

“Adam, Where Art Thou?” Onomastics, Etymology, and Translation in Genesis 2–3

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Introduction

To open the seminar and prompt general discussion, I posted a loose translation of Genesis 2–3, which I termed an “impressionistic campfire retelling.”¹ As with most modern translations, and in particular two literary translations by Robert Alter and Everett Fox, the proper name Adam² disappeared from my translation.³ As noted by one of the other participants, the loss of Adam in translation “drastically changed the mood and feel of the text.”⁴ Should *’adam* be translated as a proper name in Genesis 2–3? If not, what does it mean there, and how should it be translated? Among the related challenges in translating these chapters is how best to represent the Hebrew ambiguities, wordplays, and relationships centering on the noun *’adam*, which plays multiple roles. In particular, I will discuss the translational issues with *’adam* and the ground, *’adam* in connection with the binaries of man/woman/male/ female, and the tradition of Adam as a proper name. If Adam is not a proper name in this primary passage, how and when did it become so?

Proper names in Hebrew

In order to understand why Adam as a proper name has disappeared from most contemporary translations, a brief introduction to grammatical aspects of Hebrew proper names is necessary. First, proper names in Hebrew do not take the definite article (a prefixed *ha*),⁵ just as proper names in English do not take the definite article (e.g., “I went to work with Bob and Jennifer,” not “I went to work with *the* Bob and *the* Jennifer”).⁶ Words with the definite article are therefore highly unlikely to be proper names.

Second, rules of capitalization vary from language to language. German capitalizes all nouns, and English only proper nouns. Capitalization assumes not just the priority of writing (one cannot hear capitals),⁷ but a writing system that contains two tiers of letters, majuscules and minuscules. As with other Semitic scripts, Biblical Hebrew has no capitalization at all, so proper nouns cannot be identified that way.⁸

Third, personal names in English today are pleasing connections of sounds and associations, often with archaic but largely irrelevant meanings that parents typically discover in baby books. By contrast, names in Hebrew have meaning because they were, for the most part, normal everyday words, such as Jonah, “dove,” or phrases with God as the subject, such as Ishmael, “God has heard.”⁹ When calling King David by title and name, a person would be saying “king beloved one,” the meaning of the sounds *melekh daweed*. This practice, combined with the lack of capitalization or any other formal marker of proper nouns, means that translators occasionally disagree over whether a given noun should be translated as a proper name or as its semantic equivalent in the target language. For example, the KJV twice assigns sons to a man named Hammelech. Because *hammelech* means “the king,” most Bibles today translate that meaning, resulting in two sons of “the king” instead of two sons of a man named Hammelech.¹⁰

Lastly, since we will be considering the meaning of several Hebrew terms, a brief note on methodology is required. Meaning is determined by context and usage. For a linguist, philologist, or translator dealing with ancient languages, etymology is the last resort but also highly important. It is the last resort in determination of meaning for two reasons. First, words that appear to be closely related may not be; there is often a good bit of etymological

uncertainty. Second, etymology is an unreliable indicator of meaning. Words shift meaning over time, and the meaning of a word often becomes completely unrelated to its origins. For example, knowing the meanings of both *butter* and *fly* does not contribute any understanding to the word *butterfly*. When we call someone “nice,” we do not mean “ignorant,” though that is the Latin origin of the term.¹¹

Etymology is nevertheless quite important. Just as being a native speaker of English does not make me an English professor, the Hebrew writers were not Semitists. They often attributed real-world significance to similar-sounding words based on apparent relation, referred to in the scholarly literature as folk etymologies. That is, the authors perceived such words, regardless of actual linguistic relationship, as related and used that perceived relationship as fodder for theological or other interpretations. Genesis 25:26 provides one example: “Afterward, his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob.”¹² Nahum Sarna comments on this passage.

By folk etymology, the name is here derived from Hebrew *’akev*, “heel.” In reality, Hebrew *ya’akov* stems from a Semitic root *’kv*, “to protect.” It is abbreviated from a fuller form with a divine name or epithet as its subject. *Ya’akov’el*, “May El protect,” is a name that has turned up several times in cuneiform texts over a wide area. The name Jacob is thus, in origin, a plea for divine protection of the newly born—most appropriate for the one who was to live his entire life in the shadow of danger.¹³ *adam* as a proper name

While English speakers are most familiar with the proper name Adam, this is the rarest of its three usages in the Hebrew Bible. In appendix 1, I list all occurrences of *’adam* in the first column and grammatical determinedness in the second. Because Hebrew proper names do not take the definite article, only those occurrences that are indefinite or ambiguous have the possibility of being a proper name, which allows only four passages: Genesis 2:5, 2:20, 3:17, and 3:21. Outside these four passages, Adam is highly unlikely to be a proper name in Genesis 2–3 without violating well-established norms of Hebrew grammar.

In the first potential passage, Genesis 2:5, Adam is ruled out by context: “there was no *’adam* to till the ground.” The point here is not that any *particular* human was missing, but that there were no humans at all to till the ground; the general class of humanity does not yet exist. Adam is not a proper name in this passage. Due to the nature of Hebrew orthography, the other three passages are ambiguous and the definiteness cannot be determined. In each case *’adam* is preceded by an attached preposition that precludes the writing of the definite article. Definiteness at such times is indicated only by the vowel underneath the preposition instead of by the definite article. Vowel markings in the Hebrew text represent a traditional pronunciation and were added to the text no earlier than the fifth century ce, greatly postdating the consonantal text.¹⁴

The three passages labeled “ambiguous” in appendix 1 (2:20, 3:17, and 3:21) are technically indefinite by that vowel under the preposition (thus allowing for the proper name in theory), but most scholars think this tradition is incorrect. First, all the surrounding occurrences of *’adam* are definite. Second, those who created these vowel markings had inherited a tradition (hundreds of years old by that point) of Adam in the Genesis narrative, which may have influenced their tradition of vowel pointing. If we accept those two arguments, as I do, we cannot read these three occurrences as the proper name Adam.

If not a name, what does *adam* mean there?

What, then, does *’adam* mean in the text? Other than a proper name, *’adam* represents two things, a class and a member of that class (see table 1). First and most generally, *’adam* can refer to the abstract class of humanity or humankind, in distinction from other animals. Second, more specifically, *’adam* can refer to a member of that class,

a human or person. Just as *human* and *person* are not gendered terms, neither is *'adam*. In this usage, the referent of *'adam* could be either male or female. We find *'adam* used this way later on in nonnarrative material, such as Leviticus 13:2. Translating *'adam* as “anyone,” the NIV reads, “When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a shiny spot on their skin that may be a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest.”¹⁵

Table 1. Representations of *'adam*

Most General Level	Abstract class
More Specific	A member of that class
Most Specific Level	A particular member of that class in distinction from the others, i.e., a personal name

Terminology indicating the gender of the referent is available both at the human level (i.e., man vs. woman) and at the broad, general level (i.e., male vs. female), *zakar* and *neqēb ah*. Both appear together in Genesis 1:27: “So God created humankind [*'adam*] in his image, . . . male [*zakar*] and female [*neqēb ah*] he created them” (NRSV).¹⁶ Table 2 below shows these paired Hebrew terms.

Table 2. Paired Hebrew terms indicating gender

Paired Hebrew terms	Translational equivalent(s)	Notes
ʾadam (ahDAHm)	A human or person; humankind; Adam (rare)	ʾadamah is form noun ʾadam with ending <i>-ah</i> . ^a Etymological relationship is unclear.
ʾadamah (uhdahmAH)	dirt, soil, ground	
ʾiyš (eesh)	man	The folk etymology of the form of “woman” is from the feminine ending <i>-ah</i> . The two terms are unrelated.
ʾiššah (ishAH)	woman	
zakar	male	Applied to humankind in Genesis 1:27; 5:2.
neqēbah (nuhkayVAH)	female	

a. While ʾadam is a masculine noun, there is no morphological marker for gender; it is thus the unmarked form.

b. See, for example, the *Word Biblical Commentary* on Genesis 2:7: “Though the feminine form of [ʾadam] it is doubtful whether there is any etymological relationship to the words. It is sometimes suggested that both terms are derived from [ʾedom] and also the earth. This too seems improbable. Certainly, however, there is a parallelism between [ʾadam] and [ʾadamah] to emphasize man’s relationship to the land. He was created from the earth (Genesis 2:5, 15); and on death he returns to it (Genesis 3:19).”

c. Samuel Meier argues that this folk etymology was not possible in a Semitic language and thus can date no earlier than 1200 BC. See his article “Linguistic Clues to the Origin of Genesis 2:23–24,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 53/1 (1991).

In Genesis 2–3 ʾadam fluctuates between these two meanings of class versus individual. For the first portion of this narrative, they are one and the same because there is only one member of that class who remains nameless throughout the text. In its very first usage, ʾadam refers to the abstract class of humanity. Genesis 1:27 reads, “Thus God created humankind [ʾadam] in his image; in the image of God did he create it [not *him*];¹⁷ he created them male and female [*zaqar* and *neqēbah*].” Humanity, ʾadam, exists as a nameless male and female pair, distinguished only by gender. Note that we are given no substance from which ʾadam is created, and the pair is created simultaneously.

By contrast, Genesis 2:5 informs us that there was no *'adam*, no human, to work the ground (*'adamah*). That ground becomes quite important in 2:7 as God improves upon the personnel situation by shaping or forming *'adam* from the dust of the *'adamah*. In other words, the single *'adam* is formed from the *'adamah*. The word *'adam* appears paired with *'adamah* several times in the text (2:5, 7, 19; 3:17). Some have tried to bring out this linguistic relationship in English by translating with related English words such as “a human from the humus,” “a groundling from the ground,” or “an earthling from the earth.”¹⁸ This indicates that humanity has a special relationship with the ground, but the precise implications are not spelled out, and various ideas and interpretations have been put forth.¹⁹ Note also that the gender of this single *'adam* is not specified, nor is it clear that gender is applicable at this point in the narrative.²⁰ After the woman is created, we do find gendered terminology indicating that this *'adam* is a male. We also find *'adam* in its second meaning as an individual of the human class, leading translators like Robert Alter and Everett Fox to translate *'adam* consistently as “the human” instead of “the man” (the gendered term) or “Adam.”²¹

Why does the KJV treat *adam* as a name?

The process of *'adam* becoming the name Adam in Genesis 2–3 involves three stages. First, Adam becomes a proper name relatively quickly beyond Genesis 3 in the Hebrew Bible.²² Second, that tradition of Adam as a proper name was retrojected into the text of Genesis 2–3 beginning with the early versional translations, which include the Septuagint and targumim. Third, likely under the influence of the versions and theological tradition, early English translations also include the proper name Adam in Genesis 2–3.

The name Adam after Genesis 3

Adam as a proper name appears anarthrously (without the definite marker) and unambiguously as a proper name in Genesis 4:25, “Adam again knew his wife, who bore a son and named him Seth.” Again, in Genesis 5:1, Adam is anarthrous and clearly a proper name: “This is the record [*toledot*] of the descendants of Adam.”²³ Although both references are clear, they also exist near other usages of *'adam*. Genesis 5:1–3 alludes directly to Genesis 1:26–27 and juxtaposes the proper name with the common noun: “This is the record of the descendants of Adam; when God created *'adam* [or humanity], he created it in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and called them *'adam* [or humanity]. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son, in his likeness, in his image, and he named him Seth.”

Why does the Hebrew Bible convert *'adam* into a proper name so quickly? The narrative logic and asymmetry of Genesis 2–3 certainly suggest it. That is, we have two paired characters in the text, *'iyš* and *'iššah*, man and woman. The woman receives a name, Eve or Life Giver, but the man has no name, only a repeated vague descriptor, The Human. His name is a vacuum to be filled, and biblical interpretive tradition loves filling vacuums.

Richard Hess has proposed a linguistic motive for this transition. He examines the range of usage of *'adam* in Genesis, from abstract noun *humanity* to semititular use designating one member in particular “the human.” He argues that the logical extension of this evolution is a proper name, Adam. That is, “*'ādām* is a title that reflects a middle point in the continuum from the general usage of *'ādām* in Genesis 1 to the personal name Adam at the end of Genesis 4.”²⁴

A partial parallel for this process is found in the name Satan, known today as the personal name of a supernatural figure opposed to Deity. Lexically speaking, it began somewhat as Adam did. First it was a common noun meaning “adversary” or “accuser,” sometimes with semititular usage and the definite article. In some texts such as Job and

Zechariah, this adversary is a heavenly being, and the noun receives the definite article there, rendering it a title, “The Adversary.” Later on, the title gives way to a personal name of an individual, Satan, as is known from Chronicles, the New Testament, and much Second Temple literature outside the Bible. Interpretive tradition then reads this name back into the narratives, just as it does with the name Adam.²⁵

The Hebrew Bible does not innovate the use of *'adam* as a proper name, as is known from other Semitic sources. The term is found as a personal divine name and the name of a month at Ebla in the third millennium bce. It may exist in similar usage at Emar, in northern Syria, from the same time period. Usage of Adam as a personal name is unknown between that time period and the writing of Genesis, but “the implication is that the earlier into West Semitic texts that one looks, the more likely one is to discover the use of the name Adam.”²⁶ To summarize stage 1, other sections of the Bible fill the vacuum of the man’s name by extending the usage of *'adam* to a personal name, but this was not innovating new usage.

The early versional translations

The third column of the table in appendix 1 represents ancient translations that read *'adam* as a proper name in a given verse. These include the Aramaic targumim (Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan), the Greek Septuagint, and the Latin Vulgate. Being the most certain in date, Jerome’s Vulgate comes from circa 400 ce. The Septuagint and targumim probably represent traditions that began as early as 250 bce for the Septuagint, through the New Testament period, taking final form perhaps as late as the seventh and eighth centuries for Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. These translations, notably, make liberal use of Adam as a proper name. Targums Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan are both highly interpretive and expansive, adding Adam even where the Hebrew text lacks *'adam*. Along with New Testament passages such as 1 Timothy 2:13 and Luke 3:38, these early translations clearly attest to early traditions of retrojecting Adam back into the garden narrative.

English translations

The fourth column of the table represents early translations into English from Hebrew, such as Tyndale’s Pentateuch and the Coverdale, Bishops’, Geneva, and King James Bibles. The KJV was not intended as a new and fresh translation. Rather, the translators were instructed to revise the Bishops’ Bible, deviating as necessary in accordance with the Greek and Hebrew.²⁷ The table shows that the KJV translators were much more expansive in their use of Adam as a proper name than the translators of the Bishops’ Bible but were only doing what had been done before by Tyndale as well as the Latin Vulgate, Greek Septuagint, and Aramaic targumim nearly fifteen hundred years earlier. The pattern suggests that the KJV translators were generally influenced by the expansiveness of the versions, without slavishly following any one version in particular.

Note, however, the near emptiness of the final column, which shows modern translations that include Adam. Bible translations of the last few decades have largely rejected the interpretive tradition that ignores the rules of Hebrew grammar in including the proper name Adam in Genesis 2–3. The exceptions are the three ambiguous passages where Adam can be inserted without doing violence to the text. However, the translations that do so are largely acting out of respect for tradition and as a concession to their readers who, inheritors of that tradition, expect to see the name Adam there in the text. The conservative evangelical New International Version (or NIV) alone has added it in two more places where it cannot defensibly be on grounds of Hebrew grammar.²⁸ Most translations that do not include the name Adam at all in Genesis 2–3 begin doing so in Genesis 4:25.²⁹

Translating *adam*

One of the problems of translating *'adam* is that, as we have seen, it means multiple things in the text. An ideal translation captures those meanings while simultaneously reflecting the connections and contrasts that exist in the underlying language. A brief critique of some of these translations will illustrate the challenges.

We have already examined the issues surrounding translation of the phrase “a man from the ground.” This translation is problematic because it both suggests an inherently gendered *'adam* and fails to capture the important relationship between *'adam* and *'adamah* that is repeated throughout the text. However, the usage of *man* has something to recommend it. English print can make use of capitalization to indicate different nuances of meaning. One could translate *'adam* as “Man” when it refers to humanity and “(the) man” when it refers to the created human individual. This has the advantage of using one English word to represent one Hebrew word while also setting off the different meanings.

However, this usage of *man* creates its own problems later in the passage. When the *'adam* is put to sleep and the woman is “constructed” from his side,³⁰ gendered terminology is introduced by necessity. We need a word for “woman.” If we are translating *'adam* as “(the) man,” it might seem logical that we can simply add the feminine suffix to get *woman*. The two problems with this are that, first, while grammatically masculine, *'adam* does not refer to gender. An *'adam* is not inherently male in contrast to a female. Second, a noun made of *'adam* with the feminine suffix is not grammatically available to us because it has already been used and its meaning is well established in the text as *'adamah*, or “ground”!

Thus in Genesis 2:23 the text introduces the gendered terms *'iyš* (pronounced “eesh”) and *'iššah* (pronounced “ish-shah”), meaning man and woman. In doing so the text includes an explicit folk etymology, “She shall be called *'iššah*, Woman, because she was taken out of *'iyš*, Man.” Although *'iyš* and *'iššah* appear to be a simple case of paired nouns (i.e., an unmarked masculine noun and its gendered counterpart marked with a feminine suffix), *'iyš* and *'iššah* are unrelated, having completely different roots.³¹ Because the terms *man* and *woman* (or *woman*) have the same general relationship in English as *'iyš* and *'iššah* appear to have in Hebrew (i.e., the female noun *woman/'iššah* includes the male form *man/'iyš* within it), “man” is a good translation here. Other languages in which *man* and *woman* are unrelated (e.g., French *homme/femme*, German *Mann/Frau*) are often constrained to add a note explaining the Hebrew wordplay or else form a neologism to create a gendered pair.

I have just argued that “man” is a good translation for *'adam* because English capitalization allows it to reflect distinctions between the general and particular usages of *'adam* in the text. I have also argued that “man” is a good translation for *'iyš* because it can capture the folk etymology present in the Hebrew. However, we should still note that it is less than ideal to use *Man* or *man* to translate both *'adam* and *'iyš*, because doing so conflates the different roles the two terms play and can create misreadings. Moreover, the usage of *Man* to mean humankind and *man* or compounds thereof to indicate a person of either gender³² has largely fallen out of favor. These are not the only issues involved. Caught between the rock of accurate translation and the hard place of felicitous and inoffensive English, translators must make some hard decisions in rendering the text.³³

What are the implications?

The effects of Adam’s linguistic absence from Genesis 2–3 can be debated. Some readers may not see any serious implications at all. But upon reflection, I think there are two. First and very importantly, how we translate (or how the translations we choose to read translate) and how we understand and interpret the text shape our personal beliefs and narratives as well as, for Latter-day Saints, the corporate teachings of the LDS Church. Awareness of

how our received traditions have evolved and do not necessarily correspond to the underlying texts in the way we assumed can help provide correctives to those traditions, if necessary.³⁴ Specifically, Genesis 2–3 is the locus and foundation for many ideas and traditions about women in Judaism and Christianity that led to theology about women, policies about women, and so on, generally not for the better.³⁵ We cannot separate our understanding of Eve and woman from our understanding of Adam and man in this text. Reevaluating the translation and meaning of one necessitates doing so with the other, but a broader discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

Second, replacing the name Adam with “the Human” or similar translations as the grammar demands has a generalizing and dehistoricizing effect. It renders the narrative less like a historical account of two specific individuals in the past and more like two archetypal humans known as (the) Human and Life-Giver. From an LDS perspective, as one participant in the Mormon Theology Seminar said, this allows one to read these as “iconic, generic roles to be filled by any individual.” This kind of approach may prove fruitful. One recent non-LDS perspective demonstrates how to read this episode archetypally instead of as historical narrative, understanding *’adam* primarily as literary foreshadow of Israel.³⁶

Ultimately, the way we translate and the way we read affect beliefs, actions, and policies. Awareness of how our received traditions have evolved and do not necessarily correspond to the underlying texts in the way we assumed helps provide correctives to those traditions, if necessary. Understanding the Hebrew text of Genesis 2–3, and in particular the meaning of the names Adam and Eve therein, may prove useful in responding to problems resulting from overly literal or concordist approaches.

Appendix 1: Adam in Hebrew and Translations

Ancient translations:^a LXX,^b VUL,^c TO,^d TN,^e TPJ^f

Early modern translations: TYN (1530),^g COV (1535),^h BSP (1568),ⁱ GNV (1560/99),^j KJV (1611)

Bold indicates the first occurrence of the proper name Adam in that translation.

Passage in Genesis	Definite, indefinite, or ambiguous in Hebrew ^k	Ancient translations with Adam	Early English translations with Adam	Modern English translations with Adam
2:5	indefinite	TN		
2:7a	definite	TO , TN		
2:7b	definite	TO, TN, (TPJ) ^l		
2:8	definite	TN		
2:15	definite	TO, TN	TYN	
2:16	definite	LXX , TO, TN, ^m TPJ	TYN	
2:18	definite	TO, TN, TPJ		
2:19a	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, KJV	
2:19b	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, KJV	
2:20a	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, KJV	

a. On each of these ancient translations as well as the English translations, see Bruce M. Metzger *Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001). With the exception of Tyndale's Old Testament (facsimile PDF available online), each of these was examined in Bibleworks.

b. Greek Septuagint

c. Latin Vulgate

d. Targum Onqelos

e. Targum Neofiti

f. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

g. Tyndale's Old Testament

h. Miles Coverdale Bible, 1535. Based on various sources.

i. Bishops' Bible

j. Geneva Bible

k. Some prepositions in Hebrew are attached to the following word, and definiteness is indicated only by the vowel. The notation used in the Masoretic Text to indicate vowels, representing a traditional pronunciation, was not created (as far as we know) until the eighth century CE.

l. The text here is disputed.

m. The primary text violates Aramaic grammar by using a Hebrew definite article, *ha'adam*, while the marginal variant reads *'adam*. The Aramaic equivalent of the definite article is a post-positive -*ā*, for example, *'adam'ā*. The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project (<http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/>) tags both as prepositions. The reverse happens in 3:12, where the main text reads *'adam* and the variant is *ha'adam*.

Passage in Genesis	Definite, indefinite, or ambiguous in Hebrew^k	Ancient translations with Adam	Early English translations with Adam	Modern English translation with Adam
2:20b	ambiguous	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, GNV , KJV	ESV, JPS, NAS, NET, NIVⁿ
2:21	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP , KJV	
2:22a	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN	
2:22b	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ	TYN	
2:23	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, KJV,	
2:25	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN	NIV ^o
3:8	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP, COV , KJV	
3:9	definite	LXX (x2), TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP, COV, KJV	
3:12	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP, COV	
3:17	ambiguous	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP, GNV, COV, KJV	FBM,^p ESV, JPS, NIV, NE NAS
3:20	definite	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP, COV, KJV	NIV
3:21	ambiguous	LXX, TO, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, BSP, GNV, COV, KJV	FBM, ESV, JPS, NIV, NE NAS
3:22	definite	LXX, TN, TPJ, VUL	TYN, COV	
3:24	definite	LXX, TN, VUL	TYN, COV	

n. Both the 1984 and 2011 editions of the New International Version introduce the name Adam here.

o. 2011 edition.

p. Fox, *Five Books of Moses*.

NOTES

1. Available at <http://genesisseminar.wordpress.com/2013/01/10/overview-of-genesis-2-3-part-1/>.

2. Hereafter Adam will refer to the proper name and *'adam* to the general Hebrew term.
3. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004); Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, The Schocken Bible*, vol. 1 (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).
4. Rosalynde Welch, email message to author, April 8, 2013.
5. Proper names are definite by definition. Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblio, 1991), §137b. However, a regular noun with the article may be proper by extension, for example, hay'or, "the River" = the Nile. Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), §24.4.ii.e.
6. Exceptions tend to be foreign, such as *The Hague*. By contrast, proper names in Classical Greek, for example, regularly take the definite article.
7. In the oral presentation of this paper, I distinguished between Adam and *'adam* by giving the former the typical English pronunciation and the latter the typical Hebrew pronunciation.
8. Other languages have developed different ways of indicating proper names in writing. For example, Akkadian (i.e., Assyrian and Babylonian) writes the DINGIR sign before divine names, and two other optional signs indicate male and female personal names. See John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), §13.3.
9. An accessible selection of names and meanings is found in Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry, "Israelite Names—Witnesses of Deity," *Ensign*, December 1990, 52–54
10. Jeremiah 36:26; 38:6. The prefixed *ha-* is the definite article, a strong indicator that the word is not a proper noun.
11. See the "Root Fallacy" section in D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 28.
12. New Revised Standard Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989). Hereafter abbreviated NRSV.
13. Nahum M. Sarna, Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation, *The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 180.
14. E. J. Revell, "Masorettes," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:593–94.
15. New International Version (2011). Note that the translation of masculine singular pronouns in Hebrew (to agree with the grammatically masculine *'adam*) results in the nongendered *their* and *they* in English.
16. In other words, God created humanity, both male and female. The NRSV here chooses to pluralize the pronoun, which refers back to *'adam*. See note 17.

17. Note that the KJV here reads “him.” The pronoun is masculine singular because ’adam is masculine singular, not because the pronoun refers to the particular man who will come to be known as Adam. Several translations opt for a plural pronoun to avoid misleading on this point, for example, NRSV, NIV, and NET. Fox’s *Five Books of Moses* (hereafter FBM) reads “it.”
18. See, for example, Phyllis Trible, “Eve and Miriam: From the Margins to the Center,” in *Feminist Approaches to the Bible* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1995).
19. The ambiguity of ’adam makes it difficult to know whether this relationship is with all humankind or with the masculine aspect—or with both. That is, does humankind have a special relationship with the ground that other animals do not, but then mankind/males have a further relationship? Is it relevant that after the fall it is the assignment of Groundling to work the ground and the assignment of Life-Giver to give life?
20. Paralleling Greek tradition about the creation of humans, Jewish tradition includes speculation that the lone ’adam was at first genderless and then split into male and female aspects. This assertion is not well supported by the text, however.
21. See Alter, *Five Books of Moses*; and Fox, *Five Books of Moses*.
22. We should recall, though, that the canonical order is not necessarily the chronological order in which the texts were written, which is a much more complicated issue.
23. The toledot in Genesis are a long-recognized organizational theme in Genesis, appearing twelve times. All follow the pattern toledot + proper name, except for the very first. Genesis 2:4 reads, “These are the generations [toledot] of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” Esau gets a double mention, and one instance reads “sons of X” instead of “X.” Some scholars count the double mention of toledot Esau in 36:1 and 36:9 as one occurrence.
24. Richard S. Hess, “Adam,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 19.
25. See, for example, P. L. Day and C. Breytenback, “Satan,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter van der Horst, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999).
26. Hess, “Adam,” 21.
27. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Anchor, 2001), 172–78.
28. Both the 1984 and 2011 editions insert Adam at 3:20, and the 2011 edition further inserts Adam into 2:25.
29. Using Bibleworks 9, I was able to check more than twenty common and historical English translations.
30. The verb used is banah “to build, construct.”
31. The root of ’iyš is ’yš, but the root of ’iššah is ’nš + the feminine ending -ah. When n closes a syllable and is followed by certain consonants such as š, n assimilates and doubles the following consonant instead.

Consequently, 'nšah > 'iššah. The masculine counterpart of 'iššah is the rare word 'enoš, which appears to have identical semantic range to 'adam, namely "humankind," "human," and a proper name, Enos (appearing in Genesis 4:26 as the son of Seth, as well as in the Book of Mormon).

32. For example, "If any man . . ." (= person, male or female) or "mailman" (= a male or female mail carrier).

33. See Ben Spackman, "Why Bible Translations Differ: A Guide for the Perplexed," *Religious Educator* 15/1 (2014): 31–66.

34. I suspect that recent updates to the Gospel Topics section of LDS.org—the articles titled "Race and the Priesthood" and "Book of Mormon and DNA Studies," for example—represent examples of examining previously accepted traditions more closely. See also my post on the power of tradition at <http://timesandseasons.org/index.php/2013/06/the-philosophies-of-men-mingled-with-monopoly/>.

35. See, for example, Jolene Edmunds Rockwood, "The Redemption of Eve," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

36. Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011).