



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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& Christina Tsouparopoulou

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’, https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/index.html
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 ²	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, https://cdli.ucla.edu	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 Aethiopien</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> , http://psd.museum.upenn.edu	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, http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/	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.

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 http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/index.html	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.

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 13

An ox by any other name: castration, control, and male cattle terminology in the Neo-Babylonian period

Michael Kozuh

The study of domesticated animals in Mesopotamian history is flooded with abundance but limited by scope.¹ We have an incredible number of texts that deal with the management of animals – all told, tens of thousands of them. But they provide information that is patchy at best. We know much about some things, and nothing about others. What we do not know is often foundational and important. One can, for example, read an entire book on the Ur III organization of sheep and cattle (Śtepień 1996) and find very little about breeds or dairy. This is not the fault of the author. This is just something that the thousands of texts at his disposal largely fail to address.

As part of a larger project on Mesopotamian cattle, I am revisiting some basic issues, one of which is Mesopotamian animal terminology and classification. Here, I aim to show how influential anthropological work in ancient Near Eastern studies – seemingly mirrored by animal terminology in modern Western languages – influences our understanding of the classification of mature domesticated male bovines in Neo-Babylonian texts. Simply put, the anthropology links cattle terminology to economic usefulness, which, for male cattle, makes castration the terminological point of departure. I will then show how, contrary to expectations, Mesopotamian classification and terminology for male cattle do not center on castration; rather, they point to a much richer classificatory scheme. In the end, I speculate on ways that one might reconcile this evidence with the spirit of the anthropology.²

Anthropology and terminology

Given the patchy nature of the evidence, the initial questions we ask about the management of animals are particularly important, as we use answers to those questions to fill in the narrative when our texts fail to provide usable information.³ With that in mind, cuneiform studies tends to draw much inspiration from

anthropology, as many cuneiformists are cross-trained in archaeology as students. Anthropologists use a basic dichotomy in the way that they set up and understand issues around large-scale sheep management against large-scale cattle management (in general see Adams 1981, 149–51; Redding 1981; Zeder 1988; 1991; 1994; for more recent work that uses this literature, see Widell 2003; Rattenborg 2016). On one side is sheep herding, which involved mobility, distances, and peripheries, and was therefore not amenable to centralized control. People with control over sheep herds had an unusual degree of autonomy, and states and other authorities entered into what are in effect bilateral relationships with mobile pastoralists, not relationships of inflexible hierarchy and authority (Scott 1998; 2009).

This contrasts with the management of cattle. Zeder gives a particularly good explanation of the difference (Zeder 1994, 9):

Water and pasture preferences of cattle require that they be kept within prime areas for agricultural production, resulting in a greater potential for conflict between agricultural and herding interests. Moreover, raising cattle for draft animals requires that a higher proportion of males live a good deal longer than is conducive to efficient management for edible resources. Large scale exploitation of cattle for both labour and food resources is, therefore, likely to have resulted in conflicts needing higher level arbitration. There is, in fact, documentation dating to the pre-Sargonic period that [shows how] both names for cattle and management practices employed varied depending upon whether cattle were used as meat producers, as dairy animals, as draft animals, or as ‘war machines’.⁴

Since cattle do not roam, they live effectively with and in society. This dynamic then effects every other one. For example, given their value and proximity, cattle are often regarded with high degrees of affinity and familiarity (see, among many others, Lincoln 1980; Carlson 2001; McNerney 2010, 28–32). Moreover, cattle are highly resource intensive; not only do they need vast spaces for grazing, they also require extensive stores of fodder to make it through times of limited pasture. This puts cattle in direct competition with humans for access to proximate resources. One can grow for grain for consumption, or turn that grain over to cattle to try to obtain dairy, meat, hides, and more cattle. These are annual decisions that people make with their fields, and they are of immediate consequence. Cattle are not just food resources, but humans can also put cattle to work: to pull the plow or cart, thresh grain, and so on.

Zeder argues, then, that because training for traction allows some male cattle to live longer than male sheep (most of which are eaten young), issues around cattle should involve a sorting out and classifying process dictated by economic usefulness (i.e. ‘as meat producers, as dairy animals, as draft animals, or as “war machines”’). And indeed, classifications of cattle by economic usefulness are common. For male bovines that are not calves, western languages have as common terms:

- Intact adult male, set for reproduction: English ‘bull’ and ‘bull calf’, German, ‘Bulle’ and ‘Stier’, French ‘taureau’ and ‘taurillon’
- Castrated adult male, trained, used for traction: English ‘ox’, German ‘Ochse’, French ‘boeuf’.
- Young castrated adult male, kept alive for beef or to be trained as an ox: English ‘steer’, German, ‘junger Ochse’, French ‘bouvillon’.

Castration marks the classificatory point of departure in these; non-castrated animals fall into one category, castrated ones into others. Thus, we need not push too far into Borges’ discussion of the *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge* to make the point that classification is at least in part social construction.⁵ There is nothing ‘natural’ about an ox or steer. The difference between a castrated and non-castrated animal, which is central to cattle classification schemes in western languages, is one of deliberate human manipulation.⁶

Cattle castration and Babylonian terminology

Was castration central to Babylonian classification? There can be little doubt that castrated bovines were around in ancient Babylonia. Typically, mature male

bovines in working herds of cattle fall into one of three groups: first, a majority of male bovines over a year or two old would be oxen (that is, castrated males); second, a few uncastrated males would be kept around for breeding purposes (bulls, maybe one bull for 35 cows);⁷ third, it is possible that some males were castrated at a young age, not with the intention of training them for traction, but for beef or as an emergency food resource (steer). Mature male bovines are famously unruly, territorial, and difficult to control, so it is highly unlikely that the many mature male cattle mentioned in cuneiform texts were left intact.⁸

With a few exceptions, the literature gives the impression of an orderly enough set of terminology for Mesopotamian cattle.⁹ Reading just beyond the surface, though, one immediately finds issues.¹⁰ To give one example, the sign GU4 (*alpu*), without further qualification, is used in first millennium texts for:

- Often: basic ‘lexical’ meaning (mature domesticated male bovine: e.g., TCL 13, 182; UCP 9/1, I, 70; BIN 1, 68)
- Often: male cattle, undifferentiated by age (e.g., BRM 1, 91; UCP 9/1, II, 28; YOS 7, 182)
- Less often: male calves (for sacrifice: e.g., YOS 17, 50; YBC 4160; BIN 1, 1)
- Less often: synonym for ‘cattle’ (sex/age undifferentiated: e.g., YOS 19, 121; YBC 11899, BM 114587)
- But most often the writing is simply ambiguous, and context gives no hints.

There are issues here that go beyond classification. Sign selection could mask words in a way that we are not aware.¹¹ Even then, in English words like ‘cow’ and ‘bull’ are used promiscuously; one might reference a herd of cows when in reality the herd (as is typical) contains cows, calves, steer, and a few bulls. We should grant Mesopotamians the same leeway. But the examples here do span all text types. It is not as though one finds these issues only at the colloquial level (in, say, letters), and then technical people used more precise terminology. This ambiguity is endemic to institutional accounting texts, where labeling and precision presumably mattered most.

The point here is that, for administrators, cattle management really did not employ a distinct set of terminology that classifies animals by economic usefulness, and certainly not by a usefulness centered on castration. For whatever reason (see below), written administration tolerated levels of fluidity and ambiguity in terminology that mask what many classification schemes deem foundational. Modern lexicographers, searching through the huge mass of tablets, might find

apt classificatory terms used from time to time, but Mesopotamian bureaucrats did not employ them in a way that had immediate accounting and administrative resonance. To put it another way, we might find a word that broadly parallels our understanding of ‘steer’ as an aside in a tablet or two, but that word did not necessarily have day-to-day administrative currency.

An ox by any other name

Taking this a step further, with one rare exception, I am not convinced that the Babylonians used a classificatory term for an ‘ox’ – a castrated bovine trained for traction. They could attach qualifiers to various uses of GU4; for example, we have the GU4 GIŠ.APIN, the ‘cattle of the plow’ (cf. Heimpel 1995), or some GU4s appear in texts that also mention plows or plowmen (e.g. NBC 4840; NBC 4649; Moore, Mich. Coll. 35; PTS 2800).¹² In these cases the texts are likely referencing oxen, but these are rare, and even then it is not always certain. The differences here are academic, but Babylonians did use cows for the plow (Janković 2013),¹³ and there are examples in cattle cultures worldwide where they train actual bulls to the plow (Halstead 2014). It does not then necessarily follow that any mention of a GU4 in association with a plow was an actual ox, however likely that may be.

The question of which word may or may not mean ‘ox’ runs deep in cuneiformist lexicography. To my knowledge, Landsberger (1960) first attempted to sift through the first millennium evidence in MSL VIII/I, and he was clearly irked by the lack of an obvious term for castrated animal.¹⁴ He runs through a process of deduction, some steps based in etymology, some in odd folk-logic,¹⁵ to produce a complex chart of ‘euphemistic’ and ‘non-euphemistic’ words for castration, subdivided into men and animals. Although little in that chart remains valid, three terms made their way into subsequent literature.

Landsberger translates *šuklulu* as ‘uncastrated’, which, as Van Driel (1995) and Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018, 21–2) have pointed out, is problematic. Derived from the Š-stem verb *šuklulu* ‘to finish, bring to completion’, this word is a fairly common descriptor of male cattle in Ebabbar texts; it is less common in Eanna texts, which use other writings (such as KÙ, *tamīmu*) almost certainly for the same phenomenon. Other than applying it only to male cattle, administrative texts shed almost no light on the meaning of the word. Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018, 28–9) recently make the case that, at Sippar, the vast majority of animals with this label trend very young (they are less than a year old), and were reserved for the highest-level gods. I see no reason to doubt that the spirit of this observation

holds true for the Eanna as well, but I do not have the same metrics.

The most colourful context for the word is *The Kettledrum Ritual* (TU 44 [AO 6479]), lines 1–6

When y[ou] want [to cover] the kettledrum (proceed as follows). A knowledgeable expert will carefully inspect a *šuklulu* black bull, whose horns and hooves are intact, from its head to the tip of its tail; if its body is black as pitch, it will be taken for the rites and rituals. If it is spotted with seven white tufts (which look) like stars, (or if) it has been struck with a stick (or) touched with a whip, it will not be taken for the rites and rituals. [Translation from Linssen (2004)]¹⁶

As Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018, 33) and others note, the translation ‘most precious, perfect one’ or ‘without defect’ seems to be the best meaning of *šuklulu* in this context. Non-castrated is likely assumed in this understanding, but it was only part of what was a much richer concept of identification based on ritual purity.

By focusing entirely on intactness to define *šuklulu*, Landsberger then took any word that seemed to exist in opposition to *šuklulu* to mean ‘castrated’. The two most common of these words are GU4.NINDÁ and *tapṭīru*, about which Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018, 29–35) draw two relevant conclusions in their recent study. First is that the writings GU4.NINDÁ and *tapṭīru* were more or less interchangeable; the fact that one can replace the other suggests that, whatever the differences between them, they were insignificant. Second, interestingly, they argue that what distinguished a GU4.NINDÁ/*tapṭīru* from a *šuklulu* was not the age of the animal (as all had assumed up to that point), but just the fact that a GU4.NINDÁ/*tapṭīru* was simply less ritually valuable than a *šuklulu*.¹⁷ This had been noted in passing by others, but often in a way that just created more confusion around classification and age issues (in fact, as Tarasewicz & Zawadzki note, GU4.NINDÁ/*tapṭīrus* trend a bit older than *šuklulus*, which is the opposite of earlier assumptions).

Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018, 35–6) take the meaning of *tapṭīru* as ‘gelded’, adding that these animals were ‘freshly gelded’ because they could move into the broader group of GU4.NINDÁ (the presumably long-gelded) if they were not sacrificed. I think the sequence they propose makes sense, but I take issue with the assumption about castration. I assume they follow Landsberger, who gives an etymological translation for *tapṭīru* as ‘(who was subjected to) a removal’, which is *exceedingly* (almost comically) generous to the idea that castration drives classification. Perhaps

aspects of the root would allow for this definition (a ‘detached one’ or some such), but it needs to be stressed that no other cognates of the word carry that nuance,¹⁸ nor do words for castrated animals usually reference the act itself (as Landsberger himself notes elsewhere).¹⁹ The cognates of *tapṭīru* seem rather to carry a meaning mostly of ‘released’ or ‘segregated’, often applied to cattle in the sense of ‘unyoked’ or ‘unhitched’.

Without more information, I think *tapṭīru*-males are simply non-*šuklulu* males; they are not ritually perfect (but still ritually permitted), so they are administratively set aside for other purposes. Some may be sacrificed to lesser gods, some put to the plow, and some raised for beef. Again, castration may have played a role in this, but it was not central to the classification.

Finally, the descriptor *ummānu* certainly refers to bovines trained to the plow (See Jursa 1995; van Driel 1995; Janković 2013). It is uncommon in institutional texts, although standard in Murashu and other late-Babylonian private contracts (Stolper 1985; 1994). The CAD U/W lists *ummānu* as its own entry, as an ‘adult, mature ox’, without a cognate referent. AhW and CDA take the word as related to *ummanīātu*, ‘specialist, scholar, trainee’. The word was productive, as it could refer to females (CAD **ummānatu* ‘adult cow, heifer’). None of these understandings have to do with castration.

Terminology and ritual purity

The key here is that in Mesopotamian classifications the animal does not move from one classification to another by virtue of being castrated, as it does in modern Western classifications. Rather, the classifications are mostly bound to a tapestry of ritual purity; if nothing else, they relate the animal back to abstract human judgements (ritually pure/less-than-pure; trained/untrained) rather than physical alterations or easily discernible characteristics. Perhaps terms like *šuklulu*, *tapṭīru*, and *puhālu* work by a process of elimination; any older male not explicitly given one of these labels in a context where specificity matters is assumed to be an ox, and may occasionally be called an *ummānu*.

Viewed one way, these issues over terminology seem to be specific to the Babylonian temple. One assumes a typical Babylonian family, or even a state cowherd, would not have to worry about ritual purity when deciding whether to slaughter a calf for beef, use it to stud, or train it as an ox.²⁰ Even if so, the major temples dealt with cattle at something like an industrial level for the ancient world. The Eanna, for example, wrote contracts involving hundreds of heads of cattle, and administered a cattle population of probably a few thousand at any given time (on the contracts, see

Janković 2013). The Ebabbar of Sippar seems to have operated at a smaller, if still significant, level (Da Riva 2002; Jursa 2010; Tarasewicz & Zawadzki 2018). Unlike with sheep, though, the temples did not sacrifice all that many cattle; we lack numerical precision, but it is certain that cattle sacrifice had nowhere near the sacrificial visibility, cultural impact, and bureaucratic underpinning that sheep did.²¹ What the temples did need in bulk was oxen to work their vast holdings of arable land.²² So even for the temple, ritual purity adds a level of non-economic complexity in an area where one might expect streamlining and efficiency.²³

There are other issues at play here as well. Quoted at length, van Driel says the following about cattle terminology:

The administrative texts from both Sippar and Uruk use in the main a standardized, in some respects local, terminology written in logograms, the Akkadian reading of which is often problematic. Even if the Akkadian word is known its exact meaning is not always obvious. It is more than likely that the written administrative terminology is only a bleak reflection of the vocabulary in common use. The terminology is not the same in the various departments of the same administration and in Sippar the differences seem to be more marked than in Uruk. The relation between written administrative terminology and the spoken word is lamentably weak ... spoken language will have been far richer.

He is certainly correct, and this hints at the larger issue that began this chapter: why do anthropological expectations and textual realities in Mesopotamia match up poorly here? We find neither the terminological intimacy that one expects from pastoral societies, nor do we find a strict sorting by economic usefulness that one expects from a literate, bureaucratic, hierarchical society like ancient Mesopotamia.

The anthropology of course uses airtight logic in assuming that proximity and a kind of competition over local resources should be the things that dictated the relationships between Mesopotamians and their cattle. The issue, then, is whether the anthropology is ultimately correct, and the problem is in the way that accounting documentation works in Mesopotamia; or ultimately that it is misguided, and that anonymity and generalness gave shape to the relationships between southern Mesopotamians and their cattle.

I think there are two potential ways to address this, and it does not have to be either/or: one could

argue that, living among the animals, it is actually surprising that Mesopotamians do not employ a very rich set of terminology to describe them. This would indicate that maybe we need to rethink the conceptual framework altogether, or that some of the anthropological assumptions about early Mesopotamia will not hold for later Mesopotamia, and we have to start thinking about administrative historical change.²⁴ On the other hand, Van Driel hints at a counterintuitive way to think about this in the quote above: that most things actually ran on interpersonal relationships and local knowledge, and that hence the accounting, many steps removed from that process and largely unconcerned with the particulars of it, only needed a limited set terminology to function at a satisfactory level. That is, the day-to-day terminology might reflect more the demands of the accounting system than it reflects praxis. Accounting could afford to be general because individuals negotiated the particulars extra-textually and face-to-face.

The latter, while disappointing for lexicography, does allow us to take new approaches. For example, I think we can speculate with some confidence on *why* institutional accounting, understood in this way, would focus on details like ritual purity yet fail to mark standard differentiations between bulls and oxen. Deciding what young male calf would become an ox is something that requires very local, very intimate, very culturally specific knowledge and abilities. It is a process that seeks characteristics in young male calves that are deemed predictive of a docile yet strong older animal, and early judgements might prove to be incorrect. It is a trial-and-error process that takes time to show results – a promising young ox might turn into a steer (and then beef) after a bad week behind the plow. This process, playing out over years, certainly involved castration at some point, but is not something that an upper-level administrator could actually manage to any useful degree of effectiveness. It is local and intimate, whereas his interests are distant and calculating. So, the accounting terminology is general and ambiguous here because it reflects the actual level of authoritative control over this aspect of cattle raising.

On the other hand, the decisions about whether or not an animal could be consumed in ritual sacrifice were based on particular external physical characteristics. As shown in the quote above for the Kettledrum ritual, the requirements were numerous and pedantic, yet also explicit. As such, they lent themselves to authority – both in dictating the terms, and then in assessing and confirming whether animals met those terms. So, the accounting terminology here is precise and useful because it also reflects a sphere of real control over this aspect of cattle raising, where

top-down authority had a direct role in the sorting and evaluation process. Decided by masters and policed by authorities, the assessment of ritual requirements was explicitly in the assessor's purview.

In other words, I would argue that the anthropological approach is correct, but misdirected. We really do not see the heavy hand of the state (or higher-level arbitration) here, dictating relationships, terminology, and usefulness. Instead, we see local authority manifesting itself in a complex set of ways, leaning into spheres where its interests and abilities can have influence, and stepping back from areas where it could not effectively exert control. This ultimately leaves its imprint on the terminology, which then clusters around the interests of that authority to the detriment of other – perhaps more familiar to us – ways of classifying the animals.

Notes

- 1 Of particular importance and interest are: San Nicolò 1948, 1949, 1951, 1954, 1956; Englund 1990; Gehlken 1990; Nissen, Damerow *et al.* 1993; Van Driel 1993; 1995; Steinkeller 1994; Englund 1995a,b; Heimpel 1995; Stol 1995; Stepień 1996; the essays in Collins 2002; Englund 2003; the essays in Lion 2006; Zawadzki 2006; Röllig 2008; Tsouparopoulou 2013a,b; the essays in Breniquet & Michel 2014; Kozuh 2014; Boivin 2016; Richardson 2018; Tarasewicz & Zawadzki 2018.
- 2 This chapter primarily draws from the records of the Eanna temple of the southern Mesopotamian city of Uruk and the Ebabbar temple of central-Babylonian Sippar. For both of these we have San Nicolò's and van Driel's initial forays into the evidence. For the Eanna, I use the published material as well as about 400 relevant unpublished texts at Yale, Princeton and the British Museum. For the Ebabbar, we have the recent work of Zawadzki 2006, and Tarasewicz & Zawadzki 2018.
- 3 This is especially true in lexicography, see Veldhuis (1997) for some critical remarks.
- 4 This later point references Kientz & Lambert (1963).
- 5 This famous text begins '[in] a certain Chinese encyclopedia entitled *The Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge* ... it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies at a distance', referenced in DeMello (2012, 10–11).
- 6 Compare, by contrast, the classification schemes discussed in McInerney (2010, 31–2)
- 7 Bulls are clearly identified in inventory texts as *puhālus* (Van Driel 1995), yet not all *puhālus* were stud-bulls, as they also take on the descriptors discussed below (*šuklulu*, etc).

- 8 This is a general schema. There are no hard and fast rules for when a male animal would have been castrated or eaten – at some point in the first few years (Stol 1995). The decision to turn a male into an ox is not random or arbitrary; it has to do with markers of docility and other issues that are deeply cultural. The fact that we have to make the case that castrated animals certainly existed in Mesopotamia – see the Landsberger quote here in note 15 – strongly hints at the fact that their fundamental classifications will not mirror ours very well.
- 9 See the literature cited here in note 2, but note the admirable exception of Weszeli's entry in the RLA for *Rind* (Rind B: 388–406), which stresses the fluid nature of the terminology.
- 10 See Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018), as we will discuss here. I can only speak with confidence on first millennium evidence, but Stępień (1996) and Stol (1995) seem to have the same complications for earlier periods.
- 11 Cf. the debate of how to read GU4.NINDÁ, which may have changed over time, Tarasewicz & Zawadzki (2018, 29–35).
- 12 The two NBC texts are published in Janković (2013).
- 13 Note that the one certain reference we have to the training of a bovine to the plow specifically references a female animal, in Stolper (1990).
- 14 For example, to bolster his point that castration must have happened in Mesopotamia he cites: 'prehistory', Homer, the Old Testament, and the Talamud. He then concludes 'it should also be pointed out that a civilization so well acquainted with the castration of men would hardly have been totally ignorant of the advantages of this practice with regard to domestic animals'. (Landsberger 1960, 69). Maekawa (1979) finds the logic of the lattermost persuasive, using that along with a process of elimination to argue that AMAR-KUD must mean 'young castrated cattle' in Early Dynastic and some Ur III texts. My (admittedly incomplete) survey of the literature since this publication suggests that its conclusions are not widely accepted (see, for example, Bauer 1989–90, 82; Stol 1995, 201–2).
- 15 For example, in order to explain how the Babylonian word *ellu* ('pure') might mean 'castrated', Landsberger 1960 says (with parentheses in the original) 'the concept that sexual contact makes men unclean is widespread ... even though "clean" (= chaste, celibate) could be a good word for the tabooed word "castrate," we have to admit that there is a lack of parallels and an incongruity between the meaning of *ellu* postulated by us and its well attested meaning as "cultically clean"' (Landsberger 1960, 74).
- 16 Also see the observations in Parpola (2007, 272–3).
- 17 I am unable to distinguish if this holds true at Uruk, but have no reason to challenge it.
- 18 Cognates of root **p̄tr*, from the CAD: *nap̄artu*: (part of a block); *nap̄artu* B: desertion: *nap̄artu*: (a person with certain privileges); *nap̄artu* in *bīt nap̄artu*: quarters for soldiers, a type of residence for foreigners and other persons of *nap̄artu* status; *nap̄īru*: substitute, replacement; *paṭirtu*: unyoked team; *paṭīru* = (a table); *pāṭīru* = off-duty soldier; *paṭru* (adj): opened, unhitched, unfastened; *piṭru* = loose; *puṭāru* = (a qualification of bulls) ; *puṭṭuru* = loose weave, redeemed; *tap̄irtu* = release, pacification.
- 19 See note 16 above, where he finds direct reference to castration to be a 'tabooed' phenomenon.
- 20 It is a shame that we do not have those archives, as it would be interesting to know how one sphere affected the other. Decisions on whether to raise a male calf to stud, for beef, or for the plow are deeply cultural [see, for example, Ochsenschlager (2004) and Halstead (2014)] and will often involve factors that would surprise those who study cattle in modern, scientific ways. I would not be surprised to find temple or religious terminology about animals deeply permeated into colloquial Babylonian classification schemes.
- 21 There is little done on cattle sacrifice at the Eanna (the unpublished YBC 3927 will provide an anchor to further study). See for now Beaulieu 2003.
- 22 On this, see Jursa 2010; Janković 2013 – on the value of cattle in later texts, see Stolper 1985; 2005. Dairy, as always, remains largely undocumented, but Waerzeggers (2010) remains particularly valuable on this.
- 23 Indeed, temples did streamline in other ways. Very few texts describe cattle with the sort of intimacy one usually finds in pastoral societies. A few texts describe cattle with a brand in a particular place (AnOr 8 38, BM 114648), one describes a cow with a colour (NCBT 645:1), but even texts that mention stolen animals – individual animals in distinct situations – use generic descriptions. This is different from, say, archives from Minoan Crete, where cattle terminology betrays a real intimate knowledge of the animals: spots, personalities, and so on, which parallels the anthropology on pastoral societies (McInerney 2010, 28–32).
- 24 It is clear that over an extremely *longue durée*, language and relationships toward nature evolve and change, see, for example, Wiggerman (2011, 665) and Richardson (2018). One example: we do not have evidence for cattle naming (Farber 1982; Lion 1996) in first millennium sources.

Abbreviations

Cuneiform texts, journals, and publication series are cited with the system of abbreviations of the Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (CAD), reproduced (with other abbreviations) at cdli.ox.ac.uk.

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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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