Most of the papers in this volume originated as presentations at the conference Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew: New Perspectives in Philology and Linguistics, which was held at the University of Cambridge, 8–10th July, 2019. The aim of the conference was to build bridges between various strands of research in the field of Hebrew language studies that rarely meet, namely philologists working on Biblical Hebrew, philologists working on Rabbinic Hebrew and theoretical linguists.

The volume is the published outcome of this initiative. It contains peer-reviewed papers in the fields of Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew that advance the field by the philological investigation of primary sources and the application of cutting-edge linguistic theory. These include contributions by established scholars and by students and early career researchers.

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PROPER NAMES AS PREDICATES IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

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1.0. Introduction

In this paper I shall outline the data supporting the claim that proper names have a different status in Biblical and Modern Hebrew. In Modern Hebrew they are determiner phrases (DPs), acting as arbitrary labels for individuals, while in Biblical Hebrew they are noun phrase (NP) predicates, denoting properties of individuals, and refer to an individual only because the noun phrase denotes a singleton set of individuals with the given property. DPs are headed by a D position, which can be filled either by a determiner or by a noun that moves to fill that position, while NPs are headed by nouns. While DPs are generally closed to further modification and will hold their own definiteness or lack thereof, NPs are open to further modification, including the addition of determiners (e.g., English the) and predicates such as

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adjectives. The motivation for this theory is the difference in distribution of personal proper names in the annex of construct phrases in Biblical and Modern Hebrew, which is outlined in §2.0. The various pieces of supporting evidence for this argument are outlined in §§3 and 4, and conclusions can be found in §5.

2.0. Construct Phrases

The first piece of evidence that the proper name in Biblical Hebrew is a NP is its distribution within the construct phrase. When a NP predicate—that is, a noun phrase that assigns a property—acts as the annex of a construct phrase, the head—generally, though not exclusively, a noun—takes the construct state, possibly undergoing phonological shift; it then takes a NP annex via NP incorporation, meaning that anything that can act as the annex of the construct phrase must be a NP (Borer 2008; Rothstein 2017). In both Modern and Biblical Hebrew, the head of the construct phrase needs to be relational. When a sortal noun, i.e., a noun that denotes an object that can be counted, acts as the head of the phrase, as in (1), it shifts to take a relational interpretation, with the relationship being defined from context (Rothstein 2012). In (1), this is a type of possession, while in (2), the head is inherently relational and does not need to shift to become so, with the phrase denoting a familial relationship. This is the case in both Modern and Biblical Hebrew.

(1) בִּדְגַּת הַיָּם

\textit{bi-d\textgreek{a}ṭ h\textgreek{a}y-y\textgreek{ā}m}

\textsc{prep-fish.fs.cnst} \textsc{def-sea}

‘over the fish of the sea’ (Gen. 1.28)
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The construct phrase can be found in both Modern and Biblical Hebrew. In this paper, I follow Rothstein (2012), who argues that the construct phrase requires a predicate NP complement, which acts to describe what is denoted by the head of the phrase. A DP cannot take this position, as it acts referentially and cannot be used to denote a property, even an abstract one, such as seen in (1) and (2). If this is the case, then the reason that in Modern Hebrew personal proper names cannot appear in the annex of construct phrases (apart from in specific exceptional circumstances) is likely to be as a result of their status as DPs, which prevents them from acting as input for NP incorporation, which is the syntactic process by which the parts of a construct phrase are brought together.

(2) אֶת־א ֵ֥ם ה יָָּּֽלֶד֙ ʾ ɛ ̃ ṯ ʾ ē ṁ hay-yālēd
DO mother(.CNST) DEF-boy
‘the mother of the boy’ (Exod. 2.8)

However, be(y)t ʾariʾela is judged by native speakers to be felicitous in reference to the Tel-Aviv central library, in which the construct refers not to the house that belongs to Ariella, but rather to the building that is named after her. In this situation it is not used referentially, but rather to denote a property, that of being named after her. Therefore, the name serves as a predicate. This is the
denotation of a specific building, which would be referred to in English not as Ariella’s Library, but as The Ariella Library.

(4) משקפי ג’ון לנון

mišqafe(y) du.cnst John Lennon

‘John Lennon glasses’ (Danon 2017, 50)

Similarly, (4) is grammatical, although in a way different to (3), in that it describes a type of glasses, a style characterised by the individual denoted in the annex, rather than the specific pair of glasses possessed by that individual. While (3), when grammatical, denotes a specific building or institution, (4) denotes a type, a subset of glasses, and, as such, is open to further modification to which (3) is not. Apart from these outlined exceptions, the general rule in Modern Hebrew is that a personal proper name is not allowed in the annex of a construct phrase.

In Biblical Hebrew, by contrast, personal proper names appear freely in the annex of construct phrases which denote a range of different relationships, including possession (as in (5)), familial relations (as in (6)) and part-whole relations or inalienable possession (as in (7)).

(5) באהלו שם

bǝ-ʾāhāl-ē shēm

PREP-tent-PL.cnst Shem

‘in the tents of Shem’ (Gen. 9.27)

(6) בניהם

bǝn-ē yaʿāqōb

son-PL.cnst Jacob

‘The sons of Jacob’ (Gen. 34.13)
Given the assumption that the construct state requires NP annexes (Rothstein 2012), and the observation that personal proper names appear freely in the annex of the construct state in Biblical Hebrew, the data strongly suggests that personal proper names in Biblical Hebrew, unlike in Modern Hebrew, are predicate NPs, describing properties, rather than DP arguments, which have referential qualities and are closed to any further modification. In the following sections I will bring further empirical evidence in support of this analysis.

There is an alternative explanation for this, i.e., that the construct denotes a more restricted set of relationships in Modern Hebrew than it does in Biblical Hebrew. Therefore, although in Modern Hebrew the construct does not allow for DPs to act as the annex, in Biblical Hebrew this is allowed. This would mean that the difference in the distribution of personal proper names in the construct phrase in Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew results only from differences in construct syntax, not in the syntax and semantics of proper names, as this paper argues, based on a various types of evidence elaborated in the following sections.
3.0. Semantic Composition and Interpretation of Names

3.1. Simple Names

There is further reason behind the theory that names in Biblical Hebrew are predicative, denoting properties. Names in Biblical Hebrew are at times completely transparent in terms of their semantics, although this varies from name to name. Due to their morphology, complex names, which are built up from phonological parts that have independent meaning, are more likely to be transparent than simple names. In some places, simple names may be semantically transparent, but entirely opaque in terms of the relationship between the name and the individual, such as with (8):

(8) תָּמָָּּֽר֙
    tamār
date.palm
    ‘Tamar’ = ‘date palm’ (Gen. 38.6)

This can be taken a step further, as there are names which have no clear meaning to the modern reader, such as (9):

(9) יְהֹוִ֣א
    yēhū
    ‘Jehu’ (1 Kgs 19.16)

No reason is provided in the narrative for the connection between these names and the individuals who bear them. This being the case, it is difficult to find a connection between the individual and the name in a way that would support the argument that it denotes
a property of the individual or their lifetime. In other words, (8) appears to differ little from names such as Daisy in English, which are directly taken from common nouns, and may contain a metaphorical reference to the plant from which the name is derived. Therefore, it appears that the argument that names denote properties and act as predicates, while supported by many complex names, may not hold true in regard to simple proper names. Although it appears to be the case in examples such as (10) below, it does not necessarily hold true for examples such as (9), for which it is difficult to postulate a derivation from a meaningful noun.

(10) פֶּלֶג֙

peleg

‘Peleg’ = ‘division’ (Gen. 10.25)

According to the narrative, this name was given to the individual bearing it because in his lifetime, the world was divided, after the Tower of Babel. This name could therefore be argued to be predicative in the same way as Ichabod in example (15).

Personal names are generally referential expressions whose meaning amounts to their reference in the world. They denote specific individuals, but in many languages the relationship between the lexical item and the object can be arbitrary. The name John does not express any particular property that the individual has, other than carrying that particular name. This can be seen in Biblical Hebrew in examples such as (8). In contrast, some personal names, such as that seen in (10), are used to refer to individuals, but also express properties like predicate NPs. These names are semantically transparent to a large degree and may be complex. If this is the case, then when these names are broken
down into their constituent parts, they can be interpreted as genuine predicates. These names can indicate the character of the individual that they denote, the situation surrounding the birth of the individual, or some hope that the person who gave the name had for the future, either personal or national.

3.2. Complex Names

Many names in Biblical Hebrew can be seen to have complex semantic composition, with some names having construct morphology and being indisputably comprised of two separate words, as in (11). There are also names that form a single orthographic unit, but which contain a number of different lexical items, linked with what may be the remnants of case markings, as in (12), or, alternatively, a vowel that could be argued to be the hireq compagnis, as in (13), below (Layton 1990).

(11) בֶּן־אוֹנִֵ֑י

\[ bǝn ʾōn-ī \]

son.CNST mourning-POSS.1CS

‘Benoni’ = ‘son of my suffering’ (Gen. 35.18)

There are a number of names which form single orthographic units, within which multiple lexical items can be seen, with various phonemes used to connect the lexical items as and when needed. These include names such as those shown in (12) and (13):

(12) בְּתוּא ָּֽל

\[ bǝṭ-ū-ʾēl \]

house.CNST-NOM(?)-god

‘Betuel’ = ‘house/temple of god/El’ (Gen. 22.22)
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This name, along with the more common alternate with similar semantics in (14), seems to denote an individual who is characterised by service to God, i.e., a deeply religious and devout man, or a wish of those who named him that he would be so. Indeed, of the individuals who bore the name adduced in (14), the ones who appear in the narrative rather than simply genealogies are shown to perform acts that demonstrate their faith.

It is worth noting that this is not always the case, and that not all of those who carried theophoric names were described as righteous in the text, but it is demonstrably the case that these names had meaning and denoted properties of some sort. All of these examples are theophoric names, i.e., names containing the name of a deity, with the medial vowel ּ, as in (12) above, which may be a remnant of archaic case marking that later fell out of use.

There are also some names which are clearly comprised of two words, often with the first in the construct state. One of those is (11) above, and another is (15):
(15) אִָּֽי־כָּבוֹד ʾī kāḇōd

NEG honour

‘Ichabod’ = ‘there is no honour’ (1 Sam. 4.21)

Both examples (11) and (15) denote properties of the situation of
the individual’s birth, with (11) denoting the personal suffering of
the mother, Rachel, while (15) denotes the lack of national pride
or honour caused by the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the
Philistines. These names are also explicitly explained as part of the
individual’s birth narrative. There are also names that may be con-
struct phases, or alternatively possessives, but for which the rela-
tionship between the individual and the name are unclear, such as
(16):

(16) אֲד ָּֽנִּי־צֶֹ֜דֶק ʾăḏōn-ī ṣeḏeq

master.cnst-poss.1cs/gen(?) righteousness

‘my master of righteousness’ or ‘master of justice’ (Josh. 10.1)

For names such as these, although their meaning is unclear, their
morphology strongly suggests that they are NPs. So, too, are
many construct phrases and, therefore, NP predicates.

There are also several complex names that are predicates
and yet function as nouns, such as (17):

(17) יְהוֹנָּתָֹ֜ן yēhō-nāṯān

Yhw-give.sc.3ms

‘Jonathan/Yehonatan’ = ‘The LORD has given’ (1 Sam.
14.6)
This name, also theophoric, and those like it, add to the evidence supporting the predicative status of names in general, because the predicative nature of their verbal constituents makes the preservation of that status more likely once the name is formed. Although much of the time, the name בֵּנְיָּמִּין ‘Benjamin’, forms a single unit, its status as a construct name is demonstrated in a number of circumstances in which it splits to reform its constituent elements, particularly in the gentilic, as in (17):

(18)

בְנֵי יְמִּינִּי son-PL.CNST  right-GNT/ADJ

‘Benjamites’ (Judg. 19.16)

This additionally shows that even when the name has been formed, it does not lose its status as a noun phrase, but is still productive and can change. This is further evidence that names in Biblical Hebrew should be considered NPs rather than DPs, especially given the possibility, outlined in §5.0, that Biblical Hebrew does not have a determiner position at all, and that, therefore, no nouns project to the DP level, remaining entirely at the NP level (Jeffay and Rothstein 2019).

4.0. Evidence from Gentilic Names

4.1. Gentilic Names as Modifiers

Gentilic names are a subcategory of proper names with their own distinct morphology. Of the proper names, they are the closest in nature to adjectives, and act as such, modifying names or common nouns and generally taking predicate position as modifiers.
Rather than referring to individuals, their core meaning refers to a family, tribe, or place of origin, although in certain situations, they refer pragmatically to an individual. While the name רְאוּבֵן ‘Reuben’ is a personal proper name referring to an individual, the gentilic name רֹאָבִּין/ראובנים refers to the tribe descended from this individual. Gentilic names are able to function as intersective modifiers, denoting a set or group which has a particular property or characteristic and overlaps with another group, generally denoted by the predicate being modified to produce an intersection containing a subset of the group of individuals initially denoted by the predicate. They have all of the properties of adjectival modifiers, agreeing with the noun that they modify in gender, number, and definiteness. They so frequently take the definite article, that Joüon and Muraoka (2009, §137c) suggest that the definite article appears as a rule, with the times that this does not happen being a rare exception. This use of the gentilic name is particularly interesting given evidence (outlined in §4.3) that suggests that the gentilic name, despite its morphological similarities with the Hebrew adjective, is generated as a NP. The -ī suffix is used in a number of ways in Biblical Hebrew, including in the formation of the gentilic name, as well as many adjectives, ordinal numbers and directions, indicating some commonality between them, possibly suggesting that the gentilic name is adjectival.

(19)

טֶהָּמֵָּנִּי הָָּאֲגָּגִִּי

hāmān hā-ʾāgāgī

Haman  DEF-Agag-GNT/ADJ

‘Haman the Agagite’ (Est. 8.3)
Here, the gentilic name concords grammatically with the personal name, taking the definite article as well as masculine singular agreement.

In situations where the head noun of the phrase is indefinite, the gentilic name once again agrees:

(20) אִישׁ יְהוּדִי šīš yǝhūḏ-ī
   man Judah-GNT/ADJ
   ‘a Judaeian/Judahite/Jewish man’ (Est. 2.5)

Here, due to the indefinite nominal head, the gentilic name does not take the definite article. In the examples seen so far, agreement in definiteness can be seen, but number and gender may conceivably be masculine singular by default because of the derivation of the gentilic. But cf. (21) and (22).

(21) רֻת הָמֹאֲבִיָּה rūṯ ham-mōāḇ-īyy-ā
   Ruth DEF-Moab-GNT/ADJ-FS
   ‘Ruth the Moabitess’ (Ruth 2.2)

Here, the gentilic name, derived from a masculine personal name, can be seen to agree in gender with the feminine name, taking the feminine ending.

(22) אֲנָשִׁים מִדְיָּנִים šānāš-īm midyān-īm
   man-PL Midian-GNT/ADJ.PL
   ‘Midianite men’ (Gen. 37.28)

Here, the gentilic can be seen to agree in number, taking the plural to agree with the indefinite masculine plural nominal head.
The contrast between the feminine singular in (21) and the masculine plural in (22) shows that the gentilic is able to agree in gender and number and does not default to the masculine singular in all environments.

However, in contrast to (19) and (21), the gentilic name does not always take the definite article when agreeing with personal proper names, as demonstrated in (23). This may suggest that personal proper names are not necessarily definite. It is usually (though not always) the case that modifiers agree in definiteness with the noun they modify. This together with the feasibility of marking a gentilic name with the definite article suggests that in (23) the proper name is indefinite.

(23) אֶלְקָּנָּה בֶן־יְרָחָּם בֶן־אֱלִיְהוּ בֶן־חֵּחַ צַוְּף אֶפְרָּתִּי
   ‘elqānā ben yērōḥām ben ēliyū ben tōhū
   Elkanaah son.CNST Jeroham son.CNST Elihu son.CNST Tohu
   ben šūp ēp̄rāt-i
   son.CNST Zuph Ephrat-GNT/ADJ

   ‘Elkana, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Suf, (the/an) Ephrathite’

(1 Sam. 1.1)

Here, the Masoretic reading tradition indicates that this is a single phrase, with no pause between ‘Zuph’ and ‘Ephrathite’. Therefore, agreement is expected. The lack of definiteness marking on the gentilic name suggests that the name with which it agrees may not be inherently definite, i.e., does not necessarily denote a unique and defined individual, and, thus, does not force agreement.
4.2. Gentilic Names as Noun Phrase Predicates

Gentilic names, being another class of proper, albeit not necessarily personal names, have nominal as well as adjectival uses, taking a position between that of nouns and adjectives on the spectrum. They can be used to denote individuals, and can be used as the annex of construct phrases, which is a position that licences only NP predicates. This is most clearly distinguished from adjectival usage in examples in which the head has a distinctive construct form and when the head and annex differ in terms of grammatical concord. It is, therefore, clear that there is no agreement. This means that the following examples are particularly good evidence for the nominal nature of the gentilic name within the construct phrase:

(24) מִּשְפָּחת הָּקְהָּתִֵּׁ֑י

$mishpaḥat haq-qəhāṯ-i$

family.(fs).CNST DEF-Kohath-GNT/ADJ.(MS)

‘the Kohathite family’ (Num. 26.57)

(25) מִּשְפֶּחוֹת הָּכְנֵּאִי

$mishpēḥōt hak-ḵannāʾān-i$

family.FPL.CNST DEF-Canaan-GNT/ADJ.(MS)

‘the Canaanite families’ (Gen. 10.18)

In example (24), the head is clearly assigned construct state, and there is no agreement between the head and the annex, with the head being feminine and lacking the definite article, while the annex is masculine and marked for definiteness, with the definiteness percolating over the entire phrase. Likewise in (25), except that the head is feminine plural, rather than singular.
The gentilic name can also be used to denote individuals, which can be singular, as seen in (26), or plural, as seen in (27).

(26) יִשְמְעָלִים

יִשְׁמַעֵל-יִמ

Ishmael-GNT/ADJ.PL

‘Ishmaelites’ (Judg. 8.24)

(27) וַיָּֽֽי עֲבַר אֶת־ה כוּשִּׁי

וַי עַבֵּר אֶת־ה כוּשִּׁי

and-3M.pass.(s).WPC DO DEF-Kush-GNT/ADJ

‘And he passed the Kushite’ (2 Sam. 18.23)

In (26) the reference is to a group of individuals descended from the individual who had the name ‘Ishmael’. In (27) the reference is to a single individual, salient from context, who in the situation described is the sole individual of that nationality in any way relevant to the narrative.

Of nearly 1,800 gentilic names analysed in the process of the research project building towards my thesis and from which this paper stems, the vast majority, over 1,400, were analysed as nominal, either as a result of their appearing in the annex of construct phrases or appearing alone, referring to an individual or group. Although the suggestion of an elliptical or null noun merits consideration, if that were the case here, it would be true for over nine hundred instances. The number of null nominal heads would thus approximately triple that of heads explicitly expressed. This arguably militates against a solution that emphasises elliptical expressions or null heads.

Given that the vast majority of occurrences of gentilic names have been analysed as nominal rather than adjectival, I
suggest that this is the root meaning of the word, and that the modificational use is an extension of this. While it is possible that a nominal name could shift to become an adjective with null morphology, it is more likely to be a name acting in apposition as a modifier. It is also possible that all adjectives act thus, as Waltke and O’Connor (1990, 261) suggest that “because the boundary between adjectives and substantives is not fixed or rigid, it is common to find nouns that are most often used as adjectives in substantive slots.” They suggest that the difference between adjectives and nouns in Biblical Hebrew is more subtle than may be assumed, and it may indeed be the case that all adjectives are indeed nouns acting in apposition to other nouns. This would also raise the likelihood that all nouns, including proper nouns, are predicates. Hilman (2013) discusses the formation of gentilic names, primarily in terms of the addition of the suffix ū-ī, generally used in adjective formation, to nouns such as place names, in order to denote an individual’s origin. The gentilic, more than almost any other name, is transparent in its formation and most clearly connected both to its morphological root and to the adjectival interpretation that marks it as a predicate.

4.3. Definite Markers on Gentilic Names

Of the 1,417 gentilic names found with nominal use, 1,045 have the definite marker ha-, indicating that they are NPs rather than DPs—since DPs are unable to appear in the scope of definite markers. Therefore, proper names that appear in the scope of the definite marker should be analysed as predicate NPs. This means
that alternations such as the one between (28) and (29) demonstrate that the gentilic name is a NP predicate rather than a DP, and that the *ha-* is a true clitic, rather than integral to some gentilic names.

(28) יָדֹמָה

אֲד מִִּי֙ ʾ

הָּאֲד מִִּ֗י֙

Bekins (2013) discusses the use of the definite article in Biblical Hebrew, outlining a number of potential uses. The generally accepted use of the article is anaphoric, i.e., reference to something that has already been mentioned within the discourse. This differs from associative use, in which the item mentioned has not appeared in the discourse, but has identity inferable on the basis of association with a referent found in the discourse (generally because it is found in the semantic frame of something previously mentioned in the discourse, such as referring to the front door when a house has just been mentioned). Mention is also made of the generic, where the definite article is used, but the referent is indefinite, with no specific referent denoted. In such scenarios, the definite article is not required, but may appear. For example, in prophecy, both (30) and (31) refer to lions in a generic sense, but in the former there is no definite article, while in the latter there is.
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(30)

וְעֵגֶל וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יַחְדָּו
and-calf and-lion and-fatling together
‘and calf and lion and fatling (shall be) together’ (Isa. 11.6)

(31)

וְהַכְפִיר עַל טַרְפּו
and-DEF-lion over prey-POSS.3MS
‘and the lion over his prey’ (Isa. 31.4)

(32)

לֹא יָבֹא ‘אַמִּמְנּ ה-מֹא-ב
NEG 3M.come(.s).PC Ammon-GNT/ADJ and-Moab-GNT/ADJ
‘No Ammonite or Moabite shall come...’ (Deut. 23.4)

It is possible that some parallels can be drawn between the use of the gentilic to denote kinds, as seen in (32), and the generic in the settings seen in (30) and (31), with both being able to denote specific indefinites because the kind as a whole is identifiable to the hearer. Once these parallels have been drawn and the similarities can be seen, it appears that gentilic names, and potentially all proper names, share most, if not all, properties with common nouns and, therefore, are just as likely to act as predicates.

5.0. Conclusions and Further Research

This paper has explored the properties of proper names in Biblical Hebrew, showing that they have the distributional and interpretational properties of predicate NPs, not of DPs. Complex names express properties of individuals, rather than acting as arbitrary labels for individuals. And proper names in general can
appear in predicate positions, acting as the annex of construct phrases.

Gentilic names have been explored as a case study for the wider corpus of names in Biblical Hebrew. They are able to act both in predicative NP positions and as intersective modifiers, similar to adjectives. This is a property that they may be expected to have, given their morphological similarity to adjectives and their derivation from nouns.

Besides for the points of interest outlined within this paper, there are wider theoretical implications. If personal proper names are not DPs in Biblical Hebrew, does this category exist at all in the language? The status of nominal phrases needs to be determined, and if the DP category exists in Biblical Hebrew, we need to understand at what level NPs in general are interpreted—DP or NP. There are a number of languages in which the definite article can be found with a proper name, such as Italian, as outlined in Longobardi (1994), and in many of these languages when the definite article is not found, it is suggested that the name raises to fill the determiner position. However, current syntactic theories allow for languages without DPs, and as such it is entirely possible that there is no DP position in Biblical Hebrew, leaving the question open for further investigation in future research. Doron and Meir (2016) suggest in Modern Hebrew that what is often analysed as the definite clitic is in fact part of state morphology, and is one of the morphological markers of the emphatic state—one of the three states into which nouns are classified in the context of that paper, the others being the construct state, discussed in this paper, and the absolute state, in which
nouns are generally interpreted as indefinite. If ha- is not necessarily a determiner in Modern Hebrew, there is no reason to assume that it is a determiner in Biblical Hebrew at this point.

Additionally, a question raised by the study of gentilic names within this paper is whether there is a distinction in Biblical Hebrew between the nominal and adjectival categories. If such a distinction does not exist, it makes the phenomena explored in this paper much easier to explain. However, if the distinction does exist, it is then necessary to determine in which category gentilic names are generated, and under which conditions they are prompted to shift to the second category.

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