



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 Qatṭunân</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.		



	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. Kammenhuber (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>Ramesside 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 College 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.

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 Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 19.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
PDT 1	Çig, M., H. Kizilyay & A. Salonen, 1956. <i>Die Puzris-Dagan-Texte der Istanbul Archäologischen Museen Teil 1: Texts 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 Téglaṭh-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.		

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 23

# Dogs and equids in war in third millennium BC Mesopotamia

Christina Tsouparopoulou & Laerke Recht

This chapter explores interactions between dogs and equids in Mesopotamia. It focuses especially on their use in battle during the third millennium BC, and corroborates results from the pertinent textual, visual and archaeological evidence. One of the aims is to consolidate the postulation presented by Tsouparopoulou in 2012 that dogs were used in the military in Mesopotamia in the Ur III period (c. 2112–2004 BC). The available visual evidence verifies this and pushes the date of their close interaction and their use in battle already to the Early Dynastic period (c. 2900–2350 BC). The relationship unfolds along two main lines: the iconographic record depicts the two species side by side in battle, while texts record dogs belonging to army generals being provided with equids as their fodder. The resulting dog-equid dynamics, facilitated by humans, has important implications for how animals were used in and prepared for war.

Dogs and equids have a long relationship. This relationship has not always been equal. Dogs have been depicted aiding humans in hunting equids, documented as being fed equids, or a more equal representation of companionship, either fighting together in war or buried together. In this chapter, we will discuss both their symmetrical and asymmetrical relations, in particular in the context of warfare in the third millennium BC in Mesopotamia. The equids mainly of interest here are domestic donkeys and donkey-hemione hybrids (*E. asinus* x *E. hemionus*), although hemiones and horses (*E. caballus*) were also present (the latter quite rare and appear mostly towards the end of the third millennium BC).

### Symmetrical relation: companionship

#### Visual

The iconographic material presents us with depictions of teams of equids pulling wheeled vehicles actively

engaged in battle. Perhaps the most famous example from the third millennium is the Standard of Ur (Collins 2015). Found in the Royal Tomb PG 779 of Ur, and dating to the Early Dynastic period, it is decorated on all four sides. In its third lower register of the so-called ‘war-side’, wheeled vehicles are drawn by teams of four equids – either donkeys or hybrids – trampling enemies and depicted as actively taking part in the battle (Fig. 23.1). This particular scene on the Standard of Ur is well-known and oft-repeated. In fact, the motif of wheeled vehicles drawn by equid teams in what appear to be battle scenarios – sometimes in the active gallop, sometimes trampling human bodies – is known during the Early Dynastic and Akkadian periods from both southern and northern Mesopotamia. Apart from inlays like those on the Standard of Ur (similar presumably decorative inlays are found at Mari), the most common medium of visual evidence is cylinder seals and their impressions.

In a few of such ‘battle’ scenes, dogs are depicted alongside the equids as actively participating in the battle. One such example comes from two sealings from Ur, found under the southwestern part of the Royal Cemetery, among house remains (U. 13938, U. 13963, Legrain 1936, pl. 16, no. 298, pl. 48). These sealings date to the Early Dynastic III period. The composition is in two registers and the lower register reminds us of the Standard of Ur’s war scene (Fig. 23.2). We have a scene of battle with a wheeled vehicle drawn by equids at speed. Two dogs are shown here accompanying the vehicle. One is below the equids, between their front and hind legs, probably running *next to* the vehicle rather than dangerously between the equids’ legs. The other dog follows behind, after a walking soldier. A naked enemy is shown upside down in front of the wheeled vehicle along with another soldier, who is brandishing a weapon. The two dogs are rendered very differently, suggesting two different breeds. The





**Figure 23.1.** Detail of the War side of the Standard of Ur; BM 1928,1010.3, AN12575001 CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 © The Trustees of the British Museum.



**Figure 23.2.** U. 13963. Clay door peg sealing; the elaborate design on the cylinder seal is divided into registers; above, a lion attacking a stag between two reclining human headed bulls, little figures, a bird, a crescent and a scorpion; below a man in a chariot, accompanied by attendants and dog (?), and a scene of men fighting. BM 1930,1213.407, AN191497001 CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 © The Trustees of the British Museum.



one behind appears larger and longer-legged than the one below the equids, which appears to be of a smaller, stockier stature. The one behind is reminiscent of the saluki breed, while the one next to the equids seems to be similar to dogs appearing on other seals (such as the one discussed below).

An unprovenanced Early Dynastic III cylinder seal, housed at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin (VA 2952, Frankfort 1939, pl. XVn; Moortgat 1940, no. 145; Lippert 2016) is also composed of two registers. On the lower register, we have a similar composition of a battle scene with a wheeled vehicle drawn by equids and a dog following the ensemble, itself followed again by three soldiers holding their weapons (Fig. 23.3). There are traces of an object between the legs of the equids, possibly an enemy being trampled over by the equids, but unfortunately, there is damage to the seal exactly at this place, so it is difficult to be certain what the object is. The dog behind the wheeled vehicle is medium sized and appears stocky with erect ears and an upwards, curled-over tail. It does not seem reminiscent of the lean saluki breed of dogs but finds a close parallel in a gold dog pendant from Susa, which dates to the Late Uruk period (Duval *et al.* 1987).

Of similar design, although depicting a less obviously aggressive scene, is another cylinder seal impressed three times on a sherd from Tell Mozan, which was found in an Old Babylonian context but has been dated to the ED III-Akkadian period because of its 'Brak' style (Fig. 23.4; MZ99 C2-i0245, Dohmann-Pfälzner & Pfälzner 2000, 226, fig. 29). The scene is not that of an active battle, as there are no enemies or

victims depicted, and the team of three equids walk at a steady slow pace. Aggressive action may, however, be implied by the presence of javelins kept in the front compartment of the wheeled vehicle, in the same position as on the Standard of Ur. The dog depicted here, following the wheeled vehicle, is similar to the dog depicted in the Ur sealings, next to the equids, but not the one depicted on the seal from Berlin. This one is leaner and smaller, and only a short tail can be seen. It may be no coincidence that birds also follow the company: as we will see below, dogs and birds could act as scavengers in the aftermath of battle (for animals in war, see also Battini 2019).

Yet another scene of dogs accompanying humans is found on a sealing from Tell Chuera (Moortgat-Correns 1988, 73, fig. 11). The action here is also more static, but the presence of prey animals suggests that in this case, the image is one of hunting rather than battle. This brings us to the realization that dogs could have been thought of as companions in life and in death. Just as they were seen together fighting the enemy in battles or chasing prey in hunting, or just standing next to each other, they were also sometimes buried together.

#### *Burials and ritual depositions*

Equids are one of the few animals found as complete or nearly complete skeletons in the ancient Near East. In the third millennium BC, skeletons of equids as part of burials or as ritual depositions have been found both in Mesopotamia and in the southern Levant, as well as Egypt. Occasionally, the equid remains are

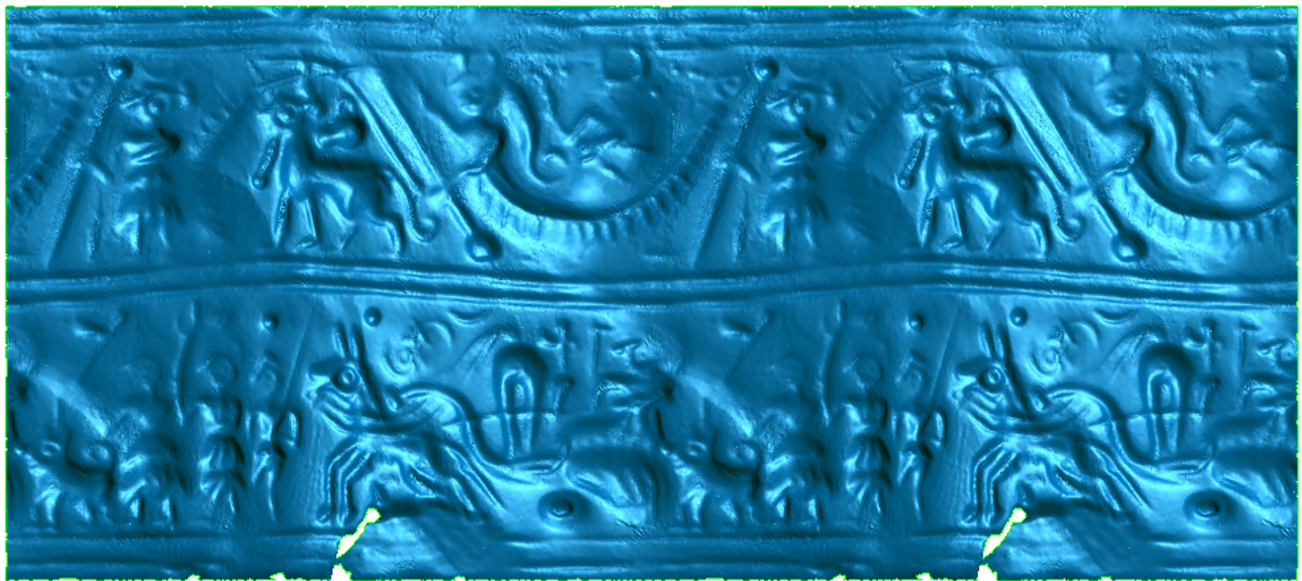
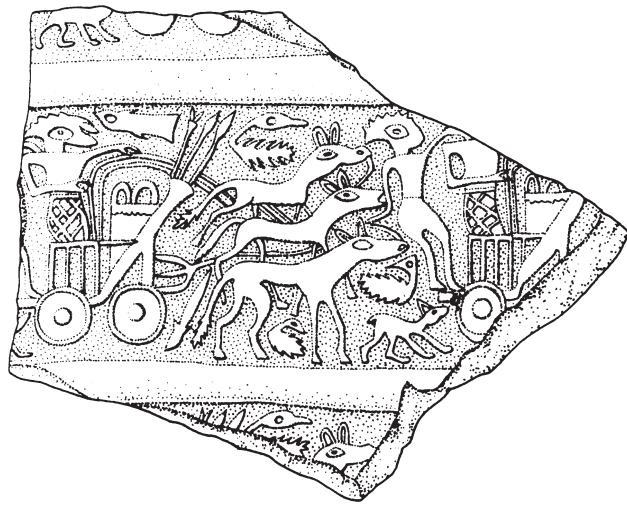


Figure 23.3. Digital reproduction of cylinder seal VA 2952, after Lippert 2016, CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 DE.



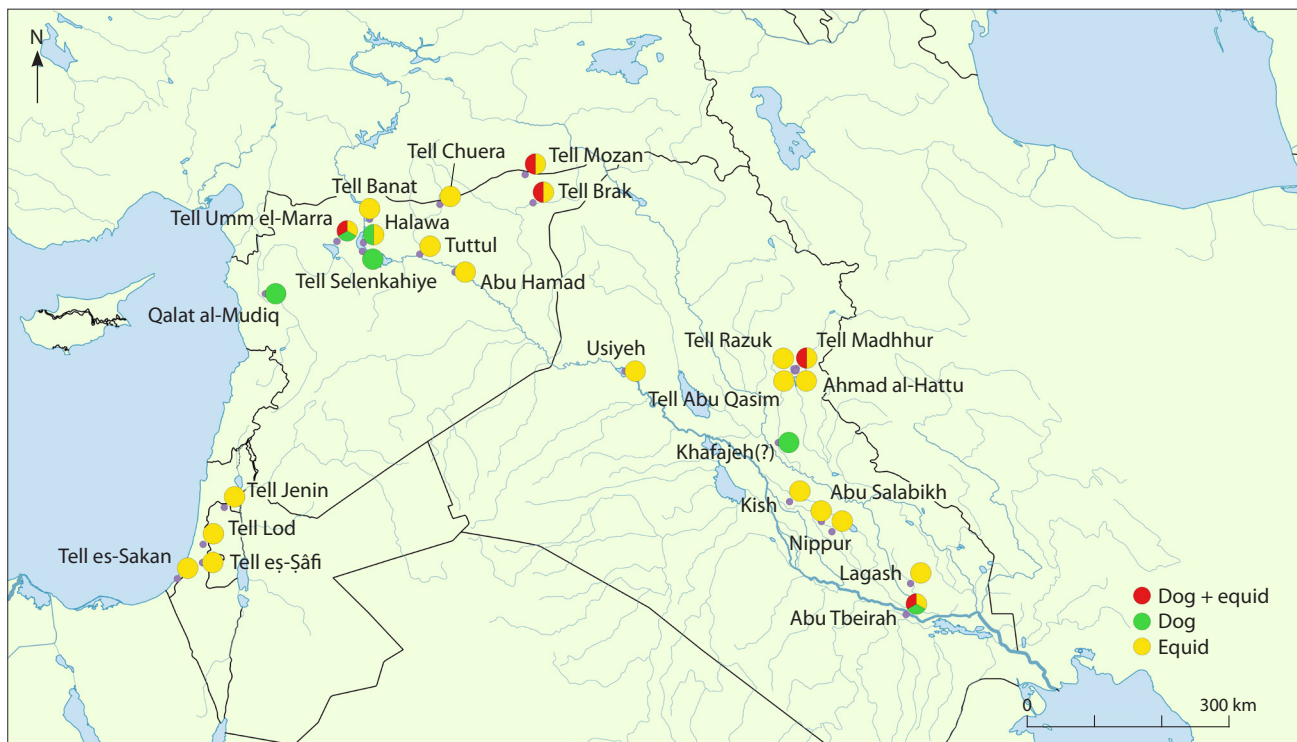


**Figure 23.4.** MZ99 C2-i0245, after Dohmann-Pfälzner & Pfälzner 2000, 226, fig. 29. Courtesy of P. Pfälzner.

accompanied by remains of dogs. Figure 23.5 shows a map with sites from the third millennium where complete equid skeletons have been discovered in ritual or burial contexts (for catalogues of equid depositions in ritual contexts, see Way 2011, Ch. 3; Recht 2018). Sites with dogs in similar contexts have also been

marked, and, of primary concern here are the sites where equids and dogs are found together or in close proximity, although these are not always complete, articulated skeletons.

One example comes from Tomb 5G at Tell Madhhur in the Hamrin Basin, dated to Early Dynastic



**Figure 23.5.** Sites with equid, dog and equid-dog depositions (burials and ritual deposits) in the third millennium BC (data based on catalogue in Recht 2018, as well as Alhaique et al. this volume; Delougaz et al. 1967; Hansen 1973; Collon et al. 1975; van Loon 1979; Orthmann 1981; Al-Zawahra & Ezzughayyar 1998; de Miroschedij et al. 2001; Oates & Oates 2001; di Martino 2005; Vila 2005; Yannai 2008; Schwartz et al. 2012; Greenfield et al. 2018).

III-Akkadian (Killick & Roaf 1979; Roaf 1984). Here, a large pit burial contained one adult male burial together with his offerings: 48 ceramic vessels, semi-precious beads, two bronze pins, a bronze cosmetic set, a bronze dagger, three bronze vessels and food offerings. The tomb also contained two equids carefully laid side by side (Fig. 23.6). These have been identified as either donkeys or onager-donkey hybrids, one aged approximately 2.5 years old, the other over 20 years (Clutton-Brock 1986). It is possible that a wooden wheeled vehicle was originally placed behind the equids (Killick & Roaf 1979, 540), as also hypothesized for contemporary equid burials at Abu Salabikh (Grave 162, Postgate 1986, 201; Grave 234, Postgate *forthc.* and pers. comm.). Between the two equids was a newborn or foetal canid, either a domestic puppy or a jackal. In this case, the association between equid and canid is clear, very carefully and deliberately created. The composition mirrors what we see on the cylinder seals, where the dog can be placed immediately next to the team of equids. The important difference, however, is that this canid was extremely young, possibly even foetal.

Further instances where dogs and equids appear together come from Tell Umm el-Marra, where the association occurs at two of the so-called 'Installations': B and C (Weber 2008; 2012; 2017). These installations are part of a mid-late third millennium BC mortuary complex which includes wealthy tombs of human

burials (Schwartz *et al.* 2006; 2012). Complete or nearly complete equid skeletons were deposited in separately constructed mudbrick installations. Installation B was divided into two compartments, each containing one equid and three puppies, while Installation C contained two equid skeletons (one aged c. 20, the other younger) and one (young) adult dog, deposited after the equids. The latter again seems to mirror what we see in the glyptic evidence, and one could imagine a life-long training companionship between these animals, although of course the archaeological context here does not reveal whether this was a symbolic or real companionship.

At Tell Brak, the situation is a little different, where we find an adult dog buried separately from donkeys (Fig. 23.7). At some point during the Akkadian period, an entire complex, interpreted as a 'caravanserai', complete with reception area, storage space, temple and a possible tower, was ritually closed at Tell Brak (Oates & Oates 2001, 41–92, 298). The closure involved deliberate depositions of complete donkey skeletons, a complete adult male dog, parts of human skeletons, and other animal parts, alongside metal and ceramic objects. The dog stood at c. 54 cm at the shoulders, and compares favourably to the saluki breed (Clutton-Brock 2001), and to dogs from Tell Chuera, calculated to be just below 50 cm at the shoulders (Boessneck 1988, 94). Only the dog and the

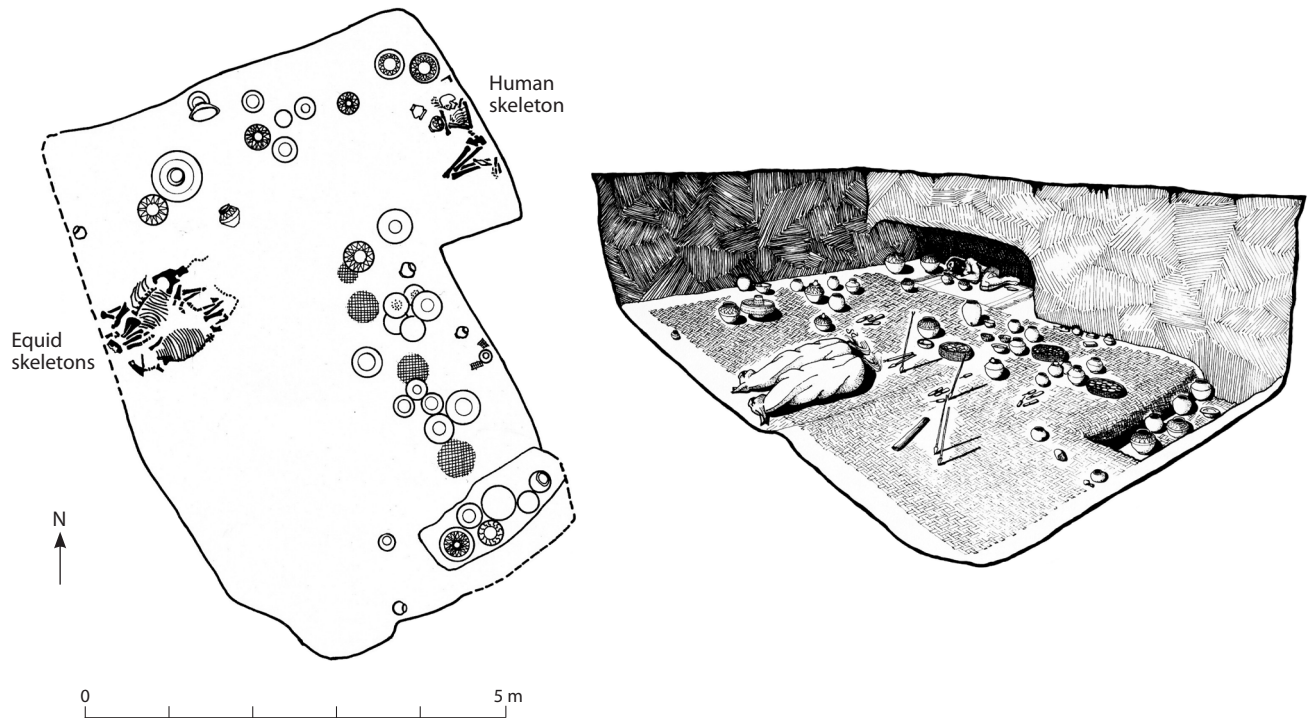
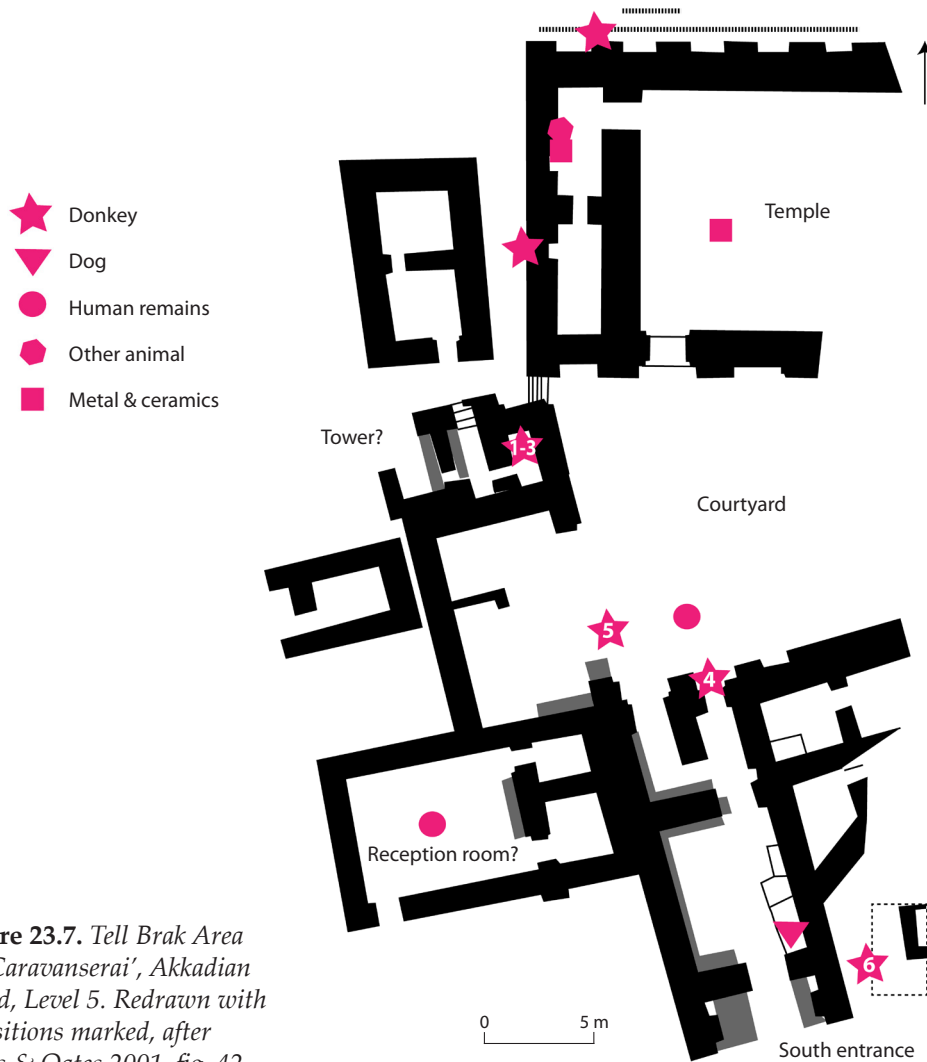


Figure 23.6. Tell Madhhur Tomb 5G plan (courtesy of M. Roaf).



**Figure 23.7.** Tell Brak Area FS 'Caravanserai', Akkadian period, Level 5. Redrawn with depositions marked, after Oates & Oates 2001, fig. 42.

donkeys were complete, and although not in close proximity, they were clearly conceptually associated in this particular ritual.

While the adult dogs may be understood in light of the companionship shared in the battlefield, the young puppies may not be so easily explained. It is possible that the puppies were perceived of as training with the equids from a very young age (after all, one of the equids from Tell Madhhur would also only just have started its training at the tender age of 2.5 years old). We could also hypothesize that the puppies represent another layer of offering, being themselves offerings or grave goods for the equids, while the equids are intended as grave goods for the deceased human (cf. Weber 2012, for a similar interpretation suggested for Tell Umm el-Marra). In any case, it is important to note that the association between equid and dog is spatially stronger than that between human-equid or human-dog.

### Asymmetrical relation: dog eat equid

The relationship between equid and dog was not purely one of a symmetrical companionship. Early on, dogs were used to help in the hunting of wild equids – evidence from this comes from the pre-Neolithic (seventh or possibly eighth millennium BC) rock art panels from Shuwaymis, a wadi in northwestern Saudi Arabia (Guagnin *et al.* 2018, 225–36). Panel 105 may be the earliest visual evidence of dogs and equids depicted together. It shows them at odds with each other: an equid and its young are surrounded by 11 dogs. These hunting dogs have been identified as the Canaan dog. They are medium-sized, with erect ears and a curly tail. The equids could have been either African wild asses (*E. africanus*) or hemiones (*E. hemionus*). Hemiones were still hunted in third-millennium BC Mesopotamia, perhaps especially in the north, where the Syrian onager is believed to have roamed. This activity, however,



does not seem to feature prominently in the art again until the appearance of the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs of the first millennium BC, where, in fact, both dogs and horses aid in the hunt for hemiones (see e.g. panel from the North Palace at Nineveh, BM 1856,0909.48, Reade 2018, fig. 57).

The fact that dogs are carnivores could have been another of their uses in war: to scavenge on the flesh of the dead enemies. This is depicted on a stele of Sargon found in Susa, which shows dogs and vultures feeding on the bodies of dead enemies (Nigro 1998). Unfortunately, the stele is quite damaged, but at least two dogs can be recognized, both seemingly pulling at and biting severed human body parts along with their avine counterparts (Fig. 23.8). The dogs here seem to be of the stockier type that we saw on the Berlin seal, with the upwards-curling tail. They are most likely domestic. The one best preserved, in the lower left-hand corner, wears a kind of collar or band that covers its shoulders and front body.

#### *Faunal record*

Occasionally, dogs fed on the meat of equids, supported by evidence found in the faunal remains. Beside complete skeletons in burials, equid bones in general make up only a small percentage in the faunal record of third-millennium BC sites. They were not frequently eaten by humans, and therefore only appear in small numbers in settlement refuse. However, we do find some suggestions of dogs eating equids: both at Tell Brak and Abu Salabikh, equid bones that have taphonomic markers consistent with being gnawed by dogs, have been found. At Abu Salabikh, a number

of heavily gnawed bones of equids were identified (Clutton-Brock 1986, 207–8), and at Tell Brak a donkey's second phalanx had carnivore (possibly dog's) gnaw marks on it (Weber 2001, 348). As mentioned by Alhaique *et al.* (this volume), gnawed bones from Abu Tbeirah are also consistent with canine activities. The fact that dogs fed on the meat of equids is further corroborated by documents of the late third millennium BC, which also allow us to identify them as military dogs (Tsouparopoulou 2012 and references therein). This activity may also be identified in the Levant. At the EB I site of Ashqelon, a complete dog skeleton was found with its head resting on the tibia of a young donkey, with signs of gnawing (Kansa 2004, 291–2).

#### *Textual evidence*

Equids seem to have been a widely circulating category of animals in the Ur III state. The available assets of the Ur III state in equids, documented in the Puzrish-Dagan archive of the state's livestock agency (Tsouparopoulou 2013a), over four years during the reign of the king Shulgi were 2204 *dusu<sub>2</sub>* (donkeys), 360 *anše eden-na* (hemione/onager), 727 *anše<sub>1</sub> kunga<sub>2</sub>* (hybrid between donkey and hemione) and 38 *anše<sub>2</sub> si<sub>2</sub>-si<sub>2</sub>* (horses) (Calvot 1969, 102). These are large numbers of animals and even if we divide these by the four years, we still end up with over 800 equids per year as being in the hands of the state. Although these were not all the asset of the army, belonging to the Ur III military, it is still an impressive quantity. These equids were bred or brought within the state as booty and often from people related to the army.



Figure 23.8. Sargon stele (drawing from Nigro 1998; close up photograph from Flickr, courtesy of ALFGRN).

There are texts that mention for example that almost 40 donkeys were brought in from the land of the Amorites as booty, possibly connected to a particular military event (e.g. 21+ *dusu<sub>2</sub> nita<sub>2</sub>*, 37 *dusu<sub>2</sub> munus nam-ra-ak kur mar-tu*, dated to Šulgi's forty-seventh regnal year, in OIP 115, 336). These equids were then seemingly given over to known military generals. There are other texts which document equids being the property of a Šeškala, a known military general in the Ur III period (e.g. 32 *dusu<sub>2</sub> nig<sub>2</sub>-gur<sub>11</sub> Šeš-kal-la*, dated to Ibbi-Suen's second regnal year in UDT 162). Most possibly these equids were used in battle, either to pull wheeled vehicles as we see from the visual record, or to carry equipment and food during expeditions. This use is well-known from modern times, and a high number of equids served – and died – during WWI and WWII. The Ur III texts present an interesting after-use of the bodies of those equids who were either injured in battle or became sick or just died: they were fed to the army dogs.

Only three types of equids were fed to the army dogs, or else the dogs that were connected to the military, by way of their handlers: *dusu<sub>2</sub>* (donkey), *anše<sup>k</sup>kunga<sub>2</sub>* (a hybrid between hemione and donkey) and *anše* (equid/donkey). Horses (*anše<sup>si</sup>si<sub>2</sub>-si<sub>2</sub>*) and hemione (*eden-na*) are not usually recorded as being fed to the dogs, although there is one single example of two horses being fed to lions (BIN 3, 454). This absence is likely due to horses still being relatively rare, and not yet fully integrated into the army, while hemiones as a wild species were used for pulling vehicles to a very limited extent, if at all (Postgate 1986; Zarins 2014, 217). The equids fed to the army dogs are generally characterized by their sex (*nita<sub>2</sub>* or *munus*), once by age, with mention of a suckling baby donkey (*dusu<sub>2</sub> amar ga*), and with the qualifier *šu-gid<sub>2</sub>*, which probably refers to their health (Tsouparopoulou 2013b, with pertinent references therein).

Very interestingly, in those Ur III texts which record dogs and their fodder, we are also acquainted with another group of dogs, those related to Gula, the goddess of healing (Tsouparopoulou 2020; see also Nett, this volume). These dogs are fed bovine and ovine animals; so far, we have found very rare mention of equids being given to those dogs. This may not be due to any kind of taboo concerning consumption of equids by the deity's dogs, but rather because the equids given to the army dogs were those injured or killed in battle.

#### Calculations

If we can calculate how many equids were given over to the dog handlers of the military as feed for their dogs, we could possibly also estimate the number of dogs the Ur III army had in its force. Through a thorough

study of the dossier of texts related to the dogs being fed equids, four military generals have been identified: Ilalum, Nir-idagal, Šeškala and Dukra, with at least ten dog handlers below these four generals: Šu-ili, Ea-bani, Ilati, Sarrum-Bani, Zimzilah, Lala, Lamma-Šulgi, Bati, Šulalum, and Lugal-urani (Tsouparopoulou 2012). A rough calculation, based on the actual documentation of equids given over to the dogs as well as the return of equid skins to the state after the dogs had eaten their flesh, shows that the state was expending about four equids per month for the military dogs.

We do not have direct evidence of how many dogs were in the army, or how many were trained/owned by specific handlers related to the military. However, knowing that the dogs received about four equids per month as fodder, we can try to calculate the amount of meat that they might have been provided with. The weight would of course depend on the height and condition of each animal. We have calculated the withers height based on available faunal measurements and assumed that the animals were about or slightly below what is today considered a healthy size, and that about 85 per cent of the animal is consumable by dogs.

Calculation of withers height is based on published measurements of 16 *E. asinus*, 19 *E. asinus* / *E. hemionus*, and 28 *E. asinus* x *E. hemionus* (as identified by zooarchaeologists) from third-millennium contexts at Abu Salabikh, Tell Asmar, Nippur (Clutton-Brock 1986), Tell Halawa (Boessneck & Kokabi 1981), Tell Umm el-Marra (Weber 2008), Tell Bi'a (Boessneck & von den Driesch 1986), Tell Mozan (Doll 2010), Tell Brak (Clutton-Brock & Davies 1993), Habuba Kabira (von den Driesch *et al.* 2014), and Tell Jenin (Al-Zawahra & Ezzughayyar 1998). The heights have been calculated or recalculated based on adjustments suggested by Johnstone (2004). The weight has been roughly calculated based on estimates suggested by The Donkey Sanctuary (Evans & Crane 2018, 257). This leads us to suggest that the consumable meat would be up to 748–952 kg per month, or 25–32 kg per day (Table 23.1). If the army dogs were about the size of a saluki (although the pertinent visual evidence suggests some were smaller), this results in a total of 50–64 dogs, with each handler having in his care about six dogs.

This calculation seems to correspond well with the information we get regarding the numbers of equids from the mid-third millennium BC account of the dispute over the border of the Sumerian city-states of Umma and Lagash, and especially from the description of the battle that took place in the Ugiga field between En-metena, the son of En-ana-tum and later ruler of Lagash, and Ur-Luma, the ruler of Umma. The conflict between the city-states of Umma

**Table 23.1.** Calculation of meat weight.

<i>Equus</i>	Estimated withers heights	Average withers height	Average estimated weight	Consumable
<i>E. asinus</i>	105–130 cm	116 cm	c. 220 kg	c. 187 kg
<i>E. asinus</i> / <i>E. hemionus</i>	102–132 cm	120 cm	c. 230 kg	c. 195 kg
<i>E. asinus</i> × <i>E. hemionus</i>	119–131 cm	127 cm	c. 280 kg	c. 238 kg
4 equids per month = 25–32 kg meat per day → 50–64 dogs in total				

and Lagash was agricultural, involving payments for land use and improper use of irrigation systems. Two cone inscriptions of En-metena summarize the history of the border war (Cooper 1983). There, En-metena boasts that he defeated Ur-Luma in battle and made him flee back to Umma, abandoning his contingent of 60 teams of donkeys at the Lummagirnunta canal. The Lagashites slaughtered them and heaped the corpses into mounds:

In the Ugiga field, the field of Ninĝirsu, En-ana-tum, ruler of Lagaš, fought with him (Ur-Luma, the ruler of Umma). En-metena, the beloved child of En-ana-tum, defeated him. Ur-Luma escaped, (En-metena) forced him back to Umma. 60 teams of his (Ur-Luma's) donkeys were abandoned on the bank of the Luma-ĝirnunta canal. The bones of their personnel were left strewn all around the plain. He (En-metena) piled up their burial mounds in five places (RIME 1.9.5.1 composite, iii 5–27).

If we assume that the teams of donkeys of Ur-Luma's army consisted of four donkeys each, this would equal 240 donkeys altogether, a reasonable number of donkeys to be used in the battlefield. If we estimate that one dog (at most two) was following the wheeled vehicle drawn by these donkeys (as seen on the cylinder seals), then we should expect to have 60 dogs in the army force of the ruler of Early Dynastic Umma, a comparable number to the dogs we have calculated for the army force of the Ur III military.

## Conclusion

Warfare is cruel and violent, but also fairly common throughout the history of the ancient Near East, from minor skirmishes between city-states to full-blown expansionist policies. Humans were not alone in being recruited and trained for such activities. We have here discussed how both equids and dogs featured as part of the army. The two species each had specific roles to play, but also appear to have close associations. These associations have two different but related aspects, one

reflecting mutual training and participation in battle, the other reflecting the aftermath, with dogs feeding on dead or injured equids. The former may also explain the occurrence of co-burials of equids and dogs, although in some cases, more complex dynamics appear to be at play, related to youth and ritual practice.

A number of equid species were present in Mesopotamia in the third millennium, but the relations between dogs and equids seem to have centred on (domestic) donkeys and the kunga<sub>2</sub>-hybrids. These were the two types of equid mainly trained for battle in the third millennium, and also the ones recorded as fed to the army dogs. It also seems that two different breeds of dogs can be identified: one slender, fairly long-legged, greyhound-like, the other shorter, stockier and with an upwards-curling tail, possibly with specialized abilities in sight and scent, respectively. While the equids are depicted as actively engaged in battle, it is less clear exactly what role the dogs played, as it surely went beyond simply picking at the bodies of the dead. They could be used to attack, chase down the enemy, act as guards or even carry messages. Whatever their exact role, what we see is that in the third millennium BC, dogs and equids fought together as companions on the battlefield and symbolically shared death in co-burials. This implies that they also trained together on a regular basis in order to prepare for violent clashes with enemies. The expenditure for keeping and feeding the numbers of animals recorded would have been high, and resources could be maximized by feeding sick, injured or dead equids to the army dogs, thus revealing another aspect of complex dog-equid relations in ancient Mesopotamia.

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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 symbolising 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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