Licking Ilu's Wounds: The Hair of a Dog as the Hangover Cure in *KTU* 1.114

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[The recipe for the hangover cure cited at the end of *KTU* 1.114 is notoriously unclear for several reasons. First, the cuneiform script in line 29 of the text is challenging to decipher, and consequently has garnered competing interpretations in recent decades. Even after resolving its epigraphic difficulties, two different understandings of *šʿr klb*—the cure's key ingredient—are possible. Drawing on comparative evidence from other ancient Near Eastern sources, this essay proposes a twofold solution to this interpretive issue. Whereas the editors of *KTU*[3] amend older readings of line 29 altogether, I argue it should be maintained as *šʿr klb*. Although some interpret *šʿr klb* as a botanical reference, I suggest this phrase might refer to an actual dog hair. Given the strong association of dogs with healing across the ancient Near East, it makes sense that dog hair is the main ingredient for the cure in *KTU* 1.114.][1]

Keywords: *KTU* 1.114, Ugaritic religion, the *mrzḥ* feast, healing, dogs, ancient Near Eastern medicine.

1. *An Episode of Divine Debauchery*

One of the most interesting stories from Late Bronze Age Ugarit, *KTU* 1.114 describes an episode where the high god Ilu hosts a drinking banquet—a *mrzḥ*—and consumes alcohol to the point of severe intoxication.[2] He becomes so drunk that he must be escorted home by his two sons Ṯakamuna and Šunama while slipping and falling in his own excrement. Meanwhile, his daughters ʾAnatu and ʾAṯtartu search the wilderness for a remedy that will cure their inebriated father. The last three lines of the text prescribe the antidote Ilu's daughters allegedly find for nursing a hangover: "This is what one should apply to his forehead: dog hair, from head, then to throat, and until his navel; he should apply along with virgin olive oil" (*KTU* 1.114:29-31).[3] Ilu's divine feast thus seems to be a *historiola*—a myth that offers an etiological background to the medicinal recipe provided at the end of the story.[4]

1. In addition to the anonymous reviewers of *AuOr*, I would like to thank Meg Hansen, Forrest Martin, and especially Eric McDonnell and Joel LeMon for offering helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

2. See further commentary about the *mrzḥ* feast in Wyatt, (2002) pp. 404-405 and McLaughlin, (2001) pp. 27-31.

3. All Ugaritic translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

4. As Gregorio del Olmo Lete explains, *KTU* 1.114 is a mythological text that "acts as the basis and warranty for a medical-magical remedy against intoxication from alcohol;" del Olmo Lete, (2014) p. 335.

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Despite its importance to *KTU* 1.114, the actual remedy in lines 29-31 is ambiguous. Specifically, the initial ingredient listed at the end of line 29—the so-called "dog hair"—is unclear. There are two primary reasons for this uncertainty. First, the cuneiform script in line 29 is disappointingly vague, leaving interpreters with two major options for the transliteration of this important component of the cure. Second, even once one chooses to read the cuneiform script as *šʿr klb*, the phrase itself could still have several different meanings. This article proposes a twofold solution to the problem of the "dog hair" in *KTU* 1.114. Whereas the editors of *KTU*[3] recommend amending older transliterations of line 29, I argue it should be maintained as *šʿr klb*. Moreover, I propose this phrase refers to an actual dog hair instead of a botanical reference. In view of the association of dogs with healing across the ancient Near East, it makes sense that dog hair is the main ingredient for the cure in *KTU* 1.114.

2. *Reconstructing the Text of* KTU *1.114:29*

Although the cuneiform wedges of the tablet are remarkably clear and deep, some portions of *KTU* 1.114 have been badly damaged or lost, leaving readers to render more speculative judgments about how it might have originally read.[5] In certain cases where it is cracked or faded but not necessarily broken, cuneiform signs have been blurred so that it is unclear which Ugaritic character the scribe intended to mold into the clay. This deterioration is what appears to have occurred in the final lines of *KTU* 1.114, which prescribe the principal ingredients for the medicinal incantation that are the crux of this text.[6] Line 29 is infamously difficult, prompting two major interpretations that are consistently proposed in the scholarly literature:[7]

(1) *d yšt . l-lṣbh . šʿr klb*[8] "This is what one should apply to his forehead: dog hair…"

(2) *d yšt . l-lṣbh ḫšʿrk lbb*[9] "This is what one should apply to his forehead: set out thyme (on) the heart…"[10]

5. Most notably, the bottom quarter of the tablet has been broken off, approximately 12 lines of missing text; Wyatt, (2002) p. 404; see also Appendix I.

6. See Appendix II.

7. Although variant readings certainly exist, these two interpretations seem most prominent and have each been suggested by different versions of *KTU*. For other possibilities, see the discussion in Dietrich & Loretz, (2000) p. 475.

8. This reading is presented by *KTU*[2] as well as del Olmo Lete, Wyatt, Dennis Pardee, Theodore J. Lewis, and Josef Tropper; Dietrich, Loretz, & Sanmartín, (1995) p. 130; del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 235; Wyatt, (2002) pp. 412-413; Pardee, (1988) p. 14; Lewis, (1997) p. 196; Tropper, (2000) p. 513.

9. This reading is what both *KTU*[1] and *KTU*[3] give preference to, and is the transliteration rendered by Johannes de Moor, and Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz; Dietrich, Loretz, & Sanmartín, (1976) p. 120; Dietrich, Loretz, & Sanmartín, (2013) p. 134; de Moor, (1984) p. 356; Dietrich & Loretz, (2000) p. 413.

10. Marvin Pope and Charles Virolleaud present a minority report for how this clause ought to be read that is worth a brief comment. They each transliterate the second half of this line as *ḫšʿr klb*, with the main difference being how the words are divided. They link the consonants *ḫšʿr* to the Akkadian cognate *ḫašurru* meaning "apple," and understand *klb* as *k-lb* in accordance with the mention of body parts in line 30; Virolleaud, (1968) p. 551; Pope, (1972) pp. 198-199. See also Hans Barstad's similar interpretation of "Hundeapfel" for the phrase *ḫšʿr klb* in Barstad, (1978) p. 25, n. 6.

The primary point of contention relates to whether the eleventh sign in the epigraphic sequence is simply a word divider (*Winkelhaken*) or represents the cuneiform sign /ḫ/.[11] While both interpretations could fit the medicinal context of the tablet's last few lines, I am inclined to agree with Gregorio del Olmo Lete's reading against that found in *KTU*[3]. He argues the cuneiform vertical wedge represents a larger form of the *Winkelhaken* since this sign would be unusually big for an /ḫ/.[12] Moreover, this sign does not match other instances in *KTU* 1.114 where the sign /ḫ/ is more certainly decipherable. In line 31, for example, the first sign in the word *ḫrpnt* ("harvest, autumnal") clearly exhibits the three-head wedges characteristic of a standard /ḫ/ sign.[13] It is unlikely the scribe would have abruptly changed epigraphic style in line 29 when they inscribed this letter consistently elsewhere in this text. It is more plausible to conclude the eleventh sign is an abnormally large form of the word divider, as the scribe was much less regular in how they impressed the *Winkelhaken* throughout *KTU* 1.114. For instance, on the obverse side of the tablet, the first *Winkelhaken* in line 3 (the fourth cuneiform sign in the sequence) is short and triangular, whereas the last *Winkelhaken* in line 5 is divergently tall and narrow.[14] The best way to read the consonantal text at the end of line 29 is therefore *šʿr klb* instead of *ḫšʿrk lbb*.

3. *A Plant or an Actual Dog Hair?*

Even with a clearer understanding of the cuneiform text, multiple interpretation options are available for the phrase *šʿr klb*. Grammatically, this clause is best understood as a construct chain meaning "dog hair," or "hair of a dog." One way to understand this expression is as a reference to a specific plant from ancient Near Eastern botany. This interpretation would parallel well with line 30 which, according to some readings, possibly prescribes the use of a *pqq* plant as another key ingredient in the medicinal recipe.[15] Wilfred Watson aptly summarizes one version of this

11. See Appendix II.

12. Del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227; see also Appendix III.

13. See Appendix IV; this epigraphic style is also characteristic of the sign /ḫ/ in the word *bi-ḫaraʾihu* from line 21 on the obverse side of the tablet.

14. Compare the *Winkelhaken* exhibited in Appendices V and VI.

15. See another example of this translation option for line 30 in Pardee, (1988) pp. 14, 23, 68-74; see also discussions in Lewis, (1997) p. 196; Cathcart, (1996) p. 3; Cathcart & Watson, (1980) pp. 43, 47-48. Del Olmo Lete cites the main issue with this reading, citing how the different botanical interpretations of *pqq* "are all hapax meanings, which surely is not an insurmountable objection, but according the scholastic *dictum* 'non sunt multiplicanda entia sine necessitate:' while the meaning 'navel' (for *pqq*) is well attested in Ug. in this kind of divinatory text;" del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227. Another way to interpret *pqq* is to regard *p-* as a conjunction ("so, then") prefixed onto the Ug. noun *qq* ("throat"). This meaning for *qq* derives from the Jewish Aram. cognate *qāqā*, meaning "neck" or "throat," and is also possibly referenced in the Sefire inscriptions, which could be relevant to Ug.; see discussions in Fitzmyer, (1995) p. 44-45, and Degen, (1969) p. 11 n. 54. *P* cannot stand apart from *qq* as a different word, as there is no *Winkelhaken* following *p* and there is not enough space between the cuneiform signs to suggest the scribe intended a break between them. This observation rules out reading these two terms separately as *p* ("mouth") and *qq* ("throat"); see Watson, (1990) pp. 266-267. If one understands *p* as a prefixed conjunction, however, a solution becomes possible. Line 30 would read, "from head, then to throat, and until his navel." A third possibility is to understand the entire word *pqq* as meaning "throat," like de Moor discusses in his study of this text, or another bodily reference such as the chest or the "navel-knot;" de Moor, (1969) pp. 169, 174; Margalit, (1979) p. 115. In any case, it is unlikely *pqq* has anything to do with plants. Thus del Olmo Lete is correct when he claims "it is easier to assume *pqq* in line 30 must be part of a list of bodily terms since "*rʾiš*

hypothesis in his study of botanical terms in the Ugaritic texts. “Instead of a literal meaning, the expression (*šʿr klb*) may correspond to Akkadian *lišān kalbi*, ‘dog’s tongue’ or ‘hound’s tongue,’ which is the name of a medicinal plant used for various ailments, including cough, jaundice, and stomach trouble.”[16] While not a perfect match to the consonantal text written in line 29, it is certainly reasonable to propose *lišān kalbi* is what the scribe meant by referencing *šʿr klb*, as “dog tongue” and “dog hair” could be conceptually related. The major problem with this argument, though, is that *lišān kalbi* is seldom mentioned as a hangover cure in the Akkadian texts.[17] Infrequent attestations for this particular usage of the plant could be circumstantial, since the herb seems to have been implemented to cure a wide array of ailments. Nevertheless, because *lišān kalbi* occurs in only one other text dealing with alcohol-induced sickness, I find this interpretation of *šʿr klb* unsatisfactory.[18]

Nicolas Wyatt proposes *šʿr klb* is a botanical reference, linking the phrase to the Akkadian *šêr kalbi*.[19] Drawing on Marvin Pope’s 1972 study of *KTU* 1.114, he identifies this plant as one that had medicinal properties in the ancient world, often “mixed with oil and taken internally for intestinal and urinary problems.”[20] Beyond its obvious parallels to the remedy’s description provided in *KTU* 1.114—especially the reference to olive oil at the end of line 31—Wyatt adds how this interpretation may be an even stronger contextual fit given the references to a dog earlier in lines 4-6 and 11-13. The mythological portion of this text preceding the ritual incantation “alludes to a dog (lines 11-13) whose hair is now used metaphorically in the application of the herb …. the dog’s further association with Yarḫu (in lines 4-6) may well have also had a bearing on the preparation of the medicine, which may have coincided with a particular phase of the moon.”[21] Wyatt acknowledges this literary connection is conjectural at best, but his hypothesis *šʿr klb* relates

and *šr* are well-attested anatomical terms;” del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227. Interpretations of line 29 that draw upon this assumption to suggest *šʿr klb* is a parallel botanical reference rest on weak argumentation. Reading *pqq* as part of a list of bodily terms might also align with the Akkadian *Mušš u ʾu* ritual in which a “rubbing from head to toe” is performed in order to cast out an evil spirit from an ill person’s body. For more information on this ritual, see Böck, (2003) pp. 1-16.

16. Watson, (2004) p. 135; it should be noted, however, that Watson himself does not subscribe to this view in his article. He merely lists it as one possible interpretation among others in concise terms. Elsewhere, he does in fact cite the possibility that *šʿr klb* could refer to an actual dog hair as part of the remedy in *KTU* 1.114; Watson, (1980) p. 266. For other discussions on the connection between *šʿr klb* and Akk. *lišān kalbi*, see Thompson, (1949) p. 23 and del Olmo Lete, (1998) p. 161.

17. Del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227.

18. One outlier example from Jo Ann Scurlock’s sourcebook on Mesopotamian medicine is potentially interesting. *Lišān kalbi* is cited as part of a prescription to cure what seems to be alcohol poisoning in BAM 59; Scurlock, (2014) p. 636. Nevertheless, the problem at hand still remains; one attestation is not enough evidence to assume *KTU* 1.114 calls for this herb as part of its medicinal treatment.

19. Wyatt, (2002) pp. 412-413; this Akkadian phrase is possibly another reference to the *lišān kalbi* herb mentioned above, but this connection seems uncertain to me.

20. Pope, (1972) p. 199; see also Thompson, (1949) p. 23.

21. Wyatt, (2002) p. 413; see also Amir Sumaka’i Fink’s article that agrees there is a literary connection between the dog in *KTU* 1.114 and *šʿr klb*. He writes, “The appended recipe in line 29 features dog hair, and although it does not seem to refer to any specific dog, I believe that we should reconstruct the plot as including a dog character from the point where *yrḫ* plays the dog to end the script.” Moreover, Fink thinks the broken lines at the end of the mythological portion of the tablet probably featured a dog, further justifying the connection between dog hair in the recipe and in the rest of the story; Fink, (2003) pp. 38-39; see also Pardee’s brief comment on this matter in Pardee, (2002) p. 186.

to these two references to a dog in *KTU* 1.114 remains an interesting theory that deserves further investigation. Regarding the focus of this study, though—the actual remedial ingredients of lines 29-31—his proposal still encounters the problem of infrequent attestation. *Sêr kalbi* is too rarely mentioned in texts that deal with Akkadian botany to be certain this plant is the principal component called for in *KTU* 1.114.[22]

Other interpreters understand *šʿr klb* in a literal sense, explaining that this text calls for a real dog hair as part of this medicinal incantation. Del Olmo Lete argues for this conclusion in his commentary and recent translation of Ilu's divine feast, though he more specifically connects this text's reference to dog hair to magical incantations used in necromancy rites.[23] He understands the wider context of *KTU* 1.114—the *mrzḫ* feast—to have originally been a ritual for communing with the dead.[24] The *mrzḫ* (at least according to *KTU* 1.114) was "a magical necromantic ritual carried out by a group or association of members, under the patronage of a deity, presided over by a professional diviner, and performed in the frame of a banquet by wine swallowing up to drunkenness as an altered state of mind that presumably allows contact to be made with the ghosts of the 'Other World.'"[25] Consuming alcohol to the point of excess allowed humans and gods alike to descend to the underworld and converse with disembodied spirits. Connecting the *mrzḫ's* necromantic aspects with several texts that prescribe dog hair in mortuary incantations, del Olmo Lete sees literal dog hair as a strong fit for *šʿr klb* in line 29.[26]

While del Olmo Lete's theory insightfully links the broader concept of the *mrzḫ* with specific details in the ritual described at the end of *KTU* 1.114, his view too confidently asserts a singular interpretation of the *mrzḫ*'s function. Despite extensive discussion in secondary literature, the *mrzḫ*'s precise nature across ancient Near Eastern literature remains unclear.[27] This frustration derives primarily from the fact that the *mrzḫ* is inconsistently described in texts where it is found, even within the relatively small corpus of Ugaritic literature. Some sources such as *KTU* 1.21 imply the *mrzḫ* might have had a funerary or mortuary function in the ancient world.[28] According to this understanding, the *mrzḫ* would have primarily been a feast designated to honor the spirits of the dead. Pope makes perhaps the strongest claim in favor of this interpretation: "Despite unfounded skepticism in some quarters, there is scant reason to doubt that the West Semitic *marzēaḥ* was a feast for and with the departed ancestors."[29] If this perspective is correct, the *mrzḫ*

22. Thompson, (1949) p. 23. It is also worth noting Dioscorides' *Materia medica* never mentions this herb in its original, medieval, or Renaissance editions, further problematizing the notion *šêr kalbi* is a proper parallel for this passage; del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227.

23. del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227.

24. See a similar interpretation of the *mrzḫ* in Dietrich & Loretz, (1984) p. 171.

25. Del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 223; it is worth noting, however, del Olmo Lete does not explicitly connect the *marziḫu* to activities concerning the official cult of the dead as Pope suggests; Pope, (1981) pp. 176-179; see also the discussion on this topic in Lewis, (1989) pp. 80-94.

26. Specifically, he cites Scurlock's quotation of a necromantic text she calls "Prescription 75" that recommends dog hair as an ingredient for communing with the dead; del Olmo Lete, (2015) p. 227. See Scurlock, (1988) p. 325; see also the related commentary in Finkel, (1983-1984) p. 10.

27. For pertinent examples, see the discussions in Lewis, (1989) pp. 80-94; McLaughlin, (1991) pp. 265-281; McLaughlin, (2001); Miralles Maciá, (2007).

28. McLaughlin, (2001) pp. 32-33; see also Lewis's argument that suggests "*KTU* 1.21 gives the strongest support for the *marzeaḥ* as a funerary banquet or institution;" Lewis, (1989) p. 86.

29. Pope, (1981) p. 176.

would be roughly equivalent to the Mesopotamian *kispum* banquet—a ritual ceremony where food and drink were symbolically shared with the dead and those dwelling in the underworld.[30] If one opts for this interpretation of the *mrzḫ*, del Olmo Lete's interpretation of the cure in *KTU* 1.114 could be appealing. However, most other texts that mention the *mrzḫ* make no such allusion to the cult of the dead or mourning rituals at all. "There is little evidence," John McLaughlin summarizes, "of any other funerary concerns in the *marzēaḥ* references" beyond a few isolated instances.[31] It seems equally possible the *mrzḫ* could have been simply an upper-class drinking banquet similar to the Greek symposium, as is suggested by texts from Ebla, Sidon, and Palmyra that allude to this feast.[32] Because the primary purpose and function of the *mrzḫ* feast is uncertain, del Olmo Lete's interpretation that *šʿr klb* is connected to necromantic rituals is rather sanguine at best. Further clarity on the relationship between the *mrzḫ* and the cult of the dead is needed for this view to be acceptable.

I propose such an acute understanding of the *mrzḫ* is unnecessary, however, to justify reading *šʿr klb* as an actual dog hair in *KTU* 1.114. One explanation the scholarly discourse on this text has insufficiently discussed is the more general link between dogs and healing across the ancient Near East. I agree with del Olmo Lete that a literal dog hair is probably the best way to understand *šʿr klb*, though not because of this text's congruences with funerary rites cited elsewhere in Mesopotamian sources—this connection is much too difficult to prove with the limited state of current evidence. The wider conceptual relationship between dogs and healing warrants understanding *šʿr klb* in line 29 as "dog hair." Read through this interpretive framework, whether the *mrzḫ* is a mortuary ritual or merely a hyper-indulgent social event is irrelevant. Ilu's alcohol-induced sickness simply requires a medicinal cure to make him well again—a part of which included a dog hair associated with healing superstitions rooted in the close relationship between these two ideas.

4. *Gula's Dog: Canines & Mesopotamian Healing Deities*

Healing and medicinal deities were closely associated with dogs in the ancient world, and the etiological explanation for this bond includes several possibilities.[33] On one hand, Ilse Fuhr and Thorkild Jacobsen have suggested this connection originally derived from the perceived healing effects of dogs licking wounds.[34] Even modern science has confirmed the limited therapeutic capabilities of dog saliva, having demonstrated it can remove bacteria and curtail the spread of infection when applied to an injury.[35] On the other hand, Barbara Böck and Volkert Haas have

30. McLaughlin, (2001) p. 71; see also Greenfield, (1973) pp. 48-49; Pope, (1979-1980) p. 143; Archi, (1988) p. 104; for more on the *kispum* ritual, see Tsukimoto, (1985).

31. McLaughlin, (2001) p. 71. Apart from the two examples cited above, most of the other Ugaritic materials simply mention the word *mrzḫ* but give no context that provides interpreters with any information related to what kind of feast the *mrzḫ* was; see McLaughlin's broader discussion on the obscurity of the *marziḥu* at Ugarit in McLaughlin, (2001) pp. 11-31; see also a similar conclusion in Pardee, (1996) pp. 273-287.

32. McLaughlin, (2001) p. 69.

33. Böck, (2015) p. 330.

34. Fuhr, (1977) pp. 139-145; see Thorkild Jacobsen's view cited in Heimpel, (1975) p. 496.

35. It is unclear, of course, whether the ancients recognized any physiological healing properties of dog saliva. Nevertheless, it seems plausible they might have observed that wounds improved when licked by dogs even if they did

cited the possibility that dogs licking wounds might have been interpreted as "a magical transference of disease from man to dog."[36] In any case, the relationship between dogs and medicine was strong enough that canines became the symbolic animals of several notable healing goddesses in antiquity.

The most well-known example is Gula—the Mesopotamian goddess of medicine and patroness of the city of Isin.[37] The relationship between this goddess and her canine companion is widely attested in both textual and archaeological sources.[38] Several lines from the text *LKA* 20 are the most frequently cited witness to Gula's bond with dogs, as this prayer warns that negligence towards canines will inevitably draw the goddess's ire:

> (8) …. is grave, he has shown great disrespect which before Gula … (9) He saw … but pretended not to notice it. He saw a wounded dog but he pretended [not to notice it]. (10) He saw [a … dog] but pretended not to notice it. The dogs [were] fighting … (11) [… they were wai]ling and he saw it but pretended not to notice it …. (12) [He saw a dead dog] but did not bury it and threw it to the ground … (13) … the dogs were fighting but he did not remove them …[39]

Gula's connection to dogs is confirmed in Mesopotamian medicinal incantations. The goddess is often described as being surrounded by puppies when performing healing practices on a patient, or is invoked in the specific instance of dog bites.[40] There are also interesting references to Gula's dogs in mythological texts and apotropaic rituals about warding off Lamaštu—an ancient demoness of disease and pestilence. In one particular example, a pack of Gula's dogs confronts Lamaštu when she attempts to attack a baby. "We are not just any dogs," they say, "we are dogs of Gula, poised to flay your face, tear your back to pieces, and lacerate your ankles."[41] Not only is Gula once again connected with dogs in this text, but the source explicitly names dogs as having the responsibility of protecting the vulnerable from sickness and disease—further supporting the notion that dogs were associated with healing in antiquity.

Iconographic evidence also closely links Gula with dogs. Although she herself is seldom depicted alongside her famous dog, Julia Asher-Greve and Joan Westenholz note how "her name appears in numerous seal legends and she is occasionally represented *by* her dog."[42] The instances where the dog is substituted for the goddess are especially significant, as it confirms the idea that

not understand the specific details of why this healing occurred; Benjamin, et al., (1997) pp. 1776; see also the further bibliography in Hatfield, (2000) pp. 122-124.

36. Böck, (2014) p. 38; Haas, (2003) pp. 407, 525-529; see also the discussion in Groneberg, (2000) p. 309.

37. Groneberg, (2000) pp. 297-304; Böck, (2014) pp. 38-44.

38. Böck, (2014) p. 39; see also Ornan, (2004) pp. 13-30; Groneberg, (2000) pp. 297-304.

39. Translation of the Akkadian text provided in Böck, (2014) p. 39; See also the relevant commentary on this text in van der Toorn, (1985) p. 26; see also where his comments on the relationship between dogs and Gula are further discussed in Avalos, (1995) pp. 186-187.

40. Böck, (2014) p. 40; see Irving Finkel's published list of incantations connecting Gula and dogs in Finkel, (2000) pp. 219-223.

41. Translation from Farber, (2007) p. 641.

42. Emphasis mine; Asher-Greve & Westenholz, (2013) p. 252.

dogs themselves may have carried Gula's healing and medicinal powers.[43] Finally, Gula's connection to dogs is most clearly evidenced by archaeological findings from excavations at temples devoted to Gula in both Nippur and Isin. In the former, numerous dog statues were discovered, and a dog cemetery containing thirty-three dog skeletons was uncovered in the latter.[44] It is unclear precisely what ritual practices occurred at both sites, but Dominique Charpin suggests these findings support the notion dogs must have been used in certain healing rites.[45]

Other Mesopotamian healing deities were closely connected with canines as well.[46] The medicine goddess Nintinuga is one such example, whose throne is described in a text from the Ur III period as adorned with two large dogs.[47] Another healing goddess—Ninisina—is similarly associated with dogs in the Udugḫul incantation series, where she wards off demons and is deemed the healer of the gods.[48] Ninkarrak's connection with dogs is cited as early as the Ur III period, and is further clarified in the Egalkura incantations from the first millennium B.C.E.[49] All of this evidence points to the strong bond between medicinal deities and dogs, and emphasizes the conceptual link between canines and healing properties in the ancient Near East.

5. *Dogs in Ancient Near Eastern Medicinal Practices*

It comes as no surprise, then, that dogs and parts of dogs are commonly mentioned in more practical texts dealing with healing rituals and incantations. A brief survey of ancient Mesopotamian medicine reveals that anatomical parts of dogs were typically key ingredients to remedial recipes used to heal a wide variety of injuries and illnesses. One example from BAM 77 prescribes dog spleen as a principal component of a cure for splenomegaly, which Jo Ann Scurlock identifies as "essentially hormone replacement therapy."[50] If a person's spleen became enlarged,

43. Another corpus of iconographic sources that is less relevant, but worth noting are the numerous plaques and amulets used to deter Lamaštu. These images frequently depict dogs jumping up to the demoness's breasts and sometimes sucking them—presumably so that Lamaštu's "deadly attention is directed away from humans;" Farber, (2007) p. 637; Frans Wiggerman further suggests the dogs are depicted latching onto Lamaštu's breasts in these images because Lamaštu's favorite targets were infants and newborns. By replacing the role of suckling human babies, dogs prevented the demoness from killing them; Wiggerman, (2000) p. 224; see also Wiggerman, (2010) pp. 410-411. Although these sources less clearly connect the goddess Gula herself with dogs, they provide support for the more general notion that dogs were associated with warding off sickness and disease.

44. Gibson, (1990) pp. 1, 4-5; Hrouda, & Strommenger, (1981) pp. 9-25; Böck, (2014) p. 44; Böck, (2015) p. 330.

45. Charpin, (2011) p. 410.

46. To some extent, it is possible the following deities eventually merged together for political, theological, and practical reasons. After all, they share many similar attributes and characteristics. Nevertheless, evidence suggests it is possible to treat them as separate entities. "Although the goddesses were thought to be comparable," as Irene Sibbing-Plantholt states, "they were not simply merged into one and the same goddess. Their manifestations were for instance kept separate in offering lists and they had their own cult centers and characters;" Sibbing-Plantholt, (2022) pp. 156-157. Whether these healing goddesses were each different or all fused together at some point in history, however, is beyond the scope of this essay. My point is simply to show the close connection between dogs and healing more conceptually as was made manifest in the ancient Near Eastern pantheon.

47. Sibbing-Plantholt, (2022) p. 147; see also Paoletti, (2012) pp. 475-476; Sallaberger, (1992) p. 134.

48. Sibbing-Plantholt, (2022) p. 128.

49. Sibbing-Plantholt, (2022) p. 121.

50. Scurlock, (2014) p. 531.

this text instructs the healer to take the spleen of a black dog and boil it with another ingredient depending on the specific situation. If the patient then drinks it on an empty stomach, the text suggests they should make a full recovery (see lines 30-42).[51] The use of dog spleen to remedy a human spleen is especially notable here, as it implies the ancients thought the healing properties of dog anatomy corresponded with ailments in their human counterparts. Another example where dogs are associated with healing cures is found in BAM 248, which prescribes a treatment for dealing with a difficult childbirth. According to these instructions, one should ward off evil spirits who might attack a sick infant by "mixing pig dung, excrement of *a black dog*, and donkey saver," and "wrap it in a tuft of wool and put it on his neck (lines 39-40)."[52] Though not directly medicinal like BAM 77, this text's inclusion of dog excrement in this protective incantation against pestilence demons further supports the notion dogs were believed to counteract illness and disease.

More pertinent to the argument at hand are the common references to actual dogs' hairs in magico-medicinal practices. In his commentary on *KTU* 1.114's hangover cure in *Les textes para-mythologiques*, Dennis Pardee connects *šʿr klb* with various sources that cite the use of dog hair as a principal ingredient in medicinal remedies.[53] Three examples from Scurlock's catalog of Mesopotamian remedies possibly illuminate Pardee's point further, but certainly lend credibility to the idea dogs were connected with healing more generally. One text (BM 42272) prescribes dog hair as part of a salve for curing a person with a fever. Along with several other ingredients, these instructions say the healer is supposed to sew up "black dog hair into a leather bag and put it on his (the patient's) neck."[54] A medicinal text Scurlock cites as DPS 28 similarly includes dog hair as a key ingredient in a recipe for a person afflicted with a curse. To save the patient, one is told to include "a hair of a black dog" as part of a mixture that should be placed on the sick person's neck.[55] Finally, a pediatric cure mentions dog hair as part of a recipe for warding off illness in children. The healer is instructed to "fumigate him (the child) with lion hair, *dog hair*, and goat hair over coals."[56] For interpreters of *KTU* 1.114, the repeated mention of dog hair in these remedies might seem a tantalizing parallel to the recipe in lines 29-31 as Pardee suggests. However, dog hair is never cited in Scurlock's collection of cures for alcohol related illness specifically, and therefore I find the connection too hasty a conclusion.[57] What one can more easily conclude from this evidence, however, is that dog hair was a common part of treatments for various ailments, and thus confirms a close association between dogs and healing practices in a broader conceptual sense.

6. *Dog Hair & The Remedy in* KTU *1.114*

Given the strong connection between dogs and healing in Mesopotamian mythology and medicinal practices, I see no reason to doubt *šʿr klb* might well refer to an actual dog hair in *KTU* 1.114. Ilu gets drunk, passes out, and requires a remedy to be brought back to sobriety—a part of

51. Scurlock, (2014) p. 534.

52. Emphasis mine; translation of the Akkadian from Scurlock, (2014) p. 627.

53. Pardee, (1988) pp. 69-70; see also a parallel example in a medicinal text from Emar that mentions the use of "goat's hair" as a remedy; Arnaud, (2007) p. 94.

54. Scurlock, (2014) p. 417.

55. Scurlock, (2014) p. 213.

56. Emphasis mine; Scurlock, (2014) p. 625.

57. See Scurlock's short list of three remedies for alcohol-related illness in Scurlock, (2014) pp. 634-637.

which included dog hair in accordance with the superstition that dogs had a wide array of healing abilities in ancient Near Eastern medicine. This conclusion is especially plausible for two additional reasons. First, dogs are mentioned repeatedly throughout *KTU* 1.114, and it seems more than sheer coincidence that dog hair is prescribed in the remedy at the end of the text.[58] Second, historical evidence of correspondence between ancient Ugarit and Eastern Mesopotamia implies an exchange of culture between these two regions. Both Ugaritic and Akkadian sources have been discovered at Tel Ras Shamra, for example, suggesting consistent correspondence between the city and Babylonian/Assyrian civilization.[59] While most of the evidence that suggests a strong relationship between dogs and healing comes from Mesopotamian texts rather than Levantine or Canaanite sources, it seems highly likely cross-cultural transfer between these two regions might have included this mythological and practical connection. While further inquiry into the *mrzḥ* feast might reveal a deeper connection between dog hair and necromancy rituals as del Olmo Lete suggests, such a complex understanding of *KTU* 1.114's banquet context is not needed to explain this interpretive issue. The evidence already available provides strong support for understanding *šʿr klb* as a literal dog hair. A more general understanding of the conceptual relationship between dogs and healing is enough to conclude this interpretation is correct, especially in light of the issues presented by alternative explanations.

58. See earlier comments on this matter from Wyatt, Fink, and Pardee in both the main text of pp. 168-169 and in n. 21.
59. Tropper & Vita, (2019) pp. 482-483; Curtis, (2015) pp. 11-13.

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APPENDIX I

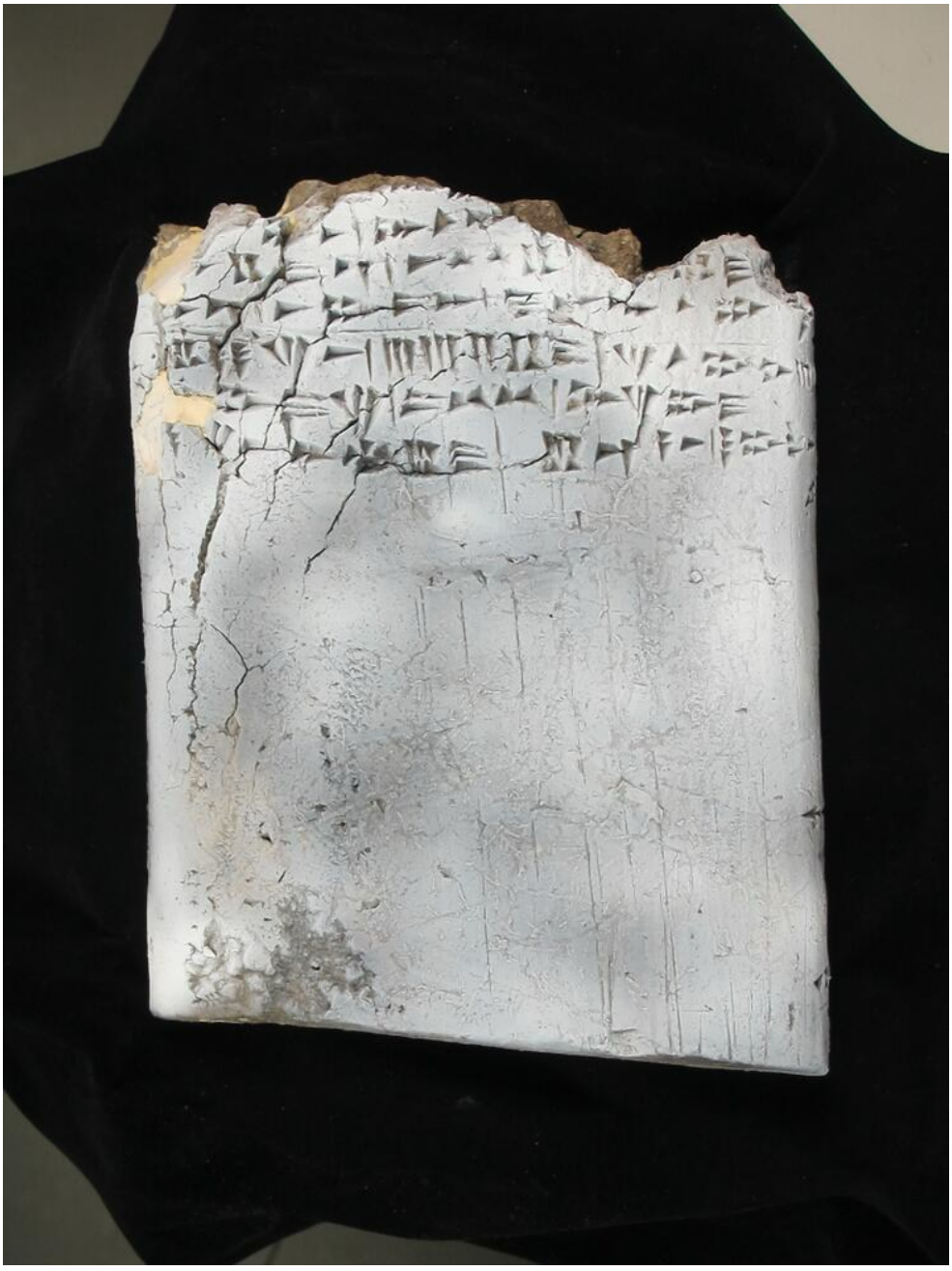

Figure 1: *KTU* 1.114 Reverse Side[60]

60. University of Southern California, https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1S2M2D6T?Flat=y&WS=PackagePres.

APPENDIX II

Figure 2: *KTU* 1.114:29[61]

APPENDIX III

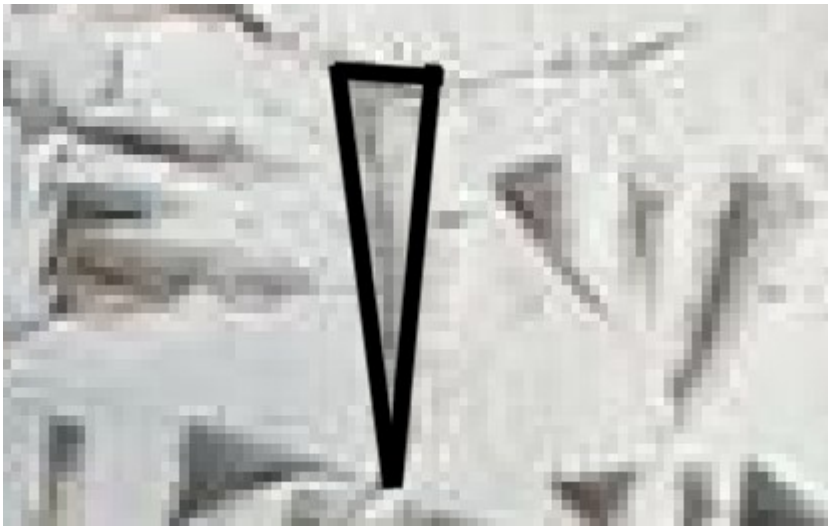

Figure 3: *KTU* 1.114:29 (Sign #11)[62]

61. University of Southern California, https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1S2M2D6T?Flat=y&WS=PackagePres.

62. University of Southern California, https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1S2M2D6T?Flat=y&WS=PackagePres.

APPENDIX IV

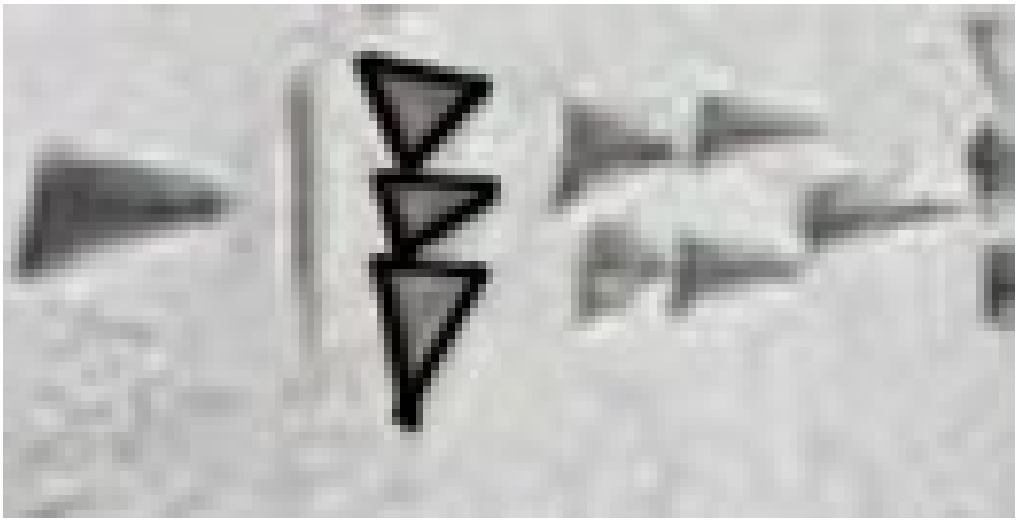

Figure 4: *KTU* 1.114:31 (Sign #13)[63]

APPENDIX V

Figure 5: *KTU* 1.114:3 (Sign #4)[64]

63. University of Southern California, https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1S2M2D6T?Flat=y&WS=PackagePres.

64. University of Southern California, https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1S2M2D6T?Flat=y&WS=PackagePres.

APPENDIX VI

Figure 6: *KTU* 1.114:5 (Sign #12)[65]

65. University of Southern California, https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1S2M2D6T?Flat=y&WS=PackagePres.