



McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

# Fierce lions, angry mice and fat-tailed sheep

Animal encounters  
in the ancient Near East

Edited by Laerke Recht & Christina Tsouparopoulou



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*with contributions from*

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## Abbreviations and sigla

ABL	Harper, R.F., 1892–1914. <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum</i> , 14 volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.	ARM 30	Durand, J.-M., 2009. <i>La nomenclature des habits et des textiles dans les textes de Mari</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 30.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.
AHw	von Soden, W., 1959-1981. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . Wiesbaden.	AUCT 1	Sigrist, M., 1984. <i>Neo-Sumerian Account Texts in the Horn Archaeological Museum</i> . (Andrews University Cuneiform Texts 1.) Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press.
AKA I	Wallis Budge, E.A. & L.W. King, 1902. <i>Annals of the Kings of Assyria: The Cuneiform Texts with Translations and Transliterations from the Original Documents in the British Museum</i> . Vol. I. London: The Trustees of the British Museum.	BabMed	Babylonian Medicine online [no year]: ‘Corpora’, <a href="https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/index.html">https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/index.html</a>
AMT	Campbell Thompson, R., 1923. <i>Assyrian Medical Texts</i> . Milford, Oxford: Oxford University Press.	BAM	Köcher, F., 1963–1980. <i>Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen</i> , 6 Vols. Berlin: De Gruyter.
AnOr 8	Pohl, A., 1933. <i>Neubabylonische Rechtsurkunden aus den Berliner staatlichen Museen</i> . (Analecta Orientalia 8.) Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum.	BCT 1	Watson, P.J., 1986. <i>Neo-Sumerian Texts from Drehem</i> . (Catalogue of Cuneiform Tablets in Birmingham City Museum I.) Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
AO	Siglum of objects in the Louvre Museum, Paris (Archéologie Orientale).	BIN 1	Keiser, C.E., 1917. <i>Letters and Contracts from Erech Written in the Neo-Babylonian Period</i> . (Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies, vol. 1.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
ARM 2	Jean, Ch.-F., 1950. <i>Lettres diverses</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 2.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BIN 3	Keiser, C.E., 1971. <i>Neo-Sumerian Account Texts from Drehem</i> . (Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of B.J. Nies, vol. 3.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
ARM 9	Biro, M., 1958. <i>Textes administratifs de la Salle 5 du Palais</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 9.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BM	Siglum for objects in the British Museum, London.
ARM 10	Dossin, G., 1978. <i>Correspondance feminine</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 10.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BPOA	Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006ff.)
ARM 14	Biro, M., 1974. <i>Lettres de Yaqqim-Addu, gouverneur de Sagarâtum</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 14.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BPOA 6	Sigrist, M., & T. Ozaki, 2009a. <i>Neo-Sumerian Administrative Tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection. Part One</i> (Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo 6.) Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
ARM 15	Bottero, J. & A. Finet, 1954. <i>Repertoire analytique des tomes I à V</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 15.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BPOA 7	Sigrist, M., & T. Ozaki, 2009b. <i>Neo-Sumerian Administrative Tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection. Part Two</i> (Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo 7.) Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
ARM 26	Durand, J.-M. et al., 1988. <i>Archives épistolaires de Mari</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 26.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BRM 1	Clay, A.T., 1912. <i>Babylonian Business Transactions of the First Millennium B.C.</i> (Babylonian Records
ARM 27	Biro, M., 1993. <i>Correspondance des gouverneurs de Qaṭṭunân</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 27.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.		
ARM 28	Kupper, J.-R., 1998. <i>Lettres royales du temps de Zimri-Lim</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 28.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.		

Abbreviations and sigla

	in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan, Part 1.) New York: Privately printed.	HSS 14	Lacheman, E.R., 1950. <i>Excavations at Nuzi V. Miscellaneous Texts from Nuzi, Part 2, The Palace and Temple Archives.</i> (Harvard Semitic Studies 14.) Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard Univ. Press.
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.</i> Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–2010.	HW <sup>2</sup>	Friedrich, J. & A. Kammerhuber (eds.), 1975–. <i>Hethitisches Wörterbuch. Zweite, völlig neubearbeitete Auflage auf der Grundlage der edierten hethitischen Texte.</i> Heidelberg: Winter.
CBS	Siglum for objects in the University Museum in Philadelphia (Catalogue of the Babylonian Section).	IB	Siglum for finds from Isin (Isan Bahriyat).
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, <a href="https://cdli.ucla.edu">https://cdli.ucla.edu</a>	IM	Siglum for objects in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad.
CHD	Goedegebuure, P.M., H.G. Güterbock, H.A. Hoffner & T.P.J. van den Hout (eds.), 1980–. <i>The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.</i> Chicago: The Oriental Institute.	ITT 5	de Genouillac, H., 1921. <i>Inventaire des Tablettes de Tello conservées au Musée Imperial Ottoman. Tome V. Époque présargonique, Époque d'Agadé, Époque d'Ur III.</i> Paris: Édition Ernest Leroux.
CM 26	Sharlach, T.M., 2004. <i>Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State.</i> (Cuneiform Monographs 26.) Leiden: Brill.	KAH 2	Schroeder, O. 1922. <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts, Heft II.</i> (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 37.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
CT 22	Campbell Thompson, R., 1906. <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in British Museum</i> , vol. 22. London: British Museum.	KBo	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi</i> (Bd. 1-22 in Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft) Leipzig/Berlin, 1916 ff.
CT 32	King, L.W., 1912. <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in British Museum</i> , vol. 32. London: British Museum.	KRI	Kitchen, K.A., 1969–1990. <i>Ramesseide Inscriptions. Historical and Biographical</i> , 8 vols. Oxford: Blackwell.
CT 55	Pinches, T.G. 1982. <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum Part 55. Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Economic Texts.</i> London: British Museum Publications.	KUB	<i>Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi</i> , Berlin 1921 ff.
CTH	Laroche, E. 1971. <i>Catalogue des Textes Hittites.</i> Paris: Klincksieck.	LAPO 16	Durand, J.-M., 1997. <i>Les Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari, tome I.</i> (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 16.) Paris: Éditions du cerf.
DAS	Lafont, B., 1985. <i>Documents Administratifs Sumériens, provenant du site de Tello et conservés au Musée du Louvre.</i> Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.	LAPO 18	Durand, J.-M., 2000. <i>Les Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari, tome III.</i> (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 18.) Paris: Éditions du cerf.
DMMA	Siglum for objects in the Département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France.	LD	Lepsius, C.R., 1849–59. <i>Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen</i> (plates), 6 vols. Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung.
DUL	Del Olmo Lete, G. & J. Sanmartín, 2015. <i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition.</i> Translated and edited by W.G.E. Watson. Third revised edition. 2 vols. (Handbuch der Orientalistik 112.) Leiden: Brill.	LKU	Falkenstein, A., 1931. <i>Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk.</i> Berlin: Berlin Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Vorderasiatische Abteilung.
EA	Siglum for the Tell El-Amarna Letters, following the edition of Knudtzon, J. A., 1915. <i>Die El-Amarna-Tafeln.</i> Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.	M	Siglum for texts from Mari.
ePSD	Electronic version of <i>The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary</i> , <a href="http://psd.museum.upenn.edu">http://psd.museum.upenn.edu</a>	Moore, Mich. Coll.	Moore, E., 1939. <i>Neo-Babylonian Documents in the University of Michigan Collection.</i> Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
ETCSL	Black, J.A., G. Cunningham, J. Ebeling, E. Flückiger-Hawker, E. Robson, J. Taylor & G. Zólyomi (eds.), 1998–2006. <i>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature.</i> Oxford, <a href="http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/">http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/</a>	MSL VIII/I	Landsberger, B., 1960. <i>The Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia. First Part: Tablet XIII.</i> (Materialien zum Sumerischen Lexikon VIII/1.) Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum. [with the assistance of A. Draffkorn Kilmer & E.I. Gordon].
FM 2	Charpin, D. & J.-M. Durand (ed.), 1994. <i>Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Maurice Birot.</i> (Florilegium Marianum II.) Paris: Société pour l'étude du Proche-Orient ancien.	MVN 8	Calvot, D., G. Pettinato, S.A. Picchioni & F. Reschid, 1979. <i>Textes économiques du Selluš-Dagan du Musée du Louvre et du Collège de France (D. Calvot). Testi economici dell'Iraq Museum Baghdad.</i> (Materiali per il Vocabolario Neosumerico 8.) Rome: Multigrafica Editrice.
Hh	<i>The Series HAR-ra='hubullu'</i> , Materials for the Sumerian lexicon (MSL), 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 11. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1957–.	MVN 11	Owen, D.I., 1982. <i>Selected Ur III Texts from the Harvard Semitic Museum.</i> (Materiali per il Vocabolario Neosumerico 11.) Rome: Multigrafica Editrice.
		MZ	Siglum for finds from Tell Mozan.
		NBC	Siglum for tablets in the Nies Babylonian Collection of the Yale Babylonian Collection.

Abbreviations and sigla

NCBT	Siglum for tablets in the Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets, now Yale University, New Haven.	SAA 11	Fales, F.M. & J.N. Postgate, 1995. <i>Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 11.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
OIP 99	Biggs, R.D., 1974. <i>Inscriptions from Tell Abu Salabikh</i> . (Oriental Institute Publications 99.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.	SAA 12	Kataja, K. & R. Whiting, 1995. <i>Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 12.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
OIP 115	Hilgert, M., 1998. <i>Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, Vol. 1: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Šulgi</i> . (Oriental Institute Publications 115.) Chicago: The Oriental Institute.	SAA 13	Cole, S.W. & P. Machinist, 1998. <i>Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Priests to Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 13.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
OIP 121	Hilgert, M., 1998. <i>Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, Volume 2: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Amar-Suena</i> . (Oriental Institute Publications 121.) Chicago: The Oriental Institute.	SAA 17	Dietrich, M., 2003. <i>The Neo-Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 17.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
P	CDLI (Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative) number.	SAA 19	Luukko, M. 2012. <i>The Correspondence of Tiglathpileser III and Sargon II</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 19.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
PDT 1	Çiğ, M., H. Kizilyay & A. Salonen, 1956. <i>Die Puzris-Dagan-Texte der Istanbul Archäologischen Museen Teil 1: Texte Nrr. 1-725</i> . (Academia Scientiarum Fennica Annales, série B, tome 92.) Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.	SAA 20	Parpola, S. 2017. <i>Assyrian Royal Rituals and Cultic Texts</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 20.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
PKG 18	Orthmann, W., 1985. <i>Der alte Orient</i> . (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 18.) Berlin: Propyläen Verlag.	SAT 2	Sigrist, M., 2000. <i>Sumerian Archival Texts. Texts from the Yale Babylonian Collection 2</i> . Bethesda: CDL Press.
PTS	Siglum for unpublished texts in the Princeton Theological Seminary.	SF	Deimel, A., 1923. <i>Schultexte aus Fara</i> . (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft 43.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
RGTC	<i>Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes</i> . (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B.) Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1974–.	SP	Alster, B., 1997. <i>Proverbs of Ancient Sumer</i> . Bethesda: CDL Press.
RIMA 2	Grayson, A.K., 1991. <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114–859 BC)</i> . (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods Vol. 2.) Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press.	TCL 12	Conteneau, G., 1927. <i>Contrats Néo-Babyloniens I, de Téglaḫ-Phalasar III à Nabonide</i> . (Textes cunéiformes, Musées du Louvre 12.) Paris: P. Geuthner.
RIME 1	Frayne, D., 2008. <i>Presargonic Period (2700–2350 BC)</i> . (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods Vol. 1.) Toronto: University of Toronto Press.	TCL 13	Contenau, G., 1929. <i>Contrats néo-babyloniens II. Achéménides et Séleucides</i> . (Textes cunéiformes, Musées du Louvre 13.) Paris: P. Geuthner.
RIME 4	Frayne, D., 1990. <i>Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)</i> . (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods Vol. 4.) Toronto: University of Toronto Press.	TRU	Legrain, L., 1912. <i>Le temps des rois d'Ur: recherches sur la société antique d'après des textes nouveaux</i> . (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 199.) Paris: H. Champion.
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period; Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus, available at <a href="http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/index.html">http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/index.html</a>	TU	Thureau-Dangin, F., 1922. <i>Tablettes d'Uruk à l'usage des prêtres du Temple d'Anu au temps des Séleucides</i> . (Musée du Louvre. Département des antiquités orientales. Textes cunéiformes.) Paris: P. Geuthner.
RLA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> .	U.	Siglum for finds from Ur.
RS	Siglum for documents from Ras Shamra (Ugarit).	UCP 9/1,I	Lutz, H.F., 1927. <i>Neo-Babylonian Administrative Documents from Erech: Part I</i> . (University of California Publications in Semitic Philology Vol. 9 no. 1/I.) Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
SAA 2	Parpola, S. & K. Watanabe, 1988. <i>Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 2.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.	UCP 9/1,II	Lutz, H.F., 1927. <i>Neo-Babylonian Administrative Documents from Erech: Part II</i> . (University of California Publications in Semitic Philology Vol. 9 no. 1/II.) Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
SAA 7	Fales, F.M. & J.N. Postgate, 1992. <i>Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 7.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.	UDT	Nies, J.B., 1920. <i>Ur Dynasty Tablets: Texts Chiefly from Tello and Drehem Written during the Reigns of Dungi, Bur-Sin, Gimil-Sin and Ibi-Sin</i> . Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
SAA 10	Parpola, S. 1993. <i>Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 10.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.		

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Abbreviations and sigla

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VA	Siglum for objects in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung).		<i>et d'Histoire in Genf</i> . Naples: Istituto orientale di Napoli.
VAT	Siglum for objects/tablets in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung. Tontafeln).	YBC	Siglum for tablets in the Yale Babylonian Collection.
VS 1	Ungnad, A. & L. Messerschmidt, 1907. <i>Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin</i> . Vol. 1, Texts 1–115, Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Sammlung der Vorderasiatischen Altertümer. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.	YOS 7	Tremayne, A., 1925. <i>Records from Erech, Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538-521 B.C.)</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 7.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
VS 16	Schröder, O., 1917. <i>Altbabylonische Briefe</i> . (Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der königlichen Museen zu Berlin 16.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.	YOS 8	Faust, D.E., 1941. <i>Contracts from Larsa, dated in the Reign of Rim-Sin</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 8.) New Haven: Yale University Press & London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press.
VS 17	van Dijk, J. 1971. <i>Nicht-kanonische Beschwörungen und sonstige literarische Texte</i> . (Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin 17.) Berlin: Akademie Verlag.	YOS 11	van Dijk, J., A. Goetze & M.I. Hussey, 1985. <i>Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 11.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
WB	Erman, A. & H. Grapow (eds.), 1971. <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> , 5 vols. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.	YOS 17	Weisberg, D.B., 1980. <i>Texts from the Time of Nebuchadnezzar</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 17.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
WMAH	Sauren, H., 1969. <i>Wirtschaftsurkunden aus der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur im Besitz des Musée d'Art</i>	YOS 19	Beaulieu, P.-A., 2000. <i>Legal and Administrative Texts from the Reign of Nabonidus</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 19.) New Haven: Yale University Press.

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# Preface

Augusta McMahon

The chapters in this volume invert traditional approaches to past human-animal relationships, placing animals at the forefront of these interactions and celebrating the many ways in which animals enriched or complicated the lives of the inhabitants of the ancient Near East. The authors embrace insights from text, archaeology, art and landscape studies. The volume offers rich evidence for the concept that ‘animals are good to think’ (Levi-Strauss 1963), enabling humans in categorizing the world around us, evaluating our own behaviours, and providing analogies for supernatural powers that are beyond humans’ control. However, totemism has never fit the ancient Near East well, because most animals had varied and endlessly complicated relationships with their human associates, as these chapters vividly describe. Taboos on eating or handling animals ebbed and flowed, and the same animal could have both positive and negative associations in omen texts. Animals were good (or bad) to eat, good (or bad) to think, good (or bad) to live with (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010) and good (or bad) to be. Through detailed, theoretically informed and well-supported case studies, this volume moves the study of human-animal-environment interactions forward, presenting animals as embedded actors in culture rather than simply objectified as human resources or symbols.

The chapters in the first section emphasize the agency of animals via their abilities to resolve crises for humans and deities and to shift between animal and human worlds. Animals have paradoxical affects: as metaphors for wilderness and chaos, or as valued companions, helpers, or votive sacrifices. The variety of interactions and assumptions cautions us to treat animals, as we do humans, as individuals. Reconstruction of animals in past rituals has a long history, usually focused on animals associated with the gods and/or animals used in formal religious sacrifice. But the chapters in the second section also examine

the impact of lesser-known animals and less formal encounters, e.g., in the landscape or in funeral contexts within the home. The value and meanings of animals could vary with context.

The fascination engendered by hybrid or composite figures is also well represented. The persistence of composite figures in the Near East, from fourth millennium BC human-ibex ‘shamans’ on northern Mesopotamian Late Chalcolithic seals to *lamassu* and *mušhuššu* of the first millennium BC, suggests that the division and recombination of animal body elements fulfilled a human need to categorize powerful forces and create a cosmological structure. The anthropomorphizing of animals is another facet of the flexibility of animal identifications in the past. The authors here also grapple with the question of whether composite images represent ideas or costumed ritual participants.

The chapters also cover the most basic of animal-human relations, that of herd management, use in labour, and consumption, digging deeply into details of mobility, breeding and emic classifications. Economic aspects of the human-animal relationship are currently being rejuvenated through archaeological science techniques (e.g., isotopes, ZooMS), which give us unparalleled levels of detail on diet, mobility, herd management, and species. Matching these insights from science, the issues raised here include the value of individual animals versus that assigned to species, the challenges of pests, the status ascribed to and reflected by different meat cuts, animals as status and religious symbols, and animals’ tertiary products or uses (e.g., transport versus traction, bile). These studies allow a more detailed reconstruction of Near Eastern economy and society, as well as emphasizing the flexibility of the relationships between animals, as well as between human and animal.

The authors implicitly advocate for a posthumanist multispecies ethnography, which incorporates

nonhumans and argues for equal care to be given to nonhumans in the realms of shared landscapes, violence, labour and especially ecology (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010; Kopnina 2017; Parathian *et al.* 2018). This approach advocates for nonhumans' agency in creating shared worlds, in contrast to the traditional approach to animals as symbols or resources in the service of humans. Going forward, the challenge will be to convert the acknowledgement of equal cultural contribution into support for nonhuman species to speak for themselves; this shift from passive subject of research inquiry to genuine active agency in academic writing does not have an easy or obvious path, and many nonhuman animals may be overlooked. Indeed, multispecies ethnography ideally seeks to incorporate plants, microbes, stones and more (Ogden *et al.* 2013; Smart 2014), many of which are ephemeral in the archaeological record and all but omitted in ancient texts. However, ancient texts do support a new approach which questions our modern boundaries between species. Our perpetual struggle to translate terms for different species of equids, to distinguish whether a word refers to rats or mice, or to link zooarchaeological remains to lexical lists, reinforces the complexity and flexibility of these concepts, and the futility of attempts at absolute categorization.

The chapters in this volume should inspire colleagues to grapple with animals, nonhumans and contexts that could not be included here. For instance, the snake has as lengthy a history of human engagement in the Near East as does the lion and had similarly unusual powers. While the lion was an icon of strength, the perfect symbol for the proximity of the emotions of awe and fear, the snake has the sneaky ability to slither

between worlds, to avoid capture, and to deliver an almost imperceptible lethal injury. Fear of the snake conquers awe. Like the fox, the presence or actions of the snake, as listed in *Šumma ālu*, may be positive or negative omens. The snake was present at key moments in both Mesopotamian and Biblical literature; its actions (stealing the plant of immortality, offering the fruit of the tree of knowledge) changed the fate of humans forever. Whether represented coiled and copulating on Late Chalcolithic seals, grasped by Late Uruk 'Masters of Animals' or first millennium BC *lamaštu*, snakes and their paradoxical nature deserve deep scrutiny. There are many other nonhuman animals deserving of similar problematization and integration, and the eclectic and exciting research stream represented by this volume shows us the way.

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## Chapter 10

# Animal names in Semitic toponyms

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In terms of semantic features, toponyms, like anthroponyms, tend to cluster into specific categories. Although toponymic research has increased considerably in recent years and various typological models have been introduced (Tent 2015), no typology has been suggested for Semitic toponyms so far, apparently due to a lack of comparative research on the topic and poor dialogue with other disciplines. Nevertheless, the typology proposed for biblical toponyms by Gray (1902) and Rainey (1978, 6) might serve as a good starting point, as it seems to be applicable to the other Semitic languages in view of the common aspects of naming practices among the speakers of these languages (Dirbas 2019a, 19–65). According to this typology, toponyms fall into six categories: (1) divine names; (2) patronymics or ethnicons; (3) topographic descriptions; (4) works of man (agricultural installation, types of settlements, fortifications, etc.); (5) animal names; and (6) plant names.

The objective of this chapter is to present a survey of Semitic toponyms derived from animal names, a topic that intersects with my previous work on the use of animal names in Semitic name-giving (Dirbas 2019a,b). It is important to document and classify toponyms, but what is more important is to try to reconstruct the stories behind them, for such stories can reveal information about memories of certain societies and their experiences. The significance of this chapter stems from the fact that it seeks to decode one aspect of these stories. It offers material that can enhance our understanding of the emergence of toponyms in relation to animals and their symbolism in certain traditions, the Semitic ones. It also motivates future interdisciplinary approaches to toponymy in general. Four samples are dealt with here: (1) Cuneiform sources, that is, Akkadian and West Semitic names from the second and first millennia BC; (2) Ugaritic; (3) biblical Hebrew; and (4) Arabic (classical sources).

In addition to this repertoire of toponyms, I discuss possible reasons for giving them animal names from the perspective of semantics and word formation.

This chapter consists of four main sections that correspond to the languages in question. These sections are arranged chronologically beginning with the oldest attestations in cuneiform sources and ending with the newest ones in Arabic. A variety of sources is called upon here. For cuneiform sources, I use the geographic series known as RGTC (*Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes*) in addition to material from the Mari Archives and other texts. For Ugaritic, I use *The Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language* (DUL) and two secondary studies on proper names (van Soldt 2005; Watson 2007). Canaanite-Hebrew toponyms are confined to the Bible, thus epigraphic material is not included. In relation to Arabic, two well-known comprehensive geographical works are investigated: *Ṣifat Ǧazīrat al-ʿArab* 'Description of the Arabian Peninsula' by al-Hamdānī (d. 945) and *Muǧam al-Buldān* 'Dictionary of Countries' by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1299). Whereas the former mainly focuses on Arabia, the latter nearly covers the entire medieval Muslim world.

### Cuneiform sources

This section deals with Semitic toponyms in cuneiform sources, that is, names of Akkadian and West Semitic origin. While West Semitic toponyms from the second millennium BC are mostly Amorite, the majority of the ones from the first millennium seem to reflect an Aramaic background. Based on their semantics and formation, the toponyms discussed in this section can be classified into three categories: (1) associative toponyms (see below); (2) occupation-related toponyms; and (3) patronymic toponyms. It is important to mention that the studies regarding these

toponyms do not always provide a comprehensive linguistic analysis of them, and thus most of the linguistic remarks given below are mine.

#### *Associative toponyms*

Sources rarely mention the reasons for naming places, except for a few cases, that is, when the name is based on a personal name (like a city, settlement, wall, or canal established by a ruler, ancestor, etc.; see *Patronymic toponyms* sub-section below). What is meant with ‘associative’ here is that the place in this category probably took its name from a special association with animals. For example, the place might have been known for having a certain animal species.

- *Agammu ša Imērē* (Akk., NB): ‘Marsh of Donkeys’ (CAD I/J, 112b, sub 12’).
- *Arnabānu* (NB): this toponym, which could be both Akkadian and West Semitic, consists of the element *aranab-* ‘hare’ and the suffix *-ān*. The place can be identified with Tell Hasaka, west of the confluence of the Khabur and Jaghjagh rivers (Zadok 1983, 58).
- *Arrabi* (Akk., OB): ‘Dormouse’, a semi-nomadic place (ARM 15, 15).
- *Ašar-Labā* (Akk., OB): this compound toponym (Groneberg 1980, 23) contains the West Semitic form *la(b)bā*, from Proto-Semitic *\*labV-* ‘lion’ (Militarev & Kogan 2005, No. 144), and it can be explained as either ‘Place of the Lioness’, meaning ‘Den’, or, more likely ‘Place/Temple of Lab(b)a’, after the Amorite deity Labba (Golinets 2016, 70; Streck 2000, §3.43, n. 1).
- *Baḡqa* (WS., NB): based on *baqq-* ‘gnat’. Given the suffix *-a*, which is frequently used in Aramaic names, this toponym likely reflects an Aramaic form. It was located in the region of Ur (Zadok 1983, 65).
- *Būrānu* (Akk., MB): consists of *būru* ‘calf’ and the suffix *-ān(u)*. It was located in the region of Nippur (Nashef 1983, 51). This toponym could be based on a personal name (see *Patronymic toponyms* sub-section below), for the mentioned diminutive suffix is quite common in male names (Dirbas 2019a, 75).
- *Ḥanzat* (WS, OB): reflects ‘Anzat’ ‘She-goat’ (from the element ‘anz-), a place in Upper Mesopotamia (ARM 15, 14).
- *Ḥazīlu/Ḥazīlu* (WS, MB): denotes ‘Gazelle’ (the Akk. form is *ḥuzālu*), in the area of Mukiš/Alalāḥ (Belmonte Marin 2001, 126).
- *Ḥimārā* (WS, OB): reflects *Ḥimārā* ‘(Country of) Donkeys’, plural of *ḥimār-*, the West Semitic counterpart of Akkadian *imēru*. It was located in Upper Mesopotamia (Durand 1998, 125).

- *Ḥimmarān* (OB): reflects either ‘*immar-* ‘lamb’, i.e., the Amorite parallel of Akkadian *immeru*, or, less likely, *ḥimār-* ‘ass’ (Kogan 2003, 253; Golinets 2016, 65) plus the suffix *-ān*. Given that this suffix is common in personal names, it is possible that this toponym is used as a patronymic (see *Patronymic toponyms* sub-section below). It was located in the District of Terqa (Durand 1997, 634; Durand 2000, 255).
- *Ḥuzālu* (Akk., MB): ‘Gazelle’, in the region of Nippur (Nashef 1983, 134).
- *Imār* (Akk., OB): ‘(The Town of the) Donkey’, modern Tell Meskene, Syria (Durand 1998, 125).
- *Imērē* (Akk., NB): ‘Donkeys’, plural of *imēru*, was not far from Uruk (Zadok 1983, 180).
- *Immertu* (Akk., NB): ‘Ewe’, in the region of Nippur (Zadok 1983, 180).
- *Kalbu* (NB): denotes ‘Dog’, and it could be both Akkadian and West Semitic. The specific location is unidentified (Zadok 1983, 191).
- *Našer* (WS, OB): probably reflects *qatil* form of Proto-Semitic *\*nVšr-/nVsr-* ‘vulture, eagle’ (Militarev & Kogan 2005, No. 166). It was located in Upper Mesopotamia (ARM 15, p. 24).
- *Nūnu* (Akk., NB): ‘Fish’, near Uruk (Zadok 1983, 244).
- *Ša Imērē* (Akk.): ‘(Land) of Donkeys’ (CAD I/J, 115a, sub b).
- *Šaḥū* (Akk., MB) ‘Pig’, in the area of Ekalte, northern Syria (Belmonte Marin 2001, 259).

#### *Occupation-related toponyms*

The only available example of this type is:

- *Māt ša Imērišu* ‘Land of the Donkey Driver’, meaning Damascus (CAD I/J, 115, sub B).

#### *Patronymic toponyms*

Naming cities, settlements, or the like after the founder (being a ruler, an official, or an eponym) was a well-known custom in the ancient Near East from the third millennium BC onward. In case of cities named after rulers, the name, however, could be changed if another ruler took over. A good example is Dūr-Yaḥdun-Lîm, which was named after the king who built it, Yaḥdun-Lîm of Mari (1810–1794 BC). When Mari fell in the hands of Šamšī-Adad, the name of the city was changed to Dūr-Yasmaḥ-Adad, after the son of Šamšī-Adad who was appointed as governor of Mari and the district of the Middle Euphrates. But its original name was given back to it when Zimrī-Lîm, the descendant of Yaḥdun-Lîm took over (Safren 1989). Toponyms containing patronymic/eponymous names derived from animal names are mostly of the nominal compound formation, and they can be distinguished through the

terms they are formed with, like *mātum* ‘land, country’, *bītum* ‘house, settlement’, *ālum* ‘city, town’, *ša* ‘(the place) of so-and-so’, and *dintum* ‘tower’, terms which frequently occur in all types of toponyms. It is also possible, especially in West Semitic traditions, that the place was named after the tribe which inhabited it.

The list below provides some instances of patronymic names derived from animal terms.

- *Āl Šēlibi* (Akk., MB): ‘Town of Šēlibi (Fox)’, in the region of Nippur (Nashef 1983, 18). Interestingly, there is also *Ālu Ša Mār Šlēbi* ‘Town of Šlēbi’s son’ in the same area (Nashef 1983, 24), which obviously was founded by the son of the previously mentioned person.
- *Bīt Ḥaḥḥūru* (Akk., NB): ‘House of Ḥaḥḥūru (Raven)’, near Babylon (Zadok 1983, 89).
- *Bīt Ḥigla* (WS, NB): ‘House of Ḥigla’ (Calf), seems to reflect the Aramaic form of Proto-Semitic \*‘*igl-*’ ‘calf’. It was located in the region of Nippur (Zadok 1983, 91).
- *Bīt Mūrānu* (Akk., NB): ‘House of Mūrānu (Puppy)’, in the region of Nippur (Zadok 1983, 96).
- *Bīt Šēlibu* (Akk., OB): ‘House of Šēlibu (Fox)’, around Ishkhali (Groneberg 1980, 44).
- *Bīt Murašû* (Akk., NB): ‘House of Murašû (Wildcat)’, in the region of Nippur (Zadok 1983, 96).
- *Bīt Uqūpi* (Akk., NB): ‘House of Uqūpi (Ape)’, in the region of Babylon (Zadok 1983, 109).
- *Nippur-Kalbiya* (Akk., MB): ‘Nippur of Kalbiya (Dog)’, based on *kalbu* and the suffix *-iya* (Nashef 1983, 210).
- *Ya’il* (NWS, OB): meaning ‘Ibex’, an Amorite toponym which is also attested in the form *Ya’ilāyī*, in the area of the Sinjar Mountains (Gelb 1980, No. 3858). Mari texts mention a tribe known as *Ya’ilānu* (Gelb 1980, No. 3861, 3863). It seems likely the place was named after the tribe which inhabited it, and that the latter took its name from an eponym.

### Ugaritic

Compared to the other Semitic languages discussed in this chapter, Ugaritic exhibits a few number of toponyms formed with animal names, namely five in particular, four of which are also found in personal names (except for *šb’*; Dirbas 2019a, 120–30). The reasons for using these terms are difficult to determine; their word formation suggests they are either associative or patronymic. The fact that the five names below denote wild animals can be explained through the impact of the natural environment, meaning the mountainous vicinity of the city of Ugarit.

- *Ayl*: based on the element *ayl-* ‘deer, hind’ (van Soldt 2005, 170).
- *Ayly*: based on the same element above plus the suffix *-ā(yu)/-yu* (Del Olmo Lete & Sanmartin 2003, 134; Watson 2007, 108).
- *Ḥldy*: reflects *Ḥuldā* and consists of *ḥuld-* ‘mole; rate’ and the suffix *-ā(yu)* (van Soldt 2005, 174).
- *Irbn*: could consist of the element *irby-* ‘locust’ and the suffix *-ān* (Watson 2007, 108); the etymology is unexplained in the Ugaritic dictionary (Del Olmo Lete & Sanmartin 2003, 99).
- *Ḥršb’*: might consist of *ḥr* ‘cave, lair’ and *šb’* ‘hyena’ (Watson 2007, 96). If this explanation is correct, the name must be associative, in that the place was known for hyenas, which seems reasonable in view of the mountainous surrounding of the city of Ugarit and the fact that hyenas existed there until recently (Masetti 2009, 241).
- *Ṭpn*: vocalized as *Ṭapunu* and written syllabically as *Ša-pu-nu* (Del Olmo Lete & Sanmartin 2003, 925). It probably reflects *ṭapan-* ‘hyrax, rock badger’ (Watson 2007, 105).

### Biblical Hebrew

Toponyms in the Hebrew Bible have received quite a lot of attention in modern scholarship (e.g., Gray 1902; Borée 1930; Aharoni 1979; Rainey 1978; Gass 2005). The ones derived from animal names were explained through the theory of totemism by Gray (1902, 3316); as I have argued elsewhere (Dirbas 2019b), there is no strong evidence for a totemistic origin of personal names, and this appears to hold true for toponyms as well. Given the semantics and word formation of these toponyms, I propose classifying them into the same categorization suggested for their counterparts in cuneiform sources and Arabic: associative, religious, and occupation-related. Some could be used as a patronymic, but it is quite difficult to establish a criterion for distinguishing them. Most of the toponyms listed in the following sub-sections are mainly extracted from Gray (1902) and Rainey (1978, 6). Both works, however, discuss them only briefly without providing a sufficient linguistic analysis.

According to the list below, names of wild animals (deer, wild ass, lizard, leopard, lion, fox, etc.) are more attested in toponyms than names of domestic animals (calf, lamb, horse), probably due to the impact of the natural environment of Palestine (mountains, hills, and desert) and lifestyle (rural population in general).

#### *Associative toponyms*

The places in this category possibly received their names due to a special association with animals. For

example, a certain species of animals might have existed in the place.

- ‘*Ayyālōn*: ‘Little Deer’, with the diminutive suffix *-ōn*, a name of two towns (Josh 10:12; Judges 12:2). It is also attested as *Ayyaluna* in the Amarna letters (EA 273; Na’man 2011, 291).
- ‘*Eben-hazzōhelet*: could mean ‘The Serpent’s Stone’ (1 Kgs 1:9), possibly related to the ‘Dragon’s Well’ (‘*En-hattannin*) in Neh 2: 13 (van der Toorn *et al.* 1999, 805).
- ‘*Ārād*: ‘Wild ass’, a town in the Negev (Num 21:1; Judg 1:16).
- ‘*Eglōn*: ‘Little Calf’, with the diminutive suffix *-ōn*, described as a Canaanite city (Josh 10:23, 34).
- ‘*Ēn-eglayim*: ‘Spring of Calves’, a place mentioned only in Ezek (47:10), somewhere near the Dead Sea.
- ‘*Ēn-haqqōrē*: could be explained as ‘Spring of the Partridge’; it was located in Lehi but the site is unknown (Judg 15:19). Alternatively, it could mean ‘Spring of the one who calls’ (Botterweck *et al.* 2001, 46).
- ‘*Eprōn*: ‘Young Deer; Fawn’, a name of two places, a town east of the Jordan (1 Macc 5:45) and a mount (Josh 15:9).
- ‘*Īr-nāhāš*: ‘City of the Serpent’ or ‘City of Bronze’ (both are synonyms), a minor town in Judah (1 Chr 4:12).
- ‘*Ēn-gedī*: ‘Spring of the Kid’, on west shore of the Dead Sea (e.g., Josh 15:62; 2 Chr 20:2). It might be so named because its water ‘leaps’ like a kid (Botterweck *et al.* 2001, 46).
- ‘*Ētām*: possibly indicating ‘Bird of Prey’, a town between Bethlehem and Tekoa (2 Chr 11:6; Josh 15:59).
- ‘*Oprāh*: ‘Young Deer; Fawn’ (compare ‘*Eprōn*’ above), a name of two towns, one in the territory allotted to Benjamin (Josh 18:23) and one in the tribal lot of Manasseh (Judg 6:11).
- ‘*Bēt-ḥoglāh*: ‘House/Place of the Partridge’, a town of Benjamin, lying between Jericho and the Jordan (Josh 15:6; 18:21).
- ‘*Bēt-nimrāh*: ‘House of the Leopardess’ (Num 32:36; Josh 13:27), which also appears in the plural form *Nimrīm* ‘Leopards’ (Isa 15:6). It can be identified with modern Nimrin, north of the Dead Sea.
- ‘*Gē-haššābo’im*: ‘Valley of Hyenas’, near Gibeah in Benjamin (1 Sam 13:18).
- ‘*Ḥāšar-šū’āl*: ‘Village of the Fox’, in southern Judah (Josh 15:28; 1 Chr 4:28; Neh 11:27).
- ‘*Ereš-šū’āl*: ‘Land of the Fox’, a place closed to Ophra (1 Sam 13:17).
- ‘*Ḥumtāh*: ‘Lizard’, a town close to Hebron (Josh 15:54).

- ‘*Kapirāh*: ‘Lioness’, one of the four cities of the Gibeonites, (Josh 9:17), and it could be identified with modern Kufeirit, near the city of Jenin.
- ‘*Layiš*: ‘Lion’, a place named in Isa (10:30), apparently located north of Jerusalem.
- ‘*Ma’ālē-aqrabbīm*: ‘Ascent of Scorpions’, a narrow grade in the Negev (Num 34:4; Josh 15:3).
- ‘*Migdal-ēder*: ‘Flock Tower’, a place close to Bethlehem (Gen 35:21).
- ‘*Pārāh*: ‘Heifer’, a town in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin (Josh 18:23).
- ‘*Ša’albīm*: ‘Foxes’, a town in Dan (Judg 1:35). Whereas the common term for ‘fox’ in Hebrew is *šū’āl*, this toponym is the only example in the Bible which reflects the proto-form \**ta’lab-* (Militarev & Kogan 2005, 303).
- ‘*Ša’alīm*: ‘Foxes’ (1 Sam 9:4). If explained correctly, this toponym reflects a unique *qatalāl* form (*ša’alāl*) versus the common *qūtāl* form (*šū’āl*) mentioned above.
- ‘*Šābo’im*: ‘Hyenas’, a place which was inhabited by the Benjamites (Neh 11:34).
- ‘*Šabō’im*: ‘Stages, Deer’, near Sodom (Gen 14:2).
- ‘*Šūr-ōrēb*: ‘Rock of the Raven’, a place at which Ōrēb, the Midianite captain who was captured by Gedon’s band, was killed (Judg 7:25). It is possible that the personal name is a derivation of the toponym (Botterweck *et al.* 2001, 342).
- ‘*Ṭalā’im*: ‘Lambs’, a place where Saul mustered his forces (1 Sam 15:4).

#### Occupation-related toponyms

- ‘*Ḥāšar-sūsīm*: ‘Village of Horses’, in Simeon (Chr 4:31). The name reveals that the place was used for horse breeding.
- ‘*Bēt-kar*: ‘House of the Ram’, a place west of Mizpah (1 Sam 7:11).

#### Divine?

- ‘*Bēt-labā’ōt*: understood as ‘House of the Lionesses’ (Josh 19:6); this could be a secondary late Hebrew pluralization in the Bible against the accurate and original Canaanite orthography and spelling *byt lb’wt*, a name which reflects the cult of the Canaanite lioness goddess (van der Toorn *et al.* 1999, 523).

#### Arabic<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the works of classical Muslim geographers and travelers, information is richly available on geographic places, not only in Arabia, but also in the

territories that were conquered by Muslims in the advent of Islam. In addition to these works, one also finds valuable toponymic data in Old Arabian inscriptions as well as Greco-Arabic documents, such as the Petra papyri from the sixth century AD (Al-Jallad *et al.* 2013). Linguistically, Arabian toponyms fall into three main classes: (1) pseudo-verbal name forms (e.g., *Yatrib*, *Yanbu'*, *Tamna'*), which are ones of the oldest; (2) nominal form types, masculine (some ending with *-ān*) and feminine (ending with *-at* and *-ā'*); and (3) nominal compound formation containing elements like *dū-X/dāt-X* '(place) of so-and-so', *ayn-X* 'spring', and *bi'r-X* 'well' (Isserlin 1986).

In relation to animal names, they are widely used in Arabic naming tradition. In personal names, for example, around 257 elements are found (Dirbas 2019a, 144ff). A smaller number (c. 43 elements) occurs in toponyms as we will see below. In terms of reasons for using these names, Arabic toponyms yield more categories than the ones attested in the above-discussed languages. In addition to associative, religious, and patronymic toponyms, there are examples that appear to indicate a pejorative sense or point to a topographical resemblance with the place in question.

Like the case in Hebrew and Ugaritic, the majority of Arabic toponyms below signifies wild animals (hyena, wolf, lion, gazelle, etc.), a phenomenon that can be attributed to lifestyle and the influence of the natural environment of Arabia. Due to their nomadic-pastoralist lifestyle, Arabs in the pre- and early Islamic times encountered all types of wild animals in their daily life and thus gave their names to places.

#### *Associative toponyms*

The meaning and etymology of the following toponyms, most of which are compound or in the plural form, suggest that they were called so due to a specific association with animals. For example, a certain type of animal lived in the place.

- *Arānīb*: 'Hares' (plural of *arnab-*), an unspecified place (Yāqūt 1995 1, 60).
- *al-Ansur*: 'Vultures' (plural of *nasr-*), a spring in the area of the Ṭayyi' tribe (Yāqūt 1995 1, 265).
- *Awrāl*: 'Monitor Lizards' (plural of *waral-*), in Najd (al-Hamdānī 1990, 294).
- *Aqārib*: 'Scorpions' (plural of *aqrab-*), in Yemen (al-Hamdānī 1990, 182).
- *Ayn al-Nāqah*: 'Spring of the She-camel', in the Bahrain region. The place is reported to have been called so because a woman crossed it on her she-camel (al-Hamdānī 1990, 273); this explanation sounds etiological.
- *Ayn Zābī*: 'Spring of the Antelope', a place close to the city of Samawah, Iraq (Yāqūt 1995 4, 179). Alternatively, it could be based on a personal name (see *Toponyms denoting topographical resemblance* sub-section below).
- *Urfat A'yār*: 'Highland of Donkeys' (plural of *ayr-*), in the land of the Asad tribe (Yāqūt 1995 4, 106).
- *Burqat Arwā*: 'Rugged Ground of Female Ibexes'<sup>2</sup> (plural *urwiyya-*), a mount in the land of the Tamīm tribe (Yāqūt 1995 1, 391).
- *Burqat al-Tawr*: 'Rugged Ground of the Bull', in the Bahrain region (Yāqūt 1995 1, 392).
- *Burqat Anqad*: 'Rugged Ground of the Hedgehog', a mount in the Yamama region (Yāqūt 1995 1, 391).
- *Burqat Afā*: 'Rugged Ground of the Snake', an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 1, 391).
- *Dārat al-Arā'im*: 'Round Sandy Tract of White Deer'<sup>3</sup> (plural of *ri'm-*), an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 2, 425).
- *Dārat al-Di'b*: 'Round Sandy Tract of the Wolf', in Najd (Yāqūt 1995 2, 427).
- *Dārat al-Ġa'ab*: 'Round Sandy Tract of the Onager', in the land of the Tamīm tribe (Yāqūt 1995 2, 425).
- *Dārat al-Hinzīr*: 'Round Sandy Tract of the Boar', an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 2, 427).
- *Dāt al-Ri'āl*: 'That of/Area of Young Ostriches' (plural of *ra'l-*), apparently in southwestern Iraq (al-Hamdānī 1990, 236).
- *Dū Ġazāl*: 'Place of the Gazelle', around 80 km northwest of Mecca (al-Hamdānī 1990, 384).
- *Marġ al-Zibā'*: 'Grassland/Meadow of Gazelles' (plural of *zaby-*), an unspecified place (Yāqūt 1995 4, 58).
- *Muṭa'lab*: 'Rich with Foxes', based on *ṭa'lab-* 'fox'. The specific location of this mount is unidentified (Yāqūt 1995 5, 53).
- *Naġd al-Uqāb*: 'Highland of the Eagle' (Yāqūt 1995 4, 133).
- *Qal'at al-Dibāb*: 'Citadel of Monitor Lizards' (plural of *ḍabb-*), in the city of Kufah, Iraq (Yāqūt 1995 3, 451).
- *Rawḍat al-Anz*: 'Meadow of Goats' (plural of *anzah-*), in the Hejaz region (Yāqūt 1995 3, 39).
- *Rawḍat al-Siḥāl*: 'Meadow of Kids/Lambs' (plural of *saḥl-*), in the Yamama region (249; Yāqūt 1995 3, 90).
- *Riyāḍ al-Qaṭā'*: 'Meadows of Sandgrouse' (plural of *qaṭāt-*), in the land of the Rabī'a tribe (Yāqūt 1995 3, 93).
- *al-Ri'āl*: 'Young Ostriches' (plural of *ra'l-*), an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 3, 109).
- *Siḥāl*: 'Kids/Lambs' (plural of *saḥl-*), in the Yamama region (Yāqūt 1995 3, 196).
- *Šaṭṭ al-Ḥaḡal*: 'The Bank of Partridges' (plural of *ḥaḡalah-*), in Yemen (al-Hamdānī 1990, 209).

- *Umm aw‘āl*: ‘Area (literary, Mother) of Ibexes’ (plural of *wa‘l*-), a highland in the Yamama region (Yāqūt 1995 1, 239). The place is also known as *Dāt Aw‘āl* ‘Area of Ibexes’ (al-Hamdānī 1990, 294).
- *Wādī al-Sibā*: ‘Valley of Beasts of Prey/Lions’ (plural *sabu*-), in the area of Kufah, Iraq (al-Hamdānī 1990, 209). According to Yāqūt (1995 5, 343), it was so called by the Arab eponym Wā‘il b. Qāsiṭ, for there he met a women called *Umm al-Asbu*’, and all of her male children had names of beasts of prey. However, one cannot take this report seriously, as it reflects folk etymology. It seems more likely that the valley was known through this name due to a large number of wild beasts which lived in it.
- *al-Zibā*: ‘Antelopes’ (pl. of *zaby*-), an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 4, 58).

#### *Toponyms associated with religious beliefs*

Unlike ancient Semitic languages, namely, Akkadian and Hebrew, Arabic exhibits no toponyms indicating a divine background, that is, referring to a deity with an animal name/epithet; yet there are two examples which are related to traditional religious beliefs.

- *Wādī al-Naml*: ‘Valley of the Ants’, close to ‘Asqalān/Ashkelon. People believed that in this valley the ants spoke to Solomon (Yāqūt 1995 5, 346).
- *‘Ayn al-Baqar*: ‘Spring of Cows’, near Acre, was so called because people believed that the cows which Adam used for cultivation appeared in it (Yāqūt 1995 4, 176).

#### *Pejorative toponyms?*

- *Dayr al-Fa‘r*: ‘Monastery of the Mouse’, in Egypt. The place is reported to have been called so because of the large number of mice which existed in it (Yāqūt 1995 2, 525).
- *Dayr al-Ḥanāfis*: ‘Monastery of Black Beetles’ (pl. of *ḥunfusā*), in the mount of Šāmiḥ/Mattā between the Tigris River and the city of Mousil, Iraq. The reason for giving it this name is that its walls were once covered by a huge number of black beetles (Yāqūt 1995 2, 508).

The fact that these two insect-based names (connoting bad symbolism) are associated with monasteries reveals that they were given by non-Christians or by an opponent Christian sect in an attempt to derogate them.

#### *Toponyms denoting topographical resemblance*

The topography of the place apparently has the shape of an animal or part of it.

- *Dabu*: ‘Hyena’, there are several places with this name, one of which is a mount in the area of the Ġaṭafān tribe. This place is said to have been called so because its rocks are distributed like a hyena’s mane (Yāqūt 1995 3, 451).
- *Ḥaṭm al-Ġurāb*: ‘The Raven’s Beak’ (literally, muzzle), a mountainous village in Yemen, currently known as *Daqm al-Ġurāb*, i.e., the same meaning (al-Hamdānī 1990, 157). Given the available photos of the mountain on which the village is located, the name was perhaps used due to a topographical resemblance with a raven’s beak.

#### *Patronymic toponyms*

Like the examples attested in cuneiform sources (see above), some Arabic toponyms could be based on personal names derived from animal names (not necessarily eponyms). This likely holds true for names in the construct state, where the *nomen rectum* is indefinite (without the article *al-*) because in the standard form of the construct state in Arabic, the *nomen rectum* is usually definite. As is known, the majority of Arabic personal names are indefinite.

- *‘Ayn Ġamal*: there are two reports regarding this place, the first of which mentions that it was so called after a camel which died at it; the second attributes the name to the person who dug the well, Ġamal ‘Camel’ (Yāqūt 1995 4, 177). The latter report sounds more probable in view of the absence of the definite article (see the next example).
- *Bi‘r Ġamal*: ‘Well of Ġamel’, in Medina (Yāqūt 1995 1, 229).
- *Bi‘r Ikrimah*: ‘Well of Ikrima (Dove)’, in Mecca (Yāqūt 1995 1, 300).
- *Ḥazn Kalb*: ‘Rugged Ground of Kalb’ (Dog), an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 2, 254).
- *al-Ta‘labiyyah*: a place close to Kufah (Yāqūt 1995 2, 78), so named after a person called *Ta‘lab* ‘Fox’ (al-Hamdānī 1990). This explanation seems reliable in view of the *nisba* ending.

#### *Unknown reasons*

Given the formation of the toponyms below, it is quite difficult to determine the reasons for naming them so. They might fall under the associative toponyms, toponyms denoting topographical resemblance or patronymic toponyms categories above.

- *Aklub*: ‘Dogs’ (plural of *kalb-*), a mountain in Yemen (Yāqūt 1995 1, 240).
- *Atān*: ‘She-donkey’, a place in Yemen (al-Hamdānī 1990, 281).

- *‘Aqrabā’*: ‘Scorpion’, there are two places with this name, one in the Yamama region and one in southern Syria (Yāqūt 1995 4, 135).
- *‘Iḡlah’*: ‘Heifer’, an unspecified place (Yāqūt 1995 4, 87).
- *al-Ḍubayb’*: ‘Little Monitor Lizard’ (diminutive of *ḍabb-*), a salt marsh in the area of Hail, central Arabia (al-Hamdānī 1990, 260).
- *Ḍabb’*: ‘Monitor Lizard’, a mount in Mecca (Yāqūt 1995 3, 451).
- *Labu’ah’*: ‘Lioness’, a mountain in Yemen (al-Hamdānī 1990, 206).
- *Na’āmah’*: ‘(female) Ostrich’, a place in Najd (Yāqūt 1995 5, 293).
- *al-Nusayr’*: ‘Little Vulture’ (diminutive of *nasr-*), a castle close to the city of Nahavand, Iran (Yāqūt 1995 5, 285).
- *Šiblān’*: based on *šibl-* ‘lion cub’, a river in the city of Basra (Yāqūt 1995 3, 322). This noun could be either the dual form or the singular form with the suffix *-ān*. In case of the latter option, it is probably based on a personal name, for this suffix is commonly attested in classical and modern Arabic names (Dirbas 2019a, 155).
- *Tays’*: ‘Ram’, a place in Yemen (al-Hamdānī 1990, 124).
- *Tu’āl’*: ‘Fox’, a place between Mecca and Medina (Yāqūt 1995 2, 78).
- *Tu’ālah’*: reflects the previous form with the suffix *-ah*, located in the Bahrain region (Yāqūt 1995 2, 78).
- *al-Tu’bān’*: ‘Serpent’, a place in Najran (al-Hamdānī 1990, 370).
- *Wādī al-Subay’*: ‘Valley of the Little Lion’ (diminutive of *sabu’-*), an unidentified place (Yāqūt 1995 5, 344).
- *al-Yamāmah’*: ‘Pigeon’, a historical region in central Arabia lying to the east of Najd (Yāqūt 1995 5, 441).
- *al-Zubayyah’*: ‘Little Hind’ (diminutive of *zabyah-*), a place in Yemen (Yāqūt 1995 4, 58).

### Concluding remarks

This chapter has surveyed Semitic toponyms derived from animal names in a variety of languages, namely cuneiform sources (Akkadian and West Semitic), biblical Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Arabic. The discussed toponyms denote all kinds of animals known to the ancient Near East, like equids, wild animals, birds, rodents, insects, but not aquatic creatures, probably because the majority of the mentioned places is on the land. The number of animal names attested in these toponyms varies from one language to another, depending on documentation and the richness of sources: Arabic (43 elements), Hebrew (28), Akkadian (14), West Semitic in cuneiform tablets (nine), and

Ugaritic (six). These findings agree with the research into Semitic personal names, where Arabic exhibits the highest number of names derived from animal terms compared to the other Semitic languages (Dirbas 2019a). Cultural and social factors seem to have affected naming places strongly, especially lifestyle. For example, the fact that Arabs in the pre- and early Islamic times encountered animals in their daily life, namely the wild ones (gazelle, lion, wolf, etc.), due to their nomadic-pastoralist lifestyle can help us understand why the names of these animals are more attested in toponyms than the names of domestic animals. The same also holds for Hebrew and Ugaritic, where we find more names of wild animals, apparently due to the natural environment and the rural aspect of life in ancient Palestine and the mountainous vicinity of the city of Ugarit.

In terms of word formation, the toponyms in question demonstrate two types: one-word names (singular and plural) and compound names. Most of the toponyms from the latter category are of the two-word type, with the exception of a few three-word instances in Akkadian (the ones with the element *ša* ‘of’). The two-word names are formed with: (1) general terms for places, such as *bayt-* ‘house, place’ or ‘temple’ in the religious context (Akkadian, West Semitic, and Hebrew), *māt* ‘land’ (Akkadian), *‘eres* ‘land’ (Hebrew); (2) terms derived from the built environment, such as *ālum* ‘city’ (Akkadian), *ḥāṣar* ‘village’, *‘ir* ‘city’ (Hebrew), *dayr* ‘monastery’, *qal’ah* ‘citadel’ (Arabic); and, the majority, (3) terms derived from the natural environment/landscape, such as *agammu* ‘marsh’ (Akkadian), *ḥr* ‘lair’ (Ugaritic), *‘eben* ‘stone’, *ma’ālē* ‘ascent’, *šūr* ‘rock’ (Hebrew), *‘ayn* ‘spring’ (Hebrew and Arabic), *‘urfah* ‘highland’, *burqah* ‘a rugged ground with sand, stones, and earth’, *dārah* ‘round sandy tract of land’, *naḡd* ‘highland’, *rawḏah* ‘meadow’, *marḡ* ‘grassland, meadow’, *šatt’* ‘river bank’, and *wādī* ‘valley’ (Arabic). The built and natural environment seem to have played an important role in naming. Arabic, for example, exhibits twenty-two toponyms formed with terms denoting the natural environment and only three denoting the built environment, something which can be explained through lifestyle as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The chapter also reflected on possible reasons for using animal names for Semitic toponyms. Given their semantics and word formation, the discussed examples seem to fall into six categories: (1) associative toponyms, where the place took its name from a special association with animals (e.g., it might have been known for having a certain animal species); (2) occupation-related toponyms; (3) toponyms associated with religion, where the name signifies a cult

of a deity with an animal name (originally epithet, in Akkadian and Canaanite-Hebrew) or reflects a traditional religious belief (Arabic); (4) patronymic toponyms, where the place was named after a person with an animal name; (5) toponyms indicating a topographic resemblance; and (6) pejorative toponyms, where the name was given to the place as an expression of derogation. The latter two categories are restricted to Arabic.

## Notes

- 1 Formal issues regarding the transliteration of Arabic names: (1) the initial *hamza* 'ʾ' is not transcribed (e.g., *Atān* instead of 'Atān); (2) assimilation of the definite article (*al-*) is disregarded (e.g., *al-Nāqah* instead of *an-Nāqah*); (3) diphthongs are written with *ay* (e.g., 'ayn) and *aw* (e.g., *Awrāl*).
- 2 *Burqah*: this term, which was frequently used for Arabian toponyms in the construct state *burqat* so-and-so (Yāqūt 1995 1, 390–9), denotes 'a rugged ground in which stones and sand and earth are mixed together' (Lane 1863, 190c).
- 3 The term *dārah*, which is commonly found in Arabic toponyms (Yāqūt 1995 2, 424–31), means 'a round tract of sands with a vacancy in the middle, or any wide space of land among the mountains' (Lane 1863, 931b).

## Abbreviations

The abbreviations used in this chapter are: (1) for languages: Akk. (Akkadian); Amor. (Amorite); Ar. (Arabic); Aram. (Aramaic); NWS (Northwest Semitic); PS (Proto-Semitic); WS (West Semitic); Ug. (Ugaritic); (2) for periods: OB (Old Babylonian); MB (Middle Babylonian); and NB (Neo-Babylonian).

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## Fierce lions, angry mice and fat-tailed sheep

Animals have always been an integral part of human existence. In the ancient Near East, this is evident in the record of excavated assemblages of faunal remains, iconography and – for the later historical periods – texts. Animals have predominantly been examined as part of consumption and economy, and while these are important aspects of society in the ancient Near East, the relationships between humans and animals were extremely varied and complex.

Domesticated animals had great impact on social, political and economic structures – for example cattle in agriculture and diet, or donkeys and horses in transport, trade and war. Fantastic mythological beasts such as lion-headed eagles or Anzu-birds in Mesopotamia or Egyptian deities such as the falcon-headed god Horus were part of religious beliefs and myths, while exotic creatures such as lions were part of elite symboling from the fourth millennium BC onward. In some cases, animals also intruded on human lives in unwanted ways by scavenging or entering the household; this especially applies to small or wild animals. But animals were also attributed agency with the ability to solve problems; the distinction between humans and other animals often blurs in ritual, personal and place names, fables and royal ideology. They were helpers, pets and companions in life and death, peace and war. An association with cult and mortuary practices involves sacrifice and feasting, while some animals held special symbolic significance.

This volume is a tribute to the animals of the ancient Near East (including Mesopotamia, Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt), from the fourth through first millennia BC, and their complex relationship with the environment and other human and nonhuman animals. Offering faunal, textual and iconographic studies, the contributions present a fascinating array of the many ways in which animals influence human life and death, and explore new perspectives in the exciting field of human-animal studies as applied to this part of the world.

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