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

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Thy Name is Deer. Animal Names in Semitic Onomastics and Name-Giving Traditions:

Evidence from Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic

te verdedigen op dinsdag 14 februari 2017

klokke 13:45 uur

aan de Universiteit Leiden

door

Hekmat Dirbas

1. The three language groups under examination show that naming was a psychological and sociocultural expression of either a temporary/special condition (e.g., birth-giving condition, familial condition, illness, nostalgia, etc.), or an affiliation to the religious and cultural values of the community of the name-giver.
2. Animal names point to an originally Proto-Semitic onomastic background imbued with metaphoric, affective, and apotropaic aspects. There is, however, no evidence for totemism (against Smith 1912 (1880); Gray 1896; Murison 1901; Lipiński 1978, 2000, 2001).
3. The occurrence of name-giving dreams in two languages (Amorite and Arabic) may also point to a common Semitic background.
4. The fact that animal names are still used in modern Arabic practices, especially among nomads, is proof of a long-term resistance of traditional ‘pre-Islamic’ naming methods to Islamic name-giving.
5. The occurrence of kinship terms as divine elements in compound names in all the language groups examined could reflect an ancestor cult rooted in Proto-Semitic practices.
6. The tribal division of the Amorite Bensim’alite federation into *Ašrug(g)āyūm* “Water clans” and *Yabasā* “Dry” (i.e., clans of the dry land) (Durand 2004: 181ff) corresponds

to the classical Arabic division of *ʿAdnān* “Fertile; Settled” and *Qaḥṭān* “Dry”. Both traditions, thus, seem to belong to ancient nomadic genealogical narratives related to conflict about water sources.

7. The fact that the earliest well-known Arab lexicographers belong to Yamani tribes (e.g., al-Ḥalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī; al-Aṣma‘ī; Ibn Durayd) suggests that Classical Arabic originates in a dialect from the south of the Arabian peninsula (against the supposition that it is a language that was standardized by grammarians).
8. Four or five radical Arabic nouns ending in -m (cf. the many examples in *Lisān*, volume 12) could be loans from Old South Arabian languages, where the -m functions as an article.
9. Many of the Syrian refugees I have encountered in this country are highly-educated. NWO can play a pioneering role through offering them short- or long-term scholarship/fellowship programs (like DAAD in Germany).
10. Ending an academic day with a one-hour song by Um Kulṭūm is a great pleasure.