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# THE SHAME OF BAʿAL: THE MNEMONICS OF ODIUM

*ABSTRACT*

*In this study, I examine a hitherto unrecognized literary phenomenon in which merely sounding the consonants found in Baʿal's name (i.e., ב–ע–ל) sometimes compelled Israelite authors to employ in equal measure the consonants found in the word "shame" (ב–ו–ש) and/or its synonymic word pairs (e.g., חפר "reproach" and כלם "humiliation"). I contend that the device has its origins in socially constructed memories concerning the events at Baʿal-Peor, where the Israelites first worshiped Baʿal, and that, as such, the dysphemistic device conjures images of apostasy, sexual infidelity, and infertility.*

הֵמָּה בָּאוּ בַעַל־פְּעוֹר וַיִּנָּזְרוּ לַבֹּשֶׁת
וַיִּהְיוּ שִׁקּוּצִים כְּאָהֳבָם
Hos 9:10

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The association of Baʿal with shame in the Hebrew Bible has long been recognized and it is perhaps nowhere better attested than in the glosses on personal names that substitute the theophoric element "Baʿal" with the word "shame", notably Ishboshet (2 Sam 2:8) for Eshbaʿal (1 Chron 8:33; 9:39), Jerubbeshet (2 Sam 11:21) for Jerubaʿal (Judg 6:32), and Mephiboshet (2 Sam 4:4) for Meri-baʿal/Merib-baʿal (1 Chron 8:34; 9:40). While scholars have long understood these names as dysphemistic in purpose, few have attempted to explain why such dysphemism existed.[1]

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1      On the dysphemistic name changes, see Parry (2003:373-376). The vocalization of יְרֻבֶּשֶׁת with בֶּשֶׁת is unusual. Many consider it a pun on בֹּשֶׁת, though Paul (1996:961) opines that it was vocalized to suggest שֶׁקֶר, "lie". Tsevat (1975:71-88), argues that בֹּשֶׁת and בֶּשֶׁת are the cognate equivalent of Akkadian *bāštu*, "guardian angel". See also Hamilton (1998:228-250); Herrmann (1999:137). Schorch (2000:598-611) provides supporting evidence from the LXX. These views were anticipated already by Jastrow (1894:19-30), who equated בֹּשֶׁת with Akkadian *baštu*, "power, possession". For the purposes of this essay, it matters little whether בשת reflected *bāštu*, "guardian angel", or *baštu*, "power, possession", since the writers still exploited it for its similarity to בֹּשֶׁת "shame".

Though beyond the focus of his study, Ben Zvi (2005:201) sheds light on the names in his commentary on Hosea, in which he observes that the use of בֹּשֶׁת, "shame", as a substitute for the name of Baʿal in Hos 9:10, cited above, is not merely dysphemistic, but evokes socially constructed "agreed memories" concerning events at Baʿal-Peor, where the Israelites first worshiped Baʿal.[2] Thus, by invoking the shame of Baʿal, the prophet also conjured images of idolatry, sexual misconduct,[3] offerings to the dead, and punishment as related in other biblical texts (e.g., Num 25:1-18; 31:13-20; Deut 4:3; Josh 22:17; Ps 106:28-31).[4]

While Ben Zvi's argument for the presence and perpetuation of powerful social memories certainly elucidates both the dysphemistic personal names and Hosea's clever substitution, I submit that it also explains a hitherto unrecognized, albeit related, literary phenomenon in which merely sounding the consonants in Baʿal's name (i.e., ב–ע–ל) compelled the use of consonants in the word "shame" (ב–ו–שׁ) and/or its synonymic word pairs (e.g., חפר, "reproach", and כלם, "humiliation").[5]

Informing this poetic strategy is an ontological conception of words that equates similarity in sound with similarity in essence, as Rabinowitz (1993:14) explains:

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2    See also 1 Kgs 18:19, 25, where the LXX reads αἰσχύνης, "shame", and the MT reads בעל, "Baʿal". Nevertheless, as Herrmann (1999:137) observes "The few references suggest that the Greek pejorative names were seldom used. Yet it should be noted that Βααλ is often preceded by the feminine article, which fact must be interpreted as a reflection of the reading ἡ αἰσχύνη".

3    Though a sexual act certainly took place at Baʿal-Peor, it would be incorrect to infer that orgiastic religious rites took place. Nevertheless, later traditions concerning the cult make it difficult to rule out the practice entirely. See the balanced discussions by Levine (2000:294-297); and Milgrom (1990:211-218, 476-480).

4    Ironically, the Ugaritic texts characterize Baʿal as a god who detests the things that the Israelite polemicists associate with him and his cult, especially shame and prostitution. Thus, *CAT* 1.4 iii 15-23: "For Baʿal abhors two sacrifices, three, the Rider on the Clouds: A sacrifice of shame (*bṯt*), a sacrifice of prostitution (*dnt*), and a sacrifice of the violation of handmaidens (*tdmm amht*). For in it the shame (*bṯt*) is obvious, and in it are handmaidens violated (*tdmm amht*)". The Ugaritic *bṯt* and *dnt* are cognate equivalents of בשת and זנה.

5    The synonyms חפר and כלם are frequent word pairs with בוש. For בוש and חפר, see Mic 3:7; Job 6:20. For בוש and כלם, see Isa 45:17; 50:7.

In ancient Israel, owing to the conception of the nature of words, verbal and linguistic similarities and comparisons of every kind – metaphor, simile, paronomasia, and all other figures of diction – were held indicative of – indeed, constitutive of – relationships and effects not restricted, as in our modern cultures, to matters of communication and expression.[6]

## 2.    MNEMONICS OF ODIUM

Since the phenomenon I examine here invokes the memory of Baʿal-Peor in order to shame or otherwise disempower the name of Baʿal,[7] I have labelled it a "mnemonic of odium". In anticipation of my evidence, I note that it is impossible to know whether the Israelite writers viewed the evocation of Baʿal's name as something taboo, thus compelling them to employ references to shame in equal measure, or if they merely were exploiting the social memory of the shame of Baʿal-Peor in composing their works, because it matched their content and resonated with their audiences. Regardless of the motivation, I herewith offer seventeen demonstrations of the mnemonics of odium from the following texts: Isa 25; 26; 54; Jer 3; Hos 2; 9; Judg 3; 2 Kgs 10:18-28, Prov 12; 18; 19; 22:17-23:35; 27; 31; Ps 35; Job 8; and Qoh 10.[8]

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6      On the performative power of allusive language, see Noegel (2007; 2010a; 2010b; 2013a; 2013c).

7      Bechtel (2004:203-215), argues that the terms "Canaanite" and "Baʿal" in Hosea served the deuteronomists as polemical metaphors to castigate non-deuteronomists who understood the power of Yahweh differently. The evidence gathered in this study suggests that the phenomenon is more widespread and that it served a number of potential purposes.

8      The pericope concerning Eli's sons in 1 Sam 2:12-25 also might invoke the memory of Baʿal-Peor. The account describes the sons' improper sacrifices and their sexual impropriety at the opening of the tent of meeting (2:22). It refers to them with the expression בְּנֵי בְלִיָּעַל, "sons of worthlessness" (2:12), which, as I show below, elsewhere alludes to the name Baʿal. Moreover, Eli's son Phinehas bears the same name as the zealous priest of the Baʿal-Peor incident, whose actions also took place at a tent. Thus, the reader naturally draws the two textual traditions into comparison. Yet, since the accounts of Eli's sons do not use the roots בעל or בוש, I have excluded them. I thank my graduate student, Shira Jaret, for this observation and for her close reading of an earlier version of this essay.

*2.1    Isa 25*

7.    On this mountain he will swallow (בִּלַּע) the shroud, the shroud over all the peoples, the covering that covers all the nations;

8.    He will swallow (בִּלַּע) death forever.
      The Lord Yahweh will wipe away the tears from all faces;
      He will remove the reproach (חֶרְפַּת) of his people from all the earth, for Yahweh has spoken.

9.    One will say on that day, "Behold, this is our God. We waited for him and he saved us.

10.   This is Yahweh, we waited for him. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation".
      For the hand of Yahweh will rest on this mountain;
      But Moab will be trampled beneath him as straw is trampled in the water of the dunghill (מַדְמֵנָה).

We first hear the name בעל, "Baʿal", echoed in the prophet's use of the anagram בִּלַּע, "swallow", in v. 7. Strengthening the allusion is its repeated use in the next verse: "He will swallow (בִּלַּע) death forever". Moreover, Isaiah here has turned Canaanite mythology on its ear by having Yahweh swallow death. In the Ugaritic myth of Baʿal, it is Death who swallows Baʿal.[9] There is an additional subtlety in that פער "Peor" means "open the mouth", as Isa 5:14 informs us: "Therefore, Sheol made wide its appetite, and opened its mouth (פָּעֲרָה פִיהָ) without measure". Thus, the twofold use of בִּלַּע, coupled with the swallowing of Death, naturally evoke the incidents at Baʿal-Peor.

Consequently, thoughts of shame are not far behind. In v. 8, the prophet thunders: "He will remove the reproach (חֶרְפַּת) of his people from all the earth". Since the allusions recall Baʿal-Peor, it is fitting that Isaiah immediately thereafter prophesies the destruction of Moab. Of special note is the reference to a מַדְמֵנָה "dunghill" (25:9), which punfully recalls the town of מַדְמֵן "Madmen" in Moab.[10] If the rabbinic traditions that record ritual defecation at Baʿal-Peor have their roots in ancient Israel,

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9    See, e.g., *CAT* 1.5 ii 2-6, 1.6 ii 21-23. Allusions to Canaanite mythological traditions perhaps are signalled in v. 5, "the din of the foreigners you will humble (תַּכְנִיעַ)", which evokes the name כנען "Canaan".

10   This town name has been a preferred object of derisive puns. See Jer 48:2, discussed by Garsiel (1991:35-36, 237). I thank my colleague Gary Martin for his close reading of an earlier draft of this article and for suggesting the inclusion of Isa 25.

then this passage has added allusive power.[11]

*2.2    Isa 26*

9.      With my being I have desired you in the night (בַּלַּיְלָה), indeed with
        my spirit within me, I have sought you early.
        For when your judgments are toward earth, the inhabitants of the
        world (תֵבֵל) learn righteousness.
10.     Though grace be given to the wicked, yet he will not (בַּל) learn
        righteousness.
        In the land of uprightness he will deal perversely,
        and he will not (בַּל) see the majesty of Yahweh.
11.     Yahweh, when your hand is raised, they shall not (בַּל) see;
        but they shall see and be ashamed (וְיֵבֹשׁוּ) at the zeal of the people,
        the fire of your enemies will devour them.
12.     Yahweh, you establish peace for us. All that we have made you
        have done (פָּעַלְתָּ) for us.
13.     Yahweh our God, lords other than you have ruled us (בְּעָלוּנוּ), but
        you alone, will we recall by name.
14.     Dead (מֵתִים), they do not (בַּל) live, Shades (רְפָאִים), they do not (בַּל)
        rise. Therefore, you punished (them) and destroyed them, you made
        perish all memory of them.

We first hear the name Baʿal echoed in the threefold use of the negative
particle בַּל in vv. 10-11, as well as in בַּלַּיְלָה, "in the night", and תֵבֵל,
"world", in v. 9 (cf. בֵּל "Bel" in Jer 51:44).[12] The echoes naturally conjure
notions of shame, which the prophet addresses by adding וְיֵבֹשׁוּ, "they shall
be ashamed" (26:11). Adding to the בעל references is the paronomastic
verb פעל, "do", in v. 12. The mention of shame and the allusion to Baʿal's
name then are made more explicit in v. 13: "Yahweh our God, lords other
than you have ruled us, but you alone, will we recall by name". Here the
use of בְּעָלוּנוּ, "have ruled us", invokes the name Baʿal, which the prophet
softens by attaching to it the generic אֲדֹנִים זוּלָתֶךָ, "lords other than you",

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11      On the rabbinic association of ritual defecation with Baʿal-Peor, see *b. Sanh.*
        64a, and Rashi on Num 25:3, who notes why the place was named Baʿal-Peor:
        על שם שפוערין לפניו פי הטבעת ומוציאין רעי וזו היא עבודתו "accounting for the
        name, they would open the 'mouth' of the rectum before him and bring forth
        excrement. This is its (ritual of) worship". Note here the use of פוערין, "open",
        and פי, "mouth". See also *Sifre* Num 131, *b. Sanh.* 106a, and *ʿAbod. Zar.* 3.
12      On Jer 51 and other performative puns in the prophecy, see Noegel (2013a:36-
        37).

and by making clear that בעל is not a personal name. This is reinforced in v. 14 by qualifying the other lords as: "Dead, they do not live, Shades, they do not rise. Therefore, you punished (them) and destroyed them, you made perish all memory of them". The passage again reminds us of Baʿal by way of the repeated negative particle בַּל and by referencing the מֵתִים, "dead", and the רְפָאִים, "shades", which recall the tradition that the Israelites "yoked themselves to Baʿal-Peor and ate sacrifices for the dead (מֵתִים)" (Ps 106:28).[13]

Isaiah's hyperbolic insistence that the memory of the previous lords has been blotted out, runs contrary to his own statement, which evokes it, and it registers the role that shared memories concerning Baʿal-Peor played in shaping poetic choices. In v. 18, Isaiah then laments: "we have conceived and writhed in travail, as it were, we bore (only) wind. We have not (בַּל) wrought salvation for the world, and inhabitants of the world (תֵּבֵל) have not (בַּל) been born".[14] As Stiebert (2002:126-27) has shown, the Israelite prophets associated notions of shame with sexual and chthonic infertility.[15] In keeping with her observations, this passage attributes human infertility to the people's shame, and thus, it subverts the conception of Baʿal as a fertility god. Moreover, the passage again echoes the name Baʿal by using the negative particle בַּל twice and by ending the verse with the noun תֵּבֵל, "world".

*2.3    Isa 54*

1.    Sing, barren one, who did not bear, sing and cry aloud, who did not

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13    The connection of Baʿal with death and the shades is well attested in Ugarit texts, e.g., *CAT* 1.5-1.6 5, 1.6 vi 45-47, 1.20, 1.161. Note also that *Tg. Ps.-J.* to Num 25:2 classifies the sacrifices to Baʿal at Peor as במרזחיהון "*marzeah*-meals". On the *marzeah* as a cultic meal involving the deceased, see Jer 16:5; Am 6:7. On this practice generally with an eye to the comparative evidence, see McLaughlin (2001); Herrmann (1999:135-136).

14    Within a context of birthing, the interpretation of יִפְּלוּ, "fallen", suggests bearing a child, which took place with the mother supported vertically. Hence also the word נֵפֶל, "miscarriage, abortion" (e.g., Ps 58:9; Job 3:6; Qoh 6:3).

15    Note similarly, in reference to the aforecited passage in Hos 9, that the mention of the Baʿal-Peor incident in 9:10 is anticipated by the mention of prostitution (9:1) and lack of agricultural produce (9:2), and elsewhere refers to a miscarrying womb and dry breasts (9:14), and the drying up of the root of Ephraim and its inability to produce fruit (9:16). See Lynch (2010) with regard to shame as a physical description of drought.

birth,
More are the children of the desolate than the children of the wife
(בְּעוּלָה), said Yahweh.

Here, the prophet refers to Zion as a "wife" with the rather unexpected form בְּעוּלָה (rather than אִשָּׁה). Since the consonants of this word resound the name Baʿal, the prophet was compelled to follow his proclamation with a reference to shame.

4.  Don't fear, because you won't be ashamed (תֵבוֹשִׁי), and don't be humiliated (תִכָּלְמִי), because you won't be reproached (תַחְפִּירִי),
    For the shame (בֹּשֶׁת) of your youth you will forget, and the reproach (חֶרְפַּת) of your widowhood you will not longer remember,
5.  For your Maker is your husband (בֹּעֲלַיִךְ), and Yahweh of Hosts is his name.

Twice the prophet uses the root בוש, "shame", in concert with the synonymic word pairs חרף, "reproach" (also twice used), and כלם, "humiliate". Following the references to shame is בֹּעֲלַיִךְ, "your husband" (54:5), which again evokes the name Baʿal. Here the prophet makes explicit the role of memory in the perpetuation of shame. However, the prophecy has transformed that memory by altering the pronunciation of the consonants that comprise Baʿal's name so that they now mean "husband" and refer to Yahweh. The prophecy illustrates the tie between shame and sexual and chthonic infertility in making a barren woman (i.e., Zion) the focus of the transformation. By removing her shame and betrothing her to Yahweh (and thus negating the presence of Baʿal), she now can bear children: "And all your children will be taught by Yahweh, and great will be the peace of your children" (54:13).

*2.4    Jer 3*

Another illustration of the device appears in Jer 3, a collection of prophecies concerning Israel's worship of foreign gods. The chapter opens by equating apostasy with prostitution and by citing it as a cause of drought.

2.  Lift your eyes to the barren heights and see. Is there any place where you have not been ravished?
    By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers, sat like a nomad in the desert.
    You have defiled the land with your prostitution (בִּזְנוּתַיִךְ) and wickedness.

3.      Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have
        fallen.
        Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute (זוֹנָה); you refuse to
        blush with humiliation (הִכָּלֵם).

Here again shame is tied to infertility. The sexually explicit language used
to describe the apostasy,[16] coupled with the mention of humiliation
(הִכָּלֵם), suggest the cult of Baʿal, even though Baʿal's name does not
appear. In addition, Yahweh's command: "Go and proclaim these words
northward (צָפוֹנָה)" (3:12), recalls Israel's worship of Baʿal (1 Kgs 12:26-
30; 16:31-32), and suggests Baʿal's home on צָפוֹן, "Zaphon", via צָפוֹנָה
"northward".[17] The allusions are made explicit in v. 14, where Yahweh
ensconces Baʿal's name: "For I have married (בְּעַלְתִּי) you".[18] With one
word, Jeremiah has made licit, what once was illicit. What formerly
belonged to Baʿal, is now Yahweh's. The use of בעל, "marry", détourns
the name of Baʿal, thus transforming an object of shame into a subject of
honour. As such, Yahweh's call for repentance constitutes a call to leave
Baʿal behind, which the prophet's punful prophesy encapsulates well:
"they (Israel and Judah) will come together from the land of Zaphon/or
[the] north (צָפוֹן)" (3:18). Having now absorbed the name of Baʿal,
Jeremiah no longer uses בעל in his prophecy, even when the word
"husband" is expected. Thus, we hear: "Therefore, as a wife has dealt
treacherously with her 'companion' (מֵרֵעָהּ), so has the House of Israel
dealt treacherously with me" (3:20). This effectively removes Baʿal from
mention. Indeed, he is only referred to afterwards as "the Shame": "The
Shame (הַבֹּשֶׁת) has devoured the fruits of our ancestors' labour from your
youth. Let us lie down in our shame (בְּבָשְׁתֵּנוּ), and let our humiliation

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16    Note the use of שֻׁגַּלְתְּ, "you have been ravaged" in v. 2, which the Masoretes
      deemed so vulgar that they glossed it with שֶׁכַּבְתְּ, "you have lain".

17    The root בעל (or an anagram thereof) also appears alongside צפן elsewhere. In
      Prov 1:11 the words, "let us ambush (נִצְפְּנָה) an innocent without cause" are
      followed in v. 12 with נִבְלָעֵם כִּשְׁאוֹל, "let us swallow them like Sheol". Here the
      consonants for "swallow" (בלע) recall Baʿal, as does the mention of the
      underworld. Following this is בַּעַל כָּנָף, "bird" (lit. "lord/possessor of a wing)"
      in v. 17, "they ambush (יִצְפֹּנוּ) themselves" in v. 18, and "it takes away the life
      of its owner (בְּעָלָיו)" in v. 19. Since Prov 1 contains no reference to shame, I
      have not grouped it with the other examples of the mnemonics of odium. For
      another example of בעל alongside צפן, see Prov 27, treated below.

18    Lundbom (1999:313) notes the "wordplay" here, but he does not discuss it.

(כְּלִמָּתֵנוּ) cover us" (3:24-25).[19] Not only has "the Shame" replaced Baʿal entirely (cf. Jer 11:13), the bed and covering that once symbolized the sexual practices associated with the cult at Baʿal-Peor now themselves metaphorically embody "shame" and "humiliation".

## 2.5   Hos 2

A similar use of the device appears in the prophecies against Israel in Hos 2.[20] In 2:10, Yahweh proclaims "I multiplied silver for her, and gold, (which) they used for Baʿal (בָּעַל)". Shortly thereafter, the prophecy employs the name Baʿal more generally: "And I shall punish her for the days of the Baʿals (הַבְּעָלִים) to which she burned incense" (2:15). This is followed by: "And I shall remove the names of the Baʿals (הַבְּעָלִים) from her mouth" (2:19). Anticipating the references is the use of בוש, "shame", in a description of Israel's apostasy: "For their mother has prostituted herself (זָנְתָה) and brought shame (הבִישָׁה) in having conceived them" (2:7). Another reference to "shame" appears in 2:19: "And I shall remove the names of the Baʿals (הַבְּעָלִים) from her mouth (מִפִּיהָ), and their names (בִּשְׁמָם) will no longer be invoked". Note the use of בִּשְׁמָם, "their names", rather than the expected form את שמותם, based on the use of the plural שמות just prior and the usual use of the verb זכר with the direct object marker. The form בִּשְׁמָם enables the prophet to echo the word בוש, "shame".[21] Immediately preceding the prophecy, he invokes the name of Baʿal: "You will call me 'my husband', and no longer 'my master (בַּעְלִי)'" (2:18). Underscoring the allusion is the previous divorce claim against Israel (using איש rather than בעל) in which the people were told to proclaim, "She is not my wife, and I am not her husband" (2:4). The twofold use of דגן "wheat" (2:10-11) also suggests Baʿal's epithet "Son of Dagan".[22]

Again bolstering the mnemonics of odium are descriptions of idolatry as acts of sexual infidelity that Yahweh punishes with infertility. In addition to the harlotry mentioned in 2:7, the woman is said to seek multiple lovers, only to return to the first (2:9), and to have received

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19     Note the sexual allusion in the use of נִשְׁכְּבָה, "let us lie down". See also Jer 11:13.

20     I thank Shira Jaret for suggesting the inclusion of Hos 2.

21     The preposition ב with the verb זכר usually conveys the meaning "invoke" (e.g., Josh 23:7; Isa 48:1).

22     Baʿal is said to be the son of Dagon in the Ugaritic texts. See CAT 1.2 i 35; 1.10 iii 34. See also the connection between the two gods in 1.123:4.

payment from her lovers including vines and figs (2:7, 14), the latter, a fruit charged with sexual nuance.[23] The punishment is then described in 2:4-5: "Remove her prostitution (זְנוּנֶיהָ) from her face and her adultery from between her breasts, lest I strip her naked, and show her as bare as the day she was born. I will make her like a desert, I will turn her into dry ground, and I will slay her with thirst" (2:4-5). Moreover, Yahweh vows to seize the new grain and wine, wool and linen, and to ruin the vines and fig trees, stop all sacred celebrations, and turn the land into a thicket (2:11-14).

## *2.6    Hos 9*

I cited Hos 9 at the start of this study to demonstrate the close association of Baʿal with shame and its connection to socially constructed memories concerning the events at Baʿal-Peor. As evidence, I turned to the prophet's dysphemistic use of the epithet בֹּשֶׁת, "Shame", for Baʿal in 9:10. I add here that the prophecy also contains evidence for the mnemonics of odium in Hosea's later pronouncement: "Ephraim is blighted, their root is dried up (יָבֵשׁ), they do not (בַּל) yield fruit" (9:16).[24] Note how the passage evokes the word "shame", by way of the word יָבֵשׁ, "dried up", and the name "Baʿal", by way of the negative particle בַּל.[25] Hosea's proclamation in 9:1-2 is similarly loaded with allusive power: "You have prostituted from upon your God, you have loved the wage upon every threshing floor of wheat. The threshing floor and winepress will not feed them, and the new wine will fail her". Of particular note is the expression גָּרְנוֹת דָּגָן, "threshing floor of grain". The addition of the word דָּגָן, "grain", is here rather superfluous, unless one considers it with Hos 2:10-11, as suggestive

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23      See Noegel & Rendsburg (2009:162).

24      The *Kethib* reads בְּלִי.

25      Stiebert (2002:126-127), discusses a number of prophetic puns between the root בוש, "shame", and יבש, "dry", that connect shame with infertility. See also Isa 1:29-30: "For they shall be ashamed (יֵבֹשׁוּ) of the oaks that you have desired, and you shall be reproached (תַחְפְּרוּ) for the gardens that you have chosen. For you shall be as an oak whose leaf fades, and as a garden that has no water". Nielsen (1989:210) argues that יֵבֹשׁוּ here suggests both "shame" and "dryness". As the former, it anticipates "be reproached", and as the latter, the waterless garden. Note also that Hosea concludes his harangue against Ephraim's cult of Baʿal in 13:15 by prophesying the coming of a drought, (i.e., וְיֵבוֹשׁ מְקוֹרוֹ, "his spring will dry up"), which constitutes an allusion to "shame".

of Baʿal's title "the son of Dagon".[26] As with the previous examples of the device, this prophecy develops a theme of infertility. Thus, in addition to the aforecited description in 9:16, we hear that the threshing floors and winepresses will fail (9:2), there will be no births, pregnancies, or conceptions (9:11), the wombs will miscarry and breasts will be dry, and that even if one should have children, Yahweh will slay them (9:16).

## 2.7    *Judg 3*

A tendency to pronounce the consonants of shame when evoking Baʿal also appears in prose. In particular, we find it in the pericope involving Ehud and the king of Moab in Judg 3:12-30.[27] I begin with v. 20, which informs us where Eglon was seated when Ehud approached: "Ehud then came to him while he was sitting alone in the upper room (בַּעֲלִיַּת) of his palace". Of interest is בַּעֲלִיַּת, "in the upper room".[28] The combination of the preposition and noun echo the name Baʿal. Note too that Ehud's אִטֵּר יַד־יְמִינוֹ, "left-handedness" (lit. "bound with regard to his right hand") shares a morphological pattern that identifies it as a physical defect, and thus, as worthy of shame.[29] Thus, in v. 25 we read that before his servants found Eglon dead, וַיָּחִילוּ עַד־בּוֹשׁ, "they waited to the point of embarrassment" (lit. "to the point of shame").[30] The narrator's remark is particularly sharp, since it can be understood as "they waited for Shame", and thus, as subtly identifying the king with Baʿal.

Indeed, several aspects of the story associate Eglon with Baʿal. The first is his name, which means "calf". The identification of Baʿal with calves is

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26    See Healey (1999:218); Albright (1946:106).

27    The pericope also contains a number of puns on body parts. See Noegel (2011).

28    The author employed the noun three more times (3:23-25), but without the preposition, and when a third chance arose to use it with a preposition in v. 24, he varied the reference to בַּחֲדַר הַמְּקֵרָה, "in the chamber of the palace".

29    See Olyan (2008:147, n. 5).

30    I note that one also can express waiting to the point of shame by means of the poʿlel form of בוש. Thus, Moses "tarries" (בֹּשֵׁשׁ) on the mountain (Exod 32:1), as does Sisera's chariot (Judg 5:28). Interestingly, the former passage appears in a pericope detailing the apostasy of the golden calf, and the latter in a passage containing the "woman in the window" motif, found widely in literary contexts involving promiscuity and iconographic contexts involving the goddesses Astarte, Ishtar, and Kilili. Nevertheless, since neither the Exodus nor Judges accounts appears to develop the theme of shame, I simply note them here. For examples from the Hebrew Bible, see Seeman (2004).

well-known (see, e.g., Hos 8:4-6; 13:1-3). In v. 25, he also possesses the title אֲדֹנֵיהֶם, "their lord". In addition, here again the text connects shame to infertility and sexual impropriety, in this case, by casting Eglon as a homosexual with untoward intentions for Ehud.[31] The memory of Baʿal-Peor also is evoked by the location of the story, which takes place in Moab. Moreover, the scatological aspects of the story identify Eglon with Baʿal, since the Israelites polemically portrayed Baʿal as defecating.[32]

## 2.8    2 Kgs 10

Another prose example obtains in the account of Jehu's massacre of the attendants of Baʿal in 2 Kgs 10:18-28. As the narrator informs us, Jehu deceptively summoned Baʿal's prophets, servants, and priests by proclaiming, "Ahab served the Baʿal (הַבַּעַל) a little, but Jehu will serve him greatly"! From this moment on, the story employs the name Baʿal fourteen additional times in just ten verses, far more often than the story requires. When the attendants arrive, Jehu then orders the keeper of the wardrobes, "Bring out the clothing (לְבוּש) to all the servants of the Baʿal". Immediately afterwards, "they brought out the clothing (הַמַּלְבּוּשׁ)" (10:22). The episode would appear to add little to the story other than colourful detail, were it not for the fact that the twofold mention of לְבוּש, "clothing", allows the author to evoke the word בוש, "shame". In addition, the account alludes to פער, "open the mouth", by employing the word פֶּה, "mouth", three times in ways that also would otherwise be unnecessary. The author uses it twice when describing the size of the crowd: "and he filled the temple of Baʿal, end to end (פֶּה לָפֶה)", literally "mouth to mouth" (10:21). The expression is unique in reference to temples,[33] and it soon becomes an ironic foreshadowment when the narrator states: "and he (Jehu) smote them with the mouth (לְפִי) of (the) sword" (10:25). Another scatological evocation of Baʿal-Peor comes at tale's end, when we are told that, after Jehu's men razed and burned Baʿal's temple and standing

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31    See Miller (1996).

32    On Baʿal's polemical association with defecation, see Rendsburg (1998). If צו means "dung" in Hos 5:11, then the passage perhaps polemicizes a memory of this practice. On the meaning "dung", see Emerton (2001:50-55). See also the rabbinic traditions cited above.

33    It appears elsewhere in reference to a city (2 Kgs 21:16) and land (Ezr 9:11). Interestingly, the former passage recalls the sins of Manasseh, which included the erecting of an altar to Baʿal and a pole to Asherah (2 Kgs 21:3), and the latter refers to ritual defilement of the land.

stones, [לְמוֹצָאוֹת] לְמֹחֲרָאוֹת וַיְשִׂמֻהוּ, "they turned it into a toilet" (10:27).[34] Finally, I note that the narrator underscores the irony in Jehu's zeal by concluding that, despite destroying the worship of Baʿal, he did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam and allowed Bethel and Dan to retain their עֶגְלֵי הַזָּהָב "golden calves" (10:29). Here again the author exploits Baʿal's identification with calves.

## 2.9 Prov 12

A poetic exploitation of the memory of Baʿal-Peor also appears in Prov 12:4: "A wife of noble character is the crown of her husband (בַּעְלָהּ), but a shameful one (מְבִישָׁה) is like decay in his bones". Here, בַּעְלָהּ, "her husband", evokes the name Baʿal, thus necessitating that the poet sound the consonants of shame, in this case by employing מְבִישָׁה "shameful one". Though the poet does not say what is shameful about the מְבִישָׁה, its use in conjunction with בַּעְלָהּ, "her husband", suggests sexual impropriety.[35] The theme is hinted at again in 12:16: "A fool's anger is made known at once, whereas the prudent (עָרוּם) conceals (כֹּסֶה) his dishonour (קָלוֹן)". Here, the word קָלוֹן, "dishonour", has sexual overtones, especially as it relates to cultic practice (e.g., Jer 13:26-27; Nah 3:5). Its use in conjunction with the verb כָּסָה, "cover, conceal", suggests that we see in עָרוּם, "prudent", an allusion to עֵרוֹם, "nakedness".[36] Note also that verse compares the "shameful (wife)" to "decaying bones", which adds a theme of dryness and infertility.[37]

## 2.10 Prov 18

See similarly Prov 18, which offers advice on honourable decorum while speaking. In v. 3, the author establishes a theme of shame: "When

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34   Cf. Isa 36:12, already by Rashi.

35   Rabichev (1996) shows that a woman is shamed by failure to maintain sexual purity, premarital coitus, adultery, failure to bear sons, and disobedience. See also Matthews (1998).

36   The consonantal text is ambiguous. Note, e.g., וַיְכַסּוּ אֵת עֶרְוַת אֲבִיהֶם, "they covered the nakedness of their father" (Gen 9:23), וְעֵירֹם יְכַסֶּה־בָּגֶד "he covers the naked with a garment" (Ezek 18:7), etc. Observed by Hurowitz (2012:320), who also notes the paronomasia between כַּעְסוֹ and כֹּסֶה. Cf. Prov 12:23: אָדָם עָרוּם כֹּסֶה דָּעַת "a prudent man conceals (lit. covers) knowledge".

37   "Rotting" here must refer to dry rot. On rotting bones, see also Prov 14:30 and Hab 3:16. Note the similar reference in Ezek 37:1-22 to "bones" that were יְבֵשׁוֹת מְאֹד, "very dry".

wickedness comes, so does contempt (בּוּז), and with dishonour (קָלוֹן) comes reproach (חֶרְפָּה)". The use of חרף, "reproach", along with קָלוֹן, "dishonour", and בּוּז, "contempt", anticipates the memory of Baʿal in v. 9: "One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys (לְבַעַל מַשְׁחִית)".[38] The mere suggestion of Baʿal gives the poet cause for mentioning shame in v. 13: "To answer before listening, that is folly and humiliation (כְּלִמָּה)". In v. 3, the word קָלוֹן, "dishonour", again has sexual overtones, and so its use in tandem with חֶרְפָּה, "reproach", plants in the listener's mind a subtext of infidelity.

*2.11 Prov 19:26-28*

26.   Whoever robs their father and drives out their mother
      is a child who brings shame (מֵבִישׁ) and causes disgrace (מַחְפִּיר).
27.   Stop listening to instruction, my son,
      and you will stray from the words of knowledge.
28.   A witness of worthlessness (בְּלִיַּעַל) mocks justice,
      and the mouth (פִּי) of the wicked swallows (יְבַלַּע) evil.

In Prov 19:26, the son who mistreats his parents מֵבִישׁ, "brings shame", and מַחְפִּיר, "causes disgrace". Since these lexemes conjure thoughts of Baʿal, the listener awaits mention of him. However, the author twists the expectation by using two different words in v. 28 that anagrammatically represent the name of Baʿal: בְּלִיַּעַל, "worthlessness", and יְבַלַּע, "swallow".[39] Moreover, the mouth that swallows again reminds us of פער, "open the mouth", or "Peor".

*2.12  Prov 22-23*

See also Prov 22:17-23:35, the so-called "thirty sayings of the wise".[40]

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38    Hurowitz (2012:388) sees the use of the construction with בַּעַל here as a characteristic of late biblical Hebrew and the influence of Aramaic. However, he does not catch the allusions to Baʿal and shame, nor elsewhere in his excellent commentary.

39    Hurowitz (2012:405) observes the paronomasia between בְּלִיַּעַל and יְבַלַּע. He also discusses possible etymologies of בְּלִיַּעַל and suggests that its appearance here is an allusion to דִּבְרֵי־בָלַע "deceitful words", as found in Ps 52:6. Moreover, he notes (223) that בְּלִיַּעַל can refer to the death, as it does in 2 Sam 22:5-6.

40    Prov 22:17-24:22 are regarded widely as a separate unit within the book that was modelled upon the Egyptian sayings of Amenhotep. See Hurowitz (2012:441-448).

We first hear Baʿal in the sage's advice: "Do not befriend a hot-tempered person (בַּעַל אָף), and do not approach a heated man" (22:24). This is followed by the negative particle בַּל in "they will not (בַּל) stand before low-ranking officials" (22:29). In 23:1-3, the poet then advises prudence when dining with a מוֹשֵׁל, "ruler". Not only should the guest regard carefully what is put before him (v. 1), he is advised: "put a knife to your throat (בְּלֹעֶךָ) if you are given to gluttony (בַּעַל נֶפֶשׁ)" (v. 2). The idioms are lost in translation and obscure the use of בְּלֹעֶךָ, "to your throat" (from the root לוּעַ), an anagram of the consonants in Baʿal's name, and בַּעַל נֶפֶשׁ, "glutton" (lit. "a lord of appetite"), which uses Baʿal as a common noun. The idiom is especially clever for it juxtaposes a "lord (of appetite)" with the "ruler". This is followed in v. 7 with an admonishment not to crave the delicacies of a begrudging host: "For as he serves food within himself, so is he. 'Eat and drink', he says to you, but his heart is not (בַּל) with you".[41] Here the negative particle בַּל again resounds the name Baʿal. As in the previous examples, merely using the consonants that comprise the name Baʿal encouraged the poet to use consonants that comprise the word "shame". Thus, continuing on the theme of dining and gluttony, we hear: "For drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes (תַּלְבִּישׁ) them in rags" (v. 21). In this verse, תַּלְבִּישׁ, "clothes" paronomastically resounds בוש "shame".[42]

Since the poet has artfully invoked the memory of Baʿal-Peor, he not surprisingly dwells for a moment on a theme of sexual impropriety in Prov 23:27-28.

27.    For a prostitute (זוֹנָה) is a deep pit (שׁוּחָה),
       and a narrow well is a foreign woman.
28.    Indeed, like a bandit she lies in wait
       and multiplies the treacherous (בּוֹגְדִים) among men.

The passage's use of שׁוּחָה, "pit", echoes the חֲשֻׁכִּים, "low-ranking officials" (22:29), while בּוֹגְדִים, "treacherous men", recalls the drunkards whose "drowsiness clothes (תַּלְבִּישׁ) them in rags" (23:21). Indeed, the word בּוֹגְדִים, also means "clothed". In v. 35, the poet concludes by recalling the drunkards of 22:21 and by describing the thoughts of one waking in a stupor: "they struck me, but I did not (בַּל) feel it, they beat

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41    On שָׁעַר as "serve food", see Barker (1998).

42    The paronomastic idiom "clothed with shame" appears elsewhere in the Bible, e.g., Job 8:22; Ps 35:26; 132:18. I examine the first two of these passages in this study.

me, but I did not (בַּל) know it". The statement twice suggests Baʿal by way of the negative particle בַּל. If rabbinic traditions linking Baʿal-Peor to rituals involving strong drink have ancient roots, then the reference to drunkenness is even more apposite.[43]

*2.13  Prov 27*

We also find the device in Prov 27, a collection of sayings that emphasizes proper speech and conduct and keeping oneself from troublesome people. In Prov 27:22, the fatherly figure offers his son the following advice: "Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding them like grain with a pestle (בַּעֱלִי), you will not remove their folly from them". The use of the *hapax legomenon* עֱלִי, "pestle", with the preposition ב resounds the name Baʿal. The proverb anticipated this in 27:11-14.

11.   Be wise my son and make my heart joyful, so that I can return a word to my reproacher (חֹרְפִי).
12.   The prudent (עֲרוּם) see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.
13.   Take the garment (בִּגְדוֹ) of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if it is done for an outsider.
14.   If anyone loudly blesses their neighbour early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse (קְלָלָה).

Note first the word חֹרְפִי, "my reproacher", in v. 11, one of the lexemes of shame. As Hurowitz (2012:524) espied, the use of חֹרְפִי, in conjunction with בִּגְדוֹ, "his garment" (v. 13) and קְלָלָה, "curse" (v. 14), suggests that we see עֲרוּם, "prudent" (v. 12) as an allusion to עֵרוֹם "naked". If we add to this the theme of foreignness raised in v. 13, then we have a constellation of key words and concepts that trigger the memory of Baʿal-Peor. Note also that v. 16 twice resounds Baʿal's home on Zaphon: צֹפְנֶיהָ צָפַן־רוּחַ, "restraining her is (like) restraining the wind". Moreover, the stich is used in reference to a [מִדְיָנִים] אֵשֶׁת מִדוֹנִים, "contentious wife" (27:15), thus associating her with shame.[44] Following the reference to Baʿal in בַּעֱלִי is "lambs will (furnish) your clothing (לִבוּשֶׁךָ)" in v. 26, which evokes the consonants of בוש "shame". Moreover, 27:20 then compares the desire of one's eyes to the insatiable lust of "Sheol and Abaddon", thus connecting a theme of desire to the infertile world of the dead.

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43     See *b. Sanh.* 64a.

44     In Prov 22:10 מָדוֹן, "contention" parallels קָלוֹן, "dishonour". As discussed above, the word קָלוֹן has sexual connotations.

### 2.14  *Prov 31*

Another demonstration of the mnemonics of odium appears in Prov 31, which like Prov 12, focuses on a אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל, "woman of noble character".[45] After introducing her, the poem qualifies her virtues in relation to her husband: "The heart of her husband (בַּעְלָהּ) trusts in her, he needs no booty (שָׁלָל)" (31:11). Here again בַּעְלָהּ, "her husband", contains the name Baʿal. Reinforcing the allusion to Baʿal in v. 18 is the Kethib בַלַּיְל, "at night", in "her lamp is not extinguished at night". Naturally, the suggestion of Baʿal evokes notions of shame. However, since the context is one of a woman of noble character, the poet employs a litany of other lexemes that contain the same consonants.

21.  When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed (לָבֻשׁ) in scarlet.

22.  She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed (לְבוּשָׁהּ) in fine linen and purple.

23.  Her husband (בַּעְלָהּ) is known in the gates, while sitting (בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ) with the elders of the land.

24.  She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants (כְּנַעֲנִי) with sashes.

25.  She is clothed (לְבוּשָׁהּ) with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

26.  She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

27.  She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

28.  Her children arise and bless her, her husband (בַּעְלָהּ) too, and they praise her (וַיְאַשְּׁרוּהָ).

Note how the poet twice makes reference to her garments in ways that echo בוש, "shame". The first is the past participle לָבֻשׁ, "clothed" (v. 21), and the second is the noun לְבוּשָׁהּ, "her clothing" (v. 22). In v. 23, we then hear about בַּעְלָהּ, "her husband", a reference that is placed in pause, just before בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ, "while sitting", so that the consonants in בוש, "shame", follow immediately upon the evocation of Baʿal. The concatenation continues with לְבוּשָׁהּ, "her clothing", in v. 25, and follows with: "Her children arise and bless her, her husband (too), and they praise her" (v. 28). Not only do we hear "Baʿal" again in בַּעְלָהּ, "her husband", but וַיְאַשְּׁרוּהָ, "and they praise her" evokes the הָאֲשֵׁרָה, "the Asherah". Bolstering the allusions is the use of כְּנַעֲנִי, normally "Canaanite", but here

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45      Hurowitz (2012:316) also notices the similarities.

"merchant" (31:24).

This pericope defines a woman's good character in relation to her husband. The use of בעל for "husband" naturally evokes the memories of shame with its sexual overtones. However, the poet has negated the connection by using the consonants that comprise the word "shame" in words that speak to the wife's good character and proper sexual conduct. Thus, the allusions to בוש thrice emphasize that she is clothed.[46] Similarly, we are told that her husband trusts in her and needs no שָׁלָל "booty" (v. 11), a witty remark, since שָׁלָל can refer to another woman.[47] Banished are notions of shame and infertility. On the contrary, one is commanded to give her the פְּרִי, "fruit", of her own hands (v. 31).

*2.15   Ps 35*

An evocation of Baʿal's shame also appears in Ps 35. For example, in v. 4 we hear: "May those who seek my life be ashamed (יֵבֹשׁוּ) and humiliated (יִכָּלְמוּ); let them be turned back and be reproached (יַחְפְּרוּ)". The use of the roots בוש, כלם, and חפר are further bolstered in v. 7 by the use of חפר, "dig", which visual suggests חפר, "reproach": "they (the wicked) have sought (חָפְרוּ) my life without cause".[48] The trifold reference to shame and the clever use of חפר are then followed in v. 8 with: "May ruin (שׁוֹאָה) overtake them by surprise, may the net they hid entangle them, may they fall into the pit, to their ruin (בְּשׁוֹאָה)". The theme of *lex talionis* follows upon the shame of v. 4 and the snares of v. 7 and twice employs the noun שׁוֹאָה, "ruin". However, the second time it occurs, it is attached to the preposition ב, which allows it to resound the consonants of shame in the form בְּשׁוֹאָה. In case the listener did not catch the paronomasia, the author adds: "But when they were ill, I dressed (לְבוּשִׁי) in sackcloth" (35:13). The references to shame and the puns thereon give cause for anticipation. The memory of shame has been evoked, but we have not yet heard Baʿal's name. It is then, in vv. 25-26, that we hear: "Do not let them think, 'Aha,

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46    Exposure and nakedness are connected closely with shame (e.g., Gen 9:23-27; Exod 28:42-43; Isa 20:4; 47:3; Jer 13:26; Ezek 23:29; Mic 1:11).

47    That שָׁלָל can refer to another woman, and thus carry sexual overtones, is clear in Deut 20:14; Judg 5:30; 8:24, and perhaps in Isa 10:2. Here, שָׁלָל also hearkens to חַיִל "noble character" (31:10), since חַיִל also can mean "wealth" (e.g., Ezek 26:2, where it appears with שלל).

48    The roots require a different pronunciation since they derive from different Semitic roots, i.e., ḥpr, "seek, dig", and ḥpr, "reproach".

just what we wanted'! or say, 'We have swallowed him (בִּלַּעֲנוּהוּ)'.[49] May all who gloat over my distress be ashamed (יֵבֹשׁוּ) and be reproached (יַחְפְּרוּ); may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed (יִלְבְּשׁוּ) with shame (בֹשֶׁת) and humiliation (כְּלִמָּה)". After resounding the name Baʿal anagrammatically in בִּלַּעֲנוּהוּ, "we have swallowed him", the verse follows with the hendiadytic יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיַחְפְּרוּ, "be ashamed and be reproached". In turn, the poet reinforces the puns between "dressing" and "shame" by adding יִלְבְּשׁוּ־בֹשֶׁת וּכְלִמָּה, "they will be clothed with shame and humiliation". Moreover, as in a number of previous examples, the word "swallow" recalls פער, "Peor", by alluding to "opening the mouth".

*2.16   Job 8*

In Job 8, Bildad characterizes the impious as plants that get torn from their place and wither: "But when it is torn (יְבַלְּעֶנּוּ) from its spot, that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you'" (8:18-19). The consonants in יְבַלְּעֶנּוּ, "torn" (lit. "swallowed") again evoke the name of Baʿal and thematically suggest פער, "open the mouth/Peor". Thus, Bildad feels compelled to add: שֹׂנְאֶיךָ יִלְבְּשׁוּ־בֹשֶׁת, "Your enemies will be clothed in shame" (8:22), a statement that employs בֹשֶׁת, "shame", and a pun on shame in יִלְבְּשׁוּ, "clothed". The pun was anticipated by Bildad in v. 12: "While still growing and uncut, they dry up (יִיבָשׁ) more quickly than grass". Here יִיבָשׁ, "dry up", resounds בוש, "shame", while metaphorically correlating the shame of the impious with infertility.[50]

*2.17   Qoh 10*

My final demonstration appears in Qoh 10. Twice in the pericope, Qoheleth alludes to בַּעַל. In 10:11, he states: "If the snake bites before it is charmed, the charmer receives no fee". The term for "snake charmer" is בַּעַל הַלָּשׁוֹן, lit. "lord of the tongue". This is followed in v. 12 with a pun on Baʿal: "words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are swallowed (תְּבַלְּעֶנּוּ) by their own lips". The root בלע, "swallow", as we have seen, is an anagram for Baʿal and suggests "Peor". The reference to Baʿal and the allusion to his name force the listener to rethink v. 1: "As dead flies (זְבוּבֵי) make perfume stink (יַבְאִישׁ), so also does a little

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49    The language of shame and the exclamation "Aha"! are employed similarly in
      Ps 40:15; 70:3-4, though not in conjunction with Baʿal or words resounding his
      name.

50    On punning and referential one upmanship in Job, see Noegel (1996a). See
      above for additional puns between the root יבש, "dry" and בוש, "shame".

foolishness outweigh wisdom and honour". Here the "flies" recall Baʿal's dysphemistic title בַּעַל זְבוּב "Lord of Flies" (2 Kgs 1:2, 6, 16),[51] while יַבְאִישׁ constitutes an audible pun on יביש, "put to shame". In addition, the root באש, "stink", can be a technical term for covenantal violation, and thus itself a cause for shame (e.g., 1 Sam 13:4; 27:12; 2 Sam 16:21).[52] Indeed, the entire context is one of dishonour. Another pun on בוש appears in v. 17: "Happy are you (אַשְׁרֵיךְ), O land, your king is of noble birth, your princes eat in the time of might, and not for drunkenness (בַּשְׁתִי)". Here בַּשְׁתִי, "for drunkenness", evokes shame both via its consonants and via its meaning, which elsewhere is associated with shame (Gen 9:20-25; Hab 2:15-16) and the worship at Baʿal-Peor. The expression אַשְׁרֵיךְ, "happy are you", evokes the name Asherah. Qoheleth then suggests Baʿal by employing the expression בַּעַל הַכְּנָפַיִם, "bird" (lit. "lord/possessor of wings"), in v. 20.

## 3.    CONCLUSION

The phenomenon examined here underscores the longevity of a shared social memory concerning the shame of Baʿal-Peor and its perpetuation by the Israelite literati.[53] In various ways, the authors exploited this memory by using the words "Baʿal" and "shame", and the consonants that comprised them, to conjure images of apostasy, sexual infidelity, and

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51    Baʿal-zebub, "Lord of Flies", represents a pejorative distortion of the epithet *zbl bʿl*, "Prince Baʿal", attested in Ugarit texts (e.g., *CAT* 1.2 iv 7). The accusation that Jesus was casting out demons in the name of Baʿal-Zebul, "prince of demons", perhaps also preserves a memory of the original meaning (Matt 9:34; 12:24-27). If the name Zebul here puns on *zebel*, "dung", then this constitutes another case of dysphemism.

52    As observed by Olyan (1996:202, n. 2).

53    The connection between Baʿal and shame was employed as a literary trope many centuries later by Immanuel of Rome (1221-1362 CE) in his sonnet "נפשי בקרבי". He first employs בעל in v. 7: "Thither, old maidens (בעלות) with scab(s)". Then, in v. 10, he follows with "All blemished women (בעלות), and every man of shame (איש בשת)". In the penultimate line of his poem he employs לובשת, "clothed", as a pun on בוש, "shame", by stating: "within you every doe is clothed (לובשת) in finery". In the poem, Immanuel irreverently toys with the notion that upon death he would rather see hell than heaven, because that is where the lustful women will be. As such, the device again evokes the shame of Baʿal and ties it to an explicitly sexual and chthonic context.

infertility, and to create and transform listener expectation. In several instances, the author also exploited the use of the verb בלע, "swallow", because it anagrammically resounded the name Baʿal and semantically suggested "open the mouth", the root meaning of פער, "Peor". Though the writers were by no means required to reference shame when they employed the root בעל,[54] the frequency with which mnemonics of odium were employed attests to its productivity as a meaningful device.[55]

The device appears in poetry and prose alike, and most frequently in Proverbs. One might account for the latter in several ways. First, it is the very nature of proverbs to employ paronomasia and other allusive language, as Prov 1:6 instructs us: "To make known a proverb, an allusion, the words of the wise men and their riddles". Second, as Fox (1996:227) observes, the Book of Proverbs is

> ... for the most part, assembled with little concern for topical or formal organization. At the same time it presents itself (1:1) as a literary unity, and indeed it manifests a fair degree of homogeneity in literary character, presuppositions, and message.

Thus, it might be that the mnemonics of odium served as an organizing principle for some units in the collection.[56] Third, as Matthews (1998:99)

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54    Thus, in Isa 62:4-5 we find no reference to shame when the prophet predicts that Jerusalem will someday be named בְּעוּלָה, "wife", because it will be "married" (תִּבָּעֵל) to Yahweh: "as a young man marries (יִבְעַל) a virgin, so will your Builder marry you (יִבְעָלוּךְ)".

55    As I remarked above, previous scholars have assumed that the so-called "dysphemistic names" were later glosses to avoid the name Baʿal. See Avioz (2011), for a summary of treatments. Avioz departs from the general view and argues that the replacement of the theophoric elements was original to the composition. In the light of his work and also the evidence I have gathered here, I suggest that the Israelite writers used the dysphemistic name in order to draw attention to something shameful concerning these figures. I aim to publish the evidence for this separately.

56    There is little consensus on the dating of individual collections in the book, though many number them at thirteen. The collections do not always match the traditional chapter divisions. See Snell (1993:2-3). All of the cases of the mnemonics of odium studied here belong to discreet collections, though if Snell (1993:6) is correct that Prov 22:17-23:11 and 23:12-24:22 constitute separate units, then some of the materials I have examined in Prov 23 might

notes, "Generally, shaming speech will take the form of a wisdom argument, calling on traditional practice, social codes, and covenantal allegiance". This, coupled with the association of shame with foolishness,[57] suggests that proverbs might have been a preferred genre for the device. If we may think of Proverbs as belonging more broadly to "wisdom literature", then we must include the examples from Job and Qoheleth as well.[58] Alternatively, if we understand Proverbs as a group of several collections traditionally attributed to Solomon as a king legendary for his wisdom (1 Kgs 4:32-34), then it is plausible that some of the proverbs might encode a social memory concerning Solomon's equally legendary fondness for foreign gods (1 Kgs 11:1-10).[59] As such, the proverbs containing the mnemonics of odium would serve an exegetical purpose, in a way similar to that which has been shown for the proverbs attributed to Hezekiah (Prov 25-29),[60] though with more critical, rather than didactic, intentions.[61] Nevertheless, the appearance of the device beyond Proverbs, and in at least two prose texts, illustrates that Israelite writers could evoke the memory of shame at Baʿal-Peor in diverse literary contexts.

As a literary device, if indeed we can call it one, the mnemonics of odium defy easy classification. On the one hand, the figure relies on the power of word association, suggesting that it functions like word pairs or perhaps on par with what Greenfield referred to as the "cluster".[62] On the other hand, merely using the consonants of the one word (i.e., Baʿal or shame), encouraged the use of the consonants of the other. This suggests

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have been gathered into the same chapter, because of their shared references to Baʿal.

57     See 2 Sam 13:12-13, where Tamar equates the reproach of her violation by Amnon with foolishness. Also noted by Matthews (1998:100). On foolishness and shame, see also Matthews & Benjamin (1993:143).

58     Though Job and Qoheleth appear critical of many of the assumptions found in Proverbs. See Whybray (1974).

59     Though Solomon is not directly connected to Baʿal, he is said to have worshiped Baʿal's consort Astarte (1 Kgs 11:4-5) and to have established a vineyard at Baʿal-Hamon (Song 8:11).

60     Cf. Carasik (1994). On the pre-exilic origins of Proverbs, see Dell (2004).

61     This would be akin to the subtle criticism levelled against Solomon and his reign in the Song of Songs, which like Proverbs, is attributed to Solomon (Song 1:1). See Noegel & Rendsburg (2009).

62     See Greenfield (1990); Noegel (2011; 1996b; 1995).

that we should understand it less as a structural figure and more of a device of sound and expectation akin to "paronomasia" and "geminate clusters".[63] Regardless of where we place it in the taxonomy of devices in Biblical Hebrew, the mnemonics of odium served as a powerful tool for evoking shame and disempowering the name of Baʿal.

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63      Cf. Noegel (2015; 2013b).

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