both form and meaning. Therefore, the idea of being made to be 'spacious' and 'wide-open' should be the accepted meaning (*HALOT*-7802). *Jones* makes some pertinent comments regarding the meaning of Japheth's name:

"The eldest son of Noah. He was called Japheth, that his name might answer to the promise of God … 'God shall enlarge Japheth.' His posterity being both numerous and widely diffused, accords well with the etymology of his name; he was enlarged both in territory and in children. His posterity possessed … those vast regions of the earth anciently inhabited by the Scythians, embracing the western and northern regions of the globe."[15]

Other researchers have noted the similarities of Japheth's name to that of the Greek god Iapetos,[16] or Jupiter,[17] which befits his descendants' northern migrations. Table 5 lists

Table 5. Hebrew lexical range for 'Japheth'

TWOT#	Translit.	Translation	Ref.	Text Example
1853a	*yapt*	"be spacious, wide"	Gen. 9:27	"God shall enlarge (יֶפְתְּ) Japheth …"
1854a	*pétaḥ*	"opening, doorway"	Gen. 6:16	"the door (פֶּתַח) of the ark shalt thou set in the side …"
1854	*pātaḥ*	"open"	Job 3:1	"After this Job opened (פתח) his mouth …"

Table 6. Egyptian vocabulary containing *wb/wp/pd* roots

Wörterbuch#	Egyptian	Translit.	Translation	Date
I, 298.7−301.12		*wbꜣ, wpi*	"to divide; to open; to judge; open"	OK
I, 300.6		*wp.t-rʾ*	"Opening-of-the-mouth (ceremony)"	MK
I, 567.8−568.13		*pḏ*	"to stretch out; to spread out"	OK
I, 568.5; 2, 271.17		*pḏ*	"to stride widely"	OK
I, 78.4		*wp.t*	"Wepet (personal name)"	OK
I, 302.5		*wp.w*	"doors"	OK
I, 571.9		*pḏ.w*	"flood"	Ptol.

biblical vocabulary associated with Japheth's name representing its semantic range.

To test if biblical 'Japheth' shares a common semantic range with Egyptian names, *wb/wp/pḏ* roots are used as search terms. Table 6 records results of an interrogation of TLA.

Discussion of results

TLA returned the following words: *ip*–34; *ib*–72; *wp*–38; *wb*–33. Table 6 lists all root words discovered that share meaning with 'Japheth'. Tables 5 and 6 offer strong parallels between the semantic range of Japheth and Egyptian words containing similar phonetic roots. Egyptian *pḏ* is shared semantically with Hebrew *pōṯeʰ* with words meaning 'wide' and 'spacious'. The OK personal name Wepet (*wp.t*) occurs as a divine name: "The Opener", and a flood epithet *wp-n.t* "He who divides the flood". Egyptian '*wpt*'

is phonetically comparable to Hebrew '*ypt*' with identical meanings 'open, wide' (and 'flood' association), offering convincing evidence '*wpt*' was understood the same way as 'Japheth'. Such data supports the hypothesis that Ham influenced Egyptian language and religion in terms of names and associated vocabulary (figure 2).

Comparing 'Japheth' to the Ogdoad

The names of the Ogdoad are discussed in parts 1 and 2, one member in particular—Heh—has immediate semantic (but not phonetic) connections to Japheth in terms of concepts of 'expansiveness'. Table 7 lists shared vocabulary when comparing phonetic roots for Heh.

The semantic range of Japheth's name includes concepts of 'stretching out', 'wide', and 'open', which accords well with Heh, whose name shares phonetic roots with equivalent OK words: 'eternity', 'infinity', 'million', and 'search'. Heh is also a NK word describing the Egyptian flood. Furthermore, an OK word 'Heh' means 'tribe, or clan' referring to people groups, consistent with Japheth's posterity (Gentiles-*gôyīm*) spreading far and wide.

Representative text examples possessing roots ipt, pḏ

Listed below are four Egyptian texts containing words with phonetic roots *ipt*, *pḏ*. The examples chosen represent key vocabulary associated with the meaning of Japheth's name, and the Ogdoad member—Heh.

OK. Unas Pyramid, PT 54, line 52.
(w)sjr (| *wnjs* |) *wpi rᶜ = k m mḥ.t im = k*
"Osiris Unas, Open your mouth with it."
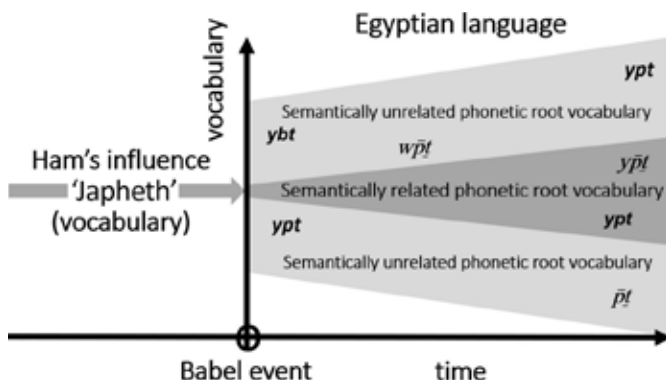
Figure 2. Influence of Ham on Egyptian vocabulary
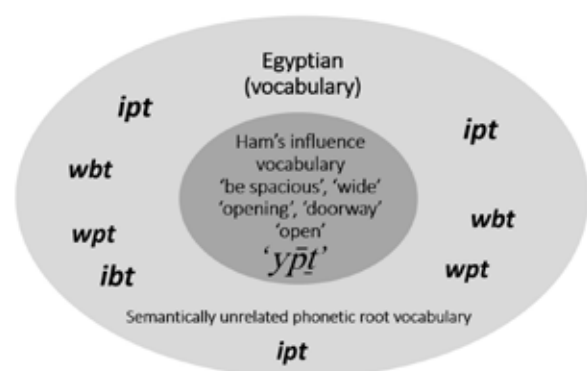
Table 7. Relevant semantic range of Heh

Wörterbuch#	Egyptian	Translit.	Translation	Date
III, 152.14–153.24		ḥḥ	"eternity, infinity, million"	OK
III, 152.14–153.24		ḥjḥj, ḥḥ	"to seek, to look, to search"	OK
I, 254.8–12		ḥḥ, ḥjḥj	"Heh, Hehi" (personal, divine names)	OK
III, 152.9–10		ḥḥ	"flood"	NK
(AL 77.2826)		ḥḥ	"tribe, or clan"	OK

Table 8. šm/sm/śem personal and divine names

RPN#	Personal Name	Hieroglyph	Date
I, 327.19	šmꜣ		OK
I, 327.20	šmꜣi		OK
1, 296.18	smj.tj		MK
1, 296.17	smj.t-kꜣ		MK
1, 307.1	śm		MK
1, 307.7	śmn		OK

Wörterbuch#	Divine Name	Hieroglyph	Date
IV, 486.16–19	šms.w-ḥr.w (Follower of Horus)		OK
IV, 467.8–10	šm.ti		MK
LGG VI, 306.	sm (Sem)		OK
IV, 121.13	śm		OK (Palermo stone)
IV, 142.12–16	śms.w (Semsu, "oldest one")		MK

OK. Pyramid of Neith, PT 71J, line 328.

pḏ pf aḥa pn

"That one is stretched out, this one stands."

OK. Pyramid of Teti, PT 406, line 340.

… gwꜣ = k m- ḫnt ḥḥ.y = f

"… if you land in front of his Heh (sky-support) gods."

OK. Pyramid Pepis I., PT 1007, line 95.

wḏ = k mdw n ḥḥ ḥwi n = k ḫfn. sḏb

"Thou shalt grant millions of orders, hundreds of thousands [for you] to ward off evil."

NK. KV 9: Tomb of Ramses VI, Celestial Cow, line 6.

bꜣ pw n ḥḥw ḥw.t

"The ba [spirit] of Heh is the flood." (Note the pun with 'Heh' *ḥḥw* and 'flood' *ḥw.t*.)

Summary

From the linguistic evidence discussed, the following comparison can be made:

Hebrew Japheth (open, wide) ≈ Egyptian *wb/wp/pḏ* (open, wide) ≈ Egyptian Heh (infinity, million, flood).

Egyptian personal and divine names phonetically equivalent to Hebrew Japheth carry equivalent meaning and support the hypothesis these names correspond to biblical Japheth. These names occur as divine names and flood epithets, and can successfully be compared to Heh and Heh.t, a divine pair from the Ogdoad.

Fourth test case: Shem—an Egyptian-sounding name

Loprieno discusses three relevant sibilants: "the Old Kingdom Egyptian displays three phonemes, usually transcribed z (or s), s (or ś), and š".[18] Loprieno states both Hamo-Semitic š and ś are continued by Egyptian s (ś). Egyptian š survives as Coptic ϣ. Furthermore, monoconsonantal /m/,[10] survived into Coptic as nasal, labiel ϻ.[19] With these phonetic considerations, equivalent-sounding personal and divine names can be searched for by phonetic root: šm, sm, śm. Table 8, below, presents the results of this search within Egyptian lexicons.

Discussion of results

From *RPN* 33 *šm*, 32 *sm*, 12 *śm* personal names are listed, *LGG* records over 300 *sm*, 223 *šm*, 11 *śm* divine name variants. The personal and divine names in table 8, possessing sibilants š, s, and ś, are representative examples, occurring in OK texts, but persist into the NK, demonstrating all three

sibilant name variations existed. These names, as far as can be determined, sound identical to biblical Shem.

Shem: meaning of the biblical name

וַיֹּאמֶר בָּרוּךְ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵי שֵׁם

"Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem (šēm) ..." (Genesis 9:26).

The meaning of Shem can be discerned contextually at Genesis 9:24–27 within Noah's blessing formula for Shem's discretion. Ross states: "Yahweh makes himself a name in becoming the God of Shem, and thus entwines His name with that of Shem, which means 'the name'."[20] Theologically,

Shem is fulfilling priestly functions in being so closely identified with YHWH.[21] *Jones* comment is noteworthy:

"Shem … son of Noah. He is placed before his brethren, probably because God conferred on him the honour of being a progenitor of the blessed Messiah; and because he was the great opposer of idolatry. God therefore distinguished him among his brethren, and he became peculiarly His, as Noah emphatically declares … ."[22]

The semantic range for Shem is given by the standard Hebrew lexicons: šēm "name, brand, mark, reputation, representative, glory"[23]; "name, name of a god, renown, fame"[24]; "name, celebrated and distinguished".[21] Table 9 offers examples of how 'šēm' appears in context, representing a theoretical semantic range.

To test if Hebrew and Egyptian 'Shem' share a common semantic range, *šm, sm, śm* roots are used as search terms. Table 10 records results of an interrogation of *TLA*.

Discussion of results

TLA was searched for words containing phonetic roots *šm, sm, śm*, which yields: *šm*-141; *sm*-284; *śm*-85 words. Table 10 offers examples of vocabulary shared between the semantic range for Hebrew Shem and Egyptian vocabulary containing *šm, sm, śm* phonetic roots, which supports the hypothesis of the influence of Ham (figure 3). (However, some key corresponding vocabulary occurs only in later texts, not displayed here). A common OK noun *rn* means 'name', but only by the MK do semantically equivalent phonetic words occur: *sm₃* and *šm₃* meaning 'title', and *śmnẖ* 'perpetuating a name'. 'Image' and 'statue' occur by MK *śmnẖ* and NK *śšm.w*. (Images or statues represent people, or gods—in the same way names represent people to which they belong). The concept of Shem as priest may be reflected in the OK term 'sem' "priest". The semantic links with these three phonetic roots is weak in the OK, compared to evidence presented for Noah, Ham, and Japheth. It cannot be stated with certainty that Shem 'sound-alike' names, in the OK, were understood in the same way as biblical Shem.

Table 9. Semantic range associated with the name 'Shem'

Ref.	Translit.	Translation	Ref.	Text Example
TWOT-2405	*shēm*	"name"	Gen. 2:11	"The name (שֵׁם) of the first is Pishon."
TWOT-2405	*shēm*	"name"	Gen. 4:26	"Then men began to call on the name (שֵׁם) of the LORD."
BDB-10046	*shēm*	"reputation, character, brand, mark, glory"	Gen. 6:4	"… mighty men which were of old, men of renown (שֵׁם)."
Holl-8694	*shēm*	"posthumous renown, memory, standing"	Gen. 11:4	"… let us make us a name (שֵׁם) …"

Table 10. Egyptian vocabulary containing roots *šm, sm, śm*

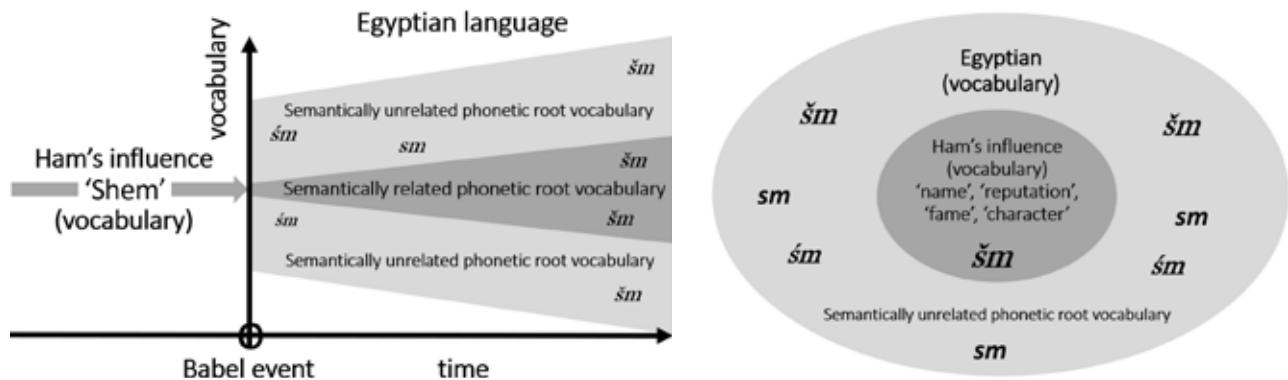| *Wörterbuch#*	Egyptian	Translit.	Translation	Date
IV, 470.1		*šm₃*	"noun in a title"	MK
IV, 290.14–291.5		*sšm*	"manifestation (of a god); nature (of a god)"	NK
V, 119.3–9		*śm*	"Sem-priest"	OK
IV, 136.7–137.25		*śmnẖ*	"make distinguished; make effective; embellish; endow"	OK
(Lesko, 41)		*smí*	"reputation"	NK
III, 451		*sm₃*	"title, name"	MK
IV, 137.24–25		*śmnẖ*	"keep your name in good memory (to perpetuate a name)"	MK

Figure 3. Influence of Ham on Egyptian language (vocabulary)

Biblical Shem corresponds to the Ogdoad

'Shem' is encapsulated in the concept 'name'. As was discussed in parts 1 and 2, "Hidden of Name" (*jmn-rn*, Wb 1, 84.1) is an OK title. Ogdoad member Amun possesses this identical phonetic root (*jmn*). Table 11 compares words that share the semantic range of Shem with bi-consonantal phonetic root vocabulary shared by Ogdoad member 'Amun'—*mn*.

Table 11 lists, by phonetic root, words that share the lexical field with biblical Shem, offering the possibility the name Amun could have been understood in a similar way to Shem— particularly in the sharing of nouns for 'identity'. Interestingly, an OK word containing the *mn* root (*mndf.ti*)

Table 11. Comparing *mn* root words with the lexical field for Shem

Wb#	Egyptian	Translit.	Translation	Date
II, 64.13−65.2		*mn, mn.t*	"so and so − someone; the like; who?"	OK
I, 84.1		*jmn-rn*	"Amun/ hidden name"	OK
II, 66.1−3; I, 83.7−11		*mn, imn.yt*	"daily offerings, lasting sacrifice"	OK
II, 89.5		*mnš*	"Cartouche (name ring); to brand (with the king's cartouche)"	NK
II, 86.15−17		*mnḫ.w*	"excellence; virtues"	OK
IV, 136.7−137.25		*śmnḫ*	"to make distinguished; to make effective; to embellish; to endow"	OK
IV, 137.24−25		*śmnḫ*	"keep your name in good memory, (to perpetuate a name)"	MK
II, 92.9		*mndf.ti*	"Author of the Flood"	OK

means "Author of the Flood", which occurs in the Pyramid Texts (Pepis I, PT 486).

Representative text examples with root *šm, sm, śm* in context

Listed below are four Egyptian texts containing words possessing phonetic roots *šm, sm, śm*. The examples chosen represent key vocabulary associated with the meaning of Shem and the Ogdoad member—Amun.

MK. Tomb of Chnumhotep II (Beni Hasan 3), Biography Chnumhoteps II, lines 41.

smn.n = f n = j wḏ šma smnḫ wḏ = sn mi pt

"… he established the southern stele for me, he made the northern stelae excellent like heaven …"

NK. Papyrus Cairo CG 24095 (pMaiherperi), Tb 127, line 559.

dwꜣ nṯr. sšm, w. ḏwꜣ.t jn ḏd = f

"The gods and images of the underworld worship … he says …"

OK. Unas Pyramid, PT 301, line 558.

jmn ḥna jmn.t m ḫnm, tj nṯr. šnm nṯr. m š {j} w = sn

"Amun and Amaunet, (you) both ... the gods, who unite the gods with their shadow."

NK. Papyrus Anastasi (Pap. Brit. Mus. 10247), Line 12, 6.

wn-f nk ꜣs ḥr pꜣi-i smi

"… that he may quickly disclose to thee my reputation."[25]

Summary

From the linguistic evidence, the following comparisons are made:

Hebrew Shem (name, reputation …) ≈ Egyptian *sm, šm, śm* (name, reputation …) ≈ Amun *mn* (likeness, image).

Egyptian personal and divine names are phonetically equivalent to Hebrew Shem. However, within OK, equivalent meaning is difficult to establish—in the MK onwards, a stronger case is made. In OK, the meaning of Shem is successfully compared to Ogdoad couple Amun and Amun.t.

Conclusion

Parts 3 and 4 demonstrate Noah, Ham, Shem, and Japheth were known as phonetically equivalent Ancient Egyptian personal and divine names, likely through Ham's influence. Part 3 considered how biblical names were understood in context, and how phonetically similar words were played upon to derive name meanings. It is asked, can a similar case be made with phonetically equivalent Egyptian names? Do these names carry equivalent semantic ranges, when compared to their Hebrew counterparts? Were these 'sound-alike' names understood the same way? These articles have sought to confirm this, demonstrating the evidence is most relevant in the OK, where from a biblical-historical perspective, the cultural and linguistic influence is strongest.

In summary, the Hebrew Flood patriarchal names, when compared with Egyptian phonetic counterparts, share equivalent meanings. This occurs in the oldest examples, so the case is made they were understood the same way. When compared to the Ogdoad names, there are striking semantic similarities. Noah and sons' names can be compared with Egyptian 'sound-alike' personal/ divine names and Ogdoad names thus:

Noah ≈ *nw* ≈ Nw
Ham ≈ *ḥm/hm/ḫm/km* ≈ Kek
Japheth ≈ *ipt/wpt* ≈ Heh
Shem ≈ *šm/sm/śm* ≈ Amun

The evidence presented cannot be claimed as 'proof' these names were understood the same way—because ancient Egyptians, long gone, cannot be personally consulted—but it supports the hypothesis. The evidence suggests the names of the Flood patriarchs influenced Egyptian onomastics and associated vocabulary, via Ham's influence, in fundamental ways. This can be discerned in equivalent phonetic Egyptian names, which share semantic connections with their Hebrew counterparts. Such evidence supports the hypothesis that Ham influenced Egyptian onomastics and religion—specific to this study, the semantic ranges of Noah and sons' names (figures 1–3). This sharing of semantics is observed when comparing Noah and sons' names with the Ogdoad names, thereby strengthening the hypothesis set up by this series, that the Ogdoad represent a polytheistic memory of Noah's family.

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