Friend or Foe? The ambivalence of the dog symbolism in Mesopotamia through the scope of animal behaviour and daily interactions with people

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[Dogs are often mentioned in cuneiform sources, appearing in a broad scope of documents and characterized by a complex symbolic value. According to the context, they can indeed be depicted either as allies and useful guardians, or, on the contrary, as dangerous and unreliable creatures one should always be wary of. This paper aims to discuss the dog's ambivalence in Sumerian and Assyro-Babylonian sources through a transversal approach, emphasizing the importance of the contribution of biology and ethology to such studies. By doing so, this work seeks to demonstrate how the ambivalence of the dog's symbolic value in Mesopotamia is a consequence of the diversity of interactions this animal had with human populations and reflects concrete aspects of interspecific patterns of interactions.]

Keywords: dogs, animal symbolism, Sumerian proverbs, omens, incantations.

0. *Introduction*

The dog has always had a very special relationship with human populations all over the world. It is the first animal to ever be domesticated and the oldest osteological remains distinguishing dogs from wolves are over 14 000 years old,[2] implying to a long history of close interactions with human beings. Many human societies were quick to explore this canid's cooperative functions, using the animal as a guardian, as a war agent or even as means of transportation.[3] Dogs can also be a valuable source of food, with their consumption being attested in several societies,[4] but their main

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2. Raisor, 2005: 61.

3. Miklósi, 2018: 142; Morey, 2010: 90-98.

4. The use of dogs as a source of food has been observed all over the world (Morey, 2010: 86-90), including in Europe where butcheries specialized in dog meat could be found up to the beginning of the XXth Century (Miklósi, 2018: 136-137). Archeozoological research suggest that dog consumption was scarce in Mesopotamia, although osteological material with marks of cutting and burning have been reported in Northern Mesopotamia and Syria (Omar, 2017: 188;

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usefulness does not lie on their meat but rather on their potentiality as a partner, leading to an exceptional diversity of interactive patterns with people. This has a direct impact on the dog's symbolic value, for its image can then be as varied as its functions. While this is true to all animals, the diversity of functions attributed to dogs and their proximity with humans result in a particularly wide range of symbolic reflections based on their interactions with people.

Each human group can then choose to focus on some aspects of their interactions with dogs. Some societies, as modern days Western countries, might emphasize positive aspects of this relationship (often depicting the dog as "man's best friend") and purposely ignore the tensions that can also exist in human-dog interactions, while others might, on the opposite, focus almost exclusively on the antagonistic dimension of those contacts. If some similarities between the dog's symbolic values in different societies can, sometimes, be explained by cultural transfers, most of them are the result of the observation of the same behavioural patterns.

Through this paper, I will show how this complexity reflects the dog's natural behaviour and its interactions with humans. On this regard, this approach is integrated into the Human-Animal studies, an area that can be described as "an interdisciplinary field that explores the spaces that animal occupy in human social and cultural world and the interactions human have with them",[5] focusing then not only on how humans and animals interact, but also on how animals find themselves integrated into human symbolic systems.[6] Still, if we consider that most relationships are co-constituted, then we must acknowledge that animals have some level of agency in their interactions with humans.[7] Human-Animal studies become then highly challenging, requiring "a knowledge of two distinct-entities".[8] The integration of ethology, the scientific study of animal behaviour (*Homo sapiens* included), appears then as essential in order to better understand and explore the complexity of the interactive schemes existing between dog and human populations, as well as the consequences on the animal's integration in a symbolic system.

Homo sapiens and *Canis lupus familiaris* must indeed be considered firstly as two animal species interacting with each other, each one responding to its own physiological needs. They are omnivorous animals with a very adaptative diet, belonging to similar ecological niches. As such, they are prone to manifest an interest for similar resources, enabling them to interact either as partners or as competitors, both for food acquisition strategy and protection. Both are also highly social species,[9] living in complex groups in which facial expressions and vocalics play a major role in communication, which facilitates interspecific interactions[10] and contributes to regulate both

Vila, 1998: 133, 138; Vila, 2010: 233; Weber, 2001: 348). Those occurrences, however, remain exceptional and seem to disappear altogether from the Middle Bronze Age on.

5. DeMello, 2012: 4.

6. Kompatscher, 2019: 12.

7. Shapiro, 2020: 801.

8. Shapiro, 2020: 802.

9. Similarities in social behaviour between wolves and humans might have played a role in the domestication process which lead to dogs (Clutton-Brock, 1989: 34-36).

10. Just as humans can often interpret dogs attitudes (playfulness, aggressiveness), studies have demonstrated that dogs are just as prone to understand humans and have even developed through generations ways to improve their communication with us: feral dogs, even with little to no contact with humans, are still better than tamed wolves to read human facial expressions (Miklósi, 2018: 101); dogs facial muscles have evolved in ways that provide expressions

partnerships and competition patterns. All those elements (similar social structures, communication modes, omnivorous alimentation and resources acquisition strategies) result in the development of rich and complex relationships between humans and dogs. This point can be strengthened in places characterized by a high population density, such as cities, which concentrate high numbers of dogs and humans, enhancing the proximity and frequence of interaction.

The dog's main image can strongly vary from one cultural framework to another, and it is also possible for a same society to be torn between several behavioural characteristics of the animal, leading to very complex and fluctuant representations. It is the case of Mesopotamian culture, which opted for multiple symbolic functions for this canid, both positive and negative.[11] Cuneiform texts refer to two very different types of interactive patterns existing between the animal and human populations. The first one is the one in which the dog acts as a partner, appearing as under human control and part of the civilized sphere. The second one concerns interactions, mostly of conflictual nature, with dogs which are out of control and can then act as competitors (and sometimes even threats) to human beings, being on that aspect much closer symbolically to chaotic forces. Two types of dogs can fit into this last interactive scheme: firstly the "domestic" dog escaping the control of its master,[12] secondly the stray dog, roaming the streets and completely out of control by definition. Even nowadays, those groups of stray animals can be seen as a problem and exterminated for both security and public health reasons.[13] While both domestic and stray dogs can inhabit urban spaces and share the same environment with human populations, the nature of their interactions with people is very different. This leads to a complex and mobile image, enabling the dog, as a species, the embody very different concepts according to the context and the objectives of its mention.[14]

On top of this complexity, the analysis of dog representation in Sumerian and Assyro-Babylonian cuneiform texts must also lead with two challenges. The first is due to the fact that all those sources are human-produced and therefore intrinsically anthropocentric. Of course, this is not limited to Mesopotamian texts and affects all applications of Human-Animal studies in historical sources.[15] All the narratives we have access to about human-animal relationships are constructed by humans themselves,[16] resulting in the human perspective often being the only one entirely

catchier to the human eye (Kaminski *et al.*, 2019), and even barking is an attention-seeking device resulting from the domestication process (Clutton-Brock, 1989: 40).

11. On the complexity of the dog's image in Mesopotamia, see P. Villard's work about dogs in Neo-Assyrian sources (Villard, 2000). Such duality of the dog's image is also present in other societies of the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean region (see Breier 2017; 2019; Schmidt 2019b; Tutrone 2019).

12. Of course, all dogs are domesticated animals on the biological level, the domestication process having an impact that can be observed both on the morphological and the behavioural characteristics of the group concerned, which is reproductively isolated from its wild cousins (Clutton-Brock, 1989: 21-25; 29; 37). In this paper, I refer to the "domestic" dog as opposed to the stray, or free-ranging dog, given the differences in their life conditions, their interactions with humans, and the environmental pressure they must face.

13. Miklósi, 2018: 137.

14. Vilela, 2021.

15. Especially those produced by humans, as textual and visual representations of animals. Archaeozoology, by focusing on animal osteological remains, can however provide other insights of the human-animal relationship complementing (or contradicting) human-made narratives.

16. Ingold, 1994: 1.

accessible to the researcher.[17] The texts we shall refer to in the next pages do not then depict the animals themselves, but how part of human populations from Mesopotamia perceived them: a distinction must be made between the "animal-as-constructed" and the "animal-as-such".[18] While the first is built over the observation of the second, dog representations will always be structured around human interpretation of the behaviour they've witnessed and their own experience of their interactions: they are then not a portrayal of the animal itself, but a selection of aspects. Moreover, most texts are also produced in urban spaces, therefore reflecting urban conceptions of human-animal interactions, which might differ from the experience of extra-urban (including nomadic) populations. This makes those representations, by definition, partial in many ways. Still, they are a precious source of information to reconstruct, even partially, the variety of interactions existing between humans and dogs in Ancient Mesopotamia, reflecting how those were integrated in human thought and conceptualized.

The second challenge comes from the longevity of Mesopotamian civilization and its textual production. Although there are many variations through time and regions,[19] some aspects of dog representation benefit from a relative stability, being found in several types of texts throughout the centuries (sometimes even millennia) and appearing in genres as distinct as proverbs, epics, royal inscriptions, omens, incantations and rituals… To reflect on the interactions between dogs and humans means to consider all those sources, as different as they may seem at first glance. To better highlight the complexity of the dog image and its main patterns in Mesopotamian culture, I have then chosen not to approach dog representations following the type of text, but according to the sort of interaction existing with humans. I will start by presenting the dog whose aggressiveness is controlled and oriented, which turns the animal into a valued partner, before turning to its *alter ego*, the dog which, while sharing a close proximity with human beings, acts on its own and can then become a threat. By such, I intend to demonstrate how deeply the interactive patterns existing between human beings and faunal elements influence the fashioning of a symbolic web of concepts.

1. *The dog under control as a partner*

Most of the positive aspects of the dog are often connected with the animal's ability to act as a partner. In textual sources from Mesopotamia, this is mostly expressed through the dog's functions as a guardian, including its role in pastoral activities and its opposition to wild animals, mostly predators. The interest expressed for such interspecies conflicts reflects the integration of the dog in human activities and interests, as well as tensions with other competitors and threats. Wolves, lions and hyenas, for example, can prey on dogs and also on flocks, affecting human resources (and, in some cases, be a danger for human themselves too), and some smaller animals with a flexible diet like foxes can feed either on products useful for humans or on leftovers which would be of interest to dogs. Both share then a common interest in keeping those animals at bay. Some dogs can be trained to enhance their capacities as guardians or to adapt to a specific function (as shepherd-

17. Schmidt, 2019a: 1.

18. Shapiro, 2020: 809.

19. For the difference in animal representation between Sumerian and Assyro-Babylonian tradition, see Richardson, 2019.

dogs), but most dogs are prone to react to the approach of species they might consider as either predators or competitors.

This is mentioned in texts from the Third to the First millennium BC, appearing as a constant element of the dog's symbolic value in the Mesopotamian cultural system, although differences can be noted through time, such as variations on the type of wild animals to which the dog is confronted. Sumerian Proverbs (= SP),[20] for example, focus on the opposition between the dog and the fox. This corpus is known mostly from Old Babylonian tablets from Nippur, although its origins are likely from the end of the Third millennium BC. The collection as it was structured in Nippur is the best known for now and its contents are divided in 28 tablets, although tablets from Uruk and Ur indicate regional variations. However, while the order of the proverbs and their organization in distinct tablets may vary, most entries concerning dogs remain the same.

In the collection from Nippur, the dog is mentioned mostly on tablets 2 and 5, which contain many animal proverbs, appearing in respectively 17 and 46 entries.[21] On many occasions, its role as a guardian and its conflictual interactions with wild animals are mentioned, although they focus almost exclusively on the opposition with the fox. While there are several proverbs about wolves attacking flocks,[22] none of them directly opposes this wild canid to the dog. Other predators are also sometimes mentioned as potentially confronting the dog, such as the lion on SP 5.56 ("When the lion came to the sheepfold, the dog was wearing a leash of spun wool"[23]), but such situations are not common.

On the other hand, we have five occurrences opposing the dog and the fox,[24] either directly or indirectly. On most occasions, there is no real confrontation, the mere presence of the dog being able to frighten the fox, as in SP 2.69, which mentions a pair of foxes trying to approach the city, only to run away at the sound of barking dogs. Such situation can also be seen in SP 8 Sec. B 28, in which the fox tries to get into the goat's house, but finally refuses to stay upon learning that the dog is coming, as stated on the final lines:

SP 8 Sec. B 28:
8. tukum.bi
9. ur.gi$_7$.re e$_2$.zu.a
10. ur$_5$.ra.še$_3$ an.ti
11. kuš.e.sir$_2$.mu DU.u$_3$
12. ĝi$_6$ na.an.sa$_2$.e.en.e.še
"If the dog stays like that in your house, bring me my shoes! I won't spend the night (here)!"

While Sumerian Proverbs focus on the dog's interactions with the fox, Assyro-Babylonian tradition, however, expands the dog's opposition to other predators. The conflict between dog and

20. Edited by E. I. Gordon in 1968 (Gordon, 1968) and B. Alster in 1997 (Alster, 1997), this corpus is now available online on the ETCSL website: The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ox.ac.uk).

21. The dog can also be found in tablets 1, 3, 7 and 8. In those cases, however, only a handful of proverbs are dedicated to this animal *per* tablet, contrasting with the situation on tablets 2 and 5.

22. SP 5 Vers. B 75; SP 8 Sec. B 8.

23. SP 5.56: u$_4$ ur.maḫ.e e$_2$.tur$_3$.še$_3$ ur.gi$_7$.re eš$_2$.sig$_2$.sur.ra i$_3$.mu$_4$.

24. SP 2.69, SP 2.118, SP 8 Sec. B. 28, SP 8 Sec. B. 29 and SP 8 Sec. B. 32.

wolf can now be found, as in Gilgamesh VI, 61-63, when Gilgamesh rejects Ishtar by evoking the fate of her former lovers, among them the shepherd she turned into a wolf:

Gilgamesh VI, 61-63
61. *tam-ḫa-ṣi-šu-ma a-na barbari*(ur.bar.ra) *tu-ut-ter-ri-šu*
62. *ú-ṭa-ar-ra-du-šu ka-par-ru šá ram-ni-šu*
63. *u kalbu*(ur.gi$_7$)^{meš}*-šu ú-na-áš-šá-ku šap-ri-šu*[25]
"You struck him and turned him into a wolf,
so his own shepherd boys drive him away,
and his dogs take bites at his thighs."[26]

In the First millennium BC fragments of a text known as the Fable of the Fox,[27] the dog faces both the wolf and the fox, which had made an alliance to attack the sheepfold. While the narrative focuses on the opposition between the dog and those two wild canids, it also mentions the dog's role as a guardian against predators in general. At one moment, the dog is depicted boasting about the fear he causes amongst the wild animals (VAT 13836, 23):[28] "At my howls, the panther, the cheetah, the lion (and) the wild cat run away in panic".[29]

The recurrence of such representations of the dog through time indicates that the animal's value resides mostly in its ability to counter the assaults of predators. The oriented (and thus controlled) aggressiveness of the dog is therefore a positive aspect, which is, under such circumstances, strongly encouraged and can also be transferred to other situations. The dog is then not only opposed to wild animals and can also act as a protector against other enemies perceived as coming from the wilderness, like supranatural foes such as demons. Reflecting its image in literary texts, the dog plays the role of a symbolic guardian in many rituals and incantations, mostly from the Old Babylonian Period onward.

This can be observed on the corpus concerning Lamaštu, a demoness responsible for the death of new-born children and complications during pregnancy. Already in the Old Babylonian Period, the dog is mentioned as a way to chase her away, as suggested in YBC 8041, a text in which we learn that an incantation against Lamaštu was untitled "Who is the dog of the house?" (a.ba ur e$_2$.aš).[30] By the Neo-Assyrian Period, the rituals and incantations against Lamaštu form an extensive corpus[31] which mentions the use of seven dog figurines supposed to be placed on the entrances of a house to prevent the demoness from entering.[32] Each of them had a name that should be inscribed on its flanks **(Table 1)**:

25. Transliteration from George 2003, 622.
26. I have kept here A.R. George's translation (George 2003, 623).
27. Lambert, 1996: 186-209; Kienast, 2003. The text is for now incomplete, and while most fragments are from First millennium BC tablets, its origins are most likely from the end of the Second millennium.
28. About this tablet, see Lambert, 1996: 192-195.
29. VAT 13836, 23: *a-na ri-ma-ti-ia ig-ru-ru nim-ru mi-di-nu la-a-bu-u$_2$ šu-ra-un*.
30. YBC 8041, 16 (Hallo, 1995: 277).
31. See Farber, 2014.
32. Farber, 2014: 105.

Table 1: Dog figurines names from Lamaštu, Series II, Ritual 7, 75-82[33]

Line	Figurine Name	Translation[34]
75	*ša$_2$-ru-uḫ* zi-*šu$_2$*	Fast is his attack (Farber 2014: 171) / He who makes his life (=that of the enemy) be destroyed*
76	*u$_2$-ṣur* gi$_6$ *ṭu-ru-ud* dumu.munus ^{d}*a-nim*	Be attentive at night, drive away the daughter of Anu
78	*ur-ru-uḫ* zi-*šu$_2$*	Very swift is his attack (Farber 2014: 171)/ He who completely[35] destroys his life (= the life of the enemy)*
78	*ana* en.nun-*ka la te-eg-gi*	Don't be negligent in (your) watch
80	*e tam-ta-lik e-pu-uš* ka-*ka*	Do not hesitate, use your muzzle
80	*si-kip lem-na*	Repel the evil one
82	^{d}30.sipa.ur.gi$_7$.meš	Sîn is the shepherd of dogs

Those names share close similarities with those of other apotropaic dog figurines, mentioned in another series of First millennium BC rituals and incantations untitled *šēp lemutti ina bīt amēli parāsu*, aiming to protect a house from evil forces. Just as in the Lamaštu series, dog figurines are to be placed at the habitation entrances as guardians. Each one of them has a name, which appear on lines 196-205[36] (**Table 2**):

33. Farber, 2014: 105.

34. The translation of the names indicated by an asterisk is unclear. The verb *arāḫu* has indeed several meanings, among them "to hurry; to hasten" (CAD A/2: 221), "to devour; to consume" (CAD A/2: 222) or "to destroy" (CAD A/2:222). I am inclined to consider the reading of zi as "life" and follow the CAD's view with names evoking the destruction (or consumption) of the enemy's life (CAD 2/A: 222) as it has also been made in the *šēp lemutti ina bīt amēli parāsu* series (Wiggermann, 1992: 14). However, W. Farber has proposed another hypothesis, considering the possible use of the first meaning of *arāḫu* ("to hurry; to hasten") and the reading *tību* ("attack") for zi. The names would then refer directly to the swiftness of the dog's attack (Farber, 2014: 237), an interpretation which is also plausible in this context. Either way, the figurine's name is highlighting the dog's oriented and valued aggressiveness.

35. Given the use of the verbal system II, I have chosen to translate *arāḫu* by "to destroy completely" here.

36. Wiggermann, 1992: 14.

Table 2: Dog figurines names from *šēp lemutti ina bīt amēli parāsu*, 196-205[37] (Wiggermann 1992: 14)

Line	Figurine Name	Translation
196	*e tam-ta-lik e-pu-uš* k a *-ka*	Do not hesitate, use your muzzle[38]
197	*e tam-ta-lik* u_2*-šuk at-ta*	Do not hesitate, you bite
198	*a-ru-uḫ* z i *-šu*	Devour/Destroy his life*
199	*da-an ri-giš-šu*	Strong is his bark
200	*ṭa-ri-id* a_2 . s a g_3	Who chases away the Asakku
201	*ka-šid a-a-bi*	Who defeats the enemy
202	*sa-kip* g a b a *lem-ni*	Who repels the chest of the evil one
203	*mu-na-ši-ku ga-ri-šu*	Who bites his adversary
204	*mu-še-ri-bu* s i g_5 . m e š	Who lets the good ones enter
205	*mu-še-ṣu-u* ḫ u l . m e š	Who makes the evil ones go out

We can note that, in both rituals, each figurine is given a name emphasizing its guarding function. Some names repeat themselves, suggesting that, although the rituals themselves were independent from each other, a connection existed between those two ritualistic traditions sharing a common repertoire of symbolic images. Some of those names have also been found written on dog figurines uncovered from Assurbanipal's Northern palace from Nineveh.[39]

All those evocations of the dog's function as a guardian in Mesopotamian society lead to a legitimate question: was the dog seen only as a useful animal? One can wonder so, such is the functional role of the dog overwhelming in its representation in textual sources. However, some occurrences, although very rare, suggest that affective interactions were also possible between dogs and humans. Such evocations can be mostly found in texts produced from the end of the Third millennium BC to the Old Babylonian period. Among the Sumerian Proverb Collection, there is an entry describing the attitude of dog towards a friendly person mentioning a friendly dog wagging its tail (SP 5.83):

SP 5.83
1. ur.gi_7.re lu_2 ki.aga_2.bi mu.un.zu
2. ur di.ku_9.dam kun.bi maškim.[x]
"The dog knows the man who loves him. The dog is the judge, its tail [is] the commissioner."

37. Wiggermann, 1992: 14.

38. F. A. M. Wiggermann has translated this name as "Do not reconsider, speak up" (Wiggermann, 1992: 15). While this name could indeed be understood as a reference to barking, I agree with W. Farber's proposal to translate k a directly as "mouth; muzzle" (Farber, 2014: 171; 238). The name could then allude both to the barking and the biting.

39. Watanabe, 2002: 119.

Tail movements are indicative of a dog's emotional state and their observation is useful to predict the animal's attitude, recognizing a friendly dog from a hostile one. Likewise, reading human facial expressions allows dogs to know if a person is nervous and might be a potential threat. This proverb is particularly interesting, as it reveals the acknowledgement of some level of mutual understanding between humans and dogs, essential to regulate their interactions.

Another depiction of an affective dog can be found in the Old Babylonian text SEpM[40] 20, which belongs to a group of documents employed in Old Babylonian scribal schools from Nippur.[41] Since compilations of those texts appear frequently in a fixed order, A. Kleinerman has suggested that they could be a collection whose study was integrated in scribal education, at least in Nippur.[42] While most of them seem to reproduce Sumerian royal epistolary texts, some can differ from this pattern. Such is the case of SEpM 20, which mentions the fashioning of a votive dog figurine for the goddess Nintinuga. The figurine mentioned in the text is named Tuni-Lusag, a name meaning "His incantation heals the man", and is probably connected to Nintinuga's aspect of goddess of healing.[43] The description provided by the text evokes a friendly animal (SEpM 20, 1-3):[44]

SEpM 20, 1-3
1. ^{m}lugal.nesaĝ.e dumu zu.zu um.mi.a nibru^{ki}.ke$_4$
2. tu$_6$.ni.lu$_2$.sag$_9$ ur kig$_2$.gi$_4$.a.ka.ni ^{d}nin.tin.ug$_5$.ga.ra mu.na.an.dim$_2$
3. nam.bi.še$_3$ ur.e nin.a.ni.ir kun mu.na.ab.gun$_3$.gun$_3$ šeg$_{11}$ mu.na.ab.gi$_4$
"Lugal-Nesag, son of Zuzu, craftsman of Nippur,
fashioned Tuni-Lusag, his messenger dog, for the Goddess Nintinuga.
For his purpose, the dog wags his tail and barks to his mistress."

After the Old Babylonian period, however, the dog's ability to have peaceful or affectionate interactions with people, already scarcely mentioned, seems to disappear almost altogether. One of the rare indirect mention we have is an entry from the omen collection *šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin* (= ŠA).[45] This is one of the most important omen series of the First millennium BC in size, with an estimated total of over 10 000 entries written on 108 thematic tablets. Three of them (tablets 46, 47 and 48) are dedicated exclusively to omens concerning dogs. Although it is true that animals can act in omen collections as symbolic representations of society and the individuals within it,

40. Sumerian Epistolary Miscellany.

41. Kleinerman, 2011: 11.

42. Kleinerman, 2011: 11.

43. Here, Nintinuga is clearly called upon for her potentiality on this regard. Although mostly referred to as Gula or Ninisina, the goddess of healing can manifest herself through many names, such as Nintinuga, Baba, Meme, Bau… As healing goddess, she is strongly associated with the dog, which appears as her emblem. This aspect, mostly explored through her mentions as Ninisina or Gula, has been developed in many publications so far, as in Fuhr, 1977; Charpin & Durand, 1980; Groneberg, 2000; Ornan, 2004; Böck, 2014; Tsouparopoulou, 2012 and 2020; Charpin, 2017; Watanabe, 2017; Nett, 2021 or Vilela, 2023.

44. Kleinerman, 2011: 174.

45. The collection was first edited by F. Nötscher between 1928 and 1930 (Nötscher, 1928; 1929; 1930), and a new edition is currently being published by S. M. Freedman, with tablets 1-63 of the collection being now available (Freedman, 1998; 2006; 2017). In this article, I use the transliterations she has proposed for the tablets dedicated to the dog (ŠA 46, 47 and 48 [Freedman, 2017]).

allowing the diviner to "map onto animals their interpretation of their social environment",[46] those animal descriptions remain rooted on fauna observation. *Šumma ālu* is also a collection dedicated to daily-life occurrences. Its entries are often built over possibilities and its animal depictions are based on a selection of behavioural and interactive patterns previously observed and to which an augural value was attributed. As such, it can provide many information on human-dog interaction dynamics. The first omen of tablet 47 (ŠA 47, 1),[47] whose prediction is missing, starts as following: "If a dog which does not belong to him show him affection (…)".[48] The indication that it is an unknown dog which shows affection to someone implies that such an attitude coming from a familiar dog was probably considered as normal, hence unworthy of an augural value.

Other sources can also provide further information about such positive interactions. It is the case in IB 29, a Middle Babylonian figurine from Ninisina's temple in Isin, in which one can see a man raising a hand while holding a dog with his other arm in a gesture one could suppose is of affection.[49] While such contact could here be part of a ritual,[50] it remains that the figurine depicts both human and dog accepting this physical proximity. All those elements, although scarce, suggest that, while those were not the elements that were selected to be highlighted in the documentation, friendly and affectionate aspects of the dog were well known and could also be valued. The dog could then act as a partner and as a friendly companion.

Of course, although sources focus on human point of view, the dog is never passive and has its own agency. Keeping predators away also serves its interests, and interpreting human attitudes is just as beneficial for dogs as it is for humans, being a key element to regulate their interactions. Still, textual sources imply not only a sense of partnership and common interests, but also some level of control over the animal, whose aggressiveness is oriented against specific targets. This point is particularly enhanced on texts mentioning the dog's role as a symbolic guardian.

As a whole, as long as it remains friendly and predictable, as long as its targets are compatible with human interests, the dog is valued. But when its interests clash with those of humans, when the dog shifts from partner to competitor and the relationship drifts away from human benefit, things change drastically and both species find themselves in a conflictual interactive pattern.

2. *The dog out of control as a foe*

A dog out of control can then be understood as an animal whose interests are no longer aligned with those of humans. Studies have demonstrated that the quantity and distribution of food resources define intraspecific social organization of many species (especially those with a meat-based diet like dogs), determining the development of multiple strategies for the acquisition of said resources.[51] Such strategies can also impact their interactions with other species, as, when it comes

46. De Zorzi, 2022 : 90.

47. Freedman, 2017: 61.

48. ŠA 47, 1: d i š u r . g i 7 *la šu2-u2 u2-ra-am-šu2* (…).

49. Hrouda, 1977: pl. 12.

50. An omen from the Neo-Assyrian period (CT 39, 38) mentions that touching one of Gula's dogs could purify a man (Avalos, 1995, p. 208). Although the text belongs to a later corpus, this figurine might already attest of the integration of the dogs living in goddess's temple in healing practices.

51. Daniels & Bekoff, 1989.

to dogs, with humans. Indeed, the "controlled" and predictable dog is not necessarily always coerced to act as a partner, for several aspects of the human-dog partnership has roots in common benefits, as the opposition to wild animals which could be threats or competitors to both dogs and humans.

Dogs can, however, have attitudes which are not just no longer compatible with human needs, but might also oppose them: humans have then no control at all over the situation. Moreover, a dog whose interests were aligned with humans' and used to act as a partner can cease to do so if those interests are no longer compatible and develop other survival strategies, disrupting preestablished interactive patterns and giving the relationship an unpredictable, uncontrolled dimension in its essence. Those uncertainties can be strengthened by gaps or misunderstandings in dog-human communication, with signals sent from one species not being correctly interpreted by the other, complicating the regulation of interactions and prediction of attitudes (especially aggressive ones). This has a direct impact on the way human populations represent the dog, which appears then as potential foe one should not fully trust.

Tensions arise when dog aggressiveness can no longer be controlled or predicted, leading to texts from many *corpora* to manifest, at best, wariness, at worst, hostility, towards those uncontrolled animals, which can belong to two main categories. The first one refers to dogs which used to be partners and whose attitude has changed, which could happen for many reasons (diverging interests, flaws in communication, behavioural changes due to pathologies such as rabies…). But there are also other types of dogs, which spend most of their lives (or all of it) without attachment to specific human individuals and, as consequence, never find themselves under some sort of human direct control. Nowadays, we often refer to those animals as "stray dogs", or "free-ranging dogs".[52] While rare in current Western countries, most of canine populations through history have belonged to this category (and still do in many places all around the world). They are born free, often in urban or peri-urban spaces, and humans have little to no control over their movements, behaviour, alimentation, reproduction… While it is true that domestic dogs could also wander, mixing themselves on occasion with those stray groups, dogs attached to specific human groups or individuals always had a place to go back to, and where they could expect to fulfil some of their needs (even if they were fed only with leftovers). In spite of a potential permeability between those canine populations, some essential aspects of their needs and life conditions might strongly differ, exposing them to distinct basic necessities prone to affect their interactions with other species, and particularly humans.

It is, however, often difficult to distinguish between those two dog categories in cuneiform texts, which mostly refer to the animals through the simple term "dog" (u r . g i$_7$/*kalbum*). In omens, possessives can be used to explicit the connection of a dog to someone, while the use of the plural, recurring when referring to groups of random animals met in the streets, might suggests that they have apparently no direct connection to the human mentioned in the text. Those animals often manifest tense or hostile behaviour, indicating potential competitive relationship with humans.

Dog's aggressiveness is a key element which appears in many types text. It appears often in proverbs, especially in the Sumerian Proverb Collection, although most remain unclear as to the type of dog, and aggressiveness and unpredictability seem to be presented as inherent characteristics of the animal. This can be seen in SP 2.11 ("Fate is (as) a dog who has bitten

52. Daniels & Bekoff, 1989.

(…)"[53]) and SP 2.14 ("Labor[54] is a dog going after someone"[55]), which are both very similar and compare the dog to an unavoidable disgrace that one has no other choice but to endure. While the dog's aggressiveness is only clearly expressed in SP 2.11, SP 2.14 nevertheless describes the presence of the canid as, at best, unpleasant and harassing.

The animal's aggressiveness is also presented as something that does not need to be provoked and that can target anyone randomly. Even without showing hostility towards a dog, the simple fact of crossing paths with this animal at the wrong moment could be enough to be in trouble. It is the case of SP 5.120, which depicts an aggressive whelping bitch:[56] "Like a whelping bitch, she bites the workmen".[57] While, in this case, one might guess that said bitch sent warning signals not to be approached, it remains that she is depicted as a potential threat.

Given the high proximity between humans and dogs, we understand that there were many occasions for conflicts. In such a context, dog bites were probably not uncommon and a genuine source of concern, as suggested by many incantations against dog bites, such as VS 17, 8[58] and BM 79125.[59] Those were seen as an important threat, not only because of the potential severity or the infection of wounds, but mostly due to the risk of transmission of rabies.[60] Yet, biting dogs can also be mentioned in humoristic texts, such as in a Neo-Babylonian tablet from Uruk (IM 78552),[61] which begins with a man named Ninurta-Pāqidāt being bitten by a dog: "A dog bit him and he went to Isin, the city of the Lady of Life, to be healed".[62] In spite of its potential serious consequences, the dog bite is not depicted here as a major event, but merely as a daily-life occurrence, which then initiates the story and the main course of events. One can also note that the unavoidable nuisance of biting dogs, already expressed in Sumerian Proverbs, remains unchanged up to the First millennium BC.

Aggressive dogs can also be found in omens, such as in *šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin*. However, this corpus only mentions biting dogs when the animal turns against its owner, as can be seen in ŠA 47, 4' ("If a dog is enraged and bites his master (…)"[63]) and ŠA 47, 4' ("If a dog bites his master (…)"[64]).[65] Does this mean that, contrary to domestic dogs, stray dog bites were *per se* not unusual and therefore unworthy of receiving an augural value? It is difficult to say, for while the verb *našāku* ("to bite") is not often used to depict dog behaviour in *šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin*, there are

53. SP 2.11: nam.tar ur.ra.am$_3$ zu$_2$ mu.un.da.an.ku$_5$ (…).

54. The term du.lum can also be translated by "hard work, toil", as it is the case in the ETCSL edition of the tablet collection (The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ox.ac.uk)). I have chosen to keep B. Alster translation "labor" (Alster, 1997: 49). It is interesting to note that there are some versions of the same proverb in which du.lum has been replaced by nam.tar (fate).

55. SP 2.14: du.lum ur.gi$_7$.ra.am$_3$ egir.ra.na mu.un.du.

56. SP 5.120: nig.tu.da.gim erin$_2$ zu$_2$ ab(!).ku$_5$.ku$_5$.de$_3$.

57. I have kept here B. Alster's translation (Alster, 1997, 142).

58. Sigrist, 1987.

59. Finkel, 1999.

60. Vilela, 2021 and 2023; Wu, 2001.

61. George, 1993.

62. IM 78552, 4: ur.gi$_7$ *iš-šuk-šu-ma ana isin*(PA.ŠE)ki uru ^{d}*be-let*-ti!.la a-*na bu-tal-lu-ṭi-šu*$_2$ gin^{ik}.

63. ŠA 47, 4': diš ur.gi$_7$ *in-na-dir-ma* en-*šu*$_2$ *iš-šuk* (…).

64. ŠA 47, 12': diš ur.gi$_7$ en-*šu*$_2$ *iš-šu*-[*uk* …] (…).

65. I follow for both those citations S.M. Freedman's translation (Freedman 2017, 61).

other ways to refer to the animal's aggressiveness, mostly through the use of the verb *šegû*, which means "to rage, to be rabid".[66] This can refer directly to rabies infections and symptoms, or simply suggest strong and uncontrolled aggressiveness, for *šegû* can also be used to describe other species, such as lions and wolves. It seems to me, however, that when referring to dogs, the term could indicate a change of attitude and the emergence of unusual and highly aggressive behavioural patterns.

While bites themselves are finally quite scarce on this *corpus*, aggressive attitudes which might precede aggression are on the contrary frequent, probably because recognizing those signals was essential to avoid being bitten. Indeed, with the exception of predatory behaviour, most animals often send aggressive signals when threatened or annoyed, whose purpose is actually to avoid direct confrontation. The recognition of hostile signals is therefore essential for both intra- and interspecific interactions,[67] being the key to avoid conflictual situations which could result in potentially severe wounds. When it comes to the interactions between humans and dogs, bites often occur when preceding signals have been either ignored or misunderstood. It is then highly relevant that cuneiform sources insist on aggressive signals, indirectly indicating their importance on human/dog interactions regulation. While aggressive behaviour was apparently expected from unknown (possibly stray) animals, domestic dogs could also turn against their owners, a situation expressed both on omens and proverbs, as it sems to be the case in SP 4.17: "May your favorite [dog][68] bite you".[69] While affective patterns could exist, a certain amount of mistrust always seems to be present, reflecting the potentially shifting nature of human/dog partnership. It could also be enhanced by the fear of rabies, a disease which had the potential to make the dog go feral, turning it from friend to foe.

The stray dog, however, is undeniably a threat, whether rabid or not. One can indeed note that the black dog mentioned in the Old Assyrian incantation kt a/k 611[70] is not presented as rabid, although it is roaming free and clearly depicted as dangerous. The animal is described as a threatening force ready to strike, illustrating the capacity of the wild dog's image to embody the notion of threat and enmity.

Kt a/k 611, 2-8:
2. *ka$_3$-al-bu-um*
3. *ṣa-al-mu-um*
4. *i-ti$_2$-li-im ra-bi$_4$-iṣ*
5. *u$_2$-qa$_2$-a illat-tam$_2$*
6. *pa$_2$-ri-is-tam$_2$ eṭ-lam$_x$*
7. *dam-qam$_2$ i-ta-na-ap$_2$-li-sa$_3$*
8. *e-na-šu*

"The black dog lurks in the tell, it waits for the isolated caravan, its eyes are looking for the good young man".

66. CAD, Š 2, p. 260.

67. Giraldeau & Dubois, 2009: 182.

68. The beginning of the entry is missing. B. Alster has proposed to reconstruct the signs u r . g i$_7$ (dog) (Alster, 1997, 115), which, given the context and the rest of the entry, is a viable possibility.

69. SP 4.17: [u r . g i$_7$(?)] s a$_6$. g a . z u z u$_2$ ḫ e$_2$. k u$_5$.

70. Veenhof, 1996.

One can also note here the location of the animal, lurking in a tell, hence inhabiting an abandoned and isolated place, contrasting with the usual location of dogs in urban spaces.[71] The dog from this incantation operates in a place more commonly associated with wild animals and demons,[72] contributing to establish a parallel between this specific dog and evil forces.

Aggressiveness, whether induced by rabies or not, seems to be the main characteristic of the stray dog. There are, however, other elements in its behavioural patterns that may also have contributed to its negative image in Mesopotamian culture, such as its feeding habits. Indeed, dogs, like all canids, have extremely high adaptative capacities and a flexible diet in which meat can be completed with cereals, fruits or even insects.[73] Still, the domestication process has had an impact on dogs, turning them even less dependent of meat than wolves.[74] Such a modification in feeding habits makes it easier to sustain the domestic animal, capable of eating many sorts of leftovers.

Of course, such diet adaptability is also beneficial to stray dogs, as it enables them to eat almost everything they find in the streets and even gives them an indirect utility to human societies, for they help to get rid of many forms of garbage. This turns urban spaces into a favourable environment for those dog populations as well, with many resources that might be relevant to them, although not necessarily that interesting for canids with a more carnivorous diet, like wolves. On this matter, it should be noted that, due to some characteristics of their regional ecosystems, Mesopotamian cities could be particularly attractive environments for dogs. The region is indeed characterized by mostly arid and semi-arid ecosystems, which make resources scarce if compared to the abundance of cities (mostly through the form of waste from diverse human activities and productions). Moreover, Near Eastern steppes were at that time occupied by a much more diverse fauna from modern days, and many animals which could either prey on dogs or compete with them were present, like wolves, lions, hyenas…[75] Staying in cities or nearby could then be beneficial on many aspects for dogs, whether for protection or for resource accessibility.

This does not, however, means that life conditions for stray dogs were mild. Competition also existed in cities, whether among dogs themselves or with other omnivorous species, and finding (and keeping) food was not an easy task. Textual sources often depict those dogs as starving animals suffering from a hunger they can never fully satiate. Such mentions can be found in very different types of texts, suggesting that misery, hunger, and starvation were notions deeply integrated in the stray dog's image. Equivalences of this sort are often mentioned in letters from vassals to their king during the Neo-Assyrian period, such as in a letter from a man named Kudurru, son of Šamaš-ibni, to Esarhaddon:

71. Dogs described in the steppe are usually shepherd dogs. When not occupying this specific function dogs are deeply associated with cities (Vilela 2021), mostly presented as a "feature of urban landscape" (De Zorzi, 2022: 94).

72. Lamentations mention the presence of wild creatures in desolated places, manifesting the intrusion of chaotic forces, as in *The Curse of Agade*, through the image of foxes entering the ravaged city (Cooper, 1983: 63).

73. Miklósi, 2018: 16.

74. Miklósi 2018: 36.

75. All of which live also, just like dogs, in social groups.

SAA 16, 31[76] **(= ABL 0756), r 3'-5':**
r. 3'. (…) *ki-i kal-bi*
r. 4'. *ina si-in-qi ina bu-bu-ti*[77]
r. 5'. *ša* ninda.ḫi.a *lu la a-mu-`a-at*
"May I not die of famine, of hunger of bread like a dog!"

Yet this refers to a much older conception of the dog for this aspect of the animal is often called upon in the Sumerian Proverb Collection. In this corpus, the dog is depicted always searching for food (SP 2.109: "A sniffing dog entering all houses"[78]), able to eat almost anything and having on this regard the pig as only concurrent as the fragmentary proverb SP 2.111 seems to indicate ("What the dog does [not(?)][79] eat in the town square, the pig eats (…)[80]").[81]

Conflicts could also arise with other species occupying similar ecological niches, like humans and pigs. Those species could indeed aim for resources that could also interest dogs, which might have resulted in the development competitive interactive patterns referred to in very different types of text. Although their cause is not always specified, as in ŠA 46, 45: "If dogs and pigs are fighting in the laid foundations of a house (…)",[82] it is probable that the sharing of similar feeding habits had a role to play.

When it comes to humans, conflicts for food occur when dogs try to steal resources which humans consider as belonging to them. The resulting tensions are not often referred to in texts, but occur from the Third to the First Millennium BC. An allusion is made in Sumerian proverb SP 5.88, for instance, in which a gardener chases away a dog approaching his palm-trees, possibly because the dog could eat the fruits. BM 114524,[83] a Neo-Babylonian text in which a puppy is killed by a slave, is clearer on that respect, for the man defends himself in as follows:

BM 114524, 3-9:
3. *ina* ugu xx *aš*$_2$*-ba-ak kal-bi* gal-*u*$_2$ *u*$_3$ 1-*en mu-ra-*[*nu*]
4. *ina pa-ni-ia u*$_2$*-šu-uz-zu kal-bi* gal-*u*$_2$
5. ninda$^{ḫi.a}$ *ul-tu* igi-*ia ki-i iḫ-bi-tu* ^{giš}nig$_2$.pa *a-n*[*a*]

76. Luuko & van Buylaere, 2002. Also online: saao/saa16 (upenn.edu).

77. I chose here to keep *sunqu*'s first meaning "famine" and consider the repetition with *bubūtu* (hunger) as part of an emphasizing process. In their edition of the text, M. Luuko and G. van Buylaere have proposed to translate *sunqu* as "distress" (Luukko/van Buylaere, 2002: 30) while the CAD offers a third option "may I not die of famine, of want of food" (CAD S: 386). Either way, the connection of the dog with the notion of hunger appears as strongly emphasized in this text.

78. SP 2.109: ur si.im.si.im e$_2$.e$_2$.a ku$_4$.ku$_4$.

79. B. Alster has suggested to reconstruct the missing sign with a negation prefix nu- (Alster, 1997: 67). While this is still hypothetical, it does not change the fact that the proverb establishes a clear parallel between dogs and pigs feeding habits as scavenging and trash-eating animals.

80. SP 2.111: ur [x].gu$_7$ tilla$_2$.a šaḫ$_2$ in.gu$_7$ (…).

81. I have kept B. Alster's translations for SP 2.109 (Alster, 1997: 67). For SP 2.111, I have decided to join the ETCSL's choice to translate tilla$_2$.a as "town square" instead of "market place" (Alster, 1997: 67; The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ox.ac.uk)).

82. ŠA 46, 45: diš ur.gi$_7$.meš *u*$_4$ šaḫ.meš ina apin šub.meš *im-daḫ-ḫa-ṣu* (…).

83. Kessler, 2006.

6. ugu *kal-bi* gal-u_2 *ki-i aš$_2$-šu-u$_2$ um-ma kal-bi* gal-u_2
7. *lu-un-ḫa-aṣ kal-bi* gal-u_2 *il-ta-su-um mu-ra-nu*
8. *li*[*b-b*]*u am-ḫu-ṣu ina mi-iḫ-ṣi-šu$_2$ ša$_2$ an-ḫa-ṣu-uš*
9. *mi-i-tu* (…)
"I was sitting on [xx] when a big dog and a puppy stood up before me. When the big dog stole bread just before my eyes, (I took) a wooden stick (to use it) against the big dog, saying (to myself): "I want to beat the big dog". (But) the big dog ran away, and I hit the puppy. Because of his wound, (which he's got because) I hit him, he was dead".

The text illustrates both the conflictual relationship with humans for the acquisition of food resources, as well as the negative consequences those encounters could have among juvenile animals. Such high pressure on survival strongly impacts both the behaviour of those dogs and the type of interactions they have among themselves and with other species, especially with human beings. It can result in adult individuals potentially more aggressive.

Dogs are also known to act as scavengers, being then able to eat human bodies when given the occasion. Such scenes are often referred to in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, as in SAA 12, 26[84] from Assurbanipal: "May dogs tear apart his body left unburied".[85] Another element attesting of the integration of the threatening nature of dog in human collective unconsciousness might also be found in the adoption formula *ša pî kalbi,* which means "(taken) from the dog's mouth" and could maybe refer to the practice of exposure.[86] The vulnerability of children left uncared for is expressed and emphasized through the image of dogs preying on them.[87] While there are no mentions of dogs directly attacking children in cuneiform sources, one can still wonder if the adoption formula *ša pî kalbi* might not be related to such events.

All those tensions in human/dog interactions have had a strong impact on the animal symbolic value, even resulting in an affiliation with the very demons the dog as a partner was supposed to fight. Many evil creatures are described as sharing similarities with dogs in hymns and incantations. In the Sumerian Hendursaga Hymn,[88] one of the seven demons accompanying the god is depicted with a dog's behaviour: "The second (demon) sniffs constantly like a dog".[89] Given that all the other demons from this text are compared with either predators or scavenging animals,[90] I consider that it is highly possible for this "sniffing dog" to be assimilated to a stray dog.[91] Such association of the dog with evil forces benefits from an extreme longevity, being also present in First millennium BC rituals against Lamaštu: (Lamaštu Series 2, Ritual 12: 165: "She keeps howling[92] like a bitch"[93]). The descriptions appearing in those texts differ greatly from those of the

84. Kataja & Whiting, 1995. Also available online: saao/saa12 (upenn.edu).

85. SAA 12, 26: r31 (= K 02729): lu$_2$.uš$_2$-*šu$_2$ i-na la qe$_2$-be$_2$-ri li-ba-aṣ-ṣi-ru* ur.gi$_7$.meš.

86. Wunsch, 2003: 178.

87. Wunsch, 2003: 177-178; De Zorzi, 2022: 94.

88. Several editions of the text are available (Edzard & Wilcke, 1976; Attinger & Krebernik, 2005) and the text can be found online on the ETCSL website (The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ox.ac.uk)).

89. Hendursaga Hymn, 79: 2.kam.ma ur.gi$_7$.gin$_7$ si.im.si.im i$_3$.ak.a.

90. Verderame, 2017.

91. Vilela, 2021: 26.

92. W. Farber has suggested to translate the Štn form of the verb *laḫābu* (to howl [CAD L, 38]) by "to whimper" (Farber, 2014: 179; 247-248).

domestic dog and probably evoke the stray animal in its threatening and devouring aspect. The lack of control over the dog also connects it to the wild and chaotic forces threatening human existence, further enhancing its association with demons.

Many tangible elements of the stray dog's behaviour have contributed to make this animal to be considered as naturally dangerous and unpredictable, as a being that, while living amongst human populations, remains completely out of control. Through their aggressiveness, which is not oriented on designed targets, and their feeding habits, those dogs distinguish themselves from their domestic counterpart, even if this one can also be unpredictable and shift from friend to foe. As a whole, the complex relationship existing between humans and dogs as two species enabled to both cooperate and compete with each other is what defines the animal's integration in human symbolic thought.

3. *Conclusion*

Although each dog is unique and shaped by different life conditions, it remains nevertheless that, as a species, dogs evolve within a broad scope of behavioural schemes defined by both their physiology and their biological needs. Depending on the environmental pressures they must face, they will manifest distinct behavioural patterns to ensure their survival. Canids, and dogs in particular, are indeed a mammal group known for their strong adaptability, able to respond quickly to environmental and resource changes. A better understanding of dog behaviour is useful to better recognize and comprehend how human societies choose to represent the animal. Although textual representations are cultural and, as such, partial depictions, ethology is precious to reconstruct the patterns behind such descriptions and replace them in the complex web of interactions existing between *Homo sapiens* and *Canis lupus familiaris*.

Given the gap existing between the life conditions to which domestic and stray dogs are confronted to, it is not surprising that distinct interactions with people came to be. Those two categories of dogs have had to adapt to very different lifestyles, which has affected not only their general behaviour but also the dynamics of their interactions with human beings. As such, while belonging to a single species, they cannot convey a unique reality. Domestic and stray dogs correspond then to very different interaction patterns with people, making it possible to associate them with different symbolic values, resulting in a dualistic cultural depiction of the same animal species.

Such vision of the dog is further strengthened by the uncertainties regarding the domestic animal. While valued as an ally and able to develop affective bonds with its master, it can always escape this latter's control and turn against him for many reasons. This dog goes then from controlled to uncontrolled, from friend to foe, becoming a threat as dangerous as the stray dog.

The image of the dog varies then according to whether its aggressiveness can be oriented against established targets (wild animals, demons), or not. The ambivalence of the dog reflects the complexity and diversity of interactive patterns existing between two species: humans and dogs. Living in close proximity and being frequently in contact, they have come to develop both cooperative and competitive relationships according to the circumstances. Those interactive patterns are the core of the dog's image in cuneiform sources from Mesopotamia and are the key to understand this animal's representation in this cultural system, an approach that can also be employed to study animal representation in other societies in a broader context.

93. Lamaštu Series 2, Ritual 12: 165: *uš-ta-na-al-ḫab ki-ma kal-ba-tum*.

4. *Abbreviations*

CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
ETCSL	The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature
SAA 12	State Archives of Assyria 12 (= Kataja/Whiting 1995)
SAA 16	State Archives of Assyria 16 (= Luukko/van Buylaere 2002)
ŠA	*Šumma Ālu ina Mēlê Šakin* (= Freedman 1998; 2006; 2017)
SEpM	Sumerian Epistolary Miscellany (= Kleinerman 2011)
SP	Sumerian Proverb Collection (= Alster 1997)

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