Thy Name is Deer, Animal names in Semitic onomastics and name-giving traditions : evidence from Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic

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1 Introduction

1.1 Objective and scope

Personal naming is a central and universal aspect of human sociality (Alford 1988). This is due to the fact that human ways of life are both social and personal, and naming is one of the vital aspects through which the two imply each other (Rorty 1969). Arguably, personal names are the most prototypical category of proper names. The number and types of names that are bestowed on people are highly culture-specific, as are the principles that guide the choice of a name (Van Langendonck and Van de Velde 2016: 33). In relation to meaning, however, proper names, and consequently personal names, have been a question of debate in the field of linguistics (e.g., see the discussion in Van Langendonck 2007: 24-100). A good general explanation concerning this issue is the following: a name has an 'illusory' lexical and etymological meaning, while the reference of the name is actually the entity carrying it, the named object (Nyström 2016: 39). In the same context of etymology, meaning, and denotation, Macdonald (1999: 254) gives an interesting example from Arabic and Hebrew:

> An Arab mother calling to her child *yā 'abdu-rraḥmān* is not saying 'servant of the Compassionate', she is addressing her son. In the same way, even a learned Hebraist addressing me, or referring to me, as 'Michael' is not asking the question 'Who is like God?'.

Yet from an anthropological and onomastic viewpoint, such an explanation merely covers one aspect of naming, for names have a strong historical and cultural nature in that the creation or the application of a name to an individual is an act rooted in a particular moment in time and that name may carry a load of cultural meanings (Coates 2016: 539). Additionally, the 'lexical' meaning in some societies is thought to have an effect on name-bearers (Alford 1988: 59). Leaving aside etymology, names are considered especially powerful in traditional and nonindustrial societies. Name magic is commonly found in obtaining both positive and negative effects (Frazer 1911: 318ff; Parkin 1980).

In terms of classification, despite their huge variation across cultures, personal names tend to cluster in specific prototypical categories: theophoric, characteristic, based on natural phenomena (animal, plants, etc.), circumstantial (time and place of birth), apotropaic (i.e., protective), and so on (Alford 1988: 59ff).

Of these categories, animal names form a remarkable case. They are found in both ancient and modern languages. In ancient languages, for instance, they occur in Sumerian (Foxvog 2011: 74ff), Egyptian (Ranke 1925), Greek (Robert 1963: 184ff), and Old Norse (Jennbert 2011: 184-88). In modern languages, they are recorded in twenty-two out of the sixty societies examined by Alford (1988: 60).

Historically speaking, it is the Semitic family that, thanks to its exceptionally long recorded history, provides us with a particularly rich diversity of animal names from a period that goes from as early as the mid-3rd millennium BCE (Akkadian) until our present time (Arabic). Undoubtedly, an Arab mother calling her child *yā nimr* is not saying "leopard", nor was it the intention of a mother from ancient Mesopotamia or Syria-Palestine addressing her child as *ayyal*, to refer to the literal meaning "deer". In both cases, the entity referred to is the child. But why give names such as *nimr* and *ayyal*, while others can equally well fulfill the basic function of naming, that is to say, denotation? This is the question I will investigate here.

The objective of this study is to examine the use of animal names in different Semitic name-giving traditions from a linguistic and sociocultural viewpoint. This aim is articulated in the following three questions:

(1) How do animal names occur in the Semitic onomasticon?

(2) What are the reasons for their use?

(3) How did the social setting and cultural changes influence their use?

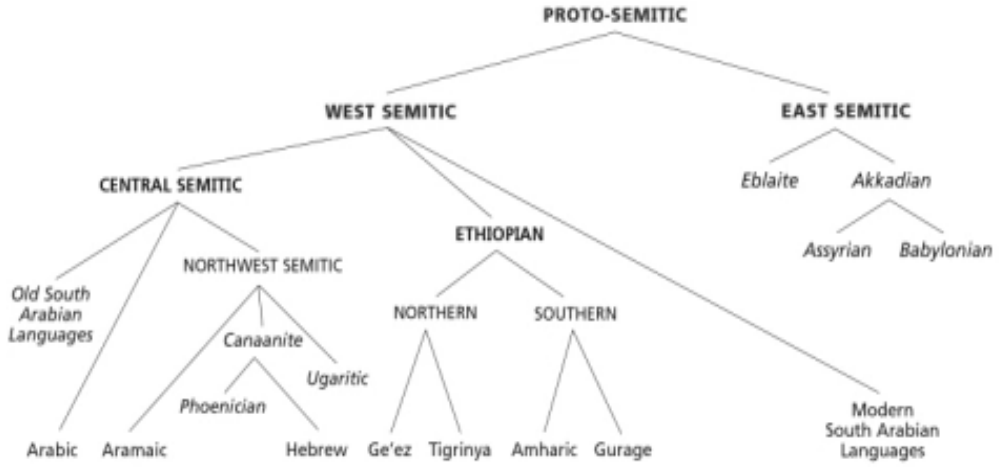
This discussion covers three language groups which reflect three individual traditions yet affected by a continuum of cultural contact: (1) Akkadian, (2) Northwest Semitic, and (3) Arabic. Additional supportive material from Eblaite as well as Ancient Arabian is included in the appendix.

What makes such an organization by language particularly appropriate for our topic is that the mentioned three groups, despite cross-cultural influences, all have their native onomastic traditions and correspond to different original speech regions with their own proper socio-cultural conditions.

Before surveying the previous studies related to our topic and addressing the methodological aspects, I shall start first with a brief outline of the languages in question.

1.2 The Semitic languages: a brief outline

The Semitic family is a branch of the Afroasiatic language family. The primary division among the Semitic languages is between East Semitic, comprising the various dialects of Akkadian and Eblaite, and West Semitic, which includes everything else. The basis for this division is a major innovation that took place in the verbal system of West Semitic: the development of the inherited stative (*qatala*) into a past tense, while the inherited past tense (*yaqtul*) has been marginalized or lost (Rubin 2008: 62). Yet the internal subgrouping of West Semitic has been debated since the systematic linguistic study of the family began in the 19th century. The classification scheme accepted by most scholars, and thus adopted in this work, divides West Semitic into three sub-branches: Central Semitic, Ethiopian, and Modern South Arabian. This classification is mainly, though not exclusively, based on an important innovation in the verbal system of Central Semitic: the new imperfect **yaqtulu* replaced the inherited form of the imperfect **yaqattal*, which is still reflected in all non-Central Semitic branches (Huehnergard and Rubin 2011). This classification scheme is outlined in the following figure:



Since Ethiopian and Modern South Arabian are excluded from our study, the brief description below will be limited to East Semitic and Central Semitic. Ethiopian is not to the same extent part of the cultural continuum that unites the Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic traditions, and the Ethiopian onomasticon is strongly affected by Christian traditions. Modern South Arabian naming practice, by contrast, reflects a very strong influence of Islamic practices. Also, the state of research is an important factor: onomastics has been an important topic in Assyriology, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic Studies for more than a century.

1.2.1 East Semitic: Akkadian and Eblaite

Akkadian is the Semitic language of ancient Mesopotamia (a region which roughly coincides with present day Iraq), attested in several hundred thousand texts written in cuneiform script on clay tablets dating from the mid-3rd millennium BCE until the mid-1st c. CE. Akkadian in the 3rd millennium is referred to as Old Akkadian; thereafter it is split into two principal dialects, Assyrian in the north and Babylonian in the south, each of which is in turn divided into several chronological periods as is outlined in the figure below (Kouwenberg 2011):

Old Akkadian (ca. 2600–2000)

Old Babylonian (2000-1600)	Old Assyrian (1950–1730)
Middle Babylonian (1400-1000)	Middle Assyrian (1500–1000)
Neo-Babylonian (1000-600)	Neo-Assyrian (1000–600)
Late Babylonian (600 BCE–100 CE)	

Eblaite is the language of several thousand cuneiform texts dating to the 24th c. BCE from the ancient city of Ebla, modern day Tell Mardikh, south of Aleppo, Syria. Knowledge of the language remains patchy due to the nature of the cuneiform writing system, particularly the broad use of logograms and the ambiguity in the representation of nearly all consonants and vowels. Thus the classification of Eblaite has been debated among scholars: some classify it as a distinct East Semitic language, while others see it as a dialect of Akkadian (see the summary in Streck 2011a). This discussion, however, does not affect our topic.

1.2.2 Northwest Semitic

The group labeled ‘Northwest Semitic’ in a historical-comparative framework, or ‘Syro-Palestinian’ languages in dialect geography, is commonly thought to include three major branches: Ugaritic, the Canaanite languages (or dialects), and Aramaic, in addition to several other varieties, i.e., Amorite, Sam’alian, and the language of the Deir ‘Alla inscription. Northwest Semitic languages are characterized by several shared developments, including the change of initial */w/ to /y/ (excluding the conjunction /wa-/ “and”), the regular assimilation of /n/ to the following consonant (except for /h/ in several cases), and the double plural marking on nouns of the pattern CVCC (Gzella 2011; Rubin 2008: 79).

1.2.2.1 Amorite

'Amorite', one of the earliest reflexes of Northwest Semitic, is a label which designates the language of all names (ca. 7000, mostly personal) and loan words (ca. 90) in Akkadian and Sumerian cuneiform texts from the mid-3rd millennium BCE until about 1200 BCE that are Semitic but not Akkadian. Amorite was chiefly spoken in the Middle Euphrates valley and the Syrian steppe (Streck 2011: 452-53). Non-Akkadian features of Amorite include: (1) the 'imperfect' preformative /ya-/ instead of /i-/, (2) the change of word-initial */w/ to /y/, and (3) the assimilation of /n/ before another consonant (*/yattin/* 'he gave', varying freely with */yantin/*) *yattin* < *yantin*). The case system of Amorite, however, appears to preserve some more archaic traits (Gzella 2011: 427). Despite the absence of any Amorite texts, the Akkadian Archives of the Amorite kingdoms, mainly that of Mari (modern day tell Hariri, Syria), provide us with valuable information on the Amorite people(s), that is, their political and tribal structure, religion, customs, and so on.[1]

1.2.2.2 Ugaritic

Ugaritic, the language of the ancient city of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, Syria), is attested in clay tablets in an indigenous cuneiform alphabet from the latter part of the Late Bronze Age (14th–12th c. BCE). It provides the oldest sizeable corpus of texts in a Northwest Semitic language, approximately 2000 texts representing a broad spectrum of literary genres (mythological, ritual, divinatory, epistolary, legal, economic, pedagogical), though many are fragmentary (Pardee 2011).

1.2.2.3 Aramaic

Aramaic, which has never ceased to be a living, spoken language, seems to have taken shape some time before the 9th c. BCE. During its three millennia of attestation, it has been the language of small principalities in ancient Syria, three successive world empires (Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Achaemenid), and a fair share of normative texts of three living religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Mandaeism (Gzella 2015: 1). However, the division of Aramaic into phases has been a question of debate. Fitzmyer's scheme (1979), the most widely cited one in current scholarship, divides Aramaic into five phases: Old Aramaic (ca. 900 –700 BCE), Imperial Aramaic (ca. 700–200 BCE), Middle Aramaic (ca. 200 BCE–200 CE), Late Aramaic (ca. 200 –700 CE), and Modern Aramaic (spoken today). Beyer (1984: 23-71), on the other hand, proposes an alternative tripartite division,

[1] On the political history of the Amorite kingdoms, see Charpin and Ziegler (2003); on their tribes and social life, see, for example, Durand (2004).

that is, Old Aramaic (until the 3rd c. BCE), Middle Aramaic (until the breakthrough of Arabic in the 7th c. CE), and Modern Aramaic (covers the Aramaic languages still spoken today). In his recent study, Gzella (2015: 382ff) argues that Aramaic cannot neatly be divided into a sequence of clearly-defined chronological phases and that its development is highly fluid process conditioned by diachronic, geographical, and social factors.

1.2.2.4 Canaanite

The Canaanite group includes the languages of various independent city-states, and later small regional polities, in a region that now basically corresponds to Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. Hebrew, and to a lesser degree Phoenician, are well-attested, while the *Transjordanian* languages (Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite) are much less well-attested. Many early Canaanite forms, however, occur in place names in 20th-18th c. BCE Egyptian transcriptions, in the Akkadian cuneiform tablets from Emar and other places in Syria-Palestine, and, more notably, in the corpus of Akkadian letters found at El-Amarna in Egypt (14th c. BCE) (Gzella 2011: 428ff; Moran 1992).

1.2.3 Ancient South Arabian

Ancient South Arabian is a collective term for four different idioms: Sabaic, Minaic, Qatabanic, and Hadramitic, which were spoken and written in Southwest Arabia at least from the early 1st millennium BCE until the rise of Islam (Stein 2011). Like Arabic, the Ancient South Arabian languages possess an imperfective of the Central Semitic type (Nebes 1994). They also share a number of areal features with Arabic, Modern South Arabian, and Ethiopian, notably the shift of Proto-Semitic */p/>/f/, widespread use of broken plurals, and a number of lexical items (Stein 2011).

1.2.4 Ancient North Arabian and Arabic

The relationship between languages attested in the Ancient North Arabian inscriptions and Arabic is complicated and has been a subject of much confusion and debate. To clarify this issue, I will start with a short description of the former and then move to the latter.

Ancient North Arabian is a cover term for a number of interrelated dialects that are attested only in mostly brief inscriptions (dated roughly between the 8th c. BCE and 4th c. CE) and were used by the settled peoples and nomads of central and north Arabia and by the nomads in what is now southern Syria and eastern and southern Jordan. The Ancient North Arabian corpus consists of four independent branches: Taymanitic, Dadanitic (both also known as Oasis North Arabian), Safaitic and Hismaic (i.e., Old Arabic), and Thamudic (Macdonald 2004: 490-93; Al-Jallad Forthc.).

Arabic, a member of the Central Semitic category, exhibits almost 19 features which distinguish it from the other Semitic languages (Al-Jallad Forthc.). Arabic is divided into five varieties: (1) Old Arabic (refers to the inscriptions in the Safaitic and Hismaic scripts as well as few other texts in the Dadanitic, Nabataean, Nabataeao-Arabic, Old Arabic, and Greek script), (2) Classical Arabic, (3) Middle Arabic, (4) Modern Standard Arabic, and (5) Spoken Arabic Dialects (Macdonald 2000: 30; Al-Jallad Forthc.).

1.3 Review of related literature

Having surveyed the linguistic map of the Semitic family, I will now outline the previous literature concerning our topic.

The use of animal names in the Semitic name-giving traditions has been studied in three types of works: (1) early comparative onomastic works, (2) manuals (i.e., repertoires of the onomastic evidence, usually with etymological and grammatical information, in certain more or less close-knit corpora) and standard dictionaries, and (3) articles that focus on specific periods or corpora.

1.3.1 Early comparative onomastic works

Robertson Smith (1912 [1880]) and Nöldeke (Beiträge 75-90) were among the first scholars to study animal names from a comparative viewpoint.

Robertson Smith used several examples of animal names in Arabic and Biblical Hebrew in order to support his theory on totemism in the ancient Semitic cultures. According to the most widely accepted definition, totemism is a system of belief in which humans are said to have kinship or a mystical relationship with a spirit-being, such as an animal or plant. The entity, or totem, is thought to have interacted with a given kin group or an individual and served as their emblem or symbol. The main argument supporting Robertson Smith's totemistic interpretation of animal names is that they originated as tribal and consequently became personal. Some years later, this theory was adopted by other scholars (Gray 1896: 86-114; Murison 1901).[2]

In his chapter on Semitic name-giving, Nöldeke (Beiträge 75-90) discusses animal names beside other types of profane names. He focuses on Arabic, especially the classical onomasticon, with some examples from Biblical Hebrew and Palmyrene. The study consists of two parts: (a) a brief introduction on the reasons for using animal names, and (b) a repertoire of names.

[2] The totemistic theory will be dealt with extensively in three sections of this study (4.1.4.1; 4.2.4; 5.4.1).

1.3.2 Manuals and standard dictionaries

Due to the increase of the onomastic corpora of the known languages (Akkadian, Aramaic, and Ancient Arabian) and the discovery of new Semitic languages (Ugaritic, Amorite, and Eblaite), the scope of onomastic research has become more specific with regards to language, time, and place. Several manuals appeared, all of which, as Rosenhouse (2002: 99) points out, use names in two main ways: (1) as tools for understanding the life of the ancient peoples and their extinct civilizations (religion, ethnicity, cultural contact, etc.); or (2) as language elements reflecting past language stages. Most of these manuals contain a small section on animal names (mainly a repertoire of names), sometimes preceded by a brief discussion of the reasons for their use. The table below gives a summary of these works:

Language/period	Work/section on animal names	Discussion?
(1) Akkadian		
general	Stamm 1939: 11, 253-55	Yes
Old Babylonian Mari	Rasmussen 1981: 470	Yes
Middle Assyrian Nuzi	NPN 292	Yes
Middle Babylonian	PKTN	No
Neo-Assyrian	PNA	No
Neo-/Late Babylonian	NBN	No
(2) Northwest Semitic		
Biblical and epigraphic Hebrew	IPN 229-31	Yes
	PHIAP 382; Rechenmacher 2012: 170-71	No
Ugaritic	PTU 27-28	No
Amorite	Huffmon 1965: 151-52; CAAA 13-35; Streck 2000: particularly §5.70	No
Phoenician-Punic	PNPPI 239	No
Aramaic		

Old/Official Aramaic	Maraqten 1988; Lipiński 1994	No
Nabataean	Cantineau 1932	No
	PNNR 164-68	Yes
Palmyrene	PNPI	No
Hatrene	Abbadi 1983; Beyer 1998	No
(3) Arabic		
Classical Arabic	Caetani and Gabrieli 1915: 87-88	Yes
Classical and Bedouin name-giving	Littmann 1948-49: 54ff	No

In addition to these works, one also finds onomastic information in many standard dictionaries: Akkadian (CAD; AHw; CDA), Ugaritic (DUL), Biblical Hebrew (HALOT), and Arabic (Lisān).

1.3.3 Articles focusing on specific periods or corpora

These kinds of articles have appeared recently, when the onomastic research started to refine its scope in terms of time, corpus, and name category/pattern. The works below have basically dealt with animal names:

- Stamm (1980): various comparative articles on Hebrew and ancient Semitic name-giving which include short discussions of animal names (p. 5, 7, 125ff).

- Schaffer (1981): a comparative repertoire of female names referring to animals in Ancient South Arabian.

- Millet Albà (2000): a discussion of animal names in the Mari Archives. It consists of three sections: (a) a short 'hypothetical' introduction on the reasons for using such names, (b) a repertoire (one-word names, suffixed names, and theophoric names), and (c) a short prosopography about names in relation to gender and affiliation. Despite its importance, however, this article does not give textual references for the mentioned personal names, nor does it establish a criterion for distinguishing the Amorite names from their Akkadian counterparts. The latter task was briefly taken by Kogan (2003: 252-55).

- Glatz (2001) on Biblical and epigraphic Hebrew. The article consists of a discussion of cultural aspects of animal names and a non-comparative repertoire of names without a consideration of linguistic issues (e.g., etymology and suffixes).

- Watson (2006, 2007): an etymological investigation of animal terms in the Ugaritic lexicon and onomasticon.

- Gaspa (2008) on profane names in the Neo-Assyrian onomasticon (i.e., animals, plants, containers, and precious items), with the first group occupying the biggest part. The work, being quite comprehensive, consists of three main sections: (a) a repertoire on Akkadian and West Semitic names, (b) a semantic analysis of some peculiarities of the names in question with a focus on animal names in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, and (c) a classification of a more limited onomastic sample according to the social, professional, and cultural settings.

- Golinets (2016) on Amorite animal names. In this thorough linguistic study, the author follows Kogan (2003) by using etymological, phonological, morphological, and syntactical considerations for distinguishing the Amorite terms from Akkadian. However, he limits his approach to terms that have been discussed in the previous works, although the huge corpus of names available in Gelb's glossary (CAAA), the ARM series, and some other Old Babylonian sources contains additional probable terms.[3]

To sum up, our survey of the previous research on animal names in the Semitic onomasticon shows that while manuals have focused on the repertoire of names, the specified works paid more attention to the cultural and/or social context of their use. The latter, however, have approached animal names as a distinct category without considering their context, i.e., name-giving in general. Thus, no specific and comprehensive comparative study has been done since Nöldeke (Beiträge).

Given this background, the relevance of the present study stems from the fact that it is the first work ever to discuss animal names in a wide spectrum of languages that moves away from the traditional taxonomy, as in the classical repertoires, to a comprehensive approach which is concerned with linguistic as well as sociocultural aspects in the broad context of name-giving traditions. In the following section, I shall highlight this point in detail.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Samples and sources

As indicated above (1.1), this research will cover three language groups: Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic (classical, modern, and contemporary sources). The choice

[3] For these terms, see ↓4.1.1.2.1; 4.1.1.2.2.1.

of these samples in particular is due to the fact that beside their rich lexicon and onomasticon, they provide us with several kinds of literary texts which enable us to examine our main question: the sociocultural aspects of using animal names. By including material from modern and contemporary Arabic sources, I seek to examine similarities in name-giving practices and thus link our historical knowledge of dead civilizations (ancient Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian) to a living one. In addition to these three samples, supportive material from other languages is included in the appendix: Eblaite and Ancient Arabian (for motivation, see ↓1.4.1.4).

The subsections below summarize the sources used, the periods under investigation, and terminological issues.

1.4.1.1 Akkadian

The study will deal with onomastic samples from the Old Akkadian period through the Neo-/Late Babylonian period as follows: general (Stamm 1939), Old Akkadian (MAD 3; Heimpel 2009), Old Assyrian (OAPN; Sturm 2000), Old Babylonian (IPNOBS; ARM; YOS 8, 13; Bowes 1987; OBTR), Middle Assyrian (OMA; NAOM; NPN), Middle Babylonian (PKTN), Neo-Assyrian (PNA; SAA), Neo-/Late Babylonian (NBN; Nielsen 2015; YOS NO. 6, 17, 19; Bongenaar 1997; Joannès 1989, index; Cousin and Watai 2016).

1.4.1.2 Northwest Semitic

Five languages will be included in this study: Amorite, Biblical and epigraphic Hebrew, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Phoenician. The situation in the other, smaller, Canaanite languages (Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite) is unsurprising and hence will not be dealt with. The Sam'alian and Deir 'Alla inscriptions are excluded, too, for they do not contribute any significant onomastic data. As for Amorite, it has to be stressed that this term refers only to names in the Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian corpora. Thus, all unclassifiable Semitic names from the later periods (Middle Babylonian down to Neo-/Late Babylonian) are only included in the appendix under the category '(North)West Semitic in cuneiform sources'. For the sake of classification, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Phoenician are treated as one group under the label 'Epigraphic Northwest Semitic'. Arabian-like names in variants of the Aramaic script, namely Palmyrene, Hatrene, and Nabataean, are also discussed in this category.

The sources and works used for Northwest Semitic are the following:

- Amorite (CAAA; ARM; Huffmon 1965; Durand 1997; Streck 2000; Golinets 2016).

- Biblical and epigraphic Hebrew (IPN; PHIAP; Stamm 1980; Deutsch and Lemaire 2000; Glatz 2001; Rechenmacher 2012).

- Epigraphic Northwest Semitic: (1) Ugaritic (KTU, PTU; Watson 2006, 2007), (2) Phoenician-Punic (PNPPI), (3) Aramaic: Old/Official (Maraqten 1988; Lipiński 1994; Lemaire 2002; Porten and Yardeni 2014), Palmyrene (PNPI; Piersimoni 1995), Hatrene (Abbadi 1983; Beyer 1998), Nabataean (Cantineau 1932; PNNR), Old Syriac (Drijvers and Healey 1999), and Dura (Grassi 2012; Gzella 2015a).

1.4.1.3 Arabic

The investigation will cover samples from the classical, modern (i.e., Bedouin), and contemporary onomasticon. Material from Old Arabic (Safaitic and Hismaic) is excluded from the discussion, except for a few references in chapter five, but it is included in the appendix along with Ancient Arabian. Non-Semitic names in the Arabic onomasticon (Persian, Turkish, and so on) will not be dealt with here. Given that some classical narrative sources, in particular genealogical and historiographic texts, could include fictitious information that do not necessarily reflect authentic naming practice, the present study will also utilize material from other two reliable sources: (1) historical-biographical works by authors from the same periods they themselves dealt with, and (2) actual records (Islamic papyri and early Islamic inscriptions). Due to the diachronic aspect of the study, general onomastic dictionaries which do not consider names in their historical and geographic context (e.g., Ibn Al-Zubayr and Badawī 1991) are not used here.

Below is an outline of the sources and literature on which the present investigation is based:

- Classical narrative sources: etymological works (Ištiqāq; Al-Aṣmaʿī 1989), nicknames and *kunyas* (KN; Al-Dawlābī 1999), genealogical works (CIK; Ibn Ḥazm n.d), onomastic works (Ikmāl; Ibn Ḥaǧar 1421 AH), historical-biographical works (Al-Baġdādī 2001; Ibn Al-Dubayṯī 2006).

- Epigraphic sources: (1) Papyri (Khoury 1993; The Arabic Papyrology Database, APD), and (2) early Islamic inscriptions (Al-Kilābī 2009).

- Bedouin name-giving (18th-20th c.): this includes onomastic and anthropological evidence about nomadic tribes from the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula (Hess 1912; Littmann 1921; Oppenheim 1938-69 “id., Beduinen”).

- Modern/Contemporary sources (20th c.): beside some general works (Al-Sāmarrāʾī 1983; Al-Šamsān 2005; Ḥittī 2003; MAAM), this study uses actual records, that is, samples of

student lists from three countries/areas: (1) Syria, (2) the Palestinian territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), and (3) the United Arab Emirates (see the abbreviation list). The reason for including these samples is that they provide us with important data that are not available elsewhere, such as the question of whether animal names are used as names or bynames, their survival among generations (i.e., the lineage), and their distribution among males and females.

Lastly, since the printed sources on modern/contemporary Arabic name-giving do not cover all naming aspects, the study uses relevant online sources, mainly fatwa websites and blogs.

1.4.1.4 Additional material in the appendix

The appendix is designated as a database for animal names in the Semitic onomasticon. In addition to the languages under investigation (Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic), it contains material from Eblaite and Ancient Arabian, which both have a rich portion of names but lack required information on name-giving practices. Nevertheless, they are helpful from a linguistic viewpoint. With its considerable number of Northwest Semitic names, Eblaite (beside Amorite) represents the oldest trace of animal names in the Northwest Semitic onomasticon. Regarding the Ancient Arabian languages, they are included for two reasons: (1) they provide us with an onomastic 'map' showing the distribution of animal names in the pre-Islamic times and therefore shed light on their survival in the Islamic sources (both narrative and epigraphic), and (2) the fact that Ancient North Arabian in particular shares a large number of names with the Aramaic onomasticon (i.e., Palmyrene, Hatrene, and Nabataean) makes it highly relevant for etymological investigation and classification of animal names.

The table below exhibits the sources used for Eblaite and Ancient Arabian:

Language/script	Reference
(1) Eblaite	ARES 3; PEb; Krebernik 1988
(2) Ancient Arabian	
Safaitic and Dadanitic	HIn (also contains data about Ancient South Arabian names)
Hismaic	ENAH
Thamudic	Shatnawi 2002

Old Sabaic	Tairan 1992
Minaic	Al-Said 1995
Qatabanic	POI
Female names in the Ancient South Arabian inscriptions	Sholan 1999; Schaffer 1981

1.4.2 Approach

The present research is mainly evidence-based, with the linguistic data as its empirical foundation. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, it applies a holistic approach involving historical linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, and socio-onomastics.

The linguistic dimension deals with our first research question, that is, the occurrence of animal names in the onomasticon. Animal names are analyzed according to their etymology, linguistic affiliation, and word formation: one-word names, suffixed names, plural forms, and compound names. In the case of Arabic, I also include names based on by-forms. In addition to the standard dictionaries of the respective Semitic languages, the etymological part draws basically on the *Semitic Etymological Dictionary: Volume 2: Animal Names* (SED 2). Although derivative, this dictionary is still the most comprehensive work on animal names in the lexicon.

Conceptual metaphor theory is partly concerned with our second research question, that is, reasons for using animal names (see also ↓1.5). The fundamental principle of this theory is that metaphor operates at the level of thinking. Metaphors link two conceptual domains, the 'source' domain and the 'target' domain. The source domain consists of a set of literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships, linked semantically and apparently stored together in the mind. These are expressed in language through related words and expressions. The 'target' domain tends to be abstract, and takes its structure from the source domain, through the metaphorical link, or 'conceptual metaphor' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 252). Such basic processes of linguistically marked items in the real world also relate to naming in the sense of the original creation of names (Dobrić 2010: 138ff). The conceptual metaphor theory, however, cannot cover all reasons for choosing a particular name for a child, which can range from historical reasons to family tradition, topics which will be approached through socio-onomastics.

Socio-onomastics can be briefly defined as a socio-linguistic study of names. It takes into account the social, cultural, and situational fields in which names are used (Ainiala 2016:

372). The term was first coined by Walther (1971), who defines the two main aims of socio-onomastics as follows: (1) the study of the social origin and use of different variants of proper names within various situations and contexts, and (2) considering the name-giver, the name-bearer, and the name-user (Walther 1971: 45). Socio-onomastic research into personal names (of all types, that is, given names, family names, and bynames) comprises, for instance, variation in the popularity of names as well as reasons for name-giving (Ainiala 2016: 373-74). In our study, the socio-onomastic method is applied in examining research questions two (partly) (reasons for using animal names) and three (the impact of social setting and cultural changes on this use). It deals with animal names in their context, that is, family tradition and social factors: gender, lifestyle (nomadic versus sedentary), status (free population versus slaves), and, importantly, the role of crucial historical changes, particularly the impact of Islamic instructions on animal names in Arabic name-giving.

1.5 Structure and organization

This study consists of four analytical chapters. Chapter two is an extensive survey of name-giving in Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic respectively. Inspired by the socio-onomastic method, this chapter is meant to provide a framework for the three chapters on animal names thereafter. It consists of three main sections, one for each language or language group. These sections are organized according to the same general outline in that each of them deals with name-giving from a socio-cultural perspective by addressing the following points: (1) power and concept of the name, (2) naming methods/motivations (when available), (3) name patterns (theophoric and profane), (4) names within the family, and (5) names in society (basically alternative names and status-related names).[4] The question of names and ethnicity is irrelevant to animal names and hence will not be dealt with.

Chapters three through five are dedicated to animal names in Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic respectively. These chapters are all organized according to the same structure in that each of them consists of four main sections:

(1) The onomastic evidence: this section covers the linguistic aspects: (a) lexemes, (b) suffixes, hypocoristica, and endearment forms, and (c) the occurrence of animal names in compound names.

[4] The order ‘names within the family’ and ‘names in society’ is inspired by Baker (2002).

(2) Reasons for using animal names: this section investigates this type of names in view of the following theories: (a) the totemistic theory, that is, animal names originated as tribal names (corresponding with chapters four and five), (b) the conceptual metaphor theory (chapters three, four, and five), and (c) the astral theory, which is to say, animal names designate astral bodies instead of real animals (chapters three and four).

(3) Animal names within the family: this section deals with the impact of family tradition on the use of this type of names.

(4) Animal names in society: this section is concerned with the use of these names as alternative names as well as their distribution in accordance with social status and cultural changes. In the case of Arabic (chapter five), I will also investigate the impact of Islamic instructions on the use of this type of names.

1.6 Conventions

1.6.1 Transcription

The traditional transcription of consonants in the study of Semitic languages, which is also employed in the present work, is at times at variance with the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) standard. The table below includes the reconstructed Proto-Semitic consonants with their reflexes in the historical daughter languages:[5]

PS	IPA	Akk.	CAr.		ANAr.	ASAr.	Amor.	Ug.	Heb.		Aram.		Pho.
*ʾ	[ʔ]	ʾ/Ø	ء	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	א	ʾ	א	ʾ	ʾ
*b	[b]	b	ب	b	b	b	b	b	ב	b	ב	b	b
*g	[g]	g	ج	ǧ	g	g	g	g	ג	g	ג	g	g
*d	[d]	d	د	d	d	d	d	d	ד	d	ד	d	d
*h	[h]	Ø	ه	h	h	h	h	h	ה	h	ה	h	h
*w	[w]	w	و	w	w	w	w/y-	w/y-	ו/י	w/y-	ו/י	w/y-	w/y-
*z	[d͡z/z]	z	ز	z	z	z	z [dz]	z	ז	z	ז	z	z
*ḥ	[ħ]	ḥ	ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ח	ḥ	ח	ḥ	ḥ
*ṭ	[tʾ]	ṭ	ط	ṭ [tˤ]	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ט	ṭ	ט	ṭ	ṭ
*y	[j]	y/Ø	ي	y	y	y	y	y	י	y	י	y	y

[5] This table is adopted from Huehnergard (2011: 2067); Kogan (2011: 55); and Al-Jallad (2015: 39ff); for the Amorite consonantal phonemes, see Streck (2000: 151-256, 2011: 453ff).

*k	[k]	k	ك	k	k	k	k	k	כ	k	כ	k	k
*l	[l]	l	ل	l	l	l	l	l	ל	l	ל	l	l
*m	[m]	m	م	m	m	m	m	m	מ	m	מ	m	m
*n	[n]	n	ن	n	n	n	n	n	נ	n	נ	n	n
*s	[t͡s/s]	s	س	s	s[1]	s[3]	s	s	ס	s	ס	s	s
*ʿ	[ʕ]	Ø	ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ע	ʿ	ע	ʿ	ʿ
*p	[p]	p	ف	f	f	f	p	p	פ	p	פ	p	p
*ṣ	[t͡s’/s’]	ṣ	ص	ṣ [sˤ]	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ	צ	ṣ	צ	ṣ	ṣ
*ṣ́	[t͡ɬ’/ɬ’]	ṣ	ض	ḍ [ɮˤ]	ḍ	ḍ	ṣ	ṣ	צ	ṣ	ע	[6]	ṣ
*q	[k’]	q	ق	q	q	q	q	q	ק	q	ק	q	q
*r	[ɾ]	r	ر	r	r	r	r	r	ר	r	ר	r	r
*ś	[ɬ]	š	ش	š [ʃ]	s[2]	s[2]	ś [s]?	š	שׂ	ś	ס	s[7]	š
*š	[ʃ]	š	س	s	s[1]	s[1]		š	שׁ	š	ש	š	š
*t	[t]	t	ت	t	t	t	t	t	ת	t	ת	t	t
*t̲	[θ]	š	ث	t̲	t̲	t̲	š[8]	t̲	שׁ	š	ת	t[9]	š
*d̲	[ð]	z	ذ	d̲	d̲	d̲	d̲	d̲/d	ז	z	ד	d[10]	z
*ṭ̲	[t͡θ’/θ’]	ṣ	ظ	ẓ [ðˤ]	ẓ	ẓ	ṣ?	ẓ/ġ	צ	ṣ	ט	ṭ[11]	ṣ
*ḫ	[x]	ḫ	خ	ḫ	ḫ	ḫ	ḫ	ḫ	ח	ḥ	ח	ḥ	ḥ
*ġ	[ɣ]	ḫ/Ø	غ	ġ	ġ	ġ	ġ?	ġ	ע	ʿ	ע	ʿ	ʿ

[6] PS */ṣ́/ is graphically represented by /q/ (qoph) in Old Aramaic and partly in the conservative spelling of Official Aramaic (Gzella 2015: 24).

[7] In the older stages of Aramaic, */ś/ is preserved and spelled as /š/ (Gzella 2015: 24, 38ff).

[8] This was pronounced /t̲/ (Streck 2000: §2.111, 2011: 454).

[9] In most of Old and partly in Official Aramaic, */t̲/ appears as /š/ in the consonantal script; in Old Aramaic, it was presumably still pronounced /t̲/, whereas in Official Aramaic, it is merely historical spelling (Gzella 2015: 24, 38ff).

[10] In Old and partly in Official Aramaic, */d̲/ appears as /z/ in the consonantal script; in Old Aramaic, it was presumably still pronounced /d̲/, whereas in Official Aramaic, it is merely historical spelling (Gzella 2015: 24, 38ff).

[11] In Old and partly in Official Aramaic, */ṭ̲/ appears as /ṣ/ in the consonantal script; in Old Aramaic, it was presumably still pronounced /ṭ̲/, whereas in Official Aramaic, it is merely historical spelling (Gzella 2015: 24, 38ff).

- Note that the exact date of the merger of /ḫ/ and /ḥ/ and of /ġ/ and /ʿ/ respectively in Northwest Semitic is unknown, i.e., it is unclear whether /ḫ/ and /ġ/ were still separate phonemes in the earliest known stages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and perhaps Phoenician (Gzella 2011: 433; Gzella 2015: 38).
- Vowels: note that *a*, *i*, *u* and *ā*, *ī*, *ū* respectively are Proto-Semitic, whereas *e*, *o* and *ē*, *ō* only developed in some of the historical Semitic languages.
- Note that Akkadian, Eblaite, and Ugaritic written in syllabic cuneiform have been transliterated according to usual Assyriological conventions.
- In the case of Amorite, the study uses the phonetic system of Streck (2000; 2011).

1.6.2 Other formal issues

General

- All Semitic names and words discussed here are written in *italics*.
- Translated names are capitalized.

Arabic

- The feminine marker (*tāʾ marbūṭa*) is written as *-a* (e.g., *ʿAnza*).
- The initial *hamza* /ʾ/ in names and references is not transcribed (e.g., *Asad/Usāma* instead of *ʾAsad/ʾUsāma*).
- The definite article (*al-*) is lowercased in all names and is neglected in the translation, e.g., *al-Fahd* “Cheetah” instead of “The Cheetah”. Assimilation is also disregarded, e.g., *al-Namir* instead of *an-Namir*. References, however, are capitalized (e.g., Al-Baġdādī 2001).
- Diphthongs are written with *ay* (e.g., *Kulayb*) and *aw* (e.g., *ʿAwf*).
- Terms commonly used in English, such as caliph, fatwa, imam, Qur’an, Shiite, Sunni, etc., are reproduced without diacritics and are written in roman characters. When used in the plural, they are generally given in the singular form with an English plural: imams, fatwas, Sunnis, and so on.