Appendix
Semitic Roots That Mean Both "Separate" And "Determine"

Introduction

In the various Semitic languages the ideas of physical and intellectual separation are frequently - one might say routinely - linked. The root *gzr, in Aramaic $g\bar{a}zr\hat{\imath}n$ "diviners" (NIV), provides an example of this. It is my contention that NIV has accurately conveyed the meaning of the term. In this case it would be natural to conclude that the "diviners" of Dan 2:27; 4:7 (4); 5:7, 11 are $b\bar{a}r\hat{u}$ priests. For some reason Daniel uses a West Semitic term rather than Akkadian $b\bar{a}r\hat{u}$ for this purpose. Was this a mistake on his part – one that shows a lack of acquaintance perhaps with sixth century religious practice? Actually not. The professional category that corresponds most closely to Daniel's term ($g\bar{a}zr\hat{\imath}n$) is that of the $b\bar{a}r\hat{u}$ priest and not the $\bar{a}\check{s}ipu$ or exorcist. He correctly includes $b\bar{a}r\hat{u}$ priests, if this is what he means by $g\bar{a}zr\hat{\imath}n$, and correctly excludes the asu functionary, otherwise normally paired with $\bar{a}\check{s}ipu$.

In the main body of the present paper I argue that the word used to describe the men that NIV calls "diviners" has to do with examining fate rather than shaping it. Here I attempt to document the claim. My lexical sources are as follows:

Biblical Hebrew   Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907; corrected 1976).

Mishnaic Hebrew   Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (reprint ed., Brooklyn: P. Shalom, 1967)

Syriac   R. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903).

In addition to the above languages there are a few passing references to Akkadian and Arabic. These are taken from:

Akkadian   Theo Bauer, *Akkadische Lesestücke* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1953).

Arabic   BDB (above).

The data cited represent a miscellaneous collection of lexical entities that I found interesting over time in the course of other reading. I share it with my readers in this same spirit. My contribution lies solely in selecting items to include. I have modernized the spelling of a few English words and have spelled out some abbreviations. Apart from this the glosses themselves are taken from standard sources, as listed above.

Data

Hebrew *bʾr: "Make Distinct, Plain" (Piel)

1. (Piel) engrave (see Hab 2:4); related noun *bᵊʾēr* well, pit.

2. (Piel) explain, expound (see Deut 1:5; 27:8).

Syriac *bwn: "Separate; Show"

1. Root meaning: separate.

2. (Pael) show, point out, give instruction, understanding; discern; (Ethpaal) notice, take notice of, regard, consider, understand, have discretion; be tried, inquired into.

Hebrew *byn: "Discern"

1. Related preposition *bēn* (<*bayin*): interval, space between.

2. (Qal) perceive; understand, know (with mind); observe, mark, give heed to, distinguish, consider (with attention); have discernment, insight, understanding; (Niphal) be intelligent, discreet, discerning, have understanding; (Poel) attentively consider; (Hiphil) understand; give heed to, attend to, observe, discern; give understanding, make understand, teach; (Hithpoel) show oneself attentive, consider diligently; get understanding, understand; show oneself to have understanding.

Hebrew *bqr: "Inquire, Seek"

1. Original meaning: divide, discern. Arabic cognate verb: *baqara* slit, rip, split.[1]

3. (Piel) seek; contemplate; consider, reflect; look at; inquire by.

Hebrew *gzr: "Cut, Divide"

1. (Qal) divide, cut in two; divide; cut down; cut off (piece of meat to eat); cut off, i.e., destroy, exterminate; (Niphal) be cut off (separated, excluded from); be cut off (destroyed).

2. (Qal) decree; (Niphal) be decreed.

---

[1] The main valley running the length of Lebanon is called the *Beqa Valley*, or *Al-Biqa*.

Syriac *gzr:* "Cut; Determine"

1. (Peal) cut or hew stone; tear; probe a wound; circumcise, be circumcised; (Ethpeal) to be cut or hewn out; to undergo a surgical operation; to be circumcised.

2. (Peal) determine, decree; (Ethpeal) to decree, appoint.

Syriac *grm:* "Cut Off; Decide"

1. (Peal) cut off, cut short.

2. (Peal) to decide, determine, appoint, to be decided.

Hebrew *ḥqq:* "Cut in, Inscribe; Decree"

1. (Qal) cut in; cut in or on, upon engrave, inscribe; trace, mark out, a circle; of a law, engrave, inscribe (on a tablet); (Poel) inscribe (as a law); (Hophal) inscribed (in a book).

2. (Qal) enact, decree; *ḥôqᵉqê yiśrāʾēl* commanders; (Poel) enact (poetic); prescriber of laws, hence (as sovereign authority in a warlike clan) commander; (Pual) that which is decreed.

Hebrew *ḥrṣ:* "Cut, Sharpen; Decide"

1. (Qal) cut, mutilate; sharpen, fig. the tongue.

3. (Qal) decide; (Niphal) be decisive; strict decision (i.e. that which is strictly determined); strict determining of desolation.

Mishnaic Hebrew *ḥtk:* "Cut, Dissect; Decide"

1. (Qal) cut, dissect; sever (see Hullin 33a, 48b; Besah 32b; Megillah [Jerusalem Talmud] IV, 75a; Niddah 24a, 24b); (Niphal) to be cut off, severed; to be cut into (see Hullin IV, 6, 32a); (Piel) cut (Hullin IV, 2, 98b; Niddah [Jerusalem Talmud] III, 50c); dig ore (in lumps) (Kethuboth 77a; Tosefta Oholoth IV, 3).

2. (Qal) decide, sentence (Leviticus Rabbah s. 4; Shebuᶜoth 30b; Sanhedrin [Jerusalem Talmud] IV, 22a); (Niphal) be decided, decreed (Megillah 15a); (Piel) to decide (Sanhedrin 7b; Berakoth 61a).

Hebrew *mnh*: "Count, Number, Reckon, Assign"

1. Related preposition *min* from.

2. (Qal) count, number; reckon, assign, appoint; (Niphal) be counted, numbered; be reckoned, assigned; (Piel) appoint, ordain; (Pual) appointed.

Hebrew *nqb* I: "Pierce"

1. (Qal) pierce, bore.

2. (Qal) designate wages; (Niphal) be noted, distinguished; be designated by name. Arabic cognate noun: *naqîbun* leader, chief (one who scrutinizes).

Hebrew *spr:* "Count (Qal); Recount, Relate" (Piel) (Cf. Syriac)

1. Cognate with Akkadian *šapāru* send off; write; give information; *našpartu* message; *šapartum* pledge; *šipirtu* message.

2. (Qal) count; number, take account of; (Niphal) be counted, numbered; (Piel) recount; talk; count exactly, accurately; (Pual) be recounted, related, rehearsed.

Syriac *spr:* "Cut, Shear; Study" (Cf. Hebrew)

1. (Peal) cut a pen; (Pael, Aphel) cut, crop, clip the hair, trim the beard, shear the head, take or give the tonsure; (Ethpaal) to be shorn; to take the tonsure.

2. (Peal) study, practise; be learned.

Syriac *psq:* "Cut Off; Decide"

1. (Peal) hew wood, stones, cut down; cut off, mutilate, castrate; break off, come to an end; with *latrēn* cut in two, divide; (Ethpeal) be cut, hewn down as wood; be cut off, slain; be cut out or off, mutilated; be in rags; be broken, interrupted; be shut up; be excommunicate, under interdict; (Pael) cut to bits, hew up, cut off; break into fragments, cut or break many small things; (Ethpaal) be cut to pieces; be castrated.

2. (Peal) interpret, decide, determine, decree, pass sentence; excommunicate; agree, make an agreement; (Ethpeal) be determined, decreed.

Syriac *prš:* "Separate"

1. (Peal) separate, sever, set apart, part, divide; set apart for a special use or office, to appoint; separate from intercourse, excommunicate; (Ethpeal) be divided, become separated; be set apart, assigned; be designated, elected, appointed; be marked out, distinguished; be divorced; be excommunicated; separate oneself, stand aloof, depart; (Pael) part asunder, separate; set apart, dedicate; (Ethpaal) be parted asunder, separated; (Aphel) set apart.

2. (Peal) make a distinction, a difference, distinguish; adverbially with another verb: distinctly, clearly; (Pael) write distinctly, describe clearly, explain; (Ethpaal) be assigned. Hebrew cognate verb: (Qal) declare distinctly.

Hebrew *qṣṣ:* "Cut Off"

1. (Piel) cut or hew off; cut in two; cut in pieces; (Pual) hewn off. Related noun *qēṣ* end.

2. Syriac cognate noun: *qᵉṣāṣā* an agreement, contract, bargain; prepayment, discount.