Ammon in the Hebrew Bible: a textual analysis and archaeological context of selected references to the Ammonites of Transjordan.
The study of the Transjordanian Iron-Age (ca. 1200-550 BC) state of Ammon is important to students of the Bible because of the numerous references to the Ammonites (bene 'ammon) included in the historical and prophetic sections of the Hebrew canon. The book of Genesis traces the ancestry of the "Sons of Ammon" to an eponymous ancestor named Ben Ammi--son/grandson of Abraham's nephew Lot (Gen 39:17).

Chapter 1 points out how Ammon--though often ignored or slighted in studies up to the mid-20th century--increasingly receives scholarly attention. It also shows a need for applying the results of archaeological research to facilitate a fuller understanding of the biblical text.

Chapter 2 outlines recent trends in the relationship between the fields of biblical studies and archaeology. Criteria are set forth for evaluating published works combining emphases on the fields of biblical studies and archaeology, especially as they relate to the study of the Ammonites. The term "archaeological context" is differentiated from "archaeological commentary."

Chapter 3 tabulates all references to the Ammonites in the Hebrew Bible and compares key references to those in the LXX. A study of the familial relationships within the courts of David and Solomon suggests interesting possibilities for identifying a number of interrelationships which existed between the royal houses of Ammon and Israel. Many Ammonite references cluster around two important themes--tribal/kindred loyalty and honor for Yahweh's temple (or a lack thereof).

Chapter 4 gives a topographical and archaeological background for selected Ammonite...
Ammon’s heartland (near modern Amman) was centered around the headwaters of the Jabbok River (Nahal Zarqa), strategically located along important trade corridors—the north-south King’s Highway and the east-west Canaanite coast. Districts of Ammonite control are identified for each biblical site with Ammonite connections, and an archaeological summary is given for each. Occupations of Ammonite people in Ammonite society, and interrelations between Ammon and other states are explored. The comparative richness of Ammon’s culture to relative prosperity as a vassal state are chronicled. Evidence of Ammonite religion, including the existence of Ammonite deities Milkom and Astarte, is depicted on seals and figurines, and in the Amman Citadel Inscription which included a divine oracle to be displayed publicly on the acropolis. Ammonite Hebrew prophetic oracles is briefly mentioned.

Chapter 5 summarizes the interrelationship between biblical references and the results of archaeological research. The archaeological evidence is consistent with the biblical portrayal of Ammon in the Hebrew Bible, and additional in-depth study of the importance of Ammon in Hebrew prophetic literature is recommended.

**Subject Area**

Ammonites (Semitic people), Jordan—Antiquities

**Recommended Citation**