

Flattening the Wild in the Ancient Near East

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Recent scholarship has critically engaged with the dualisms that undergird many of archaeology's traditional research questions and cultural and temporal frameworks (Alberti et al. 2011; Harris and Cippola 2017). The "worlding" reflected in mainstream approaches, including structural oppositions between subject-object, nature-culture, animate-inanimate, and an emphasis on static typological categories, is increasingly recognized as a uniquely modern social construct. This framework is reflected in the discipline of zooarchaeology in the resilient dualism of domestic and wild. This dyad structures much of the scholarly work on animals in the ancient Near East, impacting what and how zooarchaeological narratives are generated and framed (Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021b).

Here, we contemplate the impact of this domestic-wild dualism on how the wild is conceptualized, especially in zooarchaeological engagements with "wild" animals in the Bronze Age (3000–1200 BCE) Near East. We argue that this structure severely limits how scholars see "wild" animals in the ancient Near East, fundamentally flattening them into a narrow range of relevancies and conceiving them as out of place especially in urban communities. We instead emphasize that wild animals were regular participants in Bronze Age societies rather than exotic, peripheral, or occasional visitors. Following well-known multi-species and symmetrical approaches (e.g., Hamilakis and Overton 2013; Haraway 2003; Witmore 2007) in order to take wild animals seriously, we encourage a reassessment of traditional approaches to Bronze Age zooarchaeology, suggesting that wild animals should be conceived of as cocreators of the Bronze Age world (e.g., Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021a; Sapir-Hen in this issue). In order to demonstrate this, we explore several examples of wild animals in the zooarchaeology of Bronze Age Anatolia, starting with an examination of wild mammals at the urban center Acemhöyük and compare these finds with other Bronze Age

Drawing of the scene decorating a Hittite rhyton in the shape of a stag, depicting worship before the seated stag god. From the Schimmel Collection, Metropolitan Museum. Drawing by C. Koken from Rainer Michael Boehmer 1983 as modified by Hans G. Guterbock (1981/1983).

sites in the region. We also address complementary examples from ancient texts which support the notion that wild animals were central rather than peripheral parts of Bronze Age societies.

The Domestic and the Wild

Many scholars have critiqued archaeology's foundational ontologies and epistemologies (e.g., Harris and Cippola 2017; Hodder 1984). As a child of the European Enlightenment, the discipline is built on an understanding of culture and nature, human and animal as separate entities explored through separate lines of inquiry. This historically unique ontology of "naturalism," characterized by Philippe Descola (2013: 172) as reflecting a view of living beings with shared physicalities but differentiated interiorities, is strongly evident in zooarchaeological research particularly relating to the centrality of the themes of domestic and wild. In this discipline, we claim to see wild and domestic taxa in the faunal record. We naturalize this perspective through the use of Linnaean terminology, facilitating a worlding of human history emphasizing homogenized and progressive culture historical periods, based at least partially on relationships with animals (e.g., hunting, domestication, secondary products; Graeber and Wengrow 2021).

Zooarchaeological research can be seen to bifurcate at this nature-culture intersection. One pathway explores domestication in a broad sense—characterized by narratives surrounding the transformation of nature by culture and the integration of animals into increasingly complex human cultural systems through processes of technological innovation and problem solving. Valuing change over continuity (González-Ruibal 2014: 30), this represents one of the most productive areas of (zoo) archaeological inquiry garnering headlines and major research grants (e.g., Braidwood and Reed 1957; Zeder 2008).

The second pathway focuses on "wild" animals. This work tends to focus on animals as proxies for ancient environments

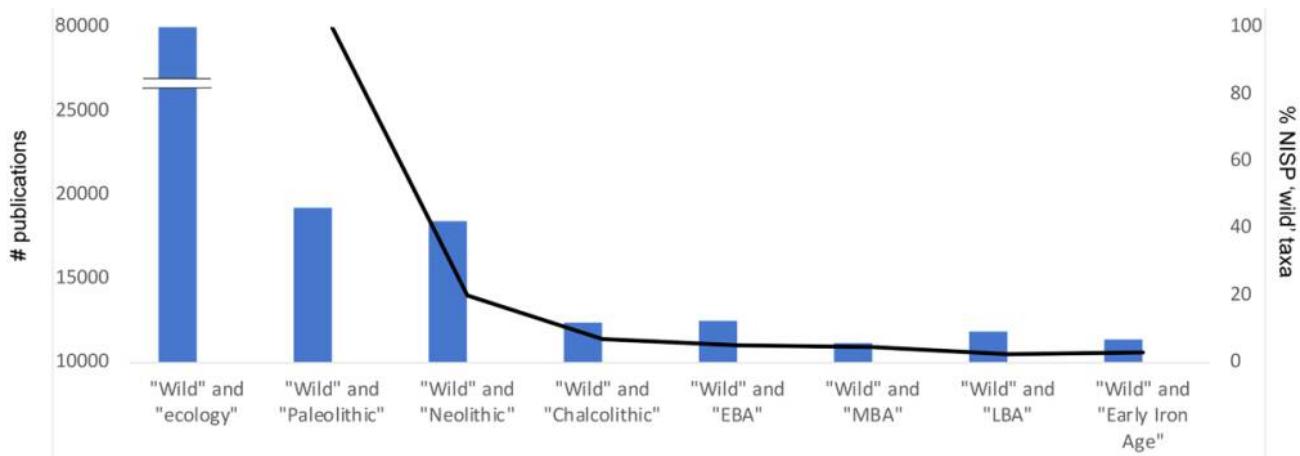


Figure 1. Bar graph showing number of archaeological publications in 2021 containing keywords paired with wild (see x-axis for details; data from app.dimensions.ai/analytics) and line graph plotting number of wild mammal specimens (measured by NISP) in archaeofaunal assemblages from successive cultural-chronological periods in Anatolia. Data from Arbuckle 2012b: fig. 11.3.

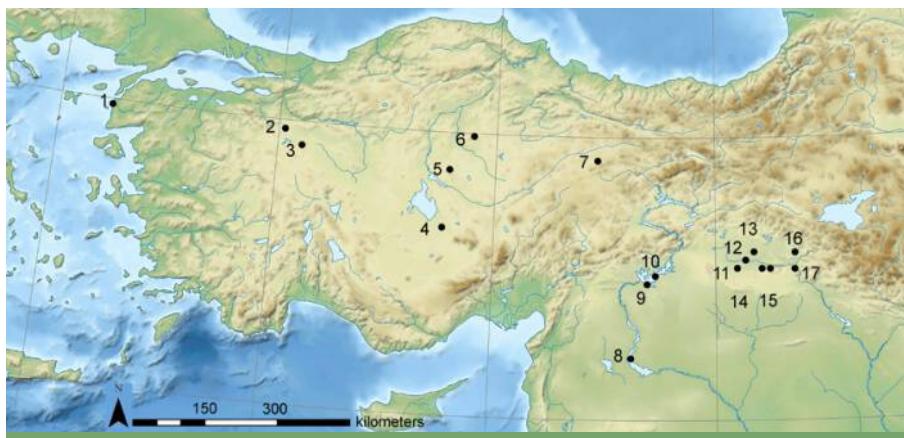


Figure 2. Map showing the location of sites mentioned in the text: (1) Beşik-Yassitepe, (2) Demircihöyük, (3) Külliöba, (4) Acemhöyük, (5) Kaman Kalehöyük, (6) Boğazköy-Hattusa, (7) Kuşaklı/Sarissa, (8) Tell Mureybet, (9) Lidar Höyük, (10) Hassek Höyük, (11) Kavuşan Höyük, (12) Giricano, (13) Kenan Tepe, (14) Muslimantep, (15) Hirbemerdon Tepe, (16) Başur Höyük, (17) Turbe Höyük.

and is dominated by evolutionary-ecology paradigms, including diet breadth models and niche construction theory (Stiner, Munro, and Surovell 2000; Zeder 2016). Although it is a central part of archaeological work in prehistoric periods, research on the wild is ever-more limited following the Neolithic Revolution when the richness of narratives focused on wild animals shrinks with measures of their relative abundance in archaeofaunal assemblages (fig. 1). Although wild taxa are addressed in research on complex societies after the revolution, they are often limited to roles as environmental proxies or passive symbols representing elite status or supernatural entities (i.e., they are good to think with [Lévi-Strauss 1963: 128]). Within these discourses, wild animals are disconnected from the complex societies into which they are perceived as trespassing. Thus, domestic and wild categories are characterized by a certain asymmetry with the former aligned with engaging, progress-oriented research and the latter implicitly associated with conservatism or even antiprogress. Interactions with wild animals are often relegated to the monolithic category of “hunting” (although see Hamilakis and Overton 2013).

Flattening the Wild

This perspective effectively “flattens” the wild into a one-dimensional entity in the zooarchaeology of southwest Asia, especially in post-Neolithic periods. We use “flattening” here in two ways. It is meant literally to evoke an image of a rich assemblage of social beings squashed flat into a homogenous pancake, effectively severing the connections between wild and other entities, particularly those within the category of

culture. The term “flattening” is also meant, ironically, in contrast to its deployment in critiques of a naturalism ontology that define a flat ontology as one in which humans, animals, and even inanimate things are cocreators of a world of flowing and interacting energies and beings (after Delanda 2002: 47; Fernández-Götz et al. 2021). Tim Ingold (2018) has suggested looking beyond the naturalist ontology and the domestication framework, instead directing our attention to life-as-a-whole; a kind of flat ontology in which humans operate, not outside of nature, but rather within a pluriverse of interacting beings and entities. It is in this second approach that we think interesting opportunities to complicate the view of the wild in the ancient Near East reside. A flat ontology offers an opportunity to see how wild animals are not separate from, but rather part of Bronze Age urban societies, which themselves can be viewed as vibrant, multispecies communities (Erskine 2021; Haraway 2003; Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021a).

Alternate ways to explore relations between human and nonhuman entities have been the subject of a rich literature explored under the concepts of relational ontologies and theoretical stances emphasizing symmetry (Witmore 2007). For example, Eduardo Kohn’s (2007) “anthropology of life” erases the boundaries between human and animal while Marilyn Strathern (1980) reconstructs concepts of wild and domestic, demonstrating how these categories can be organized in ways that differ from a naturalism ontology. Moreover, revitalized interest in a new animism stimulated by the work of anthropologists such as Descola (2013) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s

(1998) multinatural perspectivism have brought alternate ontologies of the wild into the center of anthropological dialogue. This growing body of reflexive and decentered approaches is slowly percolating into archaeological narratives providing new ways to see wild animals and to take them seriously, especially in the context of complex societies (e.g., Pilaar Birch 2018; Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021b).

Zooarchaeology of Wild Animals in Bronze Age Anatolia

We center our exploration of wild animals in the zooarchaeology of Bronze Age Anatolia at the urban center of Acemhöyük (fig. 2). Acemhöyük is one of the largest mounds in Anatolia and represents the remains of a prominent Early and Middle Bronze Age urban center (ca. 2500–1750 BCE), famous for its extensive exchange network reflected in its palace architecture, luxury goods, and sealings indicating extensive connections with Bronze Age Mesopotamia and the Levant (Özgür 1966). From a zooarchaeological perspective, wild animals are present in virtually every Bronze Age faunal assemblage in southwest Asia. Although wild taxa are present in virtually all Bronze Age archaeofaunal assemblages (often representing ca. 5 percent of the mammalian NISP [number of identified specimens; e.g., Berthon 2017: fig. 1]), in the course of studying faunal remains at Acemhöyük, we consistently noticed the presence of small numbers of wild taxa as well as our urge to explain their presence—as if they shouldn't be there. These wild taxa include both the relatives of domestic livestock species (e.g., aurochs, boar, mouflon, and wild asses) as well as more iconic wild mammals including cervids, equids, and a variety of carnivores (Arbuckle 2012a).

The wild relatives of common livestock species are often hiding in Bronze Age archaeofaunal assemblages amidst the more abundant remains of their domestic cousins. For example, at Acemhöyük, most of the large bovid remains represent domestic cattle (*Bos taurus*), which exhibit small body size and reduced horns—a typical domestic phenotype—and genetically cluster with other Near Eastern domestic cattle (Verdugo et al. 2019). However, a small percentage of the *Bos* remains represent much larger animals, which fall into the size range of Near Eastern aurochs (*Bos primigenius*; fig. 3). Log transformed postcranial measurements from the Bronze Age levels of Acemhöyük show that approximately 12 percent of measured *Bos* specimens fall within the size range of aurochs from the late Pleistocene site of Mureybet, Syria (fig. 4).

Rather than reflecting a site-specific oddity, biometric data from a range of Bronze Age sites across Anatolia indicate that aurochs-like individuals are represented in many assemblages, although in varying abundance (fig. 4). At Boğazköy-Hattusa for example, based on a sample of Middle and Late Bronze Age material recorded by Christine Mikeska, 6 percent of *Bos* specimens express an aurochs-like phenotype in terms of body size. Large *Bos* are poorly represented in various Bronze Age levels from Hassek, Lidar, and Kuşaklı Höyük (1–4 percent of *Bos* remains) whereas at Early Bronze Age Demircihöyük they are well represented (fig. 4). Of the fifteen assemblages examined here,



Figure 3. Aurochs skeleton from Copenhagen Natural History Museum. Uploaded by FunkMonk; <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18653399>; CC BY 2.0.

an average of 6.7 percent of measurable *Bos* specimens displayed body size characteristics comparable to aurochs. Although it cannot be assumed that every large *Bos* specimen represents a wild aurochs, these results do suggest that aurochs continued to be a regular part of life in Bronze Age Anatolia long after the Neolithic Revolution.

A similar pattern is evident among the suid remains at Acemhöyük. Whereas most of the suid remains are described as small-bodied domestic pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*), large-bodied individuals comparable in size to modern and early Holocene Anatolian boar represent about 3 percent of the *Sus* remains (fig. 5). These boar-like individuals are well represented in Mikeska's data from Boğazköy-Hattusa (from the North Lower Town) as well as from Lidar Höyük and Demircihöyük. Although this pattern is not evident at every site in Bronze Age Anatolia (e.g., Slim, Çakırlar, and Roosevelt 2020: fig. 10), most settlements include the presence of large-sized outliers suggesting that interaction with boar was a recurring part of life in both urban and rural communities (fig. 6).

While domestic sheep are the most abundant taxon represented in the Acemhöyük faunal assemblage, we noticed the presence of very large individuals as well as concentrations of large, worked horncores probably linked to a local horn industry. Some of these large horncores (anterior-posterior diameter ca. 70 mm) are well within the size range of wild male mouflon (fig. 7). Although the large body size of the ovine population at Acemhöyük makes it impossible to use linear biometrics to distinguish mouflon from domestic sheep (Arbuckle 2012a), these horncores suggest that distinctive moufloniform animals (fig. 7) may have been a regular sight in the vicinity of the Bronze Age city. Mouflon have also been identified at Boğazköy-Hattusa, Tigris Höyük, Küllioba, and other urban assemblages in the region, indicating that they were widespread in Bronze Age communities (von den Driesch and Boessneck 1981; Berthon 2017; Rauh 1981: 65; Gündem 2009: 76).

Finally, equids—including donkeys, both domestic and potentially wild horses, and wild Anatolian asses—represent a small

Figure 4. Jitters plot of log size index (LSI) values for *Bos* postcranial measurements from Early Holocene Tell Mureybet (Level I–III) and Bronze Age sites in Anatolia including EBA Acemhöyük; MBA–LBA Boğazköy–Hattusa (data from Mikeska); LBA–Iron Kaman Kalehöyük (Hongo 1996); LBA Kuşaklı (von den Driesch and Vagedes 1997); EBA–LBA Lidar Höyük (Kussinger 1988); Tigris Valley sites include Başur Höyük, Kavuşan Höyük, Kenan Tepe, Hırbemerdon Tepe, Muslimantepe, Turbe Höyük (Berthon 2011); EBA Hassek Höyük (von den Driesch and Boessneck 1981); EBA Demircihöyük (Rauh 1981); EBA Beşik-Yassitepe (von den Driesch 1999). Standard animal for calculating log size index (LSI) is a female aurochs from Steppan (2001). Shaded gray region, calculated with lower boundary at one standard deviation below the LSI mean for Mureybet aurochs, represents a conservative estimate for an aurochs phenotype.

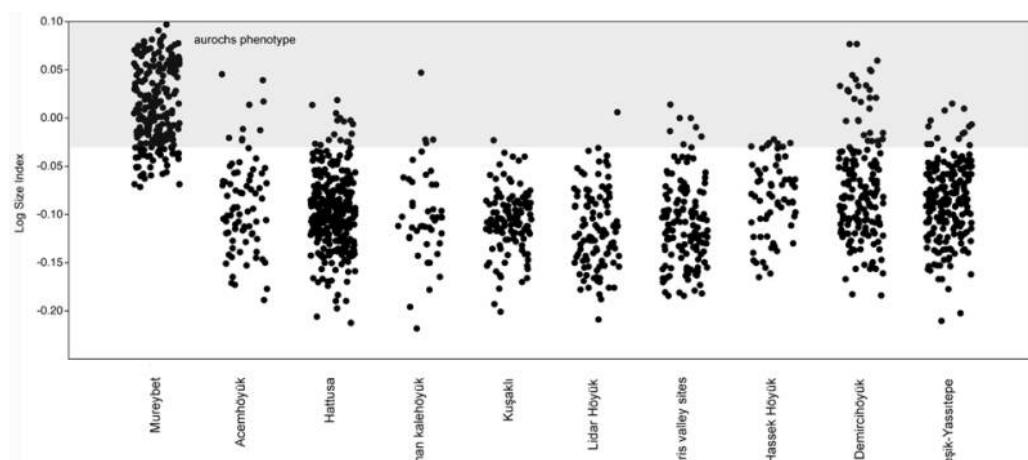
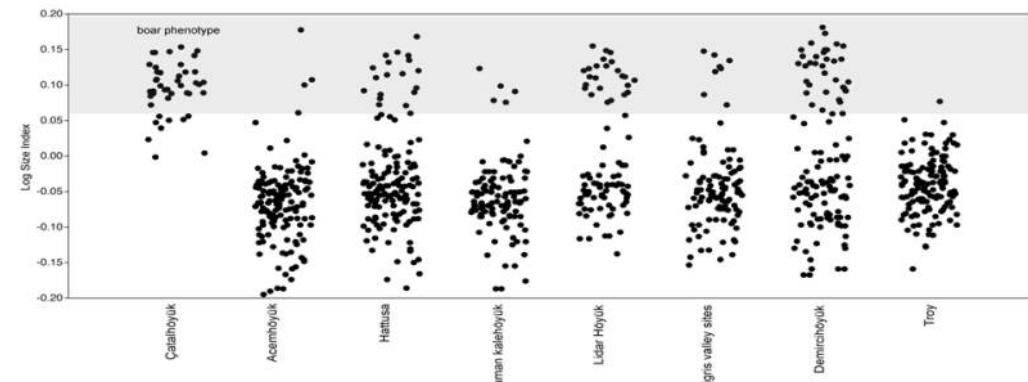


Figure 5. Jitters plot of LSI values for *Sus* postcranial measurements from Neolithic Çatalhöyük (Arbuckle et al. 2014) and Bronze Age sites in Anatolia including EBA Acemhöyük; MBA–LBA Boğazköy–Hattusa (data from Mikeska); LBA–Iron Age Kaman Kalehöyük (Hongo 1996); EBA–Iron Age Lidar Höyük (Kussinger 1988); Tigris Valley sites include Başur Höyük, Kavuşan Höyük, Kenan Tepe, Hırbemerdon Tepe, Muslimantepe, Turbe Höyük (Berthon 2011); EBA Demircihöyük (Rauh 1981); EBA Troy (Gündem 2009). Standard animal for calculating LSI is a modern female wild boar from Turkey (from Hongo 1996). Shaded gray region, calculated with lower boundary at one standard deviation below the mean, represents a conservative estimate for a boar phenotype.



component of most faunal assemblages in Bronze Age Anatolia. Among the equid remains at Acemhöyük we have identified several specimens with morphological characteristics of the Anatolian wild ass (*Equus hydruntinus*) and ancient DNA has confirmed several of these identifications (Bennett et al. 2017). Wild asses (also known as hemiones or onagers) are regularly identified at sites in central and especially southeastern Anatolia (Bennett et al. 2017; Rauh 1981). Although they are often described as minor steppic hunting resources, the archaeological record indicates a long tradition of intensive interaction between humans and wild asses extending from the late Pleistocene into the Early Bronze Age (Bennett et al. 2017). The nature of this interaction is reflected in Mesopotamian texts from the third millennium BCE, which describe the killing, capture, and management of hemiones (Zarins 2014; fig. 8). Moreover, recent archaeogenetic evidence for the burial of hemione × donkey hybrids at the site of Umm el-Marra, Syria (Bennett et al. 2022), indicates that wild equids were physically incorporated into Bronze Age Mesopotamian communities.

These results suggest that, rather than having been replaced completely by domesticates following the Neolithic Revolution, interaction with wild forms of common livestock species

continued to be a recurring part of life in and around urban and rural communities. While it is impossible to confirm that all of the large-bodied bovines, suids, and ovines identified in the faunal record represent wild aurochs, boar, and mouflon, their consistent presence in almost all urban assemblages raises important questions about the boundaries between wild and domestic animals both biologically and ontologically. Ancient DNA studies identifying recurring admixture between wild and domestic populations (Bennett et al. 2022; Verdugo et al. 2019) suggest that the line between domestic and wild may have been more porous and fluid than the traditional naturalism perspective assumes.

Beyond these wild individuals hiding among the livestock, more traditional wild species are also well-represented in Bronze Age Anatolian faunal assemblages. An iconic example of wild game, deer are frequently the most abundant wild animal represented in Anatolian Bronze Age faunal assemblages. At Acemhöyük, red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) are the most abundant cervid, but fallow (*Dama sp*) and roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) are also present. These taxa are well represented in assemblages across Anatolia. Although the use of antler as a raw material is often addressed in the literature, the roles of venison, deer skins, and

living deer are rarely addressed in the zooarchaeological literature (although see Saritaş 2012; Berthon 2017).

As a final example from the faunal record, the skeletal remains of carnivores, including bear, lion, leopard, lynx, fox, and wolf are regularly encountered in Bronze Age faunal assemblages. At Acemhöyük, fox and bear are the most abundant carnivores, with specimens recovered from a wide variety of contexts including administrative buildings, trash pits, and cemetery deposits (Arbuckle 2012a). These remains primarily represent distal limbs and teeth, suggesting they were part of decorative pelts.

A rich wild carnivore assemblage including big cats (NISP=28) and bear (NISP=23) has been identified at the Hittite capital (Adcock 2020; Hollenstein and Middea 2014; von den Driesch and Boessneck 1981; Mikeska data). However, in contrast to the situation for bear remains at Acemhöyük, the remains of big cats at Boğazköy-Hattusa include diverse parts of the skeleton (fig. 9). Moreover, Daria Hollenstein and Geraldine Middea (2014) describe the partially preserved remains of a juvenile lion skeleton recovered from within a building in the Sarikale area of the city (fig. 10). Combined, these remains raise the possibility that big cats were living residents of the Hittite capital (and other settlements) and were not present only as decorative skins (fig. 11).

Ancient Texts and Wild Animals

Ancient texts are a valuable source of emic perspectives concerning how societies in the ancient Near East conceived of and interacted with wild animals and the ways in which they were

incorporated into urban life. Here we highlight a few examples from a vast literature on animals in ancient Near Eastern texts focusing on only a few charismatic taxa that challenge the boundaries between wild and domestic (e.g., Collins 2002). For example, while bird remains are poorly represented in Near Eastern



Figure 6. Anatolian wild boar from the Dilek Yarımadası-Büyük Menderes Deltası Milli Parkı, Türkiye. Image by Esme İlgin Uçar; <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=91383131>; CC BY-SA 4.0.



Figure 7. Image of a male mouflon phenotype (*Ovis orientalis musimon*) with characteristic large horns and a moufloniform horncore fragment from Acemhöyük (specimen AC12493). Image used by CC BY-SA 4.0 original by Andrew Woods, Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 8. Scene of a captive hemione from the palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh. British Museum, acc. # 124876. Photograph by Johnbod; <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=53775845>; CC BY-SA 4.0.

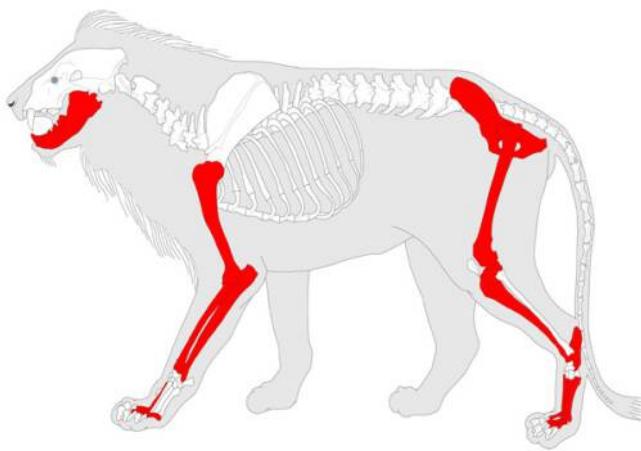


Figure 9. Shaded areas representing the skeletal elements of “large felids” recovered at the site of Boğazköy-Hattusa. Image modified from Pales and Garcia 1981: pl. 1.

archaeofaunal assemblages, Noemi Borelli (2019) describes cuneiform evidence for fishers, fowlers, and bird breeders in late third-millennium BCE (Ur III) Mesopotamia. The management of these resources, including provisioning captive bird populations with barley rations, effectively blurs the boundaries between wild and domestic and places Bronze Age societies firmly within landscapes populated by animal coresidents. This view of



Figure 10. Juvenile lion mandible from Boğazköy-Hattusa. Photograph by Benjamin Arbuckle.

Bronze Age communities as part of multispecies landscapes is further supported by texts such as the Proclamation of Amitta (CTH 1), in which the Anatolian king is described as bringing many wild animals, including “2 lions, 70 swine, 60 wildboars, and 120 leopards, lions, deer, gazelle, and wild goats” back to the city of Kanesh (Beckman et al. 2007: 218). Combined with the faunal evidence from sites such as Acemhöyük and Hattusa,



Figure 11. Neo-Hittite lion statue from Arslantepe. Photograph by Zeynel Cebeci; <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=73551119>; CC BY-SA 4.0.

this suggests that wild animals may have been a regular sight in Bronze Age urban centers.

While the Anitta text likely describes a royal hunting scenario, similar lists of wild animals also appear in the context of royal dowries and state taxation. For example, the dowry of a third-millennium BCE Eblaitte princess, Kesh-dut, included 159 wild asses, 19 “bison” (*alim*), and 14 bears, in addition to large numbers of domestic livestock (Archi 1987). This suggests that the pastures and barns surrounding Ebla and other urban centers may have been occupied by a variety of species, transgressing the typical boundaries of wild and domestic. Additionally, textual records from the Ur III site of Puzrish-Dagan reveal receipts for the movement of thousands of live wild animals associated with a “game keeper,” Lu-diggira (Wu 2010). Over a five-year accounting cycle, these texts record the movement of 3880 gazelle, 3329 wild equids, 457 bears, 404 red deer, and 236 fallow deer (among others) through the imperial animal processing center associated with the Ur III BALA tax system. These texts show the extensive scale of interaction with wild taxa within Bronze

Age urban centers and, furthermore, reveal the presence of well-developed technical expertise associated with the capture, transportation, and management of wild animals.

Similarly, a Hittite letter from Maşat Höyük describes an expedition by a royal official, a certain Hapiri, to look for and acquire a variety of wild animals, including birds, lions, and leopards to bring back to Hattusa (Hoffner 2009: 183). The fact that expeditions were sanctioned and monitored by the Hittite king suggests the central importance of wild animals to state institutions, as well as their overall integration into the fabric of Bronze Age economies, politics, and ritual (Collins 2002). The Hittite law code even refers to compensation for the theft of “tamed or trained” wild goats and deer (Hoffner 1997: 76), suggesting that the practice of keeping wild animals was common enough to warrant state regulation in Hittite Anatolia. Hittite iconography depicting fallow deer fitted with lip rings and tethers suggests that these animals were used as hunting decoys (fig. 12; Berthon 2017). These limited examples (see Collins 2002; Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021b for more) indicate that wild animals

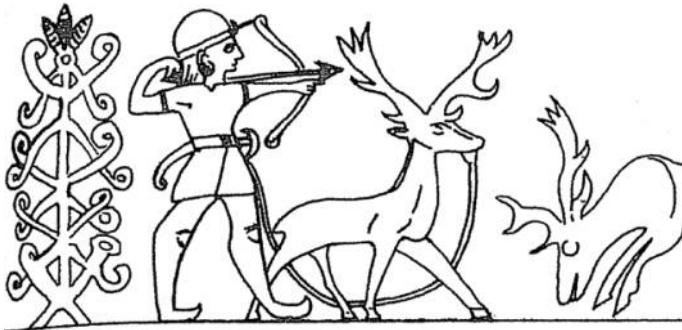


Figure 12. Detail of the Hittite Taprammi bowl showing a tethered fallow deer.
Altered from Emre and Çınaroglu 1993: fig. 8.

were active participants in Bronze Age communities and emphasize ancient texts as a rich source for accessing alternate ontologies of the wild (e.g., Perdibon 2020; Richardson 2019).

A Zooarchaeology of the Wild

Wild animals are often not taken seriously as part of Bronze Age societies, economies, and world views and are not taken seriously within many zooarchaeological epistemologies after the revolution. By linking a critique of domestic-wild dualism and its ontology of naturalism with zooarchaeological and textual evidence for wild animals at Acemhöyük and in Bronze Age southwest Asia more widely, we argue that rather than representing peripheral beings operating outside of culture, wild animals were instead fundamental participants in Bronze Age societies. The archaeological record shows us that the domestic-wild boundary is porous and even dissolves completely when deer are tethered and trained, gazelle are transported between cities, hemiones are hybridized with donkeys, bears are presented as wedding presents, and lion cubs are raised within city walls (Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021b).

We argue that rather than reflecting something out of place, a fossilized relict of a past economic stage, or even passive symbols of elite status, wild animals were, in fact, ubiquitous, multidimensional, and vital participants in Bronze Age societies, which can themselves be reimagined as multispecies collaborations. This can be seen as part of a pivot away from the structuralist notion of animals being good to think with (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 128) and toward recognizing them as good to live with (Haraway 2003: 5). Approaches emphasizing processes of living with therefore represent a productive direction for zooarchaeological epistemologies. Rather than flattening the wild into one dimensional roadkill, we instead encourage the application of flat ontologies and exploring the myriad ways in which wild animals were active and dynamic participants in Bronze Age societies. A flat ontology blurs traditional boundaries, emphasizing both the wildness of Bronze Age urban spaces as well as the domesticity of the wider natural landscape and all of its inhabitants (Averett 2020; Mouton 2021). After all, an animal's taxonomic nomenclature does not reflect its lived experience. Aurochs, boar, mouflon, fallow deer, hemiones, and lions sometimes live in close proximity to humans in anthropogenic environments; and reciprocally,

domestic sheep, cattle, and pigs sometimes live in close proximity to few or even no humans. A flat ontology is one way to accommodate this heterogeneity without assuming an individual's place within wild or domestic boxes.

As a way forward, it seems to us that we need a more robust zooarchaeology of the wild in the ancient Near East. By exploring alternate ontologies and accessing emic views reflected in ancient texts, iconography, and other forms of contextualized material culture (e.g., Collins 2002; Devillers 2021; Perdibon 2020), we can perhaps better understand wild animals as heterogenous participants in hybrid communities and utilize conceptions that extend beyond wild-domestic, living-dead, animate-inanimate to generate new conversations relating to the zooarchaeology of the ancient Near East.

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