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Nelson Henrique da Silva Ferreira

THE SILENT VOICES OF THE PAST AND ABSTRACT THOUGHT BASED ON THE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE:
A DIALOGIC READING OF SUMERIAN AND LATIN LITERATURE

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The silent voices of the past and abstract thought based on the agricultural landscape:

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To the memory of my grandparents

Fernando Soares Ferreira (03/03/1935-30/03/2004)
Palmira Silva (20/03/1937-16/05/2012)
Mirtila Silva (26/12/1933-15/01/1982)
Manuel Ferreira (06/08/1933-18/02/2017)

To Laura

To my parents,
José and Marina,

To my brothers,
Leandro and Marcelo

Contents

V. Conclusions: Sumerian metaphor and allegory and the language of the Roman instructional texts – conclusion of a parallel study

Abstract

Many authors who have studied ancient social systems have emphasised the importance of farming and herding in the genesis of complex societies. Hence, this dependence must have had an intrinsic influence on the cultural matrix of societies sustained by agriculture, such as the entire Mesopotamian and Italic regions. Farming and herding regulated daily activities, influencing the conceptualization of the surrounding cosmos. The natural world was reflected in abstract thought, which inevitably formed the basis for linguistic creativity and expression based on signs of meaning inspired by the agricultural landscape. A variety of media often shows such potential 'metaphoric' language, which extends beyond the simple expression of literary telluric feelings to present images obvious to an interlocutor who recognized meaning in signs culturally transmitted by empirical experience within the agricultural cosmos or through traditional preconceptions. In this sense, through the identification and crystallization of what modern semiotics calls 'signs of meaning', the empirical observation of fertility, abundance and quality of production would have served as a source for the creation of imagery constructed from common sense and the experience of rural life and natural phenomena. These images, made up of crystalized signs of meaning, would have been converted into linguistic symbols whose semantics reflected a symbiosis of three conceptual levels: rural life, natural phenomena and welfare.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how prejudgments of meanings drawn from nature and based on common sense were constructed and maintained in a defined cultural context which predated the exclusivity and artificiality of literary expression. At the same time, it will explore how such preconceived ideas can help us to understand ancient culture and approach the thinking of the silent people of the ancient world. In order to interpret how the allegorical images and processes for crystallising traditional ideas were constructed, I intend to identify possible traces of ancient traditional linguistic thought in Sumerian literature and Latin instructions on farming, whose matrices were developed from contact with the natural world and date from prehistorical times. The objective is to identify meaning in images transmitted by literary language by applying the same method to two unrelated cultures in order to demonstrate that different cultures may use the same mechanisms to construct abstract meaning, with similar results, in a context based mainly on agriculture and nature.

Resumo

Muitos autores dedicados ao estudo de antigos sistemas sociais apontaram que a gênese das sociedades complexas foi sustentada em grande medida pelo desenvolvimento da agricultura e do pastorícia. Nesse sentido, a matriz cultural destas sociedades foi profundamente influenciada por estas actividades económicas, tal como sucedeu com as culturas antigas de toda a região mesopotâmica e itálica. As atividades de caráter agrícola regulavam o quotidiano e, dessa forma, moldavam a conceptualização do cosmos circundante. O mundo natural reflectia-se no pensamento abstrato o que, inevitavelmente, estabeleceu a base para a criatividade linguística e para uma expressão baseada em signos de sentido inspirados na paisagem agrícola. Essa linguagem de caráter metafórico manifesta-se através de diferentes formas de expressão que não se esgotam na simples expressão de sentimentos telúricos literários; esta linguagem é a manifestação de imagens óbvias para um interlocutor que reconhece o significado em signos culturalmente transmitidos pela experiência empírica dentro do cosmos agrícola ou por preconceitos tradicionais. Nesse sentido, através da identificação e cristalização daquilo que a semiótica moderna nomeia de 'signos de sentido', a visualização empírica da fertilidade, abundância e qualidade de produção funcionaria como fonte para a criação de imagens construídas sobre o senso comum e sobre a experiência de vida rural e fenômenos naturais. Essas imagens compostas por sinais de significado cristalizados seriam convertidas em símbolos linguísticos, cuja semântica refletiria a simbiose de três planos conceituais: vida rural, fenômenos naturais e bem-estar.

O objetivo desta dissertação é analisar a forma como o prejuizo sobre a simbologia baseada no mundo natural, sustentada pelo senso comum, é construído e mantido em um contexto cultural definido, muito para além da exclusividade e artificialidade da expressão literária. E, ao mesmo tempo, como tal preconceito pode ajudar a entender melhor uma cultura antiga e favorecer a abordargem ao pensamento das 'vozes silenciosas' do mundo antigo. De modo a interpretar como as imagens e as mecânicas alegóricas sobre a cristalização do preconceito tradicional são construídas, pretendemos identificar possíveis traços do antigo pensamento linguístico tradicional na literatura suméria e nas instruções latinas sobre agricultura, cuja matriz foi formada pelo contacto com o mundo natural e remonta a tempos pré-históricos. O objetivo é identificar o significado em imagens transmitidas através da linguagem literária aplicando o mesmo método a duas culturas não relacionadas, a fim de atestar que diferentes culturas podem ter os mesmos mecanismos de construção de significado abstracto, com resultados semelhantes, quando a agricultura e a natureza são os principais definidores de contexto.

Resum

Molts autors dedicats a l'estudi dels antics sistemes socials van assenyalar la gran dependència de l'agricultura i la ramaderia per a la gènesi de les societats complexes. En aquest sentit, tal dependència ha d'haver tingut una influència intrínseca sobre la matriu cultural de cultures sostingudes per l'agricultura, com és el cas de les cultures de les regions mesopotàmica i itàlica. L'agricultura i la ramaderia regulàven les activitats quotidianes, interferint amb la conceptualització del cosmos circumdant. El món natural es reflectia en el pensament abstracte i això, inevitablement, va constituir la font de la creativitat lingüística com una expressió basada en 'signes de sentit' inspirats en el paisatge agrícola. Una varietat de mitjans d'expressió sovint mostra aquest potencial llenguatge 'metafòric', que supera la simple expressió de sentiments telúrics literaris; és la manifestació d'imatges òbvies a un interlocutor que reconeix el significat en signes culturalment transmeses per l'experiència empírica dins del cosmos agrícola o per preconceptes tradicionals. En aquest sentit, a través de la identificació i la cristal·lització del que la semiótica moderna anomena 'signes de significat', la visualització empírica de la fertilitat, l'abundància i la qualitat de la producció funcionarien com a font per a la creació d'imatges construïdes sobre el sentit comú i sobre l'experiència de la vida rural i els fenòmens naturals. Aquelles imatges compostes per signes de significat cristal·litzats es convertirien en símbols lingüístics, i la seva semàntica reflectiria la simbiosi de tres plans conceptuals: la vida rural, els fenòmens naturals i el benestar.

L'objectiu d'aquesta tesi és analitzar com es construeixen i mantenen els prejudicis sobre els significats de la natura, basats en el sentit comú, en un context cultural definit, molt per darrere de l'exclusivitat i artificialitat de l'expressió literària. I, al mateix temps, com aquest prejudici pot ajudar a entendre millor una cultura antiga i ajudar a apropar-nos als pensaments de la 'gent silencioa' del món antic. Per interpretar com es construeixen les imatges al·legòriques i la mecànica en la cristal·lització del preconcepte tradicional, procurarem identificar possibles traces del pensament lingüístic tradicional antic en la literatura sumeria i les instruccions llatines sobre l'agricultura, i així apropar-nos a la matriu que es va formar amb el contacte amb el món natural i es remunta als temps prehistòrics. L'objectiu és identificar el significat en imatges transmeses pel llenguatge literari aplicant el mateix mètode a dues cultures no relacionades, per tal de donar fe de que les diferents cultures poden tenir els mateixos mecanismes de construcció de significats abstractes, amb resultats similars, quan l'agricultura i la natura són les fonts principals del context.

Resumen

Muchos autores dedicados al estudio de los sistemas sociales antiguos señalaron la gran dependencia de la agricultura y el pastoreo para la génesis de la sociedades complejas. En este sentido, tal dependencia habría tenido una influencia intrínseca en la matriz cultural de las culturas sustentadas por la agricultura, como toda la región de Mesopotamia y Itálica. La agricultura y el pastoreo regulaban las actividades diarias, interfiriendo con la conceptualización del cosmos circundante. El mundo natural se reflejó en el pensamiento abstracto e inevitablemente estableció la base de la creatividad lingüística como expresión basada en 'signos de significado' inspirados en el paisaje agrícola. Una variedad de formas de expressión a menudo muestra ese potencial lenguaje "metafórico", que supera la simple expresión de los sentimientos telúricos literarios; ese lenguaje es la manifestación de imágenes óbvias para un interlocutor que reconoce el significado de signos culturalmente transmitidos por la experiencia empírica dentro del cosmos agrícola o por prejuicios tradicionales. En este sentido, a través de la identificación y cristalización de lo que la semiótica moderna llama "signos de significado", la visualización empírica de la fertilidad, abundancia y calidad de producción funcionaría como fuente para la creación de imágenes construidas sobre el sentido común y sobre la experiencia de vida rural y fenómenos naturales. Esas imágenes compuestas por 'signos de significado' cristalizados se converten en símbolos lingüísticos, cuya semántica refleja la simbiosis de tres planos conceptuales: la vida rural, los fenómenos naturales y el bienestar.

El objetivo de esta disertación es analizar la forma en que el prejuicio sobre los significados de la naturaleza, basados en el sentido común, se construye y mantiene en un contexto cultural definido, muy más allá de la exclusividad y la artificialidad de la expresión literaria. Y, al mismo tiempo, cómo puede este prejuicio ayudarnos a comprender mejor una cultura antigua y ayudarnos a acercarnos a los pensamientos de las voces silenciosas del mundo Antiguo. Para interpretar cómo se construyen las imágenes alegóricas y la mecánica de la cristalización del preconcepto tradicional, pretendemos identificar posibles rastros del antiguo pensamiento lingüístico tradicional en la literatura sumeria y en las instrucciones latinas sobre la agricultura, cuya matriz se formó por el contacto con el mundo natural y se remonta a tiempos prehistóricos. El objetivo es identificar el significado en imágenes transmitidas por lenguaje literario aplicando el mismo método a dos culturas no relacionadas, para atestiguar que las diferentes culturas pueden tener los mismos mecanismos de construcción de significado abstracto, con resultados similares, cuando la agricultura y la naturaleza son la base fundamental del contexto.

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations, conventions and editions of ancient texts

In general, I have followed the sign values which appear in Rykle Borger's *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon*. When quoted in isolation, the transliteration of signs forming Sumerian words are presented in a larger font size. The transliteration of signs forming Akkadian and Latin words are in italics. The abbreviations follow the standard system used in Assyriological studies (e.g. CAD, CDLI & PSD) except for certain abbreviations that have no standardized definition in those publications. For Greek and Latin texts, the abbreviations stated in OLD, OCD, Liddell & Scott 1996 and *L'Année philologique* have been followed. In general, the Latin texts were taken from the editions in Diogenes (TLG, PHI corpus; version 3.2.0), although other editions from the canon were also consulted and referenced in the list below and in the bibliography.

AH – Agricultural History

AJA – American Journal of Archaeology

Angim – *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (Cooper 1978; ETCSL c.1.6.1)

AO – Tablets in the collections of the Louvre Museum (Antiquités orientales)

AuOr – Aula Orientalis (Barcelona)

AS – Assyriological Studies

ASJ – Acta Sumerologica

BASOR – Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research

BDTNS – Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts. http://bdtns.filol.csic.es (M. Molina)

BPOA – Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo

BSA – Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture

CA – *Curse of Agade* (Cooper 1983; ETCSL: c.2.1.5)

CAD – Roth, Martha T. 1956-2014, ed., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.* Vol. I-XXI. Chicago

Cato *Agr.* – Cato. *De Agri Cultura*. (Mazzarino 2010)

CDLI – Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, http://cdli.ucla.edu/

Cic. *Off.* – Cicero. *De Officiis.* (Winterbottom 1994)

CJ – Classical Journal

CKU – *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur* (Michalowski 2011)

CLAM – *The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Cohen 1988)

Col – Columellae. *Res rustica* (Rodgers 2010)

CPh – Classical Philology

CQ – Classical Quarterly

Comp.t – Composite Text

CT 50 – *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Part L: Presargonic and Sargonic Economic Texts* (Sollberger 1972)

DDum – *Dumuzi's Death* (Kramer 1980)

DI – *Dumuzi & Inana Songs* (Sefati 1998)

DI A – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song A* (ETCSL c.4.08.01; Sefati 1998 119-27)

DI B – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song B* (ETCSL c.4.08.02; Sefati 1998 128-31)

DI C – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song* C (ETCSL c.4.08.03; Sefati 1998 132-50)

DI D_1 – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song D_1* (ETCSL c.4.08.30; Sefati 1998 301-12)

DI F – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song F* (ETCSL c.4.08.06; Sefati 1998 171-76)

DI F_1 – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song F_1* (ETCSL c.4.08.32; Sefati 1998 320-3)

DI I – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song I* (ETCSL c.4.08.09; Sefati 1998 194-205)

DI O – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song O* (ETCSL c.4.08.15; Sefati 1998 210-217)

DI P – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song P* (ETCSL c.4.08.16; Sefati 1998 219-232)

DI R – *Dumuzi-Inana Song R* (ETCLS c.4.08.18; Sefati 1998 236-38)

DI T – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song T* (ETCSL c.4.08.20; Sefati 1998 219-232)

DI V – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song V* (ETCSL c.4.08.22; Sefati 1998 257-9)

DI W – *Dumuzi-Inanna Song W* (ETCSL c.4.08.23; Sefati 1998 260-6)

DumDr – *Dumuzi's Dream* (ETCSL 1.4.7; Alster 1972)

E4 – *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods*, vol. 4 (Frayne et all.1990; RIME 4)

EJN – *Enki's Journey to Nippur* (Al-Fouadi 1969)

ELA – *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* (ETCSL c.1.8.2.3; Cohen 1973; Vanstiphout 2003; Mittermayer 2009)

Enlil A – *Enlil in the E-kur* (Enlil A) (ETCSL c.4.05.1)

EnlSud – *Enlil and Sud* (ETCSL c.1.2.2; Civil 1983)

EnmEns – *Enmerkar and Ensuhkešdana* (Berlin 1979).

ePSD – Electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary Project, last update 06/26/06: http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/

ETCSL – The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk)

Ewe and grain – The debate between Grain and sheep (Alster, Vanstiphout 1987)

FI – *The Farmer's Instruction* (Civil 1994)

GEN – Gilgameš, Enkidu & the Netherworld (Shaffer 1964; George 2003; Gadotti 2014)

GRBS – Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies

Gudea Cyl. A – Gudea Cylinder A (Edzard 1997 69-101)

HT – *Heron & Turtle* (ETCLS c.5.9.2; Gragg 1973)

HSCP – Harvard Studies in Classical Philology

Inana B – *The Exaltation of Inanna* (ETCSL c. 4.07.2; Hallo, van Dijk 1968)

InstrŠur – *Instructions of Šuruppak* (Alster 1974; Alster 2005; ETCSL c.5.6.1)

Išme-Dagan A – Attinger 2014

Išme-Dagan D – *An adab (?) to Enki for Išme-Dagan* (ETCSL c.2.5.4.04; Sjöberg 1973 13-16)

Išme-Dagan S – Frayne 1990 36-38 (ETCSL c.2.5.4.19)

Hoe and Plough –The debate between Hoe and Plough (ETCSL c.5.3.1; Vanstiphout 1997 575-588)

JAR – Journal of Archaeological Research

JANER – Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions

JANES – Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies

JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society

JBL – Journal of Biblical Literature

JCS – Journal of Cuneiform Studies

JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies

JRS – Journal of Roman Studies

LE – *Lament for Eridug (Eridu Lament)* (ETCSL c.2.2.6; Green 1978)

LN – Lament over Nippur (Tinney 1996; ETCSL c. 2.2.4)

LPS –*Letter from Puzur-Šulgi to Ibbi-Suen about Išbi-Erra's claim on Isin* (ETCL c.3.1.19; Ali 1964)

LSJ – Liddell, H. G. and R. Scott, eds (1940), *A Greek–English Lexicon*. 9th ed., rev. H. S. Jones. Oxford: Clarendon Press

Luc. – Lucanus. *Bellum Civile* (ed. Housman 1927)

LUr – *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (ETCSL c.2.2.2; Krecher 1996, Vanstiphout 1998)

LSUr – *The lament for Sumer and Urim* (ETCSL c.2.2.3; Michalowski 1989)

LW – *Uruk lament* (Green 1984)

Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon – Borger 2004

Nanna L – *A šir-namgala to Nanna* (ETCSL c.4.13.12; Sjöberg 1973)

Nungal A – *A hymn to Nungal* (ETCSL c. 4.28.1; Sjöberg 1973)

OCD – Hornblower, S. and A. Spawforth, eds 1996, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press

OLD – Glare, P. W., ed. 1968-82, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford, Clarendon Press

OBC – *Orientalia Biblica et Christiana*

OJA – *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*

Ov. *Tr.* – Ovid. *Tristia* (Hall 1995)

Palladius – Palladius. *De re rustica* (Rodgers 1975)

Plin. *Nat*. – Pliny. *Naturalis Historia* (Mayhoff 1967a–2002b)

Sen. *Ep*. – Seneca. *Epistulae* (Reynolds 1965)

    Nat. – Seneca. *Naturales Quaestiones* (Hine 1996)

    Oed. – Seneca. *Oedipus* (Zwierlein 1987)

    Phaed. – Seneca. *Phaedra* (Zwierlein 1987)

SF[?] – *Dumuzid and Enkimdu* (*The Shepherd and the Farmer*) (ETCSL c.4.08.33; Sefati 1998 324-43)

sHoe (Al) – *The song of the Hoe* (ETCSL c.5.5.4; Edzard 2000)

SP - Sumerian Proverb Collections (Alster 1997)

Šulgi A – Klein 1981

Šulgi B – Castellino 1972

Šulgi D – *A praise poem of Šulgi* (ETCSL c.2.4.2.04)

Šu-Suen C – *A balbale to Inana for Šu-Suen* (ETCSL c.2.4.4.3; Sefati 1998 360-4)

TN – Topographical name.

TAPA – *Transactions of the American Philological Association*

TSBA – *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*

UHF – *Forerunners Udug-Hul* (Geller 1985)

UrN A – *Death of Ur-Namma* (Ur-Namma A) (Flückiger-Hawker 1999; ETCSL c. 2.4.1.1)

UrN C – *A praise poem of Ur-Namma* (Ur-Namma C) (ETCSL c.2.4.1.3; Flückiger-Hawker 1999)

UrN D – *Ur-Namma the canal-digger*, Nippur version (Ur-Namma D) (ETCSL c.2.4.1.4; Tinner 1999)

UrN G – *A balbale to Enlil for Ur-Namma* (Ur-Namma G) (ETCSL c.2.4.1.7)

UrukL – *Uruk Lament* (Green 1984)

Var. *R.* – Varro. *Res rusticae* (Goetz 1929)

Verg. *G.* – Vergil. *Georgica* (ed. Mynors 1969)

VAT – Museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung. Tontafeln)

WS – *The debate between Winter and Summer* (ETCSL c.5.3.3)

WA – World Archaeology

WMNT – Wissenschafliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

ZAW – Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Editorial signs

X	-	indicates a fragmentary or unreadable sign
!	-	follows a corrected sign
?	-	follows a queried sign
[ ]	-	denotes text missing, but supplied by the editor
[X]	-	indicates one sign missing
[...]	-	indicates more than two signs missing
⌈ ⌉	-	contains partially damaged text
{ }	-	contains textual variants
< >	-	denotes corrected scribal omissions
( )	-	contains additions to the translation

0. Prelude, method and justification

The title of this thesis may suggest a comparative study of two literatures, namely Sumerian and Roman, but that is far from the real aim of this study. In order to construct a common landscape, I intend to propose a dialogic exercise involving the abstract meanings of certain traditional images identifiable in two literary languages. Therefore, I intend to reconstruct a common imaginary landscape identifiable in literature through 'signs of meaning'.[1]

For obvious reasons, Sumerian and Roman literatures cannot be compared. Nevertheless, my aim is to search for similar ways of constructing symbols and parallel uses of the same symbolic objects and *topoi*[2] in the literary discourse of different linguistic cultures.[3] The main subjects of the analysis are associated with the visual representation of the physical agricultural world and its universal expression in abstract language. Clearly, it is important to state that what is being proposed here is a highly theoretical exercise which, due to the antiquity of the subjects of the study, may lack some objective data. Hence, three main questions should be asked:

1. Why proceed with this kind of study?

2. Why select two different cultures, namely the Sumerian and Roman, which were so remote from each other in many ways?

3. Why attempt to examine cultures which used the same types of preconceptions?

These are the key questions underlying the thesis, since the main objective is to argue that they should be debated in order to develop a greater knowledge of universal history, especially Mediterranean antiquity. Having stated this, it is important to note that exploring a hypothetical common cultural ground shared by Sumerians and Romans is not the precise object of this study. In fact, this thesis is not exactly about Sumerian culture or Roman culture, although these two cultures are the main source for the argument, since Sumer and Rome are crucial to the conceptualisation of the Western cultural matrix.[4] The hypothesis proposed and defended in this thesis concerns popular and traditional culture and its transversality, in terms of agricultural themes, in abstract thought.

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[1] Vide an example on the agrarian landscape in the 'song of the songs', vide James 2017 25-54.
[2] As Oppenheim would call them (apud Ferrara 1995).
[3] With reference to literary discourse, I have followed Johansen 2002.
[4] Concerning the process of linguistic conceptualisation, I have followed Griffin and Ferreira 2006 21-60. On conceptual systems, vide Brown 2007.

0.1 Sumerians and Romans: unknown aliens

A simplistic and generalised approach to the subject of Mediterranean culture would recognise that it is quite easy to identify the influence of Roman culture in the Mediterranean cultural matrix, whereas Sumeria's relations with the West are not so clear if the aim is to obtain a wider picture of Mediterranean cultural history. The Mesopotamian region is considered the cradle of civilization and Sumerian was probably the first written language, but it is hard to connect this fact with the genesis of other cultures so distant in time and space. [5] The invention of writing in Ancient Sumer can be separated from Western writing, since other cultures also invented types of script for other non-related languages that had no connections with the cuneiform system, such as ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, for example (vide Baines 2007). In fact, the Sumerians may not have had any kind of influence at all on Western culture in this respect. Nevertheless, they influenced and were influenced by Akkadian culture in terms of fables, myths and religion, and probably their perspectives on the cosmos. Since Akkadian language and culture played an incalculable direct and indirect cultural role in the cultures of Mesopotamia and the Levant, it is therefore difficult to entirely dissociate Sumerian history from Mediterranean cultural history, even though it is not possible to identify a concrete, linear relationship between the ancient cultures of the Mesopotamian and Mediterranean regions.[6]

In fact, if this argument is pursued, it can prove impossible to distinguish clearly between Sumerian and Akkadian culture, since the main tools currently available for making these distinctions are language and some iconography, whereas the process of differentiating between cultures is associated more with linguistics, religion, specific chronologies and the aesthetics of the plastic arts (see van de Mieroop 1999). Nevertheless, there would certainly have been some convergence between Sumerian and Akkadian culture, influencing a possible correlation between all Semitic Levantine and Mesopotamian cultures within the Mediterranean area. If judged objectively without considering artificial borders, it would have been impossible to determine where and when one culture ended and the other began. The truth is that in the past artificial divisions, such as the ones that can be found in a modern world map, did not exist.

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[5] To the Romans, the Euphrates may only have signified a frontier, so there is little idea of relations with Mesopotamian cultures: normally they were the enemy (Verg. *G.* 1.509-514). We use the term 'mesopotamia' as generalised designation for the region; we do not consider the region as a cultural unit.
[6] On the Sumerian/Akkadian question, vide Rubio 2007.

The hypothesis proposed in the introduction to *The ancient economy. evidence and models* by J. G. Manning and Ian Morris (2005) was a major influence for the original idea on which this study is based. The book starts with a commentary on the biases and errors in the analytical processes used in the study of ancient Mediterranean cultures and histories. The editors base their arguments essentially on the economy, but their statements can easily be applied to other fields. They note how it was, and still is, common to approach ancient Mediterranean cultures as if they were individual social phenomena and also emphasise how these cultures have been analysed using modern models that cannot reflect the reality of antiquity. (Manning and Morris 2005 6) Some of these models still subscribe to the ethnic prejudices of the nineteenth century, which viewed non-Western cultures as inferior and less developed. The approach to ancient cultures which treats them as if they were islands, even when they are separated by geography and time, is misleading and problematic in terms of understanding the organic mechanisms of behaviour of a society and its individuals. In this study, the tradition of abstract thought becomes an issue if analysed through artificial stereotypes.

The traditional differentiation and 'geometrical division' between ancient cultures and their social systems which involves placing them in different boxes with just a few connecting lines between them may have been created by incorrect ideological approaches and ideas based on prejudice. Essentially, ancient cultures were often analysed and defined by categorizations based on presumptions that were simply not accurate. Some of the ideas that compounded theories on the ancient world simply remained 'theories'. Nonetheless, they were accepted as factual and promoted as truths. For this reason, for almost a century studies of the history of the ancient world were based on certain archaic concepts that basically created and supported modern definitions and approaches to the history of the ancient Mediterranean. The great error of this analytical method, which is still used nowadays, was the creation of boundaries between what is normally called the 'ancient classical world' and the 'ancient near east'. We must therefore be aware of generalized distinctions between ancient cultures and adopt a critical perspective towards any given definition of a culture, since we do not have the tools to obtain precise measurements and cannot base the study of history on unreliable theoretical approaches.

However, the geometrical division of cultures and such attitudes toward the history of ancient societies are changing and slowly abandoning the idea of 'boxes' constructed on the basis of geography, language and religion. It is increasingly understood that although these

cultural elements appear to be completely separate when viewed from a modern, decontextualized perspective, they were not so unrelated in the past. Hence, if the current definition of a culture is not correct, how can we establish boundaries when we do not know the nature of the actual societies that are being compared? In reality, it is very difficult to determine when a particular element of culture began, and how it was independent from other supposed 'outside' elements.

Morris and Manning (2005 3) offer some interesting commentaries on the scholarship of Mediterranean sites, claiming that every field tends to approach civilizations in different ways, using distinct methods. In fact, different approaches and methods are necessary, since the material data for fields such as Egyptology, Assyriology or Classical Philology are different in nature. Nevertheless, it raises the question of how disconnected they have to be to justify the use of a different language by the researchers in each field, as Morris and Manning note in their book: it is as if Egypt were on Mars, Rome on Neptune and Sumer somewhere on one of the moons of Saturn. Moreover, as Morris and Manning add, this may be the main reason why these fields are so disconnected: the sciences actually speak different languages and cannot understand each other. They behave as they believe ancient societies used to behave, with no interconnections, merging or sharing. This attitude has created the idea that each time similar elements between two cultures are found there is an artificial importation, merging or syncretism, without considering that sometimes a shared element can be developed in an independent or parallel way. The main reason for such prejudice probably lies in the object under analysis, which is usually a source originating from the upper strata of society, who tended to live in the main urban areas. It is common knowledge that such data samples are not representative of the majority of the population[7] and therefore are not very representative of the culture of a region. Thus, they are not reliable objects for making definitive comparisons between cultures.

Common factors may have different origins and may not be the result of common evolution or invasive contact between civilizations. Cultures do not have to merge or be absorbed in order to share common elements. In fact, 'cultural absorption' may be the wrong way to look at the mechanisms of cultural mutation, particularly if this involves a time frame of centuries or millennia.

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[7] On demographic surveys of the Mediterranean region, vide Witcher 2012 and Parkin 2011. Vide also Lo Cascio 1994 on the census in ancient times.

The method usually adopted for connecting two 'compartmentalised' cultures is the identification and correlation of a specific object found in both cultures; Athenian democracy may be considered a good example of this. One of these 'objects' is the general concept of citizenship and certain related cultural features that apparently have no parallel outside Greece and are therefore instruments that can be used to define Athenian culture.[8] As a concept, citizenship cannot be identified outside classical Greece in terms of a word that implies the same concept. However, the reason for this unique element may not lie in the specific political behaviour of the Athenian people and their understanding of community, but in the different descriptive perceptions of the relationship between the physical space occupied by the community and the government and the role of the state within that community. The Athenian Greeks had a particular, objectifying concept of citizenship but the Babylonians, apparently, had not, or at least not one defined in the same terms, as far as academic knowledge of Babylonian politics can determine. Nevertheless, I would argue that there is no proof that the general concept of the citizen was an isolated fact. Can it really be said that the original citizens of the city of Babylon had no assemblies to decide their destiny, popular courts provided by some kind of political organization,[9] public places for worship or public buildings commissioned by a central power established in the city, or that they had no notion that when a foreigner arrived he could not be considered a Babylonian because he did not belong to their original community?[10] In fact, it is impossible to support affirmative answers to these questions as there is no irrefutable data to support this, or the opposite.

Essentially, we cannot know how the Babylonians felt about themselves as members of a community because in our understanding Babylonians are a 'non-entity': we do not know exactly which language they spoke or the words they used to define their cultural or political structures. Only the written language has survived and this evidence is too artificial and crystallized to be considered a definitive reflection of their culture (see Van de Mieroop 2016 3-34) with regard to the prosopographic method.

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[8] This concept will not be discussed here: vide Lape 2010 1-94, 127-239. On Athenian democracy, vide Mitchell 2015 209-243 and Thorley 2004.

[9] On Neo-Babylonian trial records, vide Holtz 2014.

[10] On the social configuration of Old Babylon, vide Charvát 2007; for a discussion of social participation in the government of ancient Mesopotamian cities, vide Liverani 2016 192-200. For a discussion of elements of democracy, courts and assemblies in ancient Mesopotamia, vide also Liverani 2016 138-141.

The economic structure offers us another example. We have more data on economics from ancient Babylon[11] than from classical Athens[12] because of the thousands of clay tables that served for as accounts for commercial transactions and property. However, there is no consensus among scholars regarding the economic system and administrative structures of ancient Babylon. Consequently, if we do not understand exactly how the Babylonian economy worked despite the amount of data we have on the subject (vide Jursa 2010), we cannot compare it with the Athenian system, for which we have less information. In fact, we could ask an infinite number of questions about other subjects associated with comparative studies of ancient cultures including, for example, what was the Babylonian citizen's perspective of the other or what can be said about slavery as an institution.[13]

Without knowing the answers, how can we distinguish between two cultures by defining such a solid boundary, as is normally the practice, when the grounds for understanding a particular context are so insecure? Moreover, with regard to Greece, how can we make such a distinction when we have only filtered information and know that literature and archaeology sometimes offer marked contradictions? Any filtered selection of information made on the basis of the writings of the ancient authors and physical remains found by archaeologists may be very deceptive. Clearly, the data available to scientists cannot be ignored, but it must be examined critically and in most cases demands that we should suggest, rather than affirm. This minimal commentary simply serves to highlight the point that even though these two cultures are clearly different, some of the characteristics used to classify each one as distinctive are not so well known and therefore are not valid and clear markers. As Scheidel (1995) commented, "What is the use (and indeed the very nature) of comparisons when far too little is known about one of the two things to be compared? And on what criteria are we to base our choice of comparative evidence and our judgement of its representative value?"

Some perspectives in this thesis were inspired by Morris and Manning's (2005) statements, given that they present a critical study of art from the perspective of the historiography of ancient Mediterranean cultures, particularly with regard to the economy. Significantly, the book notes that the study of ancient cultures is highly divided by region

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[11] On the economic history of the first millennium B.C., vide Jursa 2010. Vide also Kleber 2012 on an example of agricultural crisis in Northern Mesopotamia.
[12] Vide Scheidel, Morris, Saller 2008 333-408; Amemiya 2007 55-114.
[13] On this subject, vide Baker 2001 and Seri 2013. On servant labourers in Nippur (14th and 13th centuries B.C.), vide Tenney 2011.

and language, even with regard to the economy, a transversal social field. Beaujard (2011), for example, refers to the relationship between the different areas of Eurasia and northern Africa as evidence of systemic proximity and cultural exchanges, citing the adoption and importation of materials and technologies such as copper, chariots and horses as proof. He (2011) questions dogmas such as the idea of a whole distribution system (state / city / temple), since commercial initiatives and exchanges do not seem to have come from a central system prior to private initiative, meaning that the idea of a state that rules everything and mirrors the culture and activities of its subordinates has to be challenged, together with the definition of geographical and economic borders. Beaujard's assumption also led me to think that it is indeed a mistake to think of ancient history as composed of homogeneous cultural entities that can be easily defined by language and iconography. Bearing all these preconceptions in mind, this thesis aims to challenge an outdated way of investigating culture and the literature of cultures sustained by agricultural economies, using the semiotic objects that compose it as main tools for constructing my argument. To sum up, how can we factually distinguish between or compare two cultures such as the Sumerian and Roman, which both extended over millennia, with the cultural mutations implicit in such a huge chronological and geographical frame? It is simply not possible and for this reason any kind of comparison between the two subjects under study was avoided, even when some elements were very similar.

General characteristics that used to be considered distinctive elements of culture are gradually being discredited, since they were constructed from modern concepts. However, the real practices in the daily life of individuals in ancient civilisations tend to be ignored because of the lack of systematic data. Religion, the economy and citizenship are the clearest examples of this. How can one really say that in the city of Babylon in the fifth century BC these social markers were completely different to those from the same period in Athens? What arguments could be used? Obviously, Babylon did not have 'Athenian democracy' and therefore it had to be different.[14] However, it did not have 'Athenian democracy' because it was 'the Athenian democracy': it only existed in Athens. Therefore I believe that exclusive elements should not be used to distinguish between two cultures, as there is no common ground for making this comparison. Is the fact that Babylon did not have Athenian democracy sufficient to distinguish between the two cultures in terms of their attitudes

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[14] On Athenian democratic institutions, vide Thorley 2004.

towards private economy and property (vide Steinkeller 2004), taxes, religion, moral behaviour, traditional language, traditions and sense of community? I believe not. Hence, I propose a dialogic study of what can be seen as common ground: relations between humans and their environment.[15]

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[15] When I was about to present this thesis I was given the opportunity of reading the thesis of Erika Marsal (2018) which debates the cultural conceptualization on Sumerian language. Unfortunately, I could not give to it the proper attention on time and in order to cite or debate her arguments, for this thesis was already finished and about to be submitted to evaluation. For a study on conceptualization in Sumerian language vide Marsal, Erika Palomo (2018). *Mapping the Sumerian Mind: A Cognitive Approach to the Royal Ideology in the Period of Isin and Larsa*. Wien.

0.2 Agriculture and the culture of the silent people

Since subsistence activities result from a combination of natural and social factors, a psycho-social[16] reconstruction of an economy specifically based on agriculture can be used to address the cognitive relationship between the environment and the societies who shared it. Hence, I aim to defend the existence of a relationship between the environment, the identity of a social group and expressive creativity. Clearly, there are always issues concerning stereotypes, since capturing a precise ancient environment and its influence on a particular social group over an extended chronology is more of an exercise in guesswork than the systematization of factual reality.[17]

Whilst recognizing the value of psycholinguistic theories such as the 'sensory-motor theory' developed by Martin, Ungerleider, and Haxby (2000 1023-1036), I do not intend to discuss this area specifically.[18] 'The sensory-motor theory' proposes that conceptual knowledge is represented in the brain according to the features that define the concepts of an object and takes human physiology as an important reference point.[19] Semantic memory therefore plays a central role in the construction of language by giving a specific modality to abstract representations, although the theory depends on readings of physical reactions to the surrounding world. However, given the nature of this thesis, it is not possible to look for semantic memory in these terms, particularly with reference to individuals from ancient civilisations. The theory was taken into consideration in the argument for the construction of symbols through conceptualisation of 'signs' identified in the natural world,[20] but as this thesis proposes a theoretical exercise using a more sensorial perception of landscape in order to make an analogy with the interlocutors of the ancient texts, this approach cannot be applied.

I also opted to avoid the psycholinguistic approach to semantics related to context because this field also tends to focus too much on the physicality of language and the formalities of language processing and lexical production/management, ignoring a great deal

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[16] This compound word is not used here as a concept per se, but refers to the connection between the perspective of the individual and the society that surrounds him.
[17] For perspectives on 'ecological linguistics (EL)', which focuses on language as relations between people and the surrounding world, vide van Lier 2004.
[18] Fernández & Cairns 2011 are followed with regard to the concept of psycholinguistics. Vide also Warren 2013.
[19] Vide A. Martin, L. G. Ungerleider, and Haxby 2000 1023-1036.
[20] On the construction of meaning through the idea of the 'visual word', vide Balota, Yap, Cortese 2006.

of the social context for the construction/recognition of abstract meaning and its environmental inspiration.[21]

The subject of this study is a kind of figurative language that may reflect a specific but transversal social experience within the farming world (see Gibbs 1994). I intend to connect with a kind of language that would generally have extended to the entire social community and would have included the illiterate or, in other words, the silent people. Contrary to Gibbs and Colston (2006 835-862), I would not consider nonliteral, indirect, and figurative meanings as secondary products dependent on some prior analysis of what words and expressions literally mean. I would argue that, where common sense is concerned, abstract language, is essentially associated with spontaneity and that therefore the meaning of certain signs must have already existed in the cognitive spectrum of the interlocutor, as simple figurative elements tend to be. I would also claim that if a specific 'cultural group' shares a common communication code (see Aguiar e Silva 2002 76-78), when elements of this code coincide with those of other cultural groups, this must happen for two reasons: interaction, or similar experiences within an environment that generate similar signs of meaning. If those signs of meaning are similar, albeit identified by different lexicons and grammatical structures, this would mean that the principles of abstract language used and created by individuals are the same, since similar cosmoses generate similar social experiences and the farming world is a good example of this.

0.3. Justification of method

Considering the scope and nature of this project and the amount of Sumerian and Latin sources, it was necessary to make certain methodological decisions. I worked with published versions of cuneiform texts, with only some exceptions when the published transliterations of Sumerian texts raised too many doubts. In general, editions of transliterated composite texts were used, which were only compared with the cuneiform sources when there were variations in meaning and interpretation. However, the cuneiform versions were also consulted on lexical matters when this was essential for the hypothesis, following CAD, PSD and Borger's *Zeichenlexikon* 2003.

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[21] For a summary of the debate on psycholinguistic perspectives on lexical and sentence comprehension, vide MacDonald and Seidenberg 2006 581-611.

I have not approached Sumerian culture from a historical and diachronic perspective as I believe this does not reflect the expression of linguistic thought and popular language – the main subject of the analysis here – at least, in terms of data that has survived from the past. Moreover, the history of Mesopotamia does not begin with the invention of writing and end with Alexander the Great's conquests, as if it was a linear sum of events and spaces. In fact, there is not one but several histories, which scholars often fail to connect and to understand due to their complexity and the lack of systematic data. Taking agricultural production as an example, during the second millennium BC there were many changes to land tenure and herding, new crops were introduced or abandoned and areas under cultivation expanded and contracted (Thompson 2004).

Studying Sumerian literature inevitably means studying Akkadian literature. Despite not examining texts in the Akkadian language, I understand that one literature cannot be dissociated from another due to the mutual process of translation from one language to another, the shared lexicon and the common geographical background in antiquity. In fact, since the theme of this thesis is traditional thought and not language per se, it would have been pertinent to study Akkadian literature as well. As Van De Miroop (2015 218) says: "Whether or not linguistic determinism applies in general, the Babylonian world presents a special challenge to it. Babylonia's literate culture was fundamentally bilingual, and the bilingualism did not just involve two cognate languages but radically dissimilar ones: the linguistic isolate Sumerian and Semitic Akkadian. So how did people deal with the two distinct mind-sets that these languages inspired?" To date, the available data cannot provide a satisfactory answer and I cannot propose one. For this reason, I have tried to ignore any possible distinctive cultural elements in Sumerian and Akkadian and to examine the images written in a specific language (Sumerian), considering that those images were in some way universal. Therefore, by working only with the Sumerian language, it was possible to reduce the sample under analysis, considering the imperatives implicit in a research project such as this. Future studies should also focus on Akkadian literature and this dialogic exercise may serve as an invitation to other scholars to expand and criticise my approach to this subject.

This study was not based on the statistical analysis of linguistic and literary data, since they are not available. Moreover, my understanding of the principles governing the expression of traditional thought is that this cannot be measured with sparse archaeological data and barely contextualized cultural evidence, although I give credit to studies of ancient

economies that are based on this kind of analysis and aim to trace or find a link between social history and culture. [22]

Considering that I intend to apply prosopography to the study of certain literary themes, following the approach of Van De Mieroop (1999 88), whose work was one of the inspirations for this research project, I believe that "The silent subjects of history can be seen only when their lives intersect with those of writers. The Mesopotamian material is not of the type where we find descriptions of the lifestyles of the poor and the humble, but a great number of people did interact with the bureaucracies of palaces and temples. The latter would demand labour and services from certain sectors of society, and thus in times of economic centralization large groups of people become known to us. This is true to such an extent that we claim to know the names of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Mesopotamians, and approximately when and where they lived, but nothing else. It would be futile to study these people as individuals with the evidence at hand, but we can investigate some aspects of their lives as members of groups. This technique is called prosopography in ancient history, 'the investigation of the common background and characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives' (apud Stone 1987 45). Prosopography has not been applied much in Mesopotamian history, but can be very promising when we can identify groups of people, named or unnamed, who appear in a set of records over a period of time."

In other words, it is necessary to give a voice to the silent people, in order to know how people used to live and who they were. Only when we know about all social groups can we understand the society they created. However, main issue here is that these people are really silent, and this is also true of Roman culture. Roman and Sumerian peasants did not leave diaries, or physical waste that can be studied by archaeology. Essentially, they 'were not', for we do not have their voices. As Scheidel (1995) says, citing Sandra Joshel: "In 'Listening to Silence', she sets out to tackle the complex of 'problems in epistemology of muted groups', which, in essence, boils down to the single problem of how to come up with anything meaningful about groups of people that have hardly left any traces in the historical record outside the sombre realm of funerary epigraphy."

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[22] For an economic analysis of the ancient Mediterranean economy based on modern economic theories, vide Jones 2014.

This is entirely valid for the peasants of the Sumerian and Roman worlds. I do not intend to present a critical analysis of the entire Sumerian or Latin literatures and languages, since aim of this research is to understand linguistic thought and its mechanisms in terms of the 'silent people', regardless of their society or language. Since we cannot get in touch with the real ancient traditional culture, I propose to identify the linguistic tools that common people would have had at their disposal for communication, in terms of their original natural basis and genesis as tools of expression. I therefore compiled a set of Sumerian sentences and Latin paragraphs whose meanings are constructed from traditional abstract thought. I did so by combining approaches from social history, anthropology and literature. I acknowledge what is being proposed is a highly theoretical approach based on subjective cultural data, aware of the fallibility inherent in a study of such distant cultures and bearing in mind the inevitable analytical distortions and prejudice generated by modern and anachronistic thought. Nevertheless, it is only by reflecting on matters related to traditional culture that one can consider the possibility of getting closer to the past and the reality of everyday life.

Most of the texts examined in this study belong to the 'overall genre' of literary texts, because this is where metaphors referring to agriculture and descriptions of the natural world mainly occur.[23] I use the term 'overall genre' without any connotations defined by literary theory. In fact, I have avoided any discussion of literary genres as I approach the texts on a semantic basis, examining images from the agricultural world that have some kind of rooted meaning.

0.4. Chapters and thematic divisions

Each chapter of Sections I, II, III and IV of this thesis corresponds to an artificial thematic division, since all the themes are closely connected, given that they come from the same symbolic landscape. I have divided the chapters on the basis of an independent but parallel analysis of the theme in question in each literature, before drawing brief conclusions on the possibilities of dialogue between each culture regarding the similarity of the signs and the potential for symbols based on images of the farming cosmos to coexist and be transversal.

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[23] For a theoretical framework for the study of spatial metaphors based on visual landscapes vide Horn 2016 9-20. With regard to literary metaphor, I have followed Semino and Steen 2008 232-261.

0.5. Some notes on transliteration and translation

Although, as previously stated, this thesis relies primarily on scholarly editions of Sumerian cuneiform and Latin texts, efforts have been made to consult handwritten copies or pictures of cuneiform texts when it was necessary to confirm the semantic value presented in different sources.

Transliterations quoted in this study are adapted from the scholarly editions or electronic sources. Unless otherwise stated, quotations from the transliterations of Sumerian sources follow the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk), CLAM published by Cohen (1988), Lambert and Millard (1969), Sefati's Dumuzi-Inana texts (1998) and the editions cited in the list of abbreviations. The transliteration of cuneiform signs follows the preferred sign readings of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (http://cdli.ucla.edu/methods/signreading.html) and those of Borger's Zeichenlexikon 2003. Concerning the use of scholarly editions in this study, it should be noted that the composite text never existed in history and therefore, so as Black (1998 32-8) argues, any literary analysis relying on such scholarly 'constructs' is questionable. For this reason, every time there were major ambiguities in the sources collected for this study, the text was analysed or commented on in terms of the editor's decisions. However, because the semantic value is crucial to my hypothesis, ambiguous sources were avoided as far as possible.

The translations of the Sumerian and Latin texts are presented in order to facilitate the reading of the argument. The sources were first consulted in the original language and I am responsible for most of the translations.

0.6. Selection of sources

Different criteria were used for the selection of the Sumerian and the Roman texts. This was due to the need to reduce the volume of sources, given the time frame for the project and the specificities of each textual sample, the chronology and the context of the sites where the texts were found.

The Sumerian corpus was essentially based on literary texts written in the Sumerian language, regardless of its original tradition. [24] Exceptions were made for the Sumerian

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[24] On the context of the Mesopotamian scribal tradition, I have followed Radner and Robson 2011.

proverbs, rhetoric collections[25] and a large part of the Suruppak Instructions or 'The Instructions of Urninurta and Related Compositions' (Alster 1991), as the language tends to be ambiguous and very dependent on the linguistic cultural context – which is difficult for modern scholars to decipher - whereas my aim was to study the language of common sense.

For the Latin corpus, I decided to focus on 'instructional literature', with some exceptions that helped to justify a general metaphor and compensate for a lack of data in the instructions. This was done to limit the references to a smaller corpus and, at the same time, to a literature that does not use so many rhetorical stylistic resources in image-based language, with one specific exception, namely Virgil's *Georgica,* which is explained in Chapter 1.2. I also avoided specific chronologies, since they could in some way distort the search for a popular and transversal tradition. However, I worked with a reduced time span for the Latin literature, using two authors from the Roman Republic, Cato the Elder (c. 234-149 B.C.) and Varro (c. 116-27 B.C.), and two from the first century of the Empire, Virgil (c. 70-19 B.C.) and Columella (c. 4-70 A.D.).

Manifestations of the agricultural cosmos may have a significant presence in religious concepts and rituals, but I have not explored religious and ritualistic contexts, since I intend to focus only on the expression of images and their conversion into abstract language, ignoring the processes whereby simple and traditional signs converge as complex symbolic constructions, such as those used in religion, which requires a different approach and a great deal of contextualization.

0.7. Some notes on the lexicon and the value of semiotics in identifying meaning

Sign of meaning – A visual marker that identifies the individual characteristics of an image that can convey a crystalized meaning. For example, a landscape described as having a lot of fruit trees bears the sign for quantity and the sign for production, materialized in the fruit. A sign is neither positive, nor negative [26] but simply marks a specific characteristic that is part of a symbol. I have identified only one exact semantic value for each sign. This thesis follows the general principles of the semiotics of signs applied to images crystalized by common sense and tradition and also to material culture.[27]

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[25] On Sumerian proverb collections, vide Taylor 2005.
[26] Vide also Eco's definition of signs (2002 29-43) and Aguiar e Silva 1997 76-79. On Umberto Eco's theory, vide also Lorusso 2015 117-158.
[27] On signs of meaning concerning material culture, vide Preucel 2006 21-92. On semiotics, vide also Cobley 2010.

Symbol – Corresponds to a compound of signs of meaning. Signs can be selected in order to construct a complex or a traditional symbol.

Traditional symbol - The compounding of crystalized signs of meaning to express the entire semantic range of the symbolic image. It is the abstract representation of an original image that served as the basis for the symbolic construction which is present in the collective mind. The symbolic image is interpreted spontaneously and relies on empirical knowledge of the natural world.

Complex symbol or literary symbol - A selective compounding of crystalized signs in order to construct a symbol whose meaning depends on context and literary purpose. It tends to take the form of a metaphor or allegory.[28]

Value - An 'objective meaning' i.e. what a lexeme or idea represents as a concrete object. For example, the value of a tree in a literary or lexical context corresponds to its meaning as an object. It is the image alone which is important and therefore the value of a tree lies in the representation itself, which has no positive or negative connotations. However, if the tree is used as a metaphor, it may suggest other objects, for example, an erect penis. The value of the tree corresponds to one or more of the signs of its image and thus in the case of the metaphor for the penis, it corresponds to the signs for the 'straight' and 'erect' representation of the tree.

The exegesis of literature is inevitably based on modern preconceptions. Even the suggestion and identification of 'linguistic thought' is an interpretation based on our conceptions of traditional thought. For this reason, I have opted to classify some of the symbols not by words, using a crystallized lexicon, but by the ideas expressed in the texts, whether Sumerian or Roman, which means that the concept of 'signs of meaning' is crucial to my argument on transversal human thought.

It is important to remember that words are very evocative. They can identify specific objects, but the same objects may suggest other meanings, depending on function, shape, colour, texture or cultural reception. Therefore, the word that identifies the object may also identify other abstract ideas and even other objects.[29] Consider, for example, the adjective 'phallic' and the many associations it may have with the shape of an object. Conversely, if

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[28] Regarding the relation between metaphor, semantics, and literary context, vide Stern's discussion (2008).
[29] Vide the 'water example' (Chap. 2.1).

we consider all the objects that have a phallic shape, we find a never-ending list of objects that can symbolize a 'penis' in modern popular discourse. In any culture, the word is not the only meaningful tool that can be used to identify an object.[30] It is the speech context that is given to the object that is crucial to its identification, regardless of the syntagma being used. In this sense, we cannot believe exclusively in the reliability of the lexicon for identifying meaning but can try to recreate context through this semantic multiplicity by analysing the signs of meaning in the image that serve as the basis of its semantic composition.

In addition, given the lack of cultural context for understanding the semantics of Sumerian words, it was necessary to work with abstract ideas in order to create meaning, instead of using possible synonyms and exact definitions. This is also valid for the Latin lexicon, since a great deal of the potential polysemy that a word could have in its cultural context may be lost, even in a language apparently close to our background and with a large literary corpus, such as Latin, although, in this case, I tend to believe that the figurative representation is similar to the modern one.

0.8. Decomposing metaphorical language

Metaphor and allegory have unlimited potential in linguistic creativity: there are literally no manageable limits to their use. In fact, this entire study is an exercise in identifying their use in ancient abstract language and their universality. As the following chapters demonstrate, any image of nature and experience of rural life can be converted into a linguistic comparison with an abstract object or, in other words, into signs of meaning or symbolic constructions. Theories of metaphor are not debated here, since definitions which describe them as 'involving a comparison or similarity between two or more objects' or as 'interactions between two semantic fields' are not relevant to the idea of the conceptualization of objects based on signs of meaning. In fact, I would argue that the debate on the concept of metaphor is to some extent sterile: it attempts to define a concept that is artificial, hence no one thinks about the concept of a metaphor when using it in everyday language. Essentially, a metaphor is what a user wants it to be. Therefore, how can boundaries be established for the interpretation and definition of generalised traditional metaphors if there is no such awareness? Is that even possible?

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[30] On metaphorical references to the penis in Sumerian literature, vide Leick 2003 48-54. On the Roman context, vide Richlin 1992. Vide also the Renaissance examples presented by Varriano 2005.

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I do not intend to answer this question, as it is not possible to identify an objective and distinctive boundary between Sumerian and Roman metaphors in terms of traditional culture and literary language. Without the definition of 'an exact traditional culture' it is not possible to draw a dividing line between purely Roman or Sumerian tradition. It would be pure speculation to distinguish between exactly what literary language and traditional abstract language are and how this is expressed through metaphor, whether Sumerian or Roman. It also raises the question that has been present throughout my research: how can we distinguish between a popular traditional metaphor and a literary or complex one?

Firstly, a metaphor is a metaphor, regardless of its complexity, since it corresponds to a particular type of linguistic construction which has semantic functions. Therefore all metaphors should basically obey the same principles and if we can understand and contextualize an image presented in a text, we can identify the source of the metaphor, following the same principle used in this thesis for identifying abstract meaning that has its source in nature, since it functions as a spontaneous metaphor. For this reason, visual signs of meaning are the essential source for this parallel study of two unrelated cultures. They offer us images of a world that formed the basis of linguistic creativity without the need to consider theoretical debates on literary concepts. In this sense, I do not intend to engage in hermeneutic discussions on the general literary expression of metaphors, nor its philosophical principles, as the focus of this thesis does not imply entering into a formal extended debate on literature. Hence, I have avoided specific definitions of metaphor, which are normally dependent on particular rhetorical contexts and forms of expression, whether textual or plastic.

In a strict sense, metaphor is an abstract comparison between two images, one of which is stated and is taken to represent the other. Therefore, it is an explanation of an image through another image, which can supplement and expand the meaning of the idea that the speaker wants to transmit. The metaphors examined in this study tend to be used to enhance and describe meaning through something that is embedded in the collective memory,[31] although I tend not to theorize too much on the conceptual idea of metaphor applied to each example, but rather to decompose it into signs of meaning.

Metaphor is used to create meaning through the semantics of an image intrinsically connected to the cultural matrix and the collective abstract thought of the people living

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[31] On conceptual metaphor, vide Lakoff, Johnson 1980.

within this matrix. In that sense, although literature is the main source for this study, this thesis does not attempt to present a philological study by commenting on aesthetics and literary resources but instead, with regard to the history of traditional thought, will present a sociological/anthropological study based on key semiotic principles. In presenting quotations from Virgil's work, for example, the aim will be to extract information from its signs of meaning, i.e. the literal data, not the literary data, which has already been widely studied by other scholars. In using Sumerian literature as a source, it is not always possible to clearly and definitively identify metaphor or allegory, and I have therefore had to trust in personal interpretation guided by the signs of meaning that can be identified.

0.9. Literature as a source of meaning

Abstract language and the images which it generates can be a valuable resource for understanding traditional thought. Abstract language is composed of manifestations of reality constructed from abstract images, which are the basic building blocks in the development and crystallization of traditional thought and the conceptualization of the surrounding natural world. Literature is the vehicle for those images, since the voices of the ancient cultures were, and are, silent.

As Iser (2000) says, "As a concomitant phenomenon of human development, literature appears to be the mirror that allows humans to see themselves reflected in their manifestations. Such a view of oneself may not result in any immediate practical consequences, especially since this self-perceiving is inauthentic, highlighted by the fictional "as if." This inauthenticity, however, does not seem to invalidate this self-examination, since humans never cease to perform it". In other words, literature may reflect fictional realities, but the symbolic language used to produce it is based on a reality, otherwise it would not be intelligible. In this thesis, the reality is identified in each sign of meaning manifested in a descriptive image, whether the said image is objective, metaphorical or allegorical.

Although language variation is a crucial aspect of our physiological, psychological and conceptual systems (Brown 2007), the mechanisms for generating meaning seem to follow the same principles, at least when they concern a conceptualization of the surrounding world that has some effect on human social reality. This is the reason why it is possible to identify the same signs of meaning in two unrelated ancient literatures, as I intend to demonstrate from a selection of literary examples.

I. Introduction

1.1 Ancient Sumerian agriculture and the disguised metaphor

> "Because Hapy had failed to come in time
>
> in a period of seven years.
>
> grain was scant,
>
> kernels were dried up,
>
> scarce was every kind of food."
>
> *The famine stela* 1.53 (Hallo, Younger 2003, vol. I 130-134).

1.1.1. Sumerian literature and the mechanics of the construction of abstract meaning

Sumerian literature, as a concept, will not be debated here, since this is a subject on which there is very little agreement among scholars, at least in terms of analyses based on the standards of modern literary theory[32]. Only one thing is certain: Sumerian literature is not understood well yet, or at least has not been fully interpreted.[33] There are several reasons for the persistent doubts among scholars, but the most relevant is the problem of unknown context. The context for the production, writing, transmission and reception of each original version of the Sumerian texts is not clear. Even the practical function of some texts, whose formal appearance tends to suggest hymns or chants, is unknown to us and can only be explained by speculative exercises.[34]

This lack of information on the context and functions of the original texts creates difficulties in terms of establishing an interpretative framework for what is expressed in a particular composition, in addition to what may be called 'objective information'. Most Sumerian literary compositions include some kind of narrative and it is hard to deny its literary background, since they sometimes appear to include something similar to a chorus, which can be seen as lyrical expression (cf. DI A ll. 51-52). In addition, the texts clearly contain allegorical material and metaphors, as can be seen in the examples presented in this

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[32] Vide Fry 2012. For the analytical procedures and criticism of the construction and reception of modern literature, vide Tejera 1995 30-52, 74-102 and Aguiar e Silva 2002.

[33] For perspectives on Sumerian literature I have followed van de Mieroop 2016 3-86, Veldhuis 2004 30-80, Black 1998 and Rubio 2009 11-76.

[34] Vide Delnero 2015 on the functions of the Sumerian liturgical texts.

thesis.[35] All these components can be considered literary when merged with narrative (see Gonzalo 2013 9-18). However, most of the texts have survived in their written form produced by scribes practicing their craft, so the literary cannon we have does not correspond directly to a literary function (vide Kleinerman 2011 57-94) as we understand it nowadays, and we still do not know the true origins of those literary creations. Therefore, how can we classify Sumerian literature and compare its data with sources from different cultural contexts?

As it stands, it is important to note that the challenges involved in understanding Sumerian literature are probably not so much the result of what is not known about it, but what we believe we know about literature in general. I make this claim on the basis of the fact that whenever Sumerian literature is discussed, the criteria for the theoretical approach tends to rely on cultural stereotypes based on the Greco-Roman matrix, since so little is known about Mesopotamian culture. However, prejudices and tradition tend to be misleading when we are engaged in a study of different cultural concepts. Taking the example of *Gilgamesh*, it is easy to identify a common, widely circulating preconceived idea: the text is popularly called 'The Epic of Gilgamesh' and without doubt almost everyone who has heard of it has learnt that the main character is engaged in a quest for eternal life. In other words, there is an attempt to sum up the narrative action in terms of the characteristics of the two main sources for Western concepts of literature: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It should be remembered that these texts happen to be at least a thousand years later than the Akkadian version of *Gilgamesh* and their 'historical context' seems to reflect a background two thousand years later than that of the king of Uruk (see George 2003 3-137). Therefore, can we really describe *Gilgamesh* as an epic? To what kind of genre would the scribe who was copying it consider this text to belong? Obviously, when proposing this question, we first have to reflect on another one: did the scribes of ancient Mesopotamia have their own concept of genre? These are questions I cannot answer and can only trust in what Van De Mieroop and Veldhuis (2016, 2004) have said on the subject. In general, I have followed their approach to cuneiform literature and am merely highlighting the issues concerning fallible categorizations to point out how misleading our preconceptions can be.

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[35] On the metaphor's dependence on context, vide Bosch 1985. For a commentary on the discussion of Sumerian metaphoric constructions and similes, vide Watanabe 2002 21-22.

Bearing this in mind, what can be said about the Sumerian concept of literature? In fact, using the data that is available today, very little can be determined since the distance in time is too great and the shadow which lies over this culture and language is too heavy.[36] We do not even know whether there was a concept of authorship in Sumerian literature. It is usually supposed that this is not the case, but it remains a possibility (vide Van De Mieroop 2016 185-224). Lack of evidence cannot confirm that it did not exist (vide also Foster 1991), since it is not absence of facts that confirm a theory: only the existence of data can support or disprove a hypothesis.

Despite all this, there are stories: there are narratives about lives and adventures, descriptions of landscapes and evidence of the use of stylistic devices. Are these not considered the basis for the great works in the Western literary cannon? We do not know how these Sumerian texts were analysed and discussed by their ancient interlocutors, in terms of styles, originality and aesthetics[37] but there is definitely literature in the Sumerian texts, even by modern Western standards, since if images such as metaphors were constructed to generate ideas of meaning, then there was literature, art and rhetoric. Of course, the conceptual elements of modern literary theory cannot be clearly identified, although it is important to state that literature as an object precedes those concepts.[38] We cannot say for sure that Sumerian literature was an aesthetic art, which is the main principle underlying our concepts of literature, but if we look at through the eyes of the audience rather than the mind of a philologist, do we not find some enjoyment in the Dumuzi-Inana texts (cf. Sefati 1998), the adventures of Gilgamesh or the stories of the lives of the ancient kings?

The oldest account of the invention of writing is, as far as modern scholarship can tell, that of the Sumerian text *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*.[39] Even if it is considered a coincidence that the oldest known written culture has the oldest mythical story about it, southern Mesopotamian culture and its literary (or administrative) writings are intrinsically related and the cuneiform writings are the main and almost the only sources that can be used to determine who the Sumerians were and how they lived and thought.[40]

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[36] Regarding the Sumerian language and issues concerning its grammar, vide Wilcke 2010 5-76.
[37] On cuneiform literacy, vide Veldhuis 2011.
[38] On literary theory and standards for categorisation, vide Aguiar e Silva 2009.
[39] Schmandt-Besserat 1996; ETCSL c.1.8.2.3. Vide Vanstiphout's 1989 commentary on the invention of writing with reference to this text.
[40] On Mesopotamian mythology, I have followed Bottéro, Kramer 1993.

Language provides valuable social data for investigating the mechanics of linguistic creativity based on traditional thought, in terms of the crystallized information materialized in literature. A culture disappears as an organic being that can somehow be cristalyzed and expressed when its language, spoken by natives, falls into oblivion. In this sense, an ancient culture known for its 'dead language' – a generalised expression with wich we do not agree – cannot be heard as a 'thinking community' and the only way to approach the minds of the people who used to share a common matrix is by examining the material reality that served as the cultural basis for expression, and same is valid for Roman context.

The plastic arts are always unreliable sources if the intention is to develop an understanding of popular thought, since this form of expression follows precise codes that normally restrict expressive potential and tend to generate a precise representation of a scene or an idea that is highly decontextualized and therefore difficult to decode completely. Plastic art barely manifests the 'thought construction' and multiplicity of signs of meaning from which it is composed.[41] I am making this point, given that Mesopotamian plastic art is not well known, due to the relative scarcity of physical remains. However, it is possible to draw on other examples, such as literature. In this sense, I concur with Guevara's (2008 215) statement: "(…) the social functions of art in Mesopotamian society were mediated by magico-religious belief and depended on agrarian prosperity. Art was made to give existence to specific and socially and economically meaningful realities, to perpetuate them, and perhaps even to multiply them."

In other words, art manifests a general social view. For this reason, Sumerian literature is the main source for 'listening to the Sumerian interior voices', i. e. their cultural thinking, even when a given text is a translation from the Akkadian language. Speech is a fundamental part of what allows us to live a collective experience. As a means of expression, the literary art contains the analogical tools for converting information into precise meaning and at the same time provides ground for the expansion of symbolic language. In this sense, the following statement by Guevara (2008 62) highlights my main argument regarding the literary expression of cultural reasoning, even though she is referring to the religious universe and its expressive manifestations: "Analogical reasoning entailed a sort of 'existential parallelism,' which permeated all aspects of life including visual and poetic

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[41] For the semiotic perspective on 'signs of meaning', vide Hoffmeyer 1993; for a cultural perspective on semiotics, vide Lorusso 2015 117-192.

expression and permitted the development of notions of art as sacred, as the repository of great powers, and as "divine need". and "art in Mesopotamia was anchored in analogical modes of thought and was pursued in conjunction with the agrarian priorities of the society: agriculture, animal husbandry, the construction of cities, conquest, monarchical government, and religion, for example" (Guevara 2008 61).

In her Ph.D. dissertation, Nancy Guevara (2008) points out that agrarian imagery is, in fact, our main source for approaching the ancient Sumerians. Moreover, in terms of Sumerian interaction with the farming universe, modern rural experience is not so conceptually different, considering its traditional practice and its conceptualization in popular thought, probably because its practicalities, necessities and aims were not that different. In this sense, Van De Mieroop, in a very simple, but remarkable argument, noted that: "The ancient Babylonians who formulated lexical lists were sedentary agriculturalists and world history's first creators of an urban society, a form of society that has now become universally dominant. Thus, despite the enormous differences between our culture and theirs, we share basic interactions with the environment, natural or created, and we can recognize many of their associations as logical. For example, the classification of animals in Babylonian lexical lists overlaps with that of modern-day agricultural societies. We are not surprised when we see that the massive series Ura = ḫubullu in its first-millennium form devoted two tablets with about 400 entries each to animals grouped into domesticated (tablet 13) and wild (tablet 14) ones. They listed mostly four-legged animals that live on land - birds and fish were dealt with separately in tablet 18 but included some other species like butterflies and flies among the wild animals" (Van de Mieroop 2016 66).

In other words, the Sumerian attitude toward the technicalities and practicalities of farming coincided in many ways with a Western tradition that is still practiced. Clearly, this is a minor coincidence resulting from common sense applied by ancient people - and common sense in natural matters tends to be transversal and universal.

Nevertheless, proving the relationship between language and social experience of the agricultural cosmos is an issue when the source is literature rather than empirical observation of the community. Literature is not the most reliable tool for such research, as the devices used in popular thought, language, literature and metaphoric language are quite hard to connect and contextualize.[42] However, it is the main surviving source for agricultural

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[42] Vide Liverani's 1996 commentaries on attempts to reconstruct the rural landscape of ancient Mesopotamia.

images, cultural context, and, consequently, abstract language. Metaphors can be representative of models of thinking: "Our cognitive ability to interpret the world around us is largely based on metaphor and metonymy. Both of them let us see relations between unknown and known, remote and near, invisible and visible, based essentially on similarity and contiguity between concepts" (Raible 2016 21-44). By understanding the processes involved in creating a metaphor, we can identify certain elements of linguistic thought in a literary culture and, at the same time, relate this to a specific context that serves as the source for signs of meaning.[43]

As already noted, the Sumerian language is not yet well known, even though it is quite understandable and has been studied by scholars for over a century. Hence, it is sometimes a challenge to argue that Sumerian could have been a literary language, for we have no reliable tools for dissecting the hermeneutics of Sumerian texts. Nevertheless, the vast potential for metaphor in this language is undeniable and is clearly expressed in texts such as those which describe the relationship between the gods Dumuzi[44] and Inana (vide Chap. 3.1) In an artificially created and thematic corpus such as DI, it is easier to arrive at an interpretation of literary expression, although this may not be transposable to other texts. Therefore, caution is needed when considering the possible literal meaning of words and the global picture presented in a particular text must be examined, since the literal meaning of a word and the semantics of a narrated image may not coincide.[45] This can be deceptive, since the process of selecting words implies a description of an abstract concept using an objective lexeme that limits the semantic spectrum. Moreover, the 'author' could have chosen the wrong words, resulting in a misleading interpretation.[46] It is also necessary to consider the idea of the 'literary code'[47] that tends to recreate meaning and is highly dependent on literary context, which cannot always be clearly identified in Sumerian literature.

As previously stated, there is no systematic and reliable collection of sources for Mesopotamian social history or, in terms of this study, agricultural practices. Instead, there are peaks of information for certain periods of time which, in fact, are irregular exceptions in comparison to the periods for there are only a few or no sources. Although the

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[43] On semiotic aspects of metaphor, vide Nöth 1985.
[44] On Dumuzi, vide Alster 1972 9-15 and Fritz 2003.
[45] On literal and non-literal meaning in speech, vide Gibbs, Colston 2006 835-862.
[46] Griffin, Ferreira 2006 23-34. On 'word production' and 'word selection' in speech, vide Griffin, Ferreira 2006 23-60.
[47] On literary codification and semiotic systems, I have followed Eco 1998.

chronological arrangement of the sources has had little influence on my hypothesis, it may be opportune to identify the said periods, as they have influenced the preservation of sources and textual circulation:

- the Urukagina period (ca. 2400 B.C.), for which we have a reasonable amount of information (Beld 2002);

- the Third Dynasty of Ur, for which there is a fine quantity of material, especially for the generation beginning around 2100 B.C. (ca.);[48]

- the Age of Hammurabi, which is quite well documented (ca. XVIII-XVII B.C.);[49]

- the Kassite period, which follows the first dynasty of Babylon, in terms of the amount of sources.[50] (ca. 1595-1155 B.C.);

- the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the second half of the eighth century and running through Neo-Babylonian and Persian times, which almost rivals the Third Dynasty of Ur in terms of the quantity of its textual materials[51] (934-610 B.C. or 912-612 B.C.).

1.1.2. Brief notes on Sumerian agriculture

It is generally agreed that agriculture was the driving force behind the development of complex societies in Lower Mesopotamia. In fact, this statement is the inspiration for what is usually known as the 'fertile crescent', which is understood to be the 'cradle of civilization'. The civilization founded in this region and its definition as a clear cultural entity are sometimes described on the basis of the data on administration, the political regime and economic system.[52] These three social engines led to the assumption that increasing agricultural production could have been responsible for the origin of the temple-state as a centre for the distribution of goods, which would have governed the entire economy. This claim is highly contested today, since concept of individual wealth did exist: it is evident in commercial activities and, in fact, private commercial businesses, crafts, herding and

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[48] Vide Garfinkle 2015 and Molina 2016. Ur III, ca. 2112 to 2004 B.C., is one of the best-documented periods in the ancient world. The vast majority of its nearly 100.000 documents are administrative in nature and most are inventories of agricultural production. On the archaeology of the Ur site, vide Crawford 2015.

[49] On the Hammurabi age, vide Charpin 1986.

[50] Knott, Elizabeth. "The Middle Babylonian / Kassite Period (ca. 1595-1155 B.C.) in Mesopotamia." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/kass/hd_kass.htm (June 2016)

[51] 1. Joshua J. Mark, "Neo-Assyrian Empire," Ancient History Encyclopedia, last modified June 30, 2014, http://www.ancient.eu /Neo-Assyrian_Empire/.

[52] On early Mesopotamian political history, vide Richardson 2014; G. Marchesi in Marchetti & Marchesi 2011 97-128; on patterns of socio-economic organization in Archaic Ur, vide Benati 2015. Vide the work of Dahl 2007 on the ruling Family of Ur III Umma.

farming can also be identified (Powell 1977). Therefore, with regard to agriculture, serious consideration should be given to the abstract concepts of wealth and abundance as subjects based on economic value that were observed as abstract concepts by the individuals in communities in the farming world, and which consequently inspired creative language. The economic value of agriculture was undoubtedly a driving force for the construction of abstract meaning.

Many scholars have tried to frame the economy of the ancient Sumer states within the theories of modern economic systems (vide Van De Mieroop 2002), although information about social organization, which would be a valuable resource for understanding the organisation of the economic system, is lacking. However, agriculture was without doubt the main source of sustenance in southern Mesopotamia and it can therefore be considered to have shaped the thinking of the whole of society in the region. Images of agricultural landscapes would have been reflected in psycholinguistics,[53] which suggests that looking for traces of community psycholinguistics in Mesopotamian literature is one possible way of exploring the archaeology of knowledge.[54] I also believe that this approach can be used for understanding the mechanisms of other ancient cultures, such as Rome. [55]

It is usually assumed that crop production in Lower Mesopotamia was higher than in Upper Mesopotamia, mainly due to the availability of irrigation water in the appropriate season. However, some authors disagree, arguing that the productivity in the upper lands may have been equal or even greater than productivity in the lowlands (Wilkinson 1994). In fact, it may have been a question of the type of farming rather than the yield of a given crop. Van Koppen (2001) notes the example of the Habur River, where agriculture dependent on rainfall must have been possible and where artificial irrigation is also documented. However,

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[53] Regarding assumptions on evolution and change in the southern Mesopotamian agricultural landscape, I have followed Pournelle 2003.

[54] Foucault´s *L'archéologie du savoir* (1969) was taken into account in this research, but I have avoided the epistemological debate, as this study intends to focus more on concrete literary objects as anthropological material and rather than the philosophical debate on history.

[55] Hence I disagree with Eric Hirsch, as it is not culture that gives meaning to the landscape, but the interaction of the individuals within it (apud Black 2002 42): "The anthropologist Eric Hirsch refers to "the meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings." That is to say that the meaning of landscape is culture dependent. Malinowski and his students in the "British school" of anthropology, made a point of subtly heightening the contrasts between the local interpretation of surroundings and what the same environment might or might not signify to twentieth-century Western outsiders. The southern Mesopotamian environment may appear to us (academics of the Western tradition) bare and featureless. It has no meaning until meaning is conferred on it by people, who translate it into a significant landscape; it was certainly not bare and featureless for ancient Mesopotamians. For, like the Australian desert described by Howard Morphy, the Mesopotamian plain was vivid with the mythology of its inhabitants."

the relevance of the different levels of production between north and south will be ignored in this study, since it focusses on the conceptual value of agriculture rather than 'farming efficiency'. It is only important to point out that farming played a central role in the economics of Mesopotamia, regardless of the irrigation system. Clearly there is a relationship between crop yield, crop management strategies, changes in climate and social mechanisms. Since they were very dependent on those factors, societies based in riverside agricultural environments tended to fluctuate between rain-fed agriculture and agriculture based on irrigation and this may have had some influence on their culture. Lake Assad in modern Syria and the Tell es-Sweyhat archaeological site provide good examples of these kinds of variations (Wilkinson 2004). These issues are discussed here simply to note the impracticality of trying to define an agricultural economy when we have little physical evidence, given the great differences between the Mesopotamian region of the fourth and third millennia BC and the present day.[56] The farming and production typologies cannot be defined precisely because we do not know enough about the techniques, given that only superficial assumptions such as the irrigation system used in agriculture in the southern region are more or less understood. Yet despite the doubts concerning production typologies, one thing remains certain, as noted in Section II: the Tigris and Euphrates played a key role in farming activities and therefore in the landscape of the agricultural cosmos.

In short, the agricultural cosmos shaped the creativity of the Sumerian social community and its forms of expression, since it was an essential part of life. It was therefore reflected in abstract discourse, providing the basis for constructing meaning through analogy and comparisons between agricultural references and other aspects of life.[57] In this sense, it should be remembered that literary or plastic art may have served to represent reality, not only because they provided expressions of nature, but also because nature was the main source of abstract language and therefore a fundamental tool for creative expression, regardless of the historical context.

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[56] Vide Robertson's 1989 notes on Temple-Estate Economies of Old Babylonian Nippur.

[57] Guevara 2008 61-3: "The social, political, and spiritual importance of art in Mesopotamia, as explained and exemplified below, derived in part from the fact that Mesopotamian "magical" reasoning was founded on analogy. To the Mesopotamian, the world was composed of two parallel and permanently united realms: heaven and earth. What happened on earth caused a reaction in heaven. Thus, to induce rain, a person could water her plants. To increase agricultural productiveness, people could engage in sex. The actions, events, and physical reality of one realm produced the same or similar results in the other: "like all that exists, the terrestrial Babylon and its temple will have a replica in the sky" (Bonnefoy 1993 161). According to this way of reasoning, art was a representation for which there was a replica in heaven and, therefore, it participated in the sacred".

1.2. Rome and the visual language of the farm

Many Roman writers in the Republic and Empire periods were eager to show that the life of the peasant farmer had moulded the character of the Roman people and was personified by their heroes and peoples (Frayn 1974). Kapteyn (2015 24) states that "In traditional Roman discourse, then, farming is part of the political and national ideology, the occupation held up as producing and exhibiting the qualities that make a Roman Roman, that make Rome great, and that are perceived as being threatened by the political and imperial shifts that irrevocably altered Rome in the first century B.C. As such, for Romans, farming manuals are not simply instructions, but are texts that automatically engage in a broader dialogue on Roman identity and morality." This statement may be considered to summarise the attitude of the aristocracy towards an idealized expression of rustic life. However, I would argue that the construction of this idealization came from traditional and popular thinking and was not artificially composed from scratch by the political propaganda of the Roman lords. This does not mean that there is no evidence of propaganda, but that the symbolic value was constructed from prototype ideas already established in a cultural matrix: the aristocracy did not create the symbols, but merely interpreted them for a specific aim. Literature absorbed those symbols and consequently the best way to understand the Roman 'traditional voice' is through the artificiality of literature.

There are so many studies on Roman literature and metaphor that is almost impossible to say anything new about the subject, at least in terms of Roman cultural history. However, there is also a lack of studies on traditional Roman thought associated with the agricultural cosmos, and certain questions have remained unanswered, namely:

1 - Would the community have followed the way in which <u>metaphors</u> were constructed?

2 - Would the rustic Romans have independently constructed value from the same kind of abstract images and have intuitively understood their meanings?

3 - Is literature in some way connected with the real thought and abstract ideas of Latin speakers?

4 - Would the community have identified reality in literary images and recognized the beauty apparently revealed in literary expression?

I would claim that the last three questions can be answered affirmatively, since simple symbols seem to be camouflaged within complex literary constructions. Obviously, the answer to the first question is a matter of guesswork and theoretical hypothesis. Nonetheless, I would argue that the answer would also be 'yes'.

With regard to metaphorical ideas, the farmer may constitute one of the most basic and generalised cultural symbols, as the great man who builds his own property, faces hardships and produces his wealth with his own hands. The farmer is not involved in markets; his value comes from his own work and from a symbiotic relationship with nature. Concerning the Roman cultural context, the symbolic construction of the farmer appears to emerge from philosophical speculations on nature and from reasoning about the nature of man himself. However, this interpretation is based on a philological approach to the farmer figure and does not include traditional symbols. I would argue that there is something simpler and more objective in traditional compounded symbols than the ideas that can be extracted from works such as Lucretius'*De rerum Natura,* for example, despite the extensive intertextuality in the *Georgica* associated with the former (vide Gale 2000).

1.2.1. Instruction as a source of knowledge and of traditional prototype images: understanding a macro symbol

Regarding the Sumerian composite text generally known as the 'Sumerian Almanac' or 'farming instructions' (vide 3.1.), Civil says the following: "The Farmer's Instructions are the starting point of a long tradition of agronomic works which includes, on the one hand, the classical Greek and Roman authors and, on the other hand, the prolific and varied Byzantine and Arabic production centred on the Nabataean Agriculture. This second branch, incidentally, tends to pay little attention to cereal cultivation. No genetic relationship between FI and these later works can be established. Their similarities result from the identity of the subject matter" (Civil 1994 5).[58]

I do not intend to discuss the general concept of farming instructions in the following chapters, above all because it is not possible to consistently theorize on a subject that can be found in various forms in other cultures simply by looking at the texts of four Roman writers from different periods and two Sumerian texts that are considered instructions by modern standards (FI; InstrŠur). Moreover, the texts are not comparable, not only because of language and textual hermeneutics, but also because of the very different farming contexts in terms of specific techniques. In addition, the volume of information provided in the Latin and Sumerian texts cannot be compared, firstly because the Sumerian instructions comprise very short texts in comparison to Cato's *de agri cultura*, for example. However, matters of

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[58] On land tenure in southern Mesopotamia, vide also Gelb, Steinkeller, Whiting 1991.

common sense, such as 'do not let your cattle walk through the crops', feature in both literatures (FI ll. 1-7; Ver. *G.* 2.371-375).

The relevance of agriculture for Roman society is reflected in the very nature of certain samples of Latin literature. Roman authors wrote many technical texts, a phenomenon that may be attributed to the practical nature of the culture and need for specific knowledge (Dueck 2011). Despite its technical characteristics, the instructional text is without doubt a sophisticated genre. Such works would have reflected the intellectuality and sense of duty of the author, as a citizen working for Roman society. The writers of this kind of text would have been recognized as leading intellectual and literary figures. Pliny the Elder, for example, notes that kings also wrote about agriculture (Plin. *Nat.* 18.22): [59]

Igitur de cultura agri praecipere principale fuit etiam apud exteros, siquidem et reges fecere, Hiero, Philometor, Attalus, Archelaus, et duces, Xenophon et Poenus etiam Mago (...)

"Therefore kings, such as Hiero, Philometor, Attalus and Archelaus, have also taken to writing about farming; so have generals, such as Xenophon and the Carthaginian Mago".[60]

This kind of recognition has moral and intellectual connotations, since the higher the status, the higher the moral requirements would have been and consequently an individual dedicated to such an activity had to be exceptional. Pliny identifies instruction as an high-status genre by referring to the great names famed for other activities who still paid attention to agriculture, such as Xenophon, a famous historian and warrior. [61] It seems likely that this was identified with plenitude, as a reflexion of a man's wisdom associated with natural phenomena.

According to Columella, Cato may have been the first known Latin author to teach agriculture (Col. 1.1.12), but of all the Latin Romans who later wrote on the subject, Varro appears to have been the first to write specifically about husbandry as an 'instructional dialogue'.[62] Of course, it should be borne in mind that a lot of texts on this subject are

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[59] On Pliny's commentaries on agriculture as a technical theme, vide the list produced by Henderson 2004 24.
[60] On Mago's instructions, vide also Col. 12.39.1, where Columella directly states that Mago gave advice similar to Columella's practices. Vide also Cic. *Orat.* 1.249.
[61] Concerning the tradition of farming instructions in the classical world, Henderson 2004 126 notes that "Democritus (fifth century B.C.) heads C.'s list of philosophers who helped farming after Hesiod broke the ice: 'springing up from the sources of wisdom' (1.1.7). All sorts of manuals later traded more or less brazenly/openly under his name. Only Columella cites his lost *Georgica* (three times), and only this citation comes close to a quote (in translation)."
[62] On the debate on Varro's *res rusticae* as agricultural instruction, vide Kapteyn 2015 13-29.

probably lost, and it is not possible to construct the 'big picture' of this subject. For example, it is known that Cato had written another treatise on agriculture named *Sasernae* about which we know almost nothing[63] apart from the possibility that Columella had read it. In short, it may be assumed that there was a substantial Latin tradition of farming instructions in comparison with Greek literature, as Columella notes in mentioning Mnaseas and Phaxamus together with the ancient Latin authors such as Marcus Ambivius, †Maecenas† Licinius and Gaius Matius. [64]

In fact, Columella mentions his own uncle as a distinguished agriculturist (*illustris agricola*), from which it may be inferred that he also taught this subject or, at least, that Columella would have learned from him (Col. 12.21.4).

Time and history have selected the authors whose works have survived. It is not possible to identify precisely all the sources used by the ancient authors for teaching and learning about agriculture and the names of the thinkers dedicated to studying this craft. However, it is certain that they amounted to many more than those preserved by tradition, although it should be acknowledged that this is more a matter of faith than an argument grounded in irrefutable facts. Nonetheless, there are some indications suggesting the existence of a bigger corpus than the one that is known today and this can be sensed in the introduction to Book V of Columella's *De Re Rustica*, 5.1.1-5:

Prioribus libris, quos ad te de constituendis colendisque vineis, Silvine, scripseram, nonnulla defuisse dixisti, quae agrestium operum studiosi desiderarent; neque ego infitior aliqua me praeterisse quamvis inquirentem sedule, quae nostri saeculi cultores quaeque veteres litterarum monumentis prodiderunt.

"Silvinus, you have said that when, in the previous books I had written to you about planting and taking care of vineyards, some things were left out; (some) of which those who studied the work of the fields would expect (to be there); and I do not deny that I disregarded certain things, although I diligently inquired into what the agriculturists of our age and also the ancients have published in written records."

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[63] On *Sasernae*, Cato's lost treatise on agriculture, vide Sáez Fernández 1992.
[64] Col. 12.4.2. Columella also states that Gaius worked carefully on many subjects which were left out of *De re rustica*, 12.46.1, indicating that there were, in fact, other authors writing about agriculture.

Although, Columella may simply be referring to Cato, Varro and also Virgil, it could easily be supposed that when he wrote those lines he was also thinking of a wider range of authors.

Despite the factual knowledge available on cultivation and its technicalities, agriculture was not understood solely as an economic activity, but also as science in the full ancient sense of the word, since in order to practice farming, one would have had to observe the natural phenomena and understand them (vide Chap. 3.2.). Consequently, agricultural knowledge is closely linked not only with common sense or empirical knowledge, but also with philosophical enquiry: the man who understands agriculture may have been a farmer, but he was certainly also a wise man and wisdom tends to be understood as a path to morality (vide Chap. 3.2.2.). This may be quite a problematic statement if the aim is to defend a simplistic, primordial meaning for the symbology of the farming cosmos, since Roman writers viewed these considerations from a more philosophical perspective in their literary accounts. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that Latin literature is a questionable and in some respects unreliable source for the study of popular traditional thinking, as the information it presents cannot be followed uncritically, even though the texts may provide some social background for agriculture as a cultural theme. The literary instructions on agriculture written by 'gentlemen Romans' are the main link between the technical knowledge of Roman agriculture and its empirical practice and these texts also present some social background for agriculture as a cultural theme. However, their connections with reality may not have been direct. The perception of an instruction depended on an ideal final object or, in other words, perfect practice and the best optimization of a farm. Therefore, many issues emerging from real practice may have been left out of commentaries, including not only technical matters, but also traditional assumptions and knowledge based on common sense.

However, I consider that the instructional texts are very valuable in terms of obtaining information on traditional thought and on the silent people. Their value may not lie in the technical accuracy of the information they contain, but in the symbolic language they may use or identify through its landscapes. For this reason, I have not ignored poetic texts such as the *Georgica*, even though the ancient authors noted that the poetic approach to the theme of agriculture in Latin literature has a very questionable or almost inept didactic approach.[65]

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[65] Regarding the place of the *Georgica* in the didactic tradition as a whole, vide Gale 2000 1-17, 58-113.

The issue was not how far the genre reflects reality, but how far it fails to teach the best of farming. Regarding the real practice of the craft, Seneca says the following about Virgil's work (*Ep.* 86.15.3-16.1)[66]:

(...) *qui non quid verissime sed quid decentissime diceretur aspexit, nec agricolas docere voluit sed legentes delectare.*

"However (Virgil) beheld not that which was nearest to the truth, but what was most appropriate to say, nor (did he behold) to teach the farmer, but to please the reader."

According to Seneca, this particular instructional text does not reflect the reality of the farmer, or at least good practice, as its focus is literature, rather than farming. This question is discussed in greater detail later, but the simple identification of farming as a potential theme for literary pleasure offers some clues to the value of these activities in the semantics of abstract language. In other words, it may reflect a certain kind of reality for nature and the images formed from it. Moreover, literary language does not exclude accurate information or valid teaching. Poetry was often used in actual technical teaching, so it was in some way possible to include it in the 'instructional category' by the very authors that quoted Virgil frequently, such as Columella. The attested use of poetry by the authors of Latin didactic texts like Columella may have had a triple role, namely:

- to reinforce an idea with a previous text that may have belonged to the reader's imagination.

- to serve as literary embellishment, to confer a certain status on the text and also to validate it as literature for entertainment.

- to serve as a rhetorical tool in order to consolidate the argument or create a break in the explanation without losing track of the subject under discussion.

The *Georgica,* for example, seems to be not so much a manual as a hymn to farming and its aesthetics. Nevertheless, there is a strong sense of instruction, combined with literary expression: in fact, it can be said that instruction is merged with poetic construction. Studies on ancient agriculture often find it difficult to consider Virgil's poem as a main source for Roman agriculture and the commentaries of the ancient authors have similar concerns, given that Cato, Varro, Columella and Pliny mistrusted poetry in general and criticised its

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[66] For Seneca's perspective on Virgil's *Georgica*, vide Henderson 2004 119-179.

empirical and instructive value (Doody 2007). It is known that even the ancient authors saw the *Georgica* as a minor source of knowledge for farmers seeking instruction (cf. Sen. *Ep.* 88.15). Although, I would agree to some extent with M. S. Spurr (1986) when he says: "Virgil ensured that his agricultural information was correct. Accuracy of detail contributes largely to the realistic picture of the Italian countryside as a whole. Thus can be understood the otherwise perplexing fact that the later agricultural prose writers, Pliny and Columella, quoted Virgil even more than Cato or Varro, as a source of agricultural knowledge".[67] I would argue that the ancient authors' need to criticise and correct Virgil reveals more about the importance of the *Georgica'* for 'apprentice farmers' than the direct use of quotations from the Virgil text to embellish literary speech or preface a technical argument. In fact, the poet may have been relevant to ancient farmers with some level of education (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 18.300, 1*pr.*12-13).

In considering the quotations of Virgil as a source for technical knowledge, it must be recognised that they were frequently used in order to produce a sententious statement or to close the argument expressed in the text where the quotation occurs. Regarding the ancient authors' perspectives on the 'poetic question', the issue may lie in the formal structure of texts such as the *Georgica*, which tend to not present the bigger picture, avoiding precise and objective data such as, for example, an exhaustive record of the type of grapes and olives that could be found in the 'Roman world' (Plin. *Nat.* 14.7):[68]

"(…) *quamquam videmus Vergilium praecellentissimum vatem ea de causa hortorum dotes fugisse et in his quae rettulit flores modo rerum decerpsisse, beatum felicemque gratiae quindecim omnino generibus uvarum nominatis, tribus oleae, totidem pirorum, malo vero tantum Assyrio, ceteris omnibus neglectis*."

"However, we see that it was for this reason that Virgil, that outstanding poet, avoided the wealth of gardens, and, in what he did write, picked the flower of the subject, so to speak, and, pleasant and graceful as he is, he named only fifteen types of grape in total, three kinds of olive, the same number of pears, no apples but the Assyrian, and left everything else out."

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[67] Vide Spurr 1986 for a discussion on the language used by Virgil regarding agriculture.
[68] For an extended debate on the instructional value of the *Georgica,* vide Spurr 1986.

Indeed, there was good information in Virgil's text but, according to Pliny, it was incomplete. Probably, 'poetic formality' and aesthetic criteria influenced the contents and the information therefore is not so objective and complete.

In fact, Pliny the Elder directly addresses the problematic misinformation offered by Virgil to the 'unprepared farmers' that followed him (Plin. *Nat.* 18.300):

Sunt qui accendant in arvo et stipulas, magno Vergili praeconio. summa autem eius ratio, ut herbarum semen exurant.

"There are those who burn the stalks in the fields, as acclaimed by Virgil. And the main result of (doing) this is to burn up the seeds of the herbs."

Pliny is not exactly criticizing the accuracy of the *Georgica* (1.84-88) with this observation, but commenting on how the information provided by Virgil was received. It can be assumed that Virgil gave incomplete information on subjects, since he did not explain or justify all the technical data in his instructions. Therefore, we can infer that there may have been some misinterpretation and that ignorant people would have blindly followed what Virgil was saying without even thinking about it or understanding it completely. In trusting Pliny's commentaries regardless of the purpose of his criticism, it can be deduced with some certainty that Virgil's poem served as instruction for a considerable number of farmers/owners (vide Spurr 1986), otherwise Pliny would not have commented on the erroneous interpretations of the Latin poet's instructions. I emphasise this specific concern of Pliny, aware that part of his general scepticism did not so much concern the information presented in Virgil's works, but the poetic style as a source of empirical knowledge (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 1.*pr.*12-13).

In short, it appears to be generally recognised that Virgil offers accurate but incomplete information. Columella notes this, recalling Virgil's own verses (Col. 3.p*r.*3-4): he recognises that Virgil was aware of the gaps in his own text and therefore left his information incomplete on purpose. Columella understands the lack of information and proposes to complete what Virgil stated he had left unsaid (Verg. *G.* 4.147-8).

It may be inferred that it is not Virgil's lack of data that is being criticised, but the wider picture of farming that tends to be generalised, rather than offering detailed and complete information. Literary genre is not the main reason for the criticism, since Columella himself tried to give some 'literary elevation' to his own instructions: it is all about empirical knowledge. In fact, as Spurr (1986) says: "No doubt Columella hoped to make his long work

more entertaining and literary by the inclusion of excerpts from the *Georgica*, but that cannot explain the seriousness with which Virgil's authority is adduced". Despite Columella once pointing out that Virgil and Cato were mistaken (Col. 4.11.1),[69] he states that Virgil provides original and valuable information (Col. 3.10.20), which reinforces the idea that there was knowledge and a kind of practical experience in the *Georgica*.

The fact that Virgil's teachings were corrected by other authors merely advises the reader that it may be erroneous to consider the *Georgica* as definitive knowledge. It also means that the poem was used as a source of knowledge on farming. Despite the criticisms (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 29.28) and Virgil's belief in the difficulty of presenting simple matters in dignified language (cf. Verg. *G.* 3.289-90), the fusion of literary aesthetics and instruction on the 'intrinsically beautiful aura' of rural life was not only possible, but also expected. Virgil simply transforms a culturally recognised kind of nobility present in traditional linguistic thought into verse, making the abstract meaning of the images serve his poetry by describing images and prototype ideas. However, we can by no means assume that the information stated in the *Georgica* did not grow out of a realistic, rather than idealized, perspective on the agricultural cosmos. Perhaps Columella realized this, at least in terms of the aesthetics of literary language, in quoting Virgil (Verg. *G.* 3.384-85, 3.443-44) in his own instructions (cf. Col. 7.3.9-10).[70] However, Columella's quotations were not restricted to aesthetic entertainment, since he also added information based on Virgil's instructions (Col. *Arb.* 1*pr.*). In fact, Columella also used poetry in his Book X. Even so, this does not imply a total acceptance of poetry as source of knowledge on farming, since, according to Columella, literature may contain a mass of information, such as mythology, that is not useful to the busy farmer (Col. 9.2.5):

Haec enim et similia magis scrutantium rerum naturae latebras, quam rusticorum est inquirere. studiosis quoque litterarum gratiora sunt ista in otio legentibus, quam negotiosis agricolis: Quoniam neque in opere neque in re familiari quidquam iuvant.

"In fact, these issues and others like them are of more concern to those who search the hidden secrets of nature, than for husbandmen. And they are more appealing to scholars of literature, who read in their leisure, than to busy farmers since they benefit neither the work nor the household".

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[69] Columella is referring to Verg. *G.* 2.362-370 and Cato *Agr.* 33. 2.
[70] For a study of Columella´s quotations and borrowings from Virgil, vide Dumont 2008 and Henderson 2002.

My interpretation of this statement is that it only reaffirms the aesthetic potential of agriculture in linguistic expression because, as Columella states, this literary genre is being used as entertainment, which means it is a matter of providing pleasure through the aesthetics of the theme of agriculture, rather than simply through literary formalities. For Columella, the artificiality of literary language was not a problem, since he did not criticise it: instead the issue lies in the information that does not concern agriculture (cf. Col. 9.2.5). The Latin author refers to peripheral information which has aesthetic value and this perception of beauty shows the potential of linguistic imagery that can be transformed into different forms of expression, such as plastic art. (vide chap. 4.4.2) The very famous Livia Garden Room *ad Gallinas*[71] and its wall paintings may serve as an example of memories of gardening and farming converted into aesthetic objects. The garden is not only representative of the beauty of the landscape; the beauty also lies in the richness of the fruit and trees in the garden. The '*Ara Pacis Augustae*' altar, an important item of imperial propaganda[72], is another example, presenting the natural world reproduced by gardeners or farmers, whilst recalling the prosperity of the empire (vide Spaeth 1994).

One could add another commentary to the *De Re Rustica* passage quoted, as it is said by Columella that the farmer may not be interested in complex literary or philosophical discussions. Columella is associating the farmer's life and work with simplicity. This perspective on the farmer's character is not constructed intentionally from profound philosophical reflection, but is based in the very nature of the farmer's activities, as discussed in Chap. 3.2.

In short, the nature of farming work and the visual elements expressed in Latin literature are the subject of this study.[73] The Latin instructions on agriculture were chosen as the main source because they portray the reality of the farmer, regardless of literary formalities or technical accuracy. The reason for this can be found in the language used in the texts, which tends to reveal the reality of the 'farming world' and the human experience within it.

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[71] Museo Nazionale Romano, vide Kellum 1994.
[72] Vide http://es.arapacis.it/. Last viewed 04/05/2018.
[73] On cognitive psychological theories of figurative language, vide Honeck, Kibler 1985.

II. Water, river and flood: constructing meaning

(...) Porque tu que és tudo! a terra a cultivar,

A mão cultivadora, o arado da cultura,

O grão a semear,

O próprio fruto, – grão da mão futura.

Pois lavra-te, és o chão! Emprega-te, és o braço!

Semeia-te, és o grão!

Floresce, frutifica, extingue-te! e, no espaço,

Pode, amanhã, nascer mais uma ideal constelação...(...)

José Régio, *Um jovem Poeta* (*A Chaga ao Lado,* 1ª ed., 1954)

2.1. The riverine landscape as a source for symbolic language: the water and the flood

2.1.1. Geographical context: the landscape and the river

Geography, and especially the riverine landscape, is a crucial factor in agricultural production and its cosmos. The Tarsus mountains are the birthplace of the two great sources of life in ancient southern Mesopotamia, namely the Tigris and the Euphrates. In southwest Anatolia the abundant annual rainfall feeds the banks of the two main watercourses in the region (Ur 2009). The Euphrates runs from the Taurus Mountains to the south, flowing towards northern Syria then turning southeast and later connecting with the Balikh and Khabur rivers. The Tigris runs to the west and the Batman, Garzau and Bohtan rivers and later the upper and lower river Zab (Modern Iraq) flow into its left bank (Adams 1981 12). Both the Euphrates and the Tigris flow south to the plains of Mesopotamia, near contemporary Baghdad. When they reach the plains, the rivers lose their force, depositing alluvium and raising the level of the platform, whilst reducing their depths and widening their banks. The landscape of southern Mesopotamia is flat in many area, which makes the level of the Euphrates similar to the plain, thus facilitating irrigation and consequently the agricultural production that sustained almost the entire economy of the southern civilizations – in good and predictable years, of course.[74] However, the environment, elevation and marshes of Mesopotamia have changed quite considerably in the past five millennia and any

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[74] For a brief introduction to the environmental history of northern Mesopotamia (3000-1600 B.C.), vide Wossink 2009 9-32.

reconstruction of the real conditions in the southern Mesopotamia of the third millennium BC cannot be accurate.

One thing is certain: silt deposits from river floods enriched the soil and, together with irrigation, made it suitable for growing crops, regardless of the fact that in the past the amount of water carried by the Euphrates would have varied tremendously according to the seasons, unlike today. In predictable years, the river was at its lowest level in the dry months (August, September and October), and reached its highest level between April and May, when the snow melted and winter rains fell in the Anatolian highlands (Wilkinson 2004 21).

The size of the Tigris was more of a danger than an attraction to societies with limited technical means. It was more dependent than the Euphrates on rainfall in its watershed and therefore also flooded more rapidly and destructively after the winter and spring storms (Adams 1981 11). Nonetheless, it still was a major force for farming and herding and consequently its landscape would also have been part of a crystalized image of the agricultural cosmos present in the collective mind.[75]

The symbolic value of the flood has to do with the fact that a substantial part of Mesopotamian agricultural practice was ruled by a limited number of irrigation cycles during the winter growing season.[76] Temperatures and soil conditions were quite different from nowadays: according to Adams, there was a "lower water flow, but more frequent irrigations would impose the unbearable requirement that water supplies be maintained permanently at adequate levels in all the extensive canal systems" (cf. also Studevent-Hickman 2006 4-7). In addition, there was a high rate of water loss through evaporation and infiltration, even during the winter. These circumstances required investing considerable effort in irrigation procedures and maintenance (Renger 1990) and Adams' assumptions are corroborated to a large extent by the so-called *Farmer's instructions.*[77] Therefore, flooding was not only expected, but also badly needed by the population. It would signify joy and an assurance that agriculture would be profitable. The flood was the force that defined balance and harmony in southern Mesopotamia, as the following quotations show:

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[75] The nature and movements of the Tigris River, which are quite hard to identify in the modern landscape, were underestimated by historians, as was its variable influence on the culture (Hritz 2010).

[76] Regarding the words used to identify flood in ancient Akkadian and Sumerian literatures, vide Chen 2013 21-66.

[77] This text is commented on in this work, following the Civil 1994 edition, entitled *Farmer's Instructions* by the editor. For a summary of the irrigation process, vide Adams 1981 5 and Hämeen-Anttila (2006) for Ibn Wahshiyya's instructions on agriculture (c. IX-X centuries) and the technical procedures in Iraq; for the process of irrigation in FI, vide ll. 67-73.

5) ša$_3$ gu$_2$-bi nam-gi$_4$

6) ša$_3$-^{d}en-1il$_2$-la$_2$ gu$_2$-bi nam-gi$_4$

7) ša$_3$ gu$_2$-bi nam-gi$_4$

8) a-ĝi$_6$-uru$_{16}$ nam-mul ni$_2$-il$_2$-il$_2$

9) ša$_3$-^{d}en-1il$_2$-la$_2$-ke$_4$ ID$_2$.idigina-am$_3$ a-du$_{10}$-ga nam-tum$_2$ (Gudea E3/1.1.7. Cyl. A ll. 5-9, Edzard 1997)[78]

5) "The interior of the banks returned;

6) The interior of Enlil's banks returned;

7) The interior of the banks returned;

8) A great flood with sparkling (water) rises high;

9) Enlil's is the (interior of) Tigris itself, it brought sweet water."

In short, the 'optimal landscape' for subsistence, namely water in the form of rivers and canals, was a permanent desired presence in the eyes of the farmers and rural inhabitants of lower Mesopotamia.

2.1.2 From the reality of an image to the symbol

The symbol of the river is deeply rooted in the collective memory, firstly because the river water gives life in a fundamental and literal sense, embodying the idea of sustenance, irrigation and fertility. As an abstract image, the river was a constant feature in the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean, from Egypt to Rome, and from the Levant[79] to Mesopotamia - and wherever there is a big river, flooding must be expected, which means that the symbol of the river contains the meanings for life growing, abundance, and also scarcity and destruction.

The flooding of rivers is a recurring theme in literature (vide Chen 2012) and is described as a source of fertility for the land in need. The image of the river that overflows its banks may also indicate the destructive potential of flooding when it is unpredictable and out of control. As previously stated, there is a duality in the symbol that considers two inverse conditions of the natural world: 'destruction' and 'growth', 'chaos' and 'peaceful harmony'.

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[78] On the history and context of the sign ID$_2$,, vide Thurman 2007 8-42.

[79] On the symbol and metaphor of the river in the Bible, vide Treadway 2013.

Aldrete (2007) sums up this dramatic relationship between the riverine communities and the flow of the river in the region by saying that "The very factors that make these areas attractive for settlement are the same ones that make them vulnerable to devastation caused by floods. The flat floodplains between the Tigris and Euphrates provided fertile ground for the type of intensive agricultural cultivation that would produce the surpluses necessary to support cities and empires, but these lands were also subject to sudden and destructive floods."

The annual flood was a vital force in ancient Southern Mesopotamia. According to Cooper (2006 28-9): "This annual flooding would have inundated many of the fields of the adjacent flood plain. But, unlike other river systems, where flooding coincides with the agricultural growing season (January-March), and water and alluvial soil come as nourishment for crops, the Euphrates flood happens at the wrong time of the year, when cereal crops were beginning to ripen and large volumes of water were prejudicial to its growth. Cereals need a more controlled dry weather and a wetter soil can be disastrous to the crops' survival. This timing clearly made winter-spring farming on the flood plain a high-risk enterprise. Consequently, most crops were grown on the several metres above the flood plain, beyond the limits of the annual inundation" (Cooper 2006 28-29).

This may be the reason why the idea of the flood is an image of a force capable of both destruction and creation, depending on whether it is predictable/controllable or not.

Normally, disregarding certain exceptions which focus on the specific features of a canal or references to canal (topographic) names, when there is a reference to a canal in Sumerian literature, the semantic value of the object lies in the abstract meaning that the canal has in the text, instead of its technicalities.[80]

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[80] On the administration and maintenance of irrigation canals, vide the examples presented in Hedrick 1998, Renger 1990 and also Civil 1994 68, 110 and 134. In this thesis, I frequently translate the 'generic idea' of the canal or river in the same way, since this study is more concerned with the meaning of the symbol and less with the specificities of the object. However, it is important to note that there was a ramified system: the water was brought from the major canal 'i₇' (*nārum*) to a smaller one 'pa₅' (*atappum*) which could supply a district, a garden or be directed into an 'e' (*īkum*), which provided water for a field (Mauer 1983). For canal names, vide Renger 1990. Vide also Civil 1994 109 for a discussion on lexis.

2.1.3. Objectifying the abstract image

Words with a common semantic meaning do not necessarily have a common, concrete origin in a metaphorical image generated in prehistorical times.[81] An object can be represented by a variety of words, implying that it is characterised by multiple signs whose meaning depends on the context in which it is used. Taking the Sumerian word 'a' (water) as an example, a simple reference to the object 'water' (CAD, vol. 10, *mû*, 'a') may imply many meanings, depending on the context. It could simply be a word whose semantic meaning is the same as the physical representation of the object, but can also serve as a metaphorical reference to identify a different 'object' or quality, and also as a metonymic process (vide Barczewska 2012). With ancient languages, it is impossible, in most cases, to determine any kind of primordial object/lexicon relationship that would identify the precise original source.

A word like 'a' (water) carries an abstract meaning that is described by a group of signs which make up the physical image of the object, even when they cannot be identified. In *Dumuzi's Dream* (DumDr), for example, when Dumuzi's murderers are described, there is a reference to water that must have some value in terms of understanding the description of the two evil characters presented in the text:

119. lugal-ra dumu adab^{ki}-a 2-am$_3$ mu-un-ši-re$_7$^{re}-eš

120. ^{ĝiš}kiši$_{16}$ a šu-ru-ug-ga ^{ĝiš}dala$_2$ a ḫab$_2$-ba

121. šu-ni ^{ĝiš}banšur-ra eme-ni e$_2$-gal-la (DumDr ll.119-121)

119. "The two sons of Adab came for the king.

120. They were thistles in dried-up waters, they were thorns in stinking waters (cf. Alster 1972 trans.).

121. 'Their hands (were) on the table, their tongue (were) in the palace'."[82]

It is not clear what l. 120 means and current Sumerian language studies cannot help us to understand what would probably have been clear to a native speaker. However, the way in which the word 'a' functions in giving meaning to an image is paradigmatic, even when

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[81] I do not follow the approaches to metaphors in Sumerian literature as a matter dependent on syntax and certain specific grammatical constructions, as in Chen 2013 34-47, since this perspective limits the concept of metaphor in a way that makes it artificial.

[82] Alster 1972 31: "…having their tongues in the palace, seems to indicate that they enjoy hospitality as guests, while sending secret reports as spies."

we do not grasp it because we cannot properly transform the artificial language we read into an image. Hence, the text cannot be understood. The issue is not the lexicon, but the context. If we could understand the entire symbolic spectrum of water, it would be possible to understand the characters in the scene better.

Water is the most common fluid and therefore its characteristics as a liquid and as something drinkable provide the base for metaphoric language:

293. urim$_5^{ki}$-ma lu$_2$ u$_2$-še$_3$ nu-ĝen lu$_2$ a-še$_3$ nu-ĝen

294. uĝ$_3$-bi a tul$_2$-la$_2$ de$_2$-a-gin$_7$ šu i$_3$-ni$_{10}$-ni$_{10}^?$-ne

293. "In Urim no one went for food; no one went for water;

294. Its people move around$^?$ like water that was poured from a well." (LSUr ll. 293-294)[83]

The behaviour of water as a fluid in a precise context gives meaning to the movement of people running away, scattered. Everyone would know how water moves, but just a few may understand the principles of a crowd in motion: the syntagma 'a' carries within it a context that can give meaning to the idea of 'a spreading of people' that is not spontaneously understood.

Later in the text (LSUr ll. 389-390), an idea is portrayed that only the sign of meaning for 'liquidity' can show:

389. iri^{ki} ^{ĝiš}tukul-e saĝ nu-šum$_2$-mu-a šag$_4$-ĝar-e im-us$_2$

390. šag$_4$-ĝar-e iri^{ki} a-gin$_7$ ba-e-si ĝa$_2$-la nu-um-ta-dag-ge

389. "In the city, those who did not fall by weapons, fell by hunger.

390. Hunger filled the city like water; it would not stop its motion."

Again, only water can transmit this action in an understandable way. The idea is to show a famine 'watering' everything, meaning that no one could escape from it; water is uniform and expansive and spreads everywhere when it moves. By knowing how water moves, that is to say, the 'sign of meaning' of its motion, the meaning of the symbol can be understood. As it is such a common object, the signs that compound the symbolic meaning of water can serve as the basis for literary metaphors.[84]

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[83] On the background of the LSUr text, vide Michalowski 1989 1-15.
[84] Vide an example in Gadotti 2014, GEN ll. 66-69, ll. 110-113.

A visual object can generate a great number of signs of meaning which depend on what each image represents as an object. In addition to the motion of the liquid, it can also be identified by its transparency, lack of taste, mass and practical functions such as irrigation, cleaning or use as a drink.

Water can also stand for a gift of nature and a symbol of prosperity, as seen in Angim:

171. ki-sur-ra uru$_2$-ĝa$_2$ pu$_2$-a dug$_3$-ga ki-en-gi-ra ḫe$_2$-a

171. "May the territory of my city be the good well of Sumer."

In this line, the 'good well' (pu$_2$-a dug$_3$) or 'good water' of the 'Sumer well' represents safety and comfort. If Ninurta is in Nibru, there will be harmony because his value to the welfare of the city is the same as that of good water from a well. A water source is an essential commodity: it ensures security, as Ninurta does.[85]

In later lines in the same text, water is shown directly as a symbol, as it is suggested as an engine of prosperity:

188. ud-ba KA sizkur$_2$ ba-ni

189. šag$_4$ kadra a sed su$_3$-a-ni

190. niĝ$_2$ nam-ḫe$_2$-a bi$_2$-in-dug$_4$-ga-ni

188. "(Ninkarnunna) who performs a prayer,

189. Sprinkled a gift of fresh water in (Ninurta's) heart

190. and also the things of prosperity about which he spoke, (...)"

It is not exactly clear what the complex meaning of this symbol is or whether the text is literally describing a magical ritual. However, it is important to note the presence of the water sign for fluidity in the scene. Again, the context that is needed to reconstruct the complex meaning is missing, but a knowledge of the signs of water gives us the grounds for guesswork. Clearly some imagination is needed to identify the signs in a linguistic exercise such as a translation, which cannot properly deal with the ambiguities of the Sumerian language.

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[85] Vide the transformation of salt water holes (pu$_2$ a sis-a-zu) into sweet water holes (pu$_2$ a dug$_3$-ga) as a mark of positive change in *Enki and Ninḫursaĝa* ll. 44-49 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.1.1); cf. its inverse in LSUr l. 9.

Another sign can also be recognised as universal: the property of quenching thirst, which is directly addressed in the text *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta*[86]. A farmer seems to ask for water and food, and finally receives it:

16.ninda ^{kuš}lu-ub$_2$ ḫa-ma-ni-in-ĝar-ra-am$_3$

17.a ^{kuš}ummud-da ḫa-ma-ni-in-de$_2$-am$_3$ (…)

24.ninda ^{kuš}lu-ub$_2$-a im-ma-ni-in-ĝar

25.a ^{kuš}ummud-da im-ma-ni-in-de$_2$

16. "May she put bread in my leather bag,

17. may she pour water into my waterskin. (…)

24. He had bread placed in his leather bag,

25. he had water poured into his waterskin."[87]

The reconstruction of ll. 30-33 by the editor suggests that the farmer affirms that he received what he had asked for. Regardless of the literary context, I have cited this merely as a simple expression of dependence on water and the fact that water could carry a significant meaning that comes from common sense and is expressed through signs. I have used the 'water' (a) example because it can be directly linked to the semantics of the traditional river symbology and, consequently, to the flood, the great source of water.[88] If the Tigris and the Euphrates do not carry water to the city, there will be a catastrophe, such as the fall of Sumer and Ur (LSUr), where the idea of block the rivers (a im-ma-da-an-keše$_2$) serves, together with other factors, to present a scene of potential annihilation:

59.^{d}en-lil$_2$-le ud gig-ga mu-un-zal iri-a me bi$_2$-ib-ĝar

60.^{d}nin-tur$_5$-re ama$_5$ kalam-ma-ka ^{ĝiš}ig-šu-ur$_2$ im-mi-in-de$_6$

61.^{d}en-ki-ke$_4$ ^{id2}idigna ^{id2}buranun-na a im-ma-da-an-keše$_2$

59. "Enlil made an evil storm to come (and) silence was placed in the city.

60. Nintur took away the door bolt of the storehouses of the Land.

61. Enki stopped the water in the Tigris and the Euphrates."

The social value of the river and the construction of its symbol in the collective mind would inevitably have been related to a physical image, i.e. to the landscape through which

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[86] Comp.t.: ECTLS c.5.5.5. cf. *Hoe and Plough* ll. 159-162.
[87] *Hoe and Plough* ll. 157-158.
[88] On culture and religion on the river Euphrates, vide Woods 2005.

the river flows. The meaning of this image depends on the context generated by the mood of the river as an agent and the reaction of the natural world as a patient. At this point, it should be noted that this theoretical analysis understands the 'natural world' as the entire cosmos affecting human reality. The value of the river does not lie in the river itself but in what it can do or bring to the land. Therefore, the semantics of the river always derives from the result of its actions. In other words, the image of the river is its potential to act on the surrounding space (vide supra). For example, when Geštinanna is offered 'a river of water' ('id$_2$ a-ba', in DumDr), this is an attempt to bribe her with the gifts that a river, together with the fields, can bring, that is to say, when the river is an actor on the landscape:

131. id$_2$ a-ba mu-un-na-ba-e-ne šu ⌈nu⌉-[um]-ma-gid$_2$-de$_3$

132. a-šag$_4$ še-ba mu-un-⌈na⌉-[ba]-e-ne šu [nu]-um-ma-⌈gid$_2$⌉-[de$_3$]

131. "They offered her a canal of water, but she accepted it ⌈not⌉.[89]

132. They offered ⌈her⌉ a field of grain, but she accepted ⌈it⌉ [not]." (DumDr ll.131-132)

The river is a gift of life and richness because it has the capacity to generate goods and prosperity. With proper irrigation, the fields of grain (a-šag$_4$ še-ba) are treasures. The value of these gifts is immeasurable and the refusal of Geštinanna for the sake of her brother Dumuzi emphasises her extraordinary loyalty to him. In fact, a gift like this cannot be refused; as can be seen in later lines (cf. DumDr ll. 138-143; vide infra chap 4.1.). In UrN D we can infer the semantic relationship between water and crops that demonstrates the value presented in DumDr, as the crops come together with good (fresh) water (a dug$_3$):

17. […] a dug$_3$ ḫu-mu-un-tum$_2$-mu [^{ĝiš}]dusu-e ḫa-ma-la$_2$-e

17. "May the good water carry […]; may that be carried in baskets to me."[90]

Hence, we believe in the image of water's absence in order to recognise its value (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 159-162):

159. ^{ĝiš}apin sur$_3$ ba-al-ba-al in-še$_3$ mu-e-dub$_2$

160. edin bar-rim$_4$ ki a nu-ĝal$_2$-la

161. a dug$_3$-ga-bi u$_3$-mu-ba-al

162. lu$_2$ <u>enmen</u> tuku gu$_2$ pu$_2$-ĝa$_2$-še$_3$ zi-ni ba-ši-in-tum$_3$

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[89] In a scene from *Enki and Ninḫursaĝa* (ll. 152-158, comp.t. ETCSL 1.1.1) associated with Utu's marriage and his gifts there is a reference to the filling of dykes and canals with water.
[90] Vide previous lines.

159. "You insult me with 'Plough, the digger of ditches',

160. (but) in the plain and dry land where there is no water,

161. I have excavated fresh water.

162. Those who are <u>thirsty</u> refresh themselves at my well." (cf. trans. ETCSL c.5.5.4)

In the same sense, the capacity to refresh can be identified as a metaphor in l. 141 of InstrŠur through a reference that seems to contain one of the signs of water: its refreshing, cleansing property.

140. inim šudu$_3$-de$_3$-ĝu$_{10}$ <u>he$_2$-ĝal$_2$</u>-la-am$_3$

141. a-ra-zu a sed$_x$(KAD$_3$)-da šag$_4$-ge im-sed$_x$(KAD$_3$)-e

140. "My words of prayer are <u>abundance</u>.

141. Supplication is cold water that refreshes the heart."

In short, water is water and its functions and physical characteristics are universally known. Regardless of the literary context, it is possible to identify the signs of the image of water contained in transversal cultural thought.

### 2.1.4. Calamity and the scale of power: the dark side of the flood

Within the symbol of the flood as an engine of destruction, it is possible to identify the following relationship between signs from the image of the river:

Sign of fluidity + Sign of power + Sign of volume + Sign of motion.

Regarding examples of the flood in literature, Chen (2013) states that "…the flood terminology found in most of these earlier sources is used figuratively as similes or metaphors for the depiction of the invincible and overwhelming power of mythical and human figures, which are presumably based on the common ecological phenomenon of regular flooding in southern Mesopotamia. None of the representations of destructive floods from third millennium sources can be identified with the primeval flood catastrophe that was believed to have wiped out the whole world except for a few survivors in the primeval time of origins, as portrayed in the mythological traditions such as the Atrahasīs Epic, or to have divided early world history into the antediluvian and postdiluvian eras (…)"[91] In this sense,

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[91] For an extended discussion of the primeval flood as a cultural, literary and historical theme, vide Chen 2013.

one can say with some certainty that the symbolic meanings of the flood predate any mythological description, at least concerning the concrete and objectifying image generated by the action/effect of a mass of water from a river that has burst its banks.

image: Landscape + river action
crystalized scene
image of abstract meaning
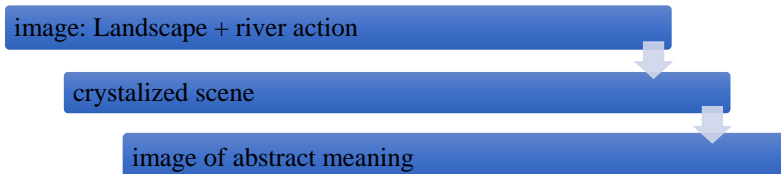
In *Inana's Exaltation* (Inana B), flood and destruction are presented as a portrait of a landscape. In order to establish the potential consequences of the goddess' power, it is necessary to create an image that, in itself, could translate the value of Inana's capacities. Taking antiquity as a reference, only nature can transmit this value, and therefore only nature can portray and give meaning to such destructive power.

9. ušumgal-gin$_7$ kur-re uš$_{11}$ ba-e-šum$_2$

10. ^{d}iškur-gin$_7$ ki šeg$_x$(KA×LI) gi$_4$-a-za ^{d}ezina$_2$ la-ba-e-ši-ĝal$_2$

11. a-ma-ru kur-bi-ta ed$_3$-de$_3$

12. saĝ-kal an ki-a ^{d}inana-bi-me-en[92]

9. "You poisoned the foreign land like a dragon.

10. When you roar at the earth like Iškur, no vegetation can withstand you. [93]

11. As a flood descending from $^{(?)}$ the mountains $^{(?)}$,[94]

12. you are their Inana, the powerful one of heaven and earth."

Inana can kill as a serpent (ušumgal-gin$_7$), but instead of inflicting limited, individual damage, the goddess has the power to affect an entire region by spreading her venom over the land, bringing sterility to the fields and making them infertile. In these lines, there is a kind of comparative gradation, since Inana multiplies the capacities that would be recognisable in nature since her power is translated through a hyperbolic interpretation of a crystalized image: the danger of a serpent. This mechanism for constructing meaning from an image of the real world can be seen throughout the canon of universal literature.

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[92] Inana B. cf. *A praise poem of Šulgi* (Šulgi O) ll. 23-24, ll. 53-54; comp.t. Klein 1976, ETCSL c. 2.4.2.15.
[93] cf. Hallo, van Dijk 1968 trans.
[94] Cf. Angim l. 119. me$_3$-ĝu$_{10}$ a-maḫ e$_3$-a-gin$_7$ kur-re ba-ra-ab-[e$_3$], "My battle, like a raised flood, [overflowed] in the mountains". Cf. Išme-Dagan S l. 13; Gudea E3/1.1.7.Cyl. A col. xv ll. 24-26 (Edzard 1997 78); CLAM 413-419, ll.39-44. Cf. ll. 10-11 with LSUr l. 72.

At this point it is important to note that, regardless of the great value of Inana in the Sumerian pantheon (Guevara 2004 129), I do not intend to discuss religious and mythological symbology in this dissertation. However, the fact that this goddess represents a kind of fertility deity associated with the fields makes her a special subject in the texts under analysis.

Line 11 seems to suggest that the goddess behaves like a flood that comes from above (a-ma-ru + ed$_3$-de$_3$); and, as a flood, her power is unstoppable. Following this semantic construction, it can be understood that nothing would stand in her path. Here, the potential of the image used to construct linguistic meaning is easily identifiable and was probably instantly recognised, since it is derived from traditional, common-sense based representations, instead of being a highly literary and aesthetic metaphor. Nevertheless, it remains a metaphor.

This mechanism is used in the same way in the following text, Išme-Dagan S,[95] which is a dedication on a statue:

13. zig$_3$-ga-ni u$_{18}$-lu <u>a-ma-ru</u> <u>tum$_9$</u> <u>sumur-ba</u> du-a

14. a$_2$-na ba$_9$-ra$_2$-a-ba ĝa$_2$-ĝa$_2$-ĝa$_2$-da-na su$_3$-ud-bi-še$_3$ ĝir$_2$-ĝir$_2$-re

15. piriĝ ḫuš edin-na-gin$_7$ usu nam-šul-ba du-a

13. "His rising is a south wind (storm), a <u>flood</u>, <u>a wind blowing in its fury</u>.[96]

14. Who by moving his swinging arms runs off into the distance,

15. who like a terrifying lion from the open country moves with might and vigour."

Again, there is an idea of power that can only be measured by an evocative comparison with natural phenomena. The precise evaluation of nature's capacity to cause harm is derived from previous observation of a catastrophe or an understanding of how such an event could affect human life. Individuals in contact with nature can spontaneously measure how destructive such event could be. It reveals the fragility of a life dependent on tilling and herding, since an uncontrolled flood would destroy pasturelands, crops and canals and bring starvation (vide infra).

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[95] On the Išme-Dagan reign, vide Frayne 1998
[96] Cf. infra, CLAM 123-137, ll. 15-24. Cf. *Lugalbanda in the mountain cave* l. 469 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.8.2.1; Vanstiphout 2003).

Any interlocutor aware of the interaction between the 'natural world' and the 'agricultural universe' would identify the semantic value of this picture, as he would be familiar with the signs of meaning that compound the symbol.

In fact, the flood contains the sign for strength and energy, as something so powerful and out of control that it exceeds human powers. Therefore, its symbol can transmit the idea of immeasurable energy, since the consequences of its effects are known:[97]

15. e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ne$_2$ a-ma-ru zi-ga gaba-šu-gar nu-un-tuku

16. e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ne$_2$ an al-dub$_2$-dub$_2$-be$_2$ ki al-sig$_3$-sig$_3$-ga

(…)

19. e-ne-em$_3$-^{d}Asar-lu$_2$-ḫi buru$_{14}$ isin-ba mu-ni-ib$_2$-su$_3$-su$_3$

20. umun-e e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ni a-zi-ga-ma$_3$ KA al-ur$_3$!-ra

21. e-ne-em$_3$-^{d}Asar-lu$_2$-ḫi a-maḫ-am$_3$ k[ar al-ša$_5$-ša$_5$]

22. umun-e e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ne$_2$ ^{giš}mes-gal-gal-la gu$_2$-gur$_5$-uš [am$_3$-me]

23. [e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ni u$_4$-d]e$_3$ du$_6$-du$_6$-da šu-še$_3$ al-[ma-ma]

15. "Those words of his, a swelling flood, have no rival.[98]

16. Those words of his make the heavens tremble, the earth quake.

(…)

19. The word of Asarluhi sinks the harvest on its stalks.

20. The word of the lord is a swelling flood that ˈsweeps awayˈ ... (cf. LSUr l. 73)

21. The word of Asarluhi is a flood that [transforms the wharfs.]

22. The words of the lord [are] a pile of huge mes-trees.

23. [The words of he] that duels with all and […] into ruins."

This example describes the effects of a flood. Metaphors of nature and agriculture make the value of Asarluhi's words clear: the words are like a flood, so nothing can withstand it. Essentially, his will is overwhelming and definitive, like a flood: a flood cannot be contradicted (gaba-šu-gar nu-un-tuku), and nor can Asarluhi's words.[99] The consequences of Asarluhi's words are the destruction of the crops (buru$_{14}$ isin-ba mu-ni-ib$_2$-su$_3$-su$_3$; cf.

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[97] CLAM 120-151, ll. 15-25; CDLI no. P414268.
[98] Cf. a+36. [a-ma-ru-z]i-ga gaba šu-gar nu-un-t[uku], a+36. It (the word) is a swelling flood that has no rival. In CLAM 319-332, ll. 1-14, ll. 28-98.
[99] Cf. CA ll. 149-151; CLAM 500-518 ll. a+69-a+86.

Inana B ll. 11-12). Therefore they are terrifying, for they summon up the same level of calamity in the collective mind as the idea of a great famine.

The semantic expansion of the effects of Asarluhi's dramatic power can be identified in the metaphor of the flood because the flood image is crystalized in traditional thought, together with its consequences for the landscape. Regardless of the text's description of the effects of the flood, the image is popularly understandable in its entirety and spontaneously underlines and recalls its own semantic value: the destruction of the crops signifies unbearable suffering.[100] This extract has been cited because it presents the symbolic meaning of the flood together with a description of its image, which enables some of the signs that compound the symbol to be identified: sign of quantity + sign of fluidity = destruction of crops.

A similar example is presented in the text *Elum Gusun: Honoured One, Wild Ox* (CLAM 271-288):

b+93. a-ma-ru na-nam kur al-gul-gul

b+94. u_3-mu-un[101]-e e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ni a-ma-[ru na-nam]

b+95. ša$_3$-bi e-lum-e a-ma-ru na-[nam]

b+96. ša$_3$-bi $^{<<e>>}$ ^{d}Mu-ul-lil$_2$ a-ma-ru na-nam

b+97. u_3-mu-un-na ša$_3$-an-še$_3$ an im-dub$_2$-ba ni ib X

b+98. ^{d}Mu-ul-lil$_2$ e-ne-em ki-še$_3$ ki im-sig$_3$-ga-ni [102]

(…)

b+101. e-ne-em$_3$-ma$_3$-ni a-ma-ru zi-ga gaba šu-gar nu-[tuku]

b+93. "He truly is the flood that destroys the land. (cf. UHF l. 552)

b+94. The word of the lord [is truly a flo]od.

b+95 The heart of the illustrious one [is indeed] a flood.

b+96. The heart of Enlil is indeed a flood.

b+97. The lord causes the interior of the heavens to tremble ...X

b+98. The word (of) Enlil causes the interior of the earth to shake.

(…)

b+101. His word is a raised flood that [knows] no opposition."

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[100] On the idea of fragility in the face of the elements, vide ll. 69-78, comp.t.: CLAM 126-27, ll. 61-79; Inana B ll. 1-43.

[101] 'Umun' (Emensal).

[102] Cf. CLAM 319-332, l. a+36.

Another example is found in ll. 76-78 of the LSUr, but in this instance the image is expanded into a larger landscape:

76. DU-bi a-ma-ru ^{d}en-lil$_2$-la$_2$ gaba gi$_4$ nu-tuku-am$_3$

77. tum$_9$ gal edin-na edin-e im-si igi-še$_3$ mu-un-ne-ĝen

78. edin niĝ$_2$-daĝal-la-ba sag$_3$ ba-ab-dug$_4$ lu$_2$ nu-mu-ni-in-dib-be$_2$ (cf. CA ll. 149-151)

76. "Their movement, like the flood of Enlil, cannot be withstood.

77. The great wind of the countryside filled the countryside, it moved against them.

78. The vastness of the countryside was disturbed, no one moved there."

The signs of the flood are used to show the interlocutor the extent of the god Enlil's power. The landscape is a passive agent that generates meaning. This image of destruction would have been recognised by an interlocutor who understood what Enlil's powers implied, as summarised in l. 405:

405. elam^{ki}-e a maḫ e$_3$-a-gin$_7$ gidim im-ma-ni-ib$_2$-ĝar

405. "The Elamites, like a swelling flood wave, left there (only) ghosts."

In a text addressed to Enlil, the lamentation *Utugin Eta: Come out like the Sun* (Cohen 1988), the action of the god is expressed by the destruction of the land, explained through the traditional signs for the flood and the visual disruption of the 'domesticated waters':

b+253. Kur na-am$_2$-ge$_{16}$-le-em$_3$-ma$_3$ im-ma-ni-in-ma-al

b+254. Kur na-am$_2$-ge$_{16}$-[le-em$_3$]-ma$_3$ i$_7$-da i-ni-in-de$_2$ (CLAM 103-116, ll. b+253-254)

b+253. "He has destroyed the land.

b+254. He poured (the waters of) destruction into the canals of the land." (trans. Cohen 1988 113)
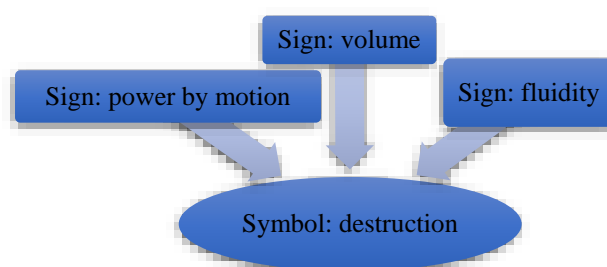
This example shows the destruction of the canals or the destruction that comes through the canals, probably by a flood. The main idea of the image is to present a feeling of disruption through a chain of relations that have, as their final consequence, starvation and the destruction of farmland:
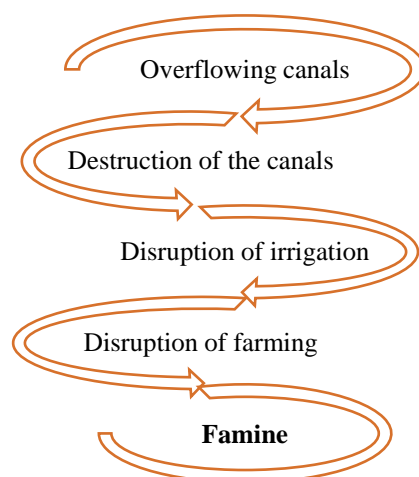
Thus, the idea of the canal ('id$_2$') as a means of destruction can represent a direct consequence, or chain reaction that results in something bad. Here, it is the context that makes the symbol negative. However, the traditional symbol is always the same: its compounding signs do not change because they belong to a crystalized image, and the distinction between positive or negative values depends on the context of the action and the combination of signs. The interlocutor constructs the image spontaneously, without the need to think about the relation between the events because he already knows the signs.

In Inana B ll. 43-46, the river is shown as an allegory for death instead of life, which it should represent in a harmonious world. A semantic value is created by the river that carries blood or literally death (uš$_2$)[103], which may serve here as an inversion of the idea of 'water of life':

43. kur saĝ ki-za ba-e-de$_3$-gid$_2$-de$_3$-en ^dezina$_2$ niĝ$_2$-gig-bi

44. abul-la-ba izi mu-ni-in-ri-ri

45. id$_2$-ba uš$_2$ ma-ra-an-de$_2$ uĝ$_3$-bi {ma-ra-na$_8$-na$_8$} {(2 mss. have instead:) ba-ra-na$_8$-na$_8$}

43. "{Once you have extended your province over the hills} {(2 mss. have instead:) If you frown at the mountains}, the vegetation there is ruined.[104]

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[103] Vide *Damu,* CAD 3 75-80.
[104] Vide trans. Hallo & Younger 2003 519.

44. You have reduced to ashes its grand entrance. [105]

45. <u>Blood</u> is poured into <u>their rivers</u> because of you, and their people {must drink it} {(2 mss. have instead:) could not drink}."

Inana is presented as possessing a power capable of destroying fields and killing plants, which would inevitably mean death by starvation. This meaning is conveyed by the image of vegetation which has become in some way 'abnormal' (^{d}ezina$_2$ niĝ$_2$-gig-bi) and the visual death of the landscape is extended through the image of human death, namely the blood (uš$_2$) in the river (id$_2$-ba). In fact, the intensity of this metaphor can be identified in the inversion of value from life to death. The river, a provider of life, is shown as a symbol of destruction, bringing the extreme opposite of this value to the scene. The destruction is so universal that a symbol that should represent life becomes the manifestation of death. Different versions exist for line 45, which may indicate different lexical results (ma-ra-na$_8$-na$_8$ or ba-ra-na$_8$-na$_8$, as suggested by the ETCLS comp.t), although in terms of the image created, the semantic value remains the same.

Inana's actions caused the death of these people. In assuming this interpretation, the textual ambiguity/variant in l. 45 is not so relevant: 'they have no water to drink' or 'they have to drink the blood of their own people'. The value lies in the destruction reflected in the river, regardless of its direct effect on people's lives. If the river is blood nothing will live, as the new river is no longer the source for life in those lands, but the result of death. Alternatively, it could signify the river bearing the blood of the people it should feed, although this is a more complex interpretation which I do not intend to follow here.

With regard to this text, Hallo (1968) comments, "a mountain (probably Ebih) is the unfortunate target of Inana's wrath. Of the several, somewhat obscure allusions employed here, one (l. 45) is particularly suggestive. Large-scale slaughter involves the problem of disposing of the bodies of the slain, and even in our own days a river is sometimes considered the handiest receptacle for this purpose, with dire results for the health of the survivors. The same idea is expressed elsewhere, more especially in the Sumerian myth of lnana and Sukkaletuda."[106] This suggests an expanded metaphor, which is not so relevant for this study.

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[105] Vide trans. Hallo & Younger 2003 519.
[106] Vide Hallo's 1968 52 commentary for the image of water converted into blood.

Regardless of the reason for the blood in the river, it is the value of the image that is of interest here.[107]

The Euphrates was the source of water and silt, change and continuity in the surrounding arid environment where other natural resources were scarce. It made the fields and orchards fertile but brought destruction or scarcity every time the rivers overflowed beyond the expected limits or every time its level was too low (Adams 1981). The dangers of flooding would always have been present in the collective mind of the farmers, whether due to the river's absence or its excessive power.[108]

The idea of the flood is essentially about the effects of action/motion on a static reality or, in other words, transformation. When a specific aspect is emphasized, the flood is framed within a precise moment, as in the text *Mutin Nunuz Dima: Fashioning Man And Woman* (Cohen 1988), when the cities are destroyed by the same source that normally makes them fertile:

a+102. [uru$_2$] a-du$_{11}$-ga a-gi$_4$-a-za

a+103. Nibru^{ki} a-du$_{11}$-ga a-ta mar-ra-za[109]

a+102. "[In your city], which has been flooded, which has been inundated,[110]

a+103. in your Nippur, which has been flooded, which has been sunken under the waters, (…)"[111]

The city no longer exists since it has been submerged; the image implies death, starvation, misery and chaos. It is not the traditional symbol that is negative, but the context that gives it a negative value.

The destruction of fields and farms would have been a constant danger or, at least, the fear of such events would have been present in the collective memory, together with its crystalized meaning, whose visual representation is clearly framed in UrN A:

22. $^{\lceil}$a-eštub^{112} id$_2$$^{\rceil}$-da de$_2$-a-bi ku$_3$-ĝal$_2$-bi ba-sig$_9$

23. [še gu]-nu a-gar$_3$-re mu$_2$-a-$^{\lceil}$bi$^{\rceil}$ zi kalam-ma ba-su

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[107] L. 94 of LSUr shows exactly this image of bodies in the Euphrates: 94. ^{id2}buranun-na ad$_6$ i$_3$-la$_2$$^!$-a [^{ĝiš}tukul-e saĝ] gaz i$_3$-ak-e. 94. […] "There were bodies floating$^!$ in the Euphrates, [the weapons] had crushed their [heads]".

[108] Cf. the destruction of the landscape in LSUr ll.1-11.

[109] CLAM 222-245, ll. a+102-a+111.

[110] Cf. the scenario presented in UrN A ll. 22-30.

[111] The following lines (ll.a+104-a+109) are repeated for Sippar, Tintir and Isin. Cf. LUr ll. 202-203.

[112] Civil 1997. This translation makes more sense than 'carp flood'.

22. "[The early flood] poured into the [canals], the canal-inspector was silent [(?)];

23. [the barley and the flax] grown in the meadow, the life of the land, was submerged."

This is an image of a wasteland. The meaning of this image, as far as it can be reconstructed, clearly shows the signs of the symbol: something that should have brought fertility instead brought an end to the harvest, since the meadows are submerged (zi kalam-ma ba-su) by the early flood that should have brought abundance (cf. Nanna L ll. 21-23).[113]

These images are recurrent *topoi* in texts usually presented as lamentations (vide Michalowski 1989 1-15), as they mourn for the destruction of a past that no longer exists. The texts focused on the devastation of Ur, as in some of the abovementioned texts, and use the signs associated with the 'flood meaning' to show some of the consequences of the calamity that befell Ur. The tradition and historical background of these texts will not be discussed here, as I am using these sources as a vehicle for the transmission of imagery,[114] although, I acknowledge their value in terms of understanding the narrative. The text LUr "was the first text known to belong to this group (lamentation) and offers a provocative view of the Ur tradition because it appears to have been popular among scribal schools during a period two to three hundred years after the disaster itself".[115] For this reason the images presented there may have had significant crystalized value, as they represent a long and ancient tradition (vide Ferrara 1995).

I have also avoided the debate on the 'universal flood' as a transversal theme in ancient Mesopotamian literature (vide Fleming 2003), since this is a debate on myth and literature, which are not exactly the aims of this thesis. However, it is important to emphasize how the flood conveys the idea of vastness, fluidity and spread, since it contains the same signs of water. (cf. LUr ll. 116-117; vide supra) Therefore it predates any kind of myth or literary tradition, as the idea of the flood was present in the subconscious of the community living under its potential effects.

Representations of landscape coincide in the 'lamentation texts' and one particular semantic image is quite recurrent: the destructive potential of the flood (LUr).

98. ud uru$_2$-gin$_7$ gul-lu-ba ni$_2$-bi ḫa-ma-la$_2$-la$_2$[116]

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[113] Cf. the words of Enlil that is an early flood that brings prosperity in Enlil A ll. 151.
[114] On the tradition of 'lamentation compositions', vide Cohen 1998, Fleming 2003; on Sumerian laments on cities and temples, vide Samet 2014 1-31.
[115] Fleming 2003; on LUr, vide also Samet 2014.
[116] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.Cyl. A, col. viii ll. 26-27 (Edzard 1997 74).

99. na-aĝ₂-bi-še₃ ki-nu₂ ĝi₆-u₃-na-ĝa₂ ki-nu₂ ĝi₆ u₃-na-ĝa₂ lib ba-ra-an-mar

98. "The storm, destructive like a flood, truly brings fear to me.[117]

99. Because of this fate, in my bed, at night-time, in my bed, at night-time, there was no peace for me."

The storm is as destructive as a flood (ud uru₂-gin₇) or, to expand the interpretation, brings the flood. I do not intend to discuss storms, as the references to the concept of the imagery are not very descriptive in terms of the relationship with 'farming world'/'natural world', at least as far as I could determine from my research into a corpus concerning abstract thought based on the agricultural universe. [118] Further research into the theme of the storm in ancient Mesopotamia may identify this kind of symbolic construction, at least with regard to the creation of destructive floods.

To sum up, there is a group of signs within the symbol of the river that give the flood a negative value, basically describing it as a calamity that leaves nothing untouched:

107. a-ma-ru ki al ak-e šu im-ur₃-ur₃-re

108. ud gal-gin₇ ki-a mur mi-ni-ib-ša₄ a-ba-a ba-ra-e₃ (LSUr ll. 107-108)

107. "The flood, a working <u>hoe</u> on the ground, wipes away everything.

108. Like a great storm it roared over the earth; who could escape it?"[119]

It is important to stress the duality of this symbol; it may be negative depending on its effect on the landscape. For example, the river brings sediment that serves as source of renewal and fertilisation for the fields, but if the silt exceeds the proper space and timing, the result is merely debris which only signifies abandonment:

269. id₂ uru₂-ĝa₂-ke₄ saḫar ḫa-ba-niĝin₂ e₂ ka₅-a ḫa-ba-an-du₃

270. šag₄-ba a zal-le ba-ra-mu-un-de₆ mu-un-kud-bi ba-ra-ĝen (LUr)

269. "Earth covered the canal of my city; fox's lairs have been dug there.

270. There is no water transported in its midst, its inspector is gone."[120]

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[117] Cf. LUr 197. ud šu ur₄-ur₄-re kalam i₃-ur₃-ur₃-re/ 198. ud a-ma-ru-gin₇ uru₂ i₃-gul-gul-e/ 199. ud kalam til-til-e uru₂-a me bi₂-ib-ĝar. "The storm's hand reaps across the land. The storm, like a flood, completely destroyed the city. The storm that annihilated countries established silence in the city". Cf. *Lugalbanda in the mountain cave* ll. 326-334 (comp.t. ETCSL c.1.8.2.1; Vanstiphout 2003).

[118] On the image of the storm in the text, vide Fleming 2003 and Black 2002 41-61. Vide also a description of a storm in southern Mesopotamian in Šulgi A ll. 60-69, comp.t.: ETCSL 2.4.2.01.

[119] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.Cyl. A, col. viii ll. 23-25 (Edzard 1997 74).

[120] Cf. Enlil A (ll. 115-23, ETCSL c.4.05.1; Reisman 1970 41-102 and LSUr (ll.49-51, ll.127-130) for the effects of the absence of the flood and the image of crops, fruit and grass that cannot grow.

Thus, a canal that used to bring water and fertility to the lands is no longer a source of richness (cf. LUr ll. 273-274): instead it expresses abandonment, as the canal is no longer the bearer of 'good waters'. Again, it is the movement of the water that conveys the image of destruction, which is reflected in the fields.[121] At the same time, abandonment is shown through the absence of produce and production. If there is no food, there are no people. The landscape of the canal helps the interlocutor to interpret a serious meaning: it is impossible to live there, for where there should be water, there is only dust (id_2 uru_2-$\hat{g}a_2$-ke_4 saḫar ḫa-ba-ni$\hat{g}in_2$). Thus the description of the landscape offers the interlocutor a perception of a fictional reality that has a specific meaning.

A similar example is presented in the text *Enzu Samarmar: Wise* En*, Planner* (CLAM 401-411).

f+106. inim-abzu-a AN dungu an-$še_8$

(…)

f+ 108. i_7-da nu-me-am_3 a-gi_6 mu-un-du_7-du_7

f+ 109. a-uh_2-pu_2 nu-me-a $peš_{10}$ ba-an-gul-la

f+106. "The word (of) the Apsu is the cloud that cries from heaven.

(…)

f+108. Where there had been no river, a flood strikes.

f+109. Where there had been no pond, the riverbank is destroyed."

This negativity is also expressed by absence contrasting with extreme change, since water has the potential to bring death or life through its presence, absence or excessive power.

Another example of abandonment is presented in the LSUr, which clearly describes an image of total abandonment due to drought, with the following consequences:

127. id_2-bi $šag_4$-sug_4-ga i_3-$\hat{g}al_2$ a nu-un-de_2

128. id_2 ^{d}en-ki-ke_4 nam kus_5-ra_2-gin_7 ka-bi-a ba-$uš_2$

129. a-$šag_4$-ga še gu-nu nu-$\hat{g}al_2$ $u\hat{g}_3$-e nu-gu_7-e

130. pu_2-$^{\hat{g}iš}kiri_6$-bi gir_4-gin_7 ba-ḫur-ḫur edin-bi sag_2 ba-ab-di

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[121] Cf. the destructive flood caused by Enlil that destroyed houses and the harvest, *Hoe and Plough* ll. 168-171.

127. "There is emptiness in the water course, no water flows there.

128. Like a canal cursed by Enki, its opening is blocked.

129. There is no grain or flax in the fields, people had no food;

130. the orchards were scorched like an oven, the open country was scattered (cf. trans. Michalowski 1989)."

The consequence of the lack of flooding is that farming is paralysed. This is described in later lines in which the desertification caused by the drying up of the river is made very clear:

144. adab^{ki}-bu e$_2$ id$_2$-de$_3$ la$_2$-a re {ki-bal-še$_3$ ba-ab-dug$_4$} {(1 ms. has instead:) a-e ba-da-ab-be$_6$} (cf. l. 196; l. 291)

145. muš kur-ra-ke$_4$ ki-nu$_2$ ba-ni-ib-ĝar ki-bal-še$_3$ ba-ab-dug$_4$

146. gu-ti-um^{ki} šag$_4$ ba-ni-ib-bal-bal numun ba-ni-ib-i-i

144. "Adab, the settlement that stretches out along the river, {was treated as a rebellious land.} {(1 ms. has instead:) was deprived of water.} (trans. Michalowski 1989)

145. The snake of the mountains made his lair there, it became a rebellious land. (trans. Michalowski 1989)

146. The Gutians bred there, issued their seed. (trans. ETCSL c.2.2.3)"

Common sense would lead anyone to imagine a deserted landscape. As a lamentation or a description of the fall of Sumer and Ur, the LSUr text contains expressive language that conveys a vivid image due to the fact that it is based on traditional signs of meaning. It describes a reality that could be perceived in its entirety; i. e. there is no need of assuming that the interlocutor had survived the destruction of the city in order to understand it.

2.1.5. Water, life and prosperity

Turning our attention to lines 60-63 of DI D$_1$ (vide infra, Chap. 4.1), it can be understood that Inana is expecting prosperity as a result of her union with Dumuzi. The river forms part of a landscape of abundance (ll. 60-63), which implies a green and fertile landscape with flourishing crops.[122] Flooding materializes as the supply of alluvium and water to improve

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[122] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.Cyl. A, col. xiv ll. 19-23 (Edzard 1997 78); cf. *A prayer to Nanna for Rīm-Sîn* (Rīm-Sîn G) ll. 31-33, comp.t. ETCLS c.2.6.9.7. cf. ELA ll. 6-11.

the harvest. Consequently, this draws on another traditional symbol associated with the river: richness (vide supra).

(col. iii) 60. ^{id2}idigna ^{id2}buranun-na <u>a-u₅-ba</u> ḫu-mu-ni-ib-$^{[}$tum₂$^{]}$ (cf. Sefati 1998 311)

61. gu₂-gu₂-ba u₂ ḫu-mu-ta-mu₂-mu₂ a-gar₃ ḫe₂-en-si

62. guru₇-du₆ guru₇-maš kug ga-ša-an^{123} ^{d}nisaba-ke₄ gu₂ ḫu-mu-ni-gur-gur^{124}

63. ga-ša-an-$^{[}$ĝu₁₀$^{]}$ nin-an-ki nin-an-ki-šu₂-a^{125}

60. "May high waters be $^{[}$carried$^{]}$ in the Tigris and Euphrates.

61. May the grasses grow tall on their banks, and may they cover the meadows.^{126}

62. May the holy lady Nisaba pile up the grain in heaps and mounds.

63. [My] lady, queen of heaven and earth, queen above heaven and earth."

The 'high waters' (a-u₅-ba), or flooding, are the same as those which I have argued have dramatic implications (vide supra). However, when the same symbol is framed in a controlled context, the signs that compound it are representative of prosperity and harmony. The flood generates piles of grain and green grasses grow on the marshes (gu₂-gu₂-ba), serving as food for the animals. The symbol of the flood is explained in this expression of prosperity as a wishful prayer, proving that the flooding river is something that makes life spring up. In this sense, interpreting a-u₅-ba as 'high waters', I consider that the flooding rivers would be the *prefacio* for growth. Any interlocutor would understand the implications of the union of the goddess of fertility and the shepherd god, regardless of complex symbologies, literary language or even theology. Ultimately, the image could be crystalized as a portrait of a landscape that would be identified as an image of beauty and harmony.

Obviously, these 'high waters' have a contrasting value to the image created by the flood that destroys the harvest. The duality of the image is not ambiguous, as it is dependent on the same visual sign.^{127} It is the reaction of the landscape that defines whether the symbol is shown as benign or negative, since a harvest that was probably created by an earlier benign flood can be destroyed by another one (*Elum Gusun, Honoured One, Wild Ox*)^{128}:

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^{123} Emesal for 'nin'.
^{124} Cf. Sefafi 1998 306.
^{126} Cf. *CT* 42 4 rev. iii 1-2, apud Ferrara 1995; cf. Išme-Dagan D ll. 24-26 and *Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta* ll. 358-367 (comp.t. ETCSL c.1.6.2).
^{126} Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylB col. xvii ll. 7-11 (Edzard 1997 9).
^{127} On the sign of high water in the Tigris serving for comparison, vide Gudea E3/1.1.7.Cyl. A col. xxviii ll.10-13 (Edzard 1997 87).
^{128} CLAM 271-278.

34. a-gal-gal buru₁₄ su-su lu₂ ta-zu mu-un-zu

35. e-lum a-gal-gal buru₁₄ su-su lu₂ ta-zu mu-un-zu

34. "A great flood, which submerges the <u>harvest</u>, what can one know about you?

35. Honoured one, a great flood, which submerges the harvest, what can one know about you?"[129]

I consider that the harvest that was submerged (su-su)[130] had originally flourished as a result of a benign flood. This apparent contrast is just one example of the potential of traditional symbols used in human expression. Abundance and loss are not unrelated concepts and both are attached to the symbol of the flood.

In the text *Elum Gusun: Honoured One, Wild Ox* (CLAM 272-318), abundance is named directly (he₂) rather than suggested, and comes with the Tigris (i7Idigna) and the Euphrates (i7buranun-na):

c+153. i7<u>Idigna-mah</u> he₂-ma-al-la-sa₅-a[131]

c+154. maš-tab-ba i7<u>buranun-na-ra</u>

c+153. The great <u>Tigris</u>, filled with abundance,

c+154. and its twin, the <u>Euphrates</u>, [132]

These two great rivers are the prime representation of all the signs implied in the abstract concept of the flood, since they are the largest rivers. Given their size, when the flood is controlled, the rivers provide enough water and silt to boost farming and herding.[133] However, because they are so powerful, when they surpass their normal limits a calamity may be expected.

It should be remembered that in one way or another water is extremely valuable in an arid landscape as it has the capacity to transform a wasteland into good land for subsistence farming and even the production of surplus. At the same time, the environment of southern Mesopotamia is good for storing certain kinds of commodities, such as cereals. Richness is therefore enhanced by the storehouses that contain the crops brought by the river's gift.

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[129] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7. Cyl. B col. x ll. 16-23.
[130] Cf. CLAM 319-341 l. f+164
[131] Cf. the promise of abundance from the Tigris to Rīm-Sîn (Rīm-Sîn G ll. 29-35, comp.t. ETCSL c.2.6.9.7).
[132] Cf. CLAM 221-249 ll. c+279-c+280.
[133] For a reference to the silt brought by the river as a metaphor vide *A hymn to Nanše* (Nanše A) ll. 15-16; comp.t. ETCLS c.4.14.1.

Traditionally, the Tigris and the Euphrates would imply life brought to a semi-desert (or desert) landscape. Such a vast expanse of water that produces green grass in the riverine marshes contrasts completely with the arid space that surrounds it. Clearly the lines cited here are not intended to be descriptive, since they are used as an epithet. Nevertheless, this title embraces the symbology of rivers.

Clearly, this value implies dependence and with dependence comes the fear of loss. Thus, any change to the established balance is a constant threat. The first lines in LSUr highlight this point:

25. ^{d}en-ki-ke$_4$ ^{id2}idigna ^{id2}buranun-na aš$_2$ bi$_2$-in-bal-a-ba

26. ^{d}utu ḫar-ra-an kaskal-e nam ba-an-kud-da-a-ba

27. ki-en-gi-ra me-bi ḫa-lam-e-de$_3$ ĝiš-ḫur-bi kur$_2$-ru-de$_3$

25. "After Enki had changed the course of the Tigris and Euphrates,

26. after Utu had cast his curse on paths and roads;

27. the essence of Sumer was lost, its designs were lost (…)"

Ultimately, this change in the great rivers is associated with the fall of Ur and the entire Sumer region. (cf. ss ll.) The balance of the rivers implies prosperity and if this is disturbed, all forms of life suffer. Therefore, control of the rivers also means stability, as reflected in the prayer asking for harmony in the twin river landscape:

498. ^{id2}idigna ^{id2}buranun-na a-bi tum$_3$-de$_3$ an-ne$_2$ nam-kur$_2$-re

499. šeĝ$_x$(IM.A) an-na ki-a še gu-nu an-ne$_2$ nam-kur$_2$-re

500. id$_2$ a-bi-da a-šag$_4$ še-bi-da an-ne$_2$ nam-kur$_2$-re

501. ambar-ambar-re ku$_6$ mušen tum$_3$ an-ne$_2$ < nam-kur$_2$-re >

502. ĝiš-gi gi sumun gi-ḫenbur mu$_2$-mu$_2$-de$_3$ an-ne$_2$ nam-kur$_2$-re [134]

498. "May the Tigris and Euphrates carry water and may An not change it.

499. May rain be in the skies and barley and flax be in the ground and may An not change it.

500. May the canals have water and the fields have grain and may An not change it.

501. May the marshes carry fish and birds and may An not change it.[135]

502. May old reeds and fresh reeds grow in the margins and may An not change it."

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[134] Cf. the abundance brought by Ur-Namma by digging canals (UrN D ll. l.-12, Nippur version).
[135] Ferrara 1995 comments on the relationship between water/fish and the symbolism of inundation.

In short, if the rivers return to their normal course, everything will run smoothly.

Having control over the rivers means having power over the region, as can be seen in ll. 42-44 of LPS:

42. ^{d}iš-bi-er$_3$-ra igi erin$_2$-na-še$_3$ i$_3$-DU.DU

43. bi$_2$-in-dug$_4$-ga-gin$_7$-nam

44. gu$_2$ ^{id2}idigna gu$_2$ ^{id2}buranuna gu$_2$ ^{id2}ab$_2$-gal u$_3$ gu$_2$ ^{id2}me-^{d}en-lil$_2$-la$_2$ ba-an-dab$_5$

42. "Išbi-Erra stood at the head of (?) his men!

43. Just as he said he would be!

44. He captured the banks of the Tigris, Euphrates, Ab-gal and Me-Enlila watercourses."

Literally this means that Nungal has power over life and death, as the symbol includes both. The traditional benign value of the river may be the reason for the epithet e$_2$ id$_2$-lu$_2$-ru-gu$_2$ (river of the ordeal) mentioned in a hymn to the Ekur (temple) in Nippur (Nungal A):[136]

8. e$_2$ id$_2$-lu$_2$-ru-gu$_2$ si sa$_2$ nu-ug$_7$-e erim$_2$-e bar ak

8. "House, river of the ordeal, which does not kill the just, which points out the evil (cf. l. 59)."

In other words, it is the river of harmony;[137] the same river that turns the arid landscape into a productive one. However, this is a very hypothetical suggestion, as I have no evidences to support this argument. I assume that the source for the symbolism used to construct the adjective is the traditional compounding of signs because this text often draws on the abstract meaning of the flood (Nungal A):

31. erim$_2$-ĝal$_2$-la-ni ^{ĝiš}rab$_3$ mi-ni-gen$_6$-ne$_2$ en-nu-uĝ$_3$-ĝa$_2$-ni nu-til-e

32. e$_2$ gal ĝiš-bur$_2$ erim$_2$-še$_3$ nu$_2$-a kalam-e na de$_5$ šum$_2$-mu

33. i-zi ḫu-luḫ-ḫa a-ĝi$_6$ gaba zig$_3$-ga peš$_{10}$ ed$_3$-de$_3$-da

31. "Clamps down on his enemies; her guard never ends. (cf. trans. ETCSL 4.28.1)

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[136] The representation of female deities associated with rivers and floods may suggest a direct relationship with the symbol of fertility, reinforcing the symbolic parallels between female / womb and earth / field (vide Chap. 4.1). For example, Leick 1994 132-133 notes that Bau, the goddess of Lagash, married Ningirsu during a festival which coincided with the high water mark of the Tigris.

[137] Foxvog 2011 59-98 notes the GN i$_7$-mud, Creative River, which could be interpreted as a direct reference to the life-giving potential of the river. It could also be compared with the other name presented by Foxvog, lugal-i$_7$-da 'King of the River' or lugal-id$_5$-mah 'The King is a Great River' and the name lugal-ĝeštin, 'The King is a Grapevine'.

32. The great house is laying a trap for the enemy that gives good advice to the land.

33. A terrible wave, a flood raising (its) chest, overflowing the banks (…)"[138]

Even assuming that this description may have negative connotations, depending on its effects, I tend to read it as a symbol whose purpose is to show a 'scale of power' based on the symbol of the flood. Sjöberg's (1973) interpretation of this hymn suggests the temple as a place for mourning where the evil and the just man are judged. In this sense, the 'mark of the flood' is indeed destructive in terms of divine justice. This interpretation confers a symbolic meaning on the river in the text and therefore I believe that rather than a possible title, the epithet (the river of ordeal) is a sign that belongs to the abstract meaning of the image of the river. An image such as the one presented in l. 33, framed and frozen in a landscape without reference to the effect on any particular subject, is simply an image. Its value must be provided by spontaneous reading; that is to say, the references to the river imagery in this text reflect the traditional meaning of the symbolic representation. The expression 'peš$_{10}$ ed$_2$-de$_3$-da' draws on the sign of the river that brings balance to the landscape and to human life.

I end this chapter by returning to DumDr (ll. 129-132) and the seduction by the two demons using the river landscape as payment (vide Chap. 4.1). Since they could not persuade Gestinanna with these gifts, they tried to bribe an informer by promising the same rewards[139]:

142. id$_2$ a-ba mu-un-na-ba-e-ne šu am$_3$-ma-gid$_2$-de$_3$-«en»

143. a-šag$_4$ še-ba mu-un-na-ba-e-ne šu am$_3$-ma-gid$_2$-de$_3$

142. "They offered him a river of water, and he accepted it.

143. They offered him a field of grain, and he accepted it." [140]

The river landscape is a treasure in the desert. It provides the resources that make life prosperous, heightened by the fact that the surrounding landscape is dead and sterile, and this is the image which traditional thought portrays. No one could refuse such a promise of a prosperous future, except someone with divine power and will, such as Gestinanna (vide supra). Rather than criticising the informer's lack of morality, the interlocutor would

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[138] Cf. LSUr ll. 185-186. Vide chap. 3.1. Also cf. *Man and his god* l. 119 (comp.t.: ETCSL 5.2.4); on this text, vide Klein 2006.

[139] For a commentary on this text, vide Alster 1972.

[140] Cf. the gifts in *Blessings of Kesh*, *CT* 36 col. iii, II. 13, 15, 19, 21, 23 (apud Ferrara 1995); cf. *Enki and the world order* ll. 259-60, comp.t. ETCSL c.1.1.3; cf. Angim ll. 359-62.

recognise Gestinanna's great loyalty to her brother. In this sense, all the signs that compound the positive symbology of the river give meaning to the character of Gestinanna. Not all of these signs are expressed in the text, but they would have existed in the collective mind of the Sumerian interlocutor, as can be seen in the examples presented in this chapter.

2.2. Rome and the shadow of the Tiber

Sauromatae cingunt, fera gens, Bessique Getaeque,
quam non ingenio nomina digna meo!
dum tamen aura tepet, medio defendimur Histro:
ille suis liquidus bella repellit aquis.

(Ov. *Tr.* 3.10.5-8)[141]

2.2.1 The landscape, the water and the river of meaning[142]

Rome was a riverside community from the very beginning[143] and there is no doubt that the River Tiber was the driving force behind farming and commercial life in Rome: towns on navigable rivers enjoy obvious strategic advantages.[144] Commenting on the rivers of Italy, Campbell (1996) states: "Rivers were a common and often destructive part of the Italian landscape. This appears vividly in descriptions of the depredations caused in northern Italy by the river Po swollen by melting snows in the Alps. Colonial settlements were intended to be self-sufficient, and rivers were essential to rural life; they provided a ready water-supply for drinking and domestic needs; they contributed to irrigation; alluvial deposit was an important element in the enrichment of the soil, a process recognized by land surveyors." The rivers had dynamic powers: as vast sources of water they helped to shape their surroundings and the alluvium they deposited made the land more fertile, providing large quantities of soil and creating perfect plains for crops.[145] Concerning the larger water sources "The Tiber River was perhaps Italy's most significant waterway in terms of its role in trade, irrigation, and communication. It runs roughly north to south from Monte Fumaiolo in the Apennine Mountains through the modern provinces of Umbria and Lazio out into the Tyrrhenian Sea near Fiumicino" (Crawford 2014 6). [146]

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[141] "Around me are the Sauromatae, a wild people, the Bessi, and the Getae, names unworthy of my genius. Nevertheless, while the tepid breeze (blows), we are protected by the interposing Hister; with the flowing of his waters he repels wars."

[142] I will not repeat the analysis of symbol construction that was discussed in Chap.2.1.

[143] On the archaeology of the Roman Republic, vide Evans 2013.

[144] Cf. Pl. Plin. *Nat.* 3.54-55 (commentary on the riverside cities).

[145] On this subject, vide Campbell 2013 73 and cf. Strabo 1.3.8 (53), 13.4.7-8 (627), 13.4.15 (630), 15.1.16 (691), 15.2.14 (726), 15.3.6 (729).

[146] On the hydrological cycle and river dynamics, vide Campbell 2012 4-44, 120-127. Vide also the Tiber Valley Project (http://www.bsr.ac.uk/research/archaeology/completed-projects/tiber-valley-project, last viewed: 26/01/2016).

Considering Crawford's words, the Tiber was a main source of water and, in fact, the driving force behind sustenance and the 'patron of life'.[147] It is even described as a father by Virgil (*G.* 4.369):

unde pater Tiberinus et unde Aniena fluenta

"whence the Father Tiber and the flowing Anio come (…)"

Obviously, this quotation is far from being a simplistic analogy, it is possible to extrapolate on the political or theological meaning Virgil is trying to evoke here, although its immediate meaning can easily be interpreted. [148] Describing the Tiber as a father, conveys the idea of a great provider and refers to the source of life, since it supplies Roman agriculture.

As in Mesopotamia (vide supra), water was essential for agricultural production in the Italian Peninsula and would therefore be expected to feature as a key topic in farming instructions. However, it is not such a relevant theme,[149] considering the sample used in this study, despite the fact that a constant supply of water was needed for farming and also for drinking.

Regarding water as an essential commodity and taking the example of Mount Gaurus (Campania), Columella notes that rain water is best for consumption, followed by spring water that comes from the mountains, flowing down over the rocks (Col. 1.5.2). The third choice should be well water, which could be found on hillsides or in valleys, although the last option may have been questionable, since stagnant water encourages bacterial growth. Swamp water was considered the worst choice (Col. 1.5.3)[150] since it could lead to diseases, not only because of the poor quality of the water, but also because of insects, which could cause various kinds of infections (cf. Col. 1.5.6). For the purposes of this study, the data from Columella's commentaries concerns the sign of meaning for water as something that quenches thirst. As fresh rainwater is not so easily available, springs or rivers are the safest sources for man's primary needs. However, Columella's commentaries on the value of water are not as extensive as might be expected, possibly because his work was instructional and

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[147] Vide Goodchild 2007 1-23, 121-179 for a modelling of the productive landscapes of the middle Tiber valley.
[148] On religious rituals on the river, vide Campbell 2012 28 -160.
[149] I not discuss the potential of water as a source of signs of meaning again, since I consider it to be universal and transcultural. Vide previous chapter.
[150] Cf. Col. *Arb.* 10.1, concerning the effects of stagnant water, and also irrigation (see also 10.4).

tended not to focus on peripheral subjects. The fact that water is a valuable resource and part of the dynamics of the landscape, shaping the material space and the atmosphere, is a matter of common sense and for this reason the subject is not discussed extensively,[151] as this was not necessary.

The signs of meaning for water are crucial in the construction of value for the symbol of the river (vide Chap. 2.1.1), particularly since the river landscape frames fertility, for which it is literally the provider. A great river transforms the entire environment and this fact has the potential to create a prototype image within the cultural tradition. In this sense, a simple reference to the river, with little context, is sufficient to generate a very complete and contextualized image for the interlocutor (Verg. *G.* 4.371-373):

et gemina auratus taurino cornua vultu

Eridanus,[152] quo non alius per pinguia culta

in mare purpureum violentior effluit amnis.

"and (that river) with a bull's expression and gilded with two golden horns,

Eridanus, of which no other river flows more violently

through rich farmlands into blackish sea."

This description contains the multiple signs that compound the symbol: the sign for the power and fluidity of the river and the signs that compound the richness it brings to the environment, probably due to the combination of water and alluvium. This would imply common knowledge of the fact that being close enough to the river to benefit from it yet distant enough to be protected from its power would have been considered very valuable.

Columella also comments on the location of farms in terms of water sources, stating that it may not be a good choice to have a villa close to a river, stream or any kind of watercourse, not only due to the danger of flooding, but also because of the mists (Col. 1.5.4; Col. *Arb.* 12.1) and damp that made temperatures more extreme. Moreover, the damp was bad for metal tools and wood due to rusting and rot, which would create difficulties for the farmer. It could also be added that damp affects temperature: the higher the atmospheric humidity, the greater the sensation of coolness or heat, and the harder it is to work the land. However, these kinds of considerations cannot be found in the semantic value of the traditional symbol

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[151] Although it is mentioned by authors such as Pliny the Elder (Plin. *Nat*. 5.118).

[152] The River Po.

as far as I could determine during the course of this research, with reference to the instructional texts. The reason may lie in the need to speculate in order to understand the consequences, which means they would not have been understood spontaneously simply by identifying the abstract image and therefore cannot be associated with the signs of meaning inspired by visual landscapes.

With regard to the river, the value for irrigation is definitely the key characteristic mentioned in Columella's instructions, although no precise symbol is identified and he simply provides direct and factual description. However, if there is any identification of a specific characteristic, the potential for a sign of meaning is also there, since the sign originates from a characteristic identified 'by seeing'. If we can determine the image Columella took as his reference, its signs of meaning can be identified. The authors of the Latin instructions must have had real landscapes in mind for their teachings to have been considered as reliable. In this sense, technical and descriptive information on agriculture which avoids the use of any kind of abstract language can also be a vehicle for the thoughts of the community (Col. 11.3.8):

Locum autem prius eligi conveniet, si permittit agri situs, iuxta villam praecipue pinguem quique adveniente rivo vel, si non sit fluens aqua, fonte puteali possit rigari. sed ut certam perennitatis puteus habeat fidem, tum demum effodiendus est.

"It will be preferable, if the terrain allows, for a site to be chosen near to the villa, especially where the soil is fertile and where there is a stream, or, if there is no flowing water, the possibility of irrigating the land with water from a well. However, the well should have a secure and continuous supply."

This is common-sense information and it can therefore be assumed that it contains the traditional idea of what was essential for good farmland: water. Since landscapes matching this description can be identified, the signs of meaning for the image must be there too. This can be seen more clearly in the following image described by Columella (Col. 11.3.9-10):

melius tamen vere riguis locis, quoniam et nascentis anni clementia excipit prodeuntia semina et sitis aestatis restinguitur fontibus. at ubi loci natura neque manu inlatam neque suae spontis aquam ministrari patitur, nullum quidem aliud auxilium est quam hiemales pluviae.

"However, the spring is better for well-watered places, since the smoothness of the growing year kindly receives the seeds and when the summer thirst (comes) it is quenched

by the springs.[153] But where the nature of the place does not permit a supply of water to be provided by hand or by nature, there is indeed no other aid than the winter rains."

To sum up, the imperative need for water in an agricultural landscape is common sense, which evokes another aspect of the signs of meaning for water: the potential absence of water (dryness). It is dangerous to trust only in nature's benevolence, since a lack of water can lead to great disasters, as the community knew well. Hence, there is meaning in a landscape with no water. For this reason, the absence of water can be considered a sign of meaning drawn from the landscape. Due to the well-known dangers, a natural absence of water had to be avoided, despite the strategies that can be used to obtain drinking water, such as those mentioned by Pliny (Plin. *Nat.* 19.55). This kind of assumption is based on the logical association between a hypothetical landscape composed of all the signs of meaning that make it optimal for human life, and the potential realities in which the signs of meaning are subtracted from the hypothetical image, leaving a visual result that acquires meaning from the preconceived ideas of the interlocutor. For example, the image of a green plain with a small spring contains the signs of meaning for growth, water, fluidity and drink/irrigation. If the spring is subtracted from the image, all the signs constructed from the spring will also disappear and the interlocutor will identify a different semantic imagery. The safest source of water is the one granted by nature and therefore in the collective mind it is essential for water to be easily available, meaning that its visual signs are completely embedded in traditional thought – and a river is the greatest visible source of useful water that can be seen.

There is a tendency for images generated from riverine landscapes that would have served as the basis for traditional symbolism to provide the grounds for abstract signs that could be compounded with conceptual or abstract symbols such as beauty (Col. 10.1.281-286):

Nunc ver egelidum, nunc est mollissimus annus,
Dum Phoebus tener, ac tenera decumbere in herba
Suadet et arguto fugientis gramine fontis
Nec rigidos potare iuvat nec sole tepentis.
"Now comes the tepid spring and also the gentler course (of the year),
when gentle Phoebus invites us to lie on tender grass

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[153] See Col. 10.1.1.143-144, 148-149.

and to drink from springs fleeing through the <u>lively grass,</u>

(water) nor chilled by cold nor warmed by sun!"

Obviously, the idea of beauty here is constructed in a literary language that contains aesthetic discourse based on 'pre-conceptual codes' (vide Chap. 4.2.3). The aim is to transmit an idea of comfort and harmony in the landscape through the element of water.

The construction of semantic value from the image of flowing water, with production/growth as another compounding sign in the greater symbol, is explained by traditional knowledge of the natural world. In combination with a fertile landscape, water enables living things to grow (*tenera herba*). Any community that shares this geography would have spontaneously known about the influence a river has on the general atmosphere. Therefore, images such as the one produced by Columella convey a perfectly understandable state of well-being. There is no mention of beauty as a concrete object, simply an agricultural framework that suggests prosperity (vide Chap. 4.2).

Of course, as previously mentioned, the river landscape, has disadvantages for farms even when there are no associations with flooding (Var. *R.* 1.12.1.6-8):

sin cogare secundum flumen aedificare, curandum ne adversum eam ponas: hieme enim fiet vehementer frigida et aestate non salubris.

"If you are compelled to build on the bank of a river, be careful not to station in front of the river, as it will be extremely cold in winter, and unwholesome in summer" (cf. Col. 1.5.4).

Therefore, in addition to flooding, rivers have advantages and disadvantages that depend on proximity and the settlers' objectives (see Campbell 2012 122-125). Clearly, this is not inherent to the symbols and signs crystalized in traditional and communal abstract thought, although such texts describe reality as people would have experienced it and hence contain signs that can compound the symbol that already existed in the common sense of the community. In this case, these elements give semantic value to a landscape: they offer a visual image that signifies a level of comfort to the interlocutor, depending on his preconceptions of the agricultural landscape.

Like the producers in the Tiber region, the lives of those who inhabit the waterfront are limited by the conditions offered by the river. The notion that winter is the coldest and the summer hottest period comes from empirical knowledge of the microclimate created by the

river. This influences the particular way in which the inhabitants of these areas adapted their habits and how production would have been organized in terms of environmental and atmospheric conditions. The winter damp easily becomes ice, which is harmful to many winter crops, while in summer the crops grow faster, particularly on irrigated farms.

Dependence on water sources has always been associated with the issues of living close to a powerful force of nature. In fact, "Settlers in some communities had been allocated land abutting the river bank, either because the founder had been compelled to do this through shortage of land or because landholders often welcomed the opportunity to be close to a source of water or accepted whatever land sortation brought them. But problems arose over the ownership of alluvial land and the threat of flooding in season, with consequent destruction of property and the diminution of useable land. So, settlers wanted part of a river but also needed protection from it"[154]. This possible duality in traditional thought would not have been dependent on any ambiguous consideration of images of the river, but on human control, which could shape a specific conjugation of signs of meaning.

2.2.2. The river and the language of growth and prosperity

In addition to irrigating the land, watercourses bring sediments and a kind of moisture which enrich the soil. The river is a powerful force in agriculture due to a variety of factors which assist or harm the cultivation of crops[155]. Moreover, despite its overall impact, there was also an awareness that the special conditions afforded by river banks favoured cultivation, including special varieties that were hard to produce in other places, such as poplars (Cato *Agr.* 1.6.3):

sicubi in iis locis ripae aut locus umectus erit, ibi cacumina populorum serito et harundinetum.

"Wheresoever there are rich banks or wet ground, plant in that place poplar cuttings and a reed thicket."

Therefore the river landscape brings richness because it offers the potential for diversity and from this it may be inferred that the idea of prosperity associated with the river bank, due to fertility and water, would be culturally generalised. It should be noted that there was

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[154] Campbell 1996. On the archaeology of rivers and valleys in ancient Roman Italy, vide the Tiber Valley Project and the Sagro Valley Project http://www.sangro.org/, last visited: 23/06/2017)
[155] Vide Chap. 2.1.3; Goodchild 2007 24-77.

a tendency to combine planting trees with other vegetables in order to boost production, especially along riverbanks, probably because irrigation was easier and the land more productive. This is a practice that existed in all Mediterranean and Mesopotamian areas (Lelle & Gold 1994 n.32): the Portuguese countryside, for example, contains several examples, associated either with subsistence agriculture or large farms.

It was generally understood that living next to the river was a good thing, at least when everything ran smoothly.[156] Everyone would have been content, since it required less work to produce results and the resources were guaranteed. In this sense, Columella sums up the value of the river without referring directly to its practicalities, which are understood (Col. 10.1.23-24):

> *Vicini quoque sint amnes, quos incola durus*
> *adtrahat auxilio semper sitientibus hortis* (...)
> "Also, may the rivers flow close (the plot); the hardy farmer may lead it,
> as aid to the always-thirsty gardens (…)"

In this example, when a river flows nearby, water is provided and the work of fertilisation and irrigation is more bearable. By extension, it could be claimed that social harmony is improved, since when people are happier, they are more peaceful. A traditional aura of peace may also be envisaged in river marshes, as if the river brought peace and happiness by making life easier.[157] Moreover, an irrigated landscape brings prosperity, since the availability of resources makes life easier and more pleasant. Pliny, for example, notes the richness of the river Po (Padus) and lists the cities that grew prosperous on its margins.[158] He also explains that the Tiber had more people living close to its banks than any other river in the world (Plin. *Nat.* 3.54-55)[159]. Despite the dangers, living close to rivers makes life

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[156] Cf. when Pliny says that the power of the Tiber was not enough to dissuade rich people from building their villas along its banks (Plin. *Nat.* 3.54; 15.137).

[157] Water can have other type of symbols associated with it, such as the idea of healing. On healing waters, vide Campbell 2012 331-368.

[158] Plin. *Nat.* 3.49: *ab altero eius latere ad Padum amnem Italiae ditissimum omnia nobilibus oppidis nitent, Libarna, Dertona colonia, Iria, Vardacate, Industria, Pollentia, Carrea quod Potentia cognominatur, Foro Fulvi quod Valentinum, Augusta Bagiennorum, Alba Pompeia, Hasta, Aquis Statiellorum.* "On one side of the region, along the Po (Padus), the richest river of Italy, the whole country shines with famous and flourishing towns: Libarna, the colony of Dertona, Iria, Vardacas, Industria, Pollentia, Carrea surnamed Potentia, Forum Fulvi or Valentina, Augusta of the Bagienni, Alba Pompeia, Asta, Acqui Statiellorum" (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 3.54-55).

[159] Campbell 2012 77 has a literary interpretation of this paragraph concerning the value of the river as a cultural and political sign of Rome. On the river as a political symbol, vide Campbell 2012 369-388.

more sustainable (vide supra). Each region that has a river landscape offers pleasing gifts to its inhabitants and abundance, which equates the symbolic value of the river with signs such as 'quantity', 'production', 'growth' and 'variety', together with the signs attached to the symbol for water (Col. 10.1.136-139; vide Chap 2.1.1):

(…) vitreoque Siler qui defluit amni,

quae duri praebent cymosa stirpe Sabelli

et Turni lacus et pomosi Tiburis arva,

Bruttia quae tellus et mater Aricia porri.

"… (Pompeii and Herculaneum) where the vitreous river Siler flows down,

of the strong Sabellians, who display multi-sprouting vegetables;

and also the Turni lake and the Tivoli fields, abounding in fruit,

of Bruttium's soil and 'mother Aricia' of the leek."

The semantics embedded in these landscapes can be spontaneously recognised both by a modern reader and the ancient interlocutor.[160] The image described here implies that the interlocutor understands that a river offers rich perspectives for agricultural activity, as the water sources mentioned in the text are the driving force behind abundance.[161] Pliny *Nat.* 5.118-119 describes the environment that a river could create, explaining the reasons although they would have been obvious, since for signs as 'fresh drinkable liquid', 'irrigation' or 'fertility' would have been generally known.

It is not my intention to discuss whether the ancient inhabitants of Latium enjoyed the river landscape as something pleasant or aesthetic, although the value of the river was certainly an asset to farming and quality of life since it provided a vast source of running water. In fact, Pliny notes that despite the dangers of living close to the river, rich people still built their villas next to it (Plin. *Nat.* 3.54; 15.137).

Concerning the river landscape and its productivity, it should be noted that the silt brought by the river must be identifiable in some way in traditional linguistic expression, since the experience of this particular characteristic of the river would have had great potential to generate signs of meaning. Jones (1999) considers that "The adjective, *niger*, may, with *flaventia*, be part of a pair of transferred epithets, since *flaventia* tends to apply to

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[160] Note the rich riverine landscape of the River Kephisos, cited by Pausanias as the best in Phocis for planting, sowing and grazing (Paus. 10.33.4).

[161] Palladius also gives examples of products that grow better in these conditions (*Opus Agriculturae* 2.14.2).

rivers and *niger* to fertile soil. In this way, the pair may contribute to an identification of river with land."

Although I do not follow Jones' argument, which relates the idea of black soil to Herodotus' description of a silt flood as black (μελάγγαιον, Hdt. 2.12), I would argue that the shape of the river when transporting masses of alluvial mud must have been noticed and crystalized as a traditional image.[162] Moreover, if Jones' assumptions are correct, the visual element of silt transportation may be represented in Virgil's *niger Galaesus* (*G.* 4.125-126):

namque sub Oebaliae memini me turribus arcis,

qua niger umectat <u>*flaventia*</u> <u>*culta*</u> [163] *Galaesus*

"For, I recall that under Spartan fortress-towers,

where the black Galaesus irrigates the <u>golden</u> <u>fields</u>"[164]

However, I should note that I am not certain that this is a representation of traditional signs that can be associated with a feature of the riverine farming context, although the possibility must not be ignored. Regardless of whether it is a reference to silt or not, the fields are fertile, since they are filled with cereal crops (*flaventia culta*) and as Virgil would have known that alluvium enhances the fertility of the land, he might be referring to this characteristic of the Galaesus by calling it *niger*. However, it may also simply be a reference to the darkness of the water due to the depth and geological typology of the riverbanks.

I have not explored complex literary meanings in the river symbol that could lead to philosophical reflection and Lucretius and Seneca have therefore tendentiously been avoided as secondary sources in this research.[165] Ancient philosophy has also been deliberately avoided, although the hermeneutics and semantics of language are important in interpreting literary images[166], which means a passage such as the one above cannot be completely ignored (Ver. *G.* 4.125-126).

Although images such as these in Virgil's verses are potentially metaphorical, the general assumptions regarding the riverine landscape in this thesis are corroborated by the description of the river Borysthenes produced by Pompeius Mela (first century AD), in

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[162] Ver. *G.* 2.203, 2.255 twice describes soil as *niger*.
[163] Varro discusses the origins of *flumen* and *amnis* in *De lingua latina* 5.28. Vide also Campbell 2012 64.
[164] On the reference to black soil in classical literature, vide Jones 1999.
[165] Cf. Sen. *Phaed.* 502-6, 510-14, 518-20; vide Jones 1999 19.
[166] On the lexicon for water and rivers in the Latin language, vide Campbell 2012 64-65.

which he expresses the common notion of the river's potential to ensure social welfare (Mela 2.6.1-6):

Tum Borysthenes gentem sui nominis adluit, inter Scythiae amnes amoenissimus turbidis aliis liquidissimus defluit, placidior quam ceteri potarique pulcherrimus. alit laetissima pabula magnosque pisces (...)[167]

"Then, Borysthenes washes the people that share its name and is the most charming of the Scythian rivers, flowing limpid while the others are muddy. It is more placid than the other rivers and the finest to drink. It feeds the most prosperous pastureland and large fishes (…)"

As already mentioned, richness implies harmony and a variety of produce, which result in a prosperous and secure life.[168] In this sense, the previous quotation could be supplemented by the description of a river landscape presented by Horace (*Ep.* 1.16.8-14):

(...) temperiem laudes. quid si rubicunda benigni
corna vepres et pruna ferant, si quercus et ilex
multa fruge pecus, multa dominum iuvet umbra?
dicas adductum propius frondere Tarentum.
fons etiam rivo dare nomen idoneus, ut nec
frigidior Thraecam nec purior ambiat Hebrus,
infirmo capiti fluit utilis, utilis alvo.

"You would praise the mild climate, if you (could see) how the bushes produce
in abundance the wild berries and plums, or how the oak and ilex
delight my flock with plenty of acorns, and their master with much shade.
You would say Tarentum had been brought here to bloom.
There is also a spring, fit to lend its name to the river,
so that no cooler or purer is Hebrus winding through Thrace,
bringing cures for ill heads and bellies."

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[167] I have ignored what Mela says about navigability in this extract because it is not connected with abstract thought in the farming world.

[168] On the variety of products associated with rivers, vide Campbell 2012 230. The commercial value and potential of the river to transport goods and people have not been considered in this study, nor its geographical boundaries. On these aspects, vide Campbell 2012 160-330. On transportation, vide Adams 2012 227-29.

This image portrays features of the river based on common sense and transformed into linguistic material. The description of Horace's retreat is more than a *locus amoenus*, it is also a common-sense interpretation of a fertile landscape. Evidently this is my personal interpretation but it simply involves identifying meaning in a landscape that manifests something good or pleasant, regardless of the aesthetics this implies in terms of individual criteria or cultural preconceptions. The signs create the value of the landscape and these signs correspond to the assets of the river.

2.2.3. The power of fluidity

Floods are natural elements of motion and are profoundly embedded in traditional culture, i.e. in the collective mind (vide Chap.2.1.2). Livy, for example, mentions that the war against the Veii was delayed because of the damage caused by a flood (Liv. 4.49.2-3):

(…) *ni Veiens bellum religio principum distulisset, quorum agros Tiberis super ripas effusus maxime ruinis villarum vastavit.*

"(…) had the war with Veii not been delayed because of the religious war between their leaders, whose fields were devastated when the Tiber burst its banks, ruining the farm-houses in particular."[169]

The dangers of the Tiber flooding were great and the negative impact they may have had on the whole of Roman society – not only the riverine areas – is hard to measure. The topography of the Tiber and its connection with other rivers made it quite difficult to control when flooding was excessive. Commenting on the topography of the Tiber, Aldrete (2006 54) says "Several major rivers drain into the Tiber and contribute to the total stream flow of the river. The two most significant of these are the Anio and the Nera, which itself collects the water from a number of subsidiary rivers."[170] Regarding this varying amount of water, Aldrete also notes the destruction that floods coming from the Tiber could bring to farms, stressing: "Finally, although they were not located in the city of Rome per se, the farms that lay in the alluvial plain along the length of the Tiber were often damaged by floods, and this

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[169] Cf. Liv. 24.9.6: *Aquae magnae bis eo anno fuerunt Tiberisque agros inundavit cum magna strage tectorum pecorumque et hominum pernicie.* "In that year came two great floods, and the Tiber inundated the fields, with great ruin to buildings and loss of people and cattle" (cf. LSUr ll.185-187).
[170] On the topography of the Tiber floods in Ancient Rome, vide Aldrete 2007 10-90.

fact is stressed in a number of accounts of ancient floods. These farms suffered destruction to buildings, infrastructure, crops, and livestock."[171]

The historicity of the events is not so important for the hypothesis defended in this study, but it should be emphasised that there was a general awareness of the dangers of floods and these issues were present in the collective mind of Roman countrymen. The effects were well known: history just provides a narrative for the factual scene that would have been embedded in the collective mind.

According to Aldrete (2007) "The most common type of farm resource cited as having been destroyed by floods was not crops or buildings, however, but livestock, particularly cattle. No less than five flood narratives by four different authors mention the loss of farm animals as one of the most important effects of these floods." In this sense, I agree with Aldrete when he says that the frequency of this type of record has more to do with the economic value of the cattle (cf. Liv. 24.9.6; 35.21-56), since they represented a greater investment in comparison to crops. However, in terms of traditional thought, the importance of this kind of record lies in the confirmation of the power of a destructive flood and the fact that the Roman people were aware of this.[172] Moreover, I believe that the destruction of the harvest is not mentioned so frequently in these historical accounts because it had less value in terms of material property, although a flood would still have been a tragedy in traditional rustic life.

The signs of meaning attached to the flood image constitute semantic resources for language. In Roman literature the idea of the flood can be found as a metaphor, transposed from natural experience. Columella offers an example of this by using 'the flood' as metaphor of 'volume' (Col. 1.*pr*.30.8-31.1):

nec parens eloquentiae deus ille Maeonius[173] *vastissimis fluminibus facundiae suae posteritatis studia restinxerat.*[174]

"Neither the father of eloquence, the divine Maeonian, with the mighty floods of his (eloquence), had extinguished the zeal of succeeding generations."

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[171] On the relation between historical floods and type of damage, vide Aldrete 2007.
[172] Aldrete (2007) provides some hypothetical results for the impact of floods on the ancient landscape. On the effects of floods in antiquity, vide Aldrete 2007 91-128.
[173] Homer (c. VIII-VII B.C.).
[174] For an example of a flood expressing quantity in Sumerian literature, vide CLAM 195-199, ll.33-38.

Sign: volume / amount

Sign: power by motion
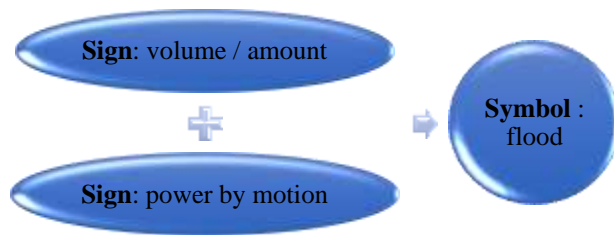
Symbol : flood

Here the flood features as an image of power and shock: just as rhetoric can change ideas, so floods can turn landscapes upside down (cf. Inana B ll. 11-12).[175]

The symbol of the flood offers a multiplicity of signs that can be selected individually, depending on the picture to be conveyed. Flowing water, for example, is good material for a metaphor. Drawing on the power of motion contained in such images, Horace describes the excessive production of verse as *flueret lutulentus* (Hor. *S.* 1.4.9-11):

in hora saepe ducentos,

ut magnum, versus dictabat stans pede in uno;

cum flueret lutulentus, erat quod tollere velles;

"Often in an hour,

"as though a great exploit, he would dictate two hundred verses while standing on one foot.

In his muddy stream there was much that you would like to remove" (trans. Fairclough 1942).

Jones (1999 127) comments on this text, stating: "Horace implies that the speed of composition is what 'muddies' Lucilius' style, just as a torrent may contain large amounts of sediment. As this example shows, motion is an essential aspect of the relationship between poetry and water. (…) Like a river, it moves from beginning to end and a listener or reader is encouraged by the form to follow its path."

In fact, the image would not have needed to be so descriptive, as this meaning was already framed in 'community thought': the author is emphasising the scene for literary purposes. The literary interpretation is much more complex than the reality framed by the image and this has little to do with the semantic construction of the symbol, as it is more dependent on literary hermeneutics than spontaneous traditional images. However, the

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[175] For an image of the destructive power of the flood, cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.2 and Plin. *Nat.* 3.55; Jones 1999 122-123.

language used to construct such a vivid metaphor is based on signs of meaning generated by empirical experience within nature.

Despite its high cultural value and catastrophic consequences for an agricultural community based near a great river, the instructions on agriculture followed here as main sources do not make much use of the language of the flood. It is surprising that in dealing with 'the agricultural world', which was greatly susceptible to this kind of calamity, none of these authors devoted much attention to images such as the following (Liv. 35.21):

Tiberis infestiore quam priore anno impetu illatus urbi duos pontes, aedificia multa, maxime circa Flumentanam portam, evertit. (…) In agris passim inundatis pecua ablata, villarum strages facta est.

"Disturbing the city with greater force than the previous year, the Tiber destroyed two bridges, and many buildings, especially near the Porta Flumentana. (…) All over in the inundated lands, cattle were swept away, and villas were turned into ruins".[176]

This kind of description does not refer to a unique event: it was repeated many times, albeit on smaller scales. The rural community living next to the river would have been aware of flooding and the hazards if this occurred out of season and on a larger than normal scale. The river's image is crucial to the construction of abstract thought based on the farming cosmos and for this reason Columella and Virgil might have been expected to devote more attention to the subject, the former due to the volume of his work and latter given the literary language used in the *Georgica* that would have found great dramatic potential in the image of the flood or its absence. In *Oedipus*, for example, Seneca uses the image of the dry rivers to highlight a widespread problematic situation in the region of Thebes (Sen. *Oed.* 41-43):

deseruit amnes umor atque herbas color

aretque Dirce, tenuis Ismenos fluit

et tinguit inopi nuda uix unda uada.

"Water has deserted the streams, and the spring vegetation of colour.

Dirce is dry, and Ismenus flows meagrely,

scarcely wets the naked channel with its scanty water." (vide Ferri 2003)

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[176] See Plu. *Oth.* 4.5; cf. the flood in LSUr, supra Chap. 2.3.

As Schiesarom (2006 435) notes: "Oedipus himself is aware that the city has undergone a dramatic transformation and is now the very antithesis of a *locus amoenus*, as an *inferna facies*, "hellish vista" (49) dominates even the dwellings of the gods (37-43, 49-51)." This awareness comes from common sense. If the quotation is analysed, it can be understood that the situation in the city is bad because the rivers are dry and the crops cannot grow: there is starvation and despair.[177] The description of the landscape surpasses the literary context as it is being used as an image of meaning. It could be an allegory, as in fact, it is, but the metaphorical potential lies in the amount of signs that a portrait like this can carry. If this text is transposed into a symbolic picture, the meaning remains exactly the same and anyone familiar with rustic life would understand what is implied by the situation.

Sign: absence of water from the river

Symbol: abandonment / desertification
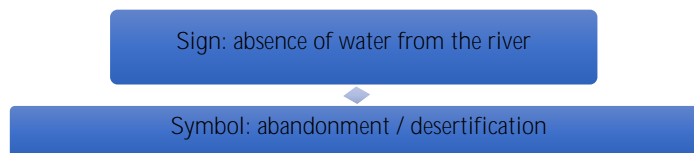
As this sign is based on common sense, it is probably implied in all the instructions: it is not mentioned because there is no need to do so.

Metaphorical language associated with the riverine landscape is all about spontaneity supported by abstract thought, since it reflects preconceptions based on crystalized images. Allegorical motifs and metaphorical language are constructed from vivid images that anyone would associate with a reality. For example, spilling blood (*cruor largus ... inundat*) immediately conveys an idea of a particular flow that is easier to imagine if water is the source of abstract meaning. Thus, a flow of blood described as if it were a stream creates a vivid and dramatic image that intensifies the notion of quantity and speed: conversely, the image would be hard to envisage for an interlocutor who never had seen such a scene. The image has to be based on common sense and therefore it draws on the reality of water in motion (Sen. *Phaed.* 498-500):

non cruor largus pias

inundat aras, fruge nec sparsi sacra

centena nivei colla summittunt boves

"No streams of blood drench

---

[177] On the frequent food crises in the Roman world, vide Garnsey 1988 8-39, 169-181, 271-277.

his pious altars, no hecatombs of snow-white bullocks,

sprinkled with the sacred meal, bend low their necks" (trans. Miller 1938).

The idea of quantity is expressed in this example. The scene uses a 'sign' that is part of the water symbol and comes from the image of the fluidity of a stream, even though the idea Seneca intends to transmit corresponds to the absence of great sacrifices, which means the absence of great quantities of blood.

Regarding the imagery of the flood, according to Jones (1999), Seneca literally describes the physical motion of a flood in his *Naturales Quaestiones*, whilst envisaging a kind of apocalyptic image caused by such power (Sen. *Nat*. 3.27.9):

Flumina vero suapte natura vasta et tempestatibus rapida alveos reliquerunt. (...) quibus torrens etiam in canali suo cursus est, cum superfusi novas sibi fecere ripas ac scissa humo simul excessere alveo?

"Rivers that are really immense by nature and swift-flowing without storms have burst their banks. (…) Besides, their torrent is violent within their own canal: what happens when they cover the earth and make themselves new banks, and have cut through the soil and abandoned the riverbeds?"[178]

Seneca's image clearly contains all the signs of meaning expressed in a flood: 'strength', 'fluidity', 'quantity', 'motion', 'silt'. Pliny also gives a similar description of effects of a flood on a landscape (Plin. *Nat.* 3.119):

Nec alius amnium tam brevi spatio maioris incrementi est. urguetur quippe aquarum mole et in profundum agitur, gravis terrae (...)

"No other river increases its volume so much over such a short space. In fact, the power of the water drives it on and gouges out its bank, bringing damage to the land."

Probably because these experiences were so common, the potential destructive power of rivers, streams, springs, and their canals were considered in Roman law regarding landholding, the management of land, relationships between neighbours, and the resolution of disputes caused by disruptive waters (Campbell 2012 75)[179]. This confirms how common

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[178] On the idea of trauma in a community caused by a destructive flood, vide Aldrete 2007 141-159.
[179] On the law on rivers, vide Campbell 2012 83-117; Bannon 2009.

destructive flooding must have been and therefore how easily it could create a crystalized image in the community's abstract thought.

Culturally, the image is there, but the 'four instructors' make little use of it. The question is therefore why this image is omitted in Cato, Varro, Virgil and Columella's texts. It may be a matter of coincidence or because the authors simply considered it part of common sense and therefore irrelevant. Yet, despite this, there are many references to metaphors constructed from signs of meaning in the riverine landscape in Latin literature.

Returning to the issue of rivers of blood discussed in the previous chapter (2.1.2), in Latin literature, blood in a river may refer to a more cultural theme and a recurrent historical fact: bodies deposited in the Tiber.[180] Catullus clearly describes the idea that corpses can pollute a river when he writes about Achilles' deeds in the Scamander (Catul. 64.357-60):

> *testis erit magnis virtutibus unda Scamandri,*
>
> *quae passim rapido diffunditur Hellesponto,*
>
> *cuius iter caesis angustans corporum acervis*
>
> *alta tepefaciet permixta Rumina caede.*
>
> "Scamander's wave will testify to his excellence
>
> as it rapidly spreads across the Hellespont,
>
> whose marches have been choked by corpses
>
> and its deep currents warmed by slaughter's blood."[181]

Although the riverine landscape is implicit, I am not sure that this kind of image constitutes a sign from the river symbol since although it is descriptive, it is hardly associated with the natural world and the conceptual abstract language constructed from it. However, it could also be argued that the idea of the corruption of a source of life would generate a concrete reaction in the imaginary of an interlocutor familiar with the abstract meaning of the river or, in other words, that he would consider the corruption of the river spontaneously. Nevertheless, I believe that this image has little to do with the farming context. Here Catullus seems to intend to show the number of enemies that Achilles killed. In fact, this is a problem with the symbolic image of the river associated with blood, since it has a powerful literary dimension, dependent on a context that transcends that of traditional thought based on

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[180] Cf. Luc. 7.787-791; vide Ambühl 2016.
[181] Cf. Accius, *epinavsimache* 322-23 (apud Jones 1999); vide Jones' commentary on this passage (1999 93-94).

common sense. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish accurately between the traditional signs of meaning and the literary metaphor if the signs of meaning are not described, as can be seen in the following example (Luc. 7.114-16):

(...) Quantum scelerum quantumque malorum in populos lux ista feret! Quot regna iacebunt! Sanguine Romano quam turbidus ibit Enipeus!

"How much crime and how much suffering this day will bring to people! How many kingdoms will fall! How turbid the Enipeus will flow with Roman blood!"

It is difficult to connect this literary image with abstract ideas based on farming, even though the landscape belongs to the riverine universe (see Jones 1999 98). The idea here is to show the amount of deaths due to war rather than the river landscape as a deadly force – the river helps us to understand the volume and flow. However, it is quite certain that corruption of the 'life cycle' is a recurring aspect within the symbol of blood in the river:
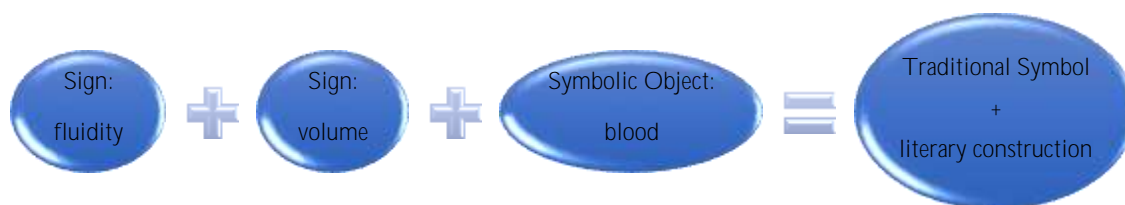
Mass bloodshed can be imagined if it is connected with the image of the river. In other words, the original landscape of the river is a source of signs for a literary construct. Through its landscape, the river gives meaning to the volume of killing that results from war.

In the same sense, when Propertius declines to describe how Rome drove back the German warriors, he is trying to materialize the level of death provoked by war in the riverine landscape (Prop. 3.3.43-46):

aut quibus in campis Mariano proelia signo

stent et Teutonicas Roma refringat opes,

barbarus aut Suebo perfusus sanguine Rhenus

saucia maerenti corpora vectet aqua.

"Care not thou in what fields the battle is arrayed beneath Marius'

standard, and Rome beats back the Teuton's power,

nor where the wild Rhine, steeped with the Swabian's

blood, bears mangled bodies down its sorrowing waves" (trans. Butler 1929).[182]

---

[182] Cf. Ammianus 16.12.57, apud Campbell 2012 375.

Lucan uses a similar image when commenting on the amount of Sula's victims. Again, this vivid description includes the signs of the flood (Luc. 2.209-220):

congesta receipt

omnia Tyrrhenus Sullana cadavera gurges.

(...) iam sanguinis alti

vis sibi fecit iter campumque effusa per omnem

praecipitique ruens Tiberina in flumina rivo

haerentis adivuit aquas; nec iam alveus amnem

nec retinent ripae, redditque cadavera campo.

tandem Tyrrhenas vix eluctatus in undas

sanguine caeruleum torrenti dividit aequor.

"The corpses of Sulla's victims were all piled up and thrown into the Tyrrhenian Sea;

(...) at this very time the river of blood soon made a way for itself

and flooded all the plain; it rushed in violence through the Tiber course

and swelled the impeded current till its bed and

banks could not contain the stream; and the river brought the corpses back to the plain;

finally forced its way with difficulty to the Tyrrhene sea,

where it divided the blue evenly with a wave of blood."

Sign:
power through motion

Symbol:
destruction

Sign:
volume / amount
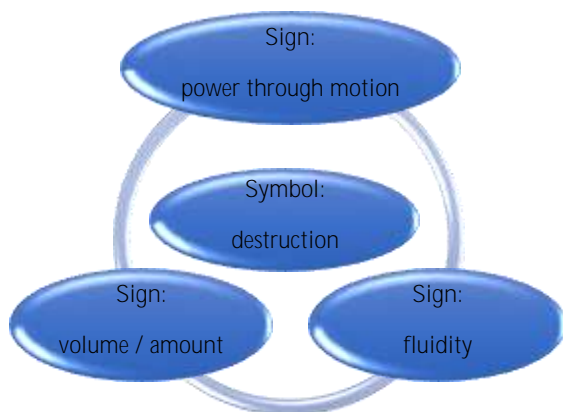
Sign:
fluidity

Here the literary metaphor and the traditional signs converge in a single symbolic scene. The direct and indirect consequences of the negative signs of the flood follow the chain of events already mentioned (vide Chap. 2.1.3). The corruption of the river and the power of the flood are expressed in the same symbol. Ultimately, famine may be the final consequence

(vide Garnsey 1988) - the flooding of the Tiber is explicitly linked to food shortages (*SHA, vita Marci Antonini Philosophi Iuli Capitolini.* 8.4-5)[183]:

sed interpellavit istam felicitatem securitatemque imperatoris prima Tiberis inundatio, quae sub illis gravissima fuit. quae res et multa urbis aedificia vexavit et plurimum animalium interemit et famem gravissimam peperit.

"But a flood of the Tiber interrupted the emperor's happiness and tranquillity, which was the most serious of those times. It shook many buildings in the city and slayed many animals and caused a severe famine."

To sum up, although episodes of famine are apparently recurrent in Roman history, Cato, Varro, Virgil and Columella are silent on this aspect of the river as a potential actor in the landscape. In addition to coincidence and common sense, the reason for this may lie in the very objectives of instructional texts on agriculture. If the purpose was to increase production, there would have been no need to focus on the negative effects of flooding, as this was general knowledge.

In addition, there is a lack of such images and metaphors in the literary language of these texts that would enrich expression, whilst maintaining the clarity of the language. However, this is a matter of expressive and creative choice: the authors did not use this abstract language as a creative source because it was not necessary for their purpose.

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[183] Aldrete 2007 132 mentions the records for various periods of famine associated with the Tiber: 54 B.C., 23 B.C., 22 B.C., A.D. 5, A.D. 69, A.D. 162, and A.D. 371.4. On the register of great floods in Rome, vide Aldrete 2007 241-246.

2.3.1. Conclusion: a dialogic exercise on signs of meaning from the image of the flood

> *Aqua et ignis terrenis dominantur; ex his ortus,*
> *ex his interitus est.*
> (Sen. *Nat*. 3.28.7.5-6)[184]

It is not possible to make direct comparisons between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamian river systems. The data on the environmental history is not very precise and the seasons in the two regions were certainly quite different in terms of rainfall, temperature and geography, crucial data for the assessing the impact of the river on the landscape. However, the general impact of the rivers in the ecosystem had the same general consequences for life; the variation between the two regions has more to do with proportion and timing. Regarding the farming world, both the Mediterranean and the Mesopotamians rivers were dynamic, since they were highly active and mutable. They transported silt deposits; changed their course and often caused floods and erosion (Campbell 2012 9). Following the argument of the two previous chapters 2.1 and 2.2, in general the rivers created similar abstract landscapes in the collective mind since they had the same effects on the surrounding cosmos.

When Columella uses 'the flood' as metaphor for 'volume or quantity'[185], it appears as a symbol of power and shock, similar to the effects created by Inana in Inana B ll. 9-12.[186] The objective meaning is therefore the same and it is only the context of the metaphor which changes. The sign of power is transversal, as it corresponds to the force of a river in motion; the object classified by the sign changes according to the cultural context.

In fact, the following lines from the text *Udam Ki Amus* can be directly compared with Columella's metaphor:

15. e-ne-em3-ma3-ne2 a-ma-ru zi-ga gaba-šu-gar nu-un-tuku (…)
20. umun-e e-ne-em3-ma3-ni a-zi-ga-ma3 KA al-ur3!-ra (CLAM 120-136)

---

[184] "Water and fire rule over earth; they bring about creation, they bring about destruction."
[185] Col. 1.*pr*.30.8-31.1; vide Chap. 2.2.3. For an example of the flood expressing quantity through metaphor in Sumerian literature, vide CLAM 195-199, ll. 33-38.
[186] Chap. 2.1.2; cf. CLAM 123-137, ll. 14-24.

15. "Those words of his, a swelling flood, <u>have no rival</u>.[187] (…)

20. The word of the lord is a swelling flood that sweeps away! ... ."

The literary context or social functions of this text are not clear and consequently its contextual meaning is not clearly understandable to a modern reader. However, the signs of the symbol used in these lines could easily have been used for the same rhetorical purposes as Columella's text (Col. 1.*pr*.30.8-31.1). Although we are unable to understand the true literary meaning of the lines, the signs are quite clear since they come from a crystalized image that depends on the landscape's reaction to the effects of the flood, rather than any cultural context. In this sense, the signs that make up the symbol in the Sumerian text are equal to those that constitute the flood metaphor for Columella, as the image that gives value to them is the same.

Sign: fluidity
Sign: volume
Sign: power
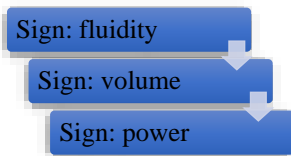
The textual context simply selects which signs to use in order to create a particular semantic image. In fact, this combining of signs is quite recurrent in Sumerian and Roman literature; it is their literary and linguistic nature that differs.[188] For example, the vivid image of moving water associated with blood and corpses used to describe calamity, as in LUr ll. 216-217 (Chap. 2.1.2), has parallels within traditional Latin thought even though it features less in the main Latin sources used for this thesis. The reason lies in the fluidity and volume/amount signs. They are the same invariable signs, so there is a high probability that they will be presented in similar expressive ways. It is the language that changes: the context and language are different, but the signs of meaning are the same and so is the abstract thought that preserves them. The description of the flood and the use of its signs, regardless of how frequently this occurs, seem to reflect the same original image: nature's behaviour. In this sense, the effect on traditional thought is the same.

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[187] Cf. a+36. [a-ma-ru-z]i-ga gaba šu-gar nu-un-t[uku], a+36. "It [the word] is a swelling flood that has no rival". In CLAM 319-332, ll. 1-14, 28-98.
[188] Cf. CLAM 319-332 ll. b+93-b+101; vide Chap. 2.2.

The same chain of motion and effects of the flood examined in Chapter 2.1 can be transposed to the Roman context, whether positive or negative, depending on the combination of signs:

Positive
• Σ Benign signs = symbol

Negative
• Σ adverse signs = symbol
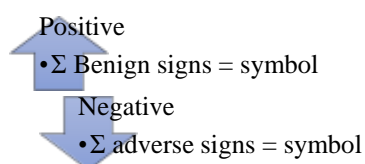
2.3.1.1. The river as a neighbour and the landscape in the language

I was unable to find a perfectly defined symbol associated with the traditional meaning of the image of the river in the ancient Latin instructional texts concerning, for example, the disadvantages of living close to the river, as described by Varro (cf. Chap. 2.2.1; Var. *R*. 1.12.1.6-8). There is also an apparent absence of examples of such facts in Sumerian literature and therefore I did not find the traditional signs that could identify this aspect of the riverine environment in traditional thought in either culture. However, in ancient Sumer there was not so much difference in temperatures between seasons and the levels only rose slightly during the winter, at least as far as it is possible to measure them. However, it is difficult to determine on which level this fact would be framed in traditional symbolic thought and how it would imply a similar tradition to Roman culture.

In Sumerian literature it is possible to find passages on the (usually contaminated) quality of the water,[189] but nothing comparable to Columella's observations on drinkable water. The Sumerian peasant would also have known the three types listed by Columella, although rainwater and streams that come from higher levels would not have been very common in southern Mesopotamia. Again, I have used technical sources such as Columella's text to collect signs of meaning similar to those present in Sumerian literature and therefore the specific details concerning natural elements found in the Latin instructional texts would have had no place in the Sumerian texts used as sources, even though technical texts did exist in Sumerian literature, such as the 'the Farmers Instructions' published by Miguel Civil (1994). However, this text has too little cultural information in comparison to the Latin texts.

Regarding the signs of the flood, the parallels in both literatures are remarkable, but there is a lack of reference to the imagery of the river and the flood in the Latin manuals on

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[189] Cf. LSUr l.9: id$_2$-bi a mun$_4$-na tum$_3$-u$_3$-de$_3$. "Its canals carry brackish water".

farming by Cato, Varro, Virgil and Columella. However, this absence does not mean that the river image was less important or non-existent in the collective mind, as other Latin texts quoted have shown. When the signs of the river were transmitted in Latin literature, the idea of agricultural landscape was present in the literary metaphor or in the historical or geographical accounts, but not so much in the language used in Latin instructional texts.

The effects on riverine life are the same and so it is their abstract image, but the traditional language present in literature is not directly comparable, as the southern Mesopotamian and Roman literary contexts were very different. However, the samples collected for this thesis clearly show, through signs of meaning, a common abstract landscape, the common impact of the river, and therefore common abstract thought reflecting common elements of traditional language, even though the ancient people who constituted the communities of thinkers and speakers are silent.

As the symbols have been identified and described, together with their signs of meaning, in the two previous chapters, I do not intend to compare them directly in this conclusion, since direct comparison involves anachronism and tends to focus on the texts instead of considering the images conveyed in them: if one was a painter, the task would be easier. Instead, signs of meaning were compared (see A.1.1) and the resulting symbols have been discussed individually in the previous chapters.

In short, considering Pliny The Younger's eye-witness description of the results of flooding on a landscape (Plin. *Ep.* 8.17), it is easy to recall the destruction so often presented in the Sumerian lamentations. This scenario (cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.86) is no different from any similar image describing a destructive flood, regardless of whether it involved the Tiber or the Euphrates, and demonstrates what the countryman would have had in mind regarding the language of the flood. However, the instructions do not present the abstract language for this.

It was not possible to obtain a completely comparable spectrum of symbols made up of the signs of the river/flood in both cultures, since the way in which they are expressed in literature is not exactly comparable. However, if the signs that make up the symbols are aligned side by side, a direct correspondence can be found. (vide A.1.1, diagram 1)

In fact, the information presented in the chart is common sense and seems to bring nothing new to the study of human language and cultural thought. However, as it is common sense to us, it would also have been common sense to the Sumerians and Romans. The signs of meaning based on the riverine landscape are the same. The symbols may diverge, depending on context and literary source, but the signs that make up the symbol do not.

I have not developed the study of Sumerian lamentations in detail, but the scenario of cities and regions doomed by destruction, often associated with a flood, is quite similar to the following (Tac. *Hist.* 1.86):

(…) *Sed praecipuus et cum praesenti exitio etiam futuri pavor subita inundatione Tiberis, qui immenso auctu proruto ponte sublicio ac strage obstantis molis refusus, non modo iacentia et plana urbis loca, sed secura eius modi casuum implevit: (...). Fames in vulgus inopia quaestus et penuria alimentorum. Corrupta stagnantibus aquis insularum fundamenta, dein remeante flumine dilapsa.*

"But particularly relating to present and future destruction, fear was caused by a sudden flood of the Tiber, which demolished the wooden bridge by increasing to immense proportions and was turned back by the ruins that dammed the stream. It not only flooded the flat parts of the city, but also parts usually free of such calamities. (...). The common people starved due to lack of labour and insufficient supplies. The insula foundations were undermined by the stagnant waters and then collapsed when the river turned back."

Is this image really incompatible with the floods described in the LUr? The semantic representation of both images is the same; the difference lies in the language and the literature which describes it. If the abstract meaning is the same, so is the knowledge of the communities who experienced it.

It is hard, not to say impossible, to reconstruct an ancient landscape simply through images from literature. For example, we know that plants may have grown in the marshes of the River Euphrates (vide Gadotti 2014 39-40, GEN ll. 27-29) but we cannot identify a proper, generalised landscape common to all the settlers in a riverine area and similar to a scenario in the Italian Peninsula. However, we know that cultivated landscapes existed and we know both cultural communities survived on farming and grazing thanks to the river water and alluvium. We know this because the ancient silent people left the signs of meaning in their landscape embedded in their languages (vide 3.1 and 3.2). Abundance and scarcity had the same main source: the interaction between the river and the landscape. In other words, in a very profound way, the experience of the river that generates signs of meaning is similar and for this reason the signs of meaning are the same.

III. Meaning in agricultural landscapes

3.1. The semantics of herding and farming: symbiosis and the landscape of signs

> *et dubitant homines serere atque impendere curam?*
> *quid maiora sequar? salices humilesque genistae,*
> *aut illae pecori frondem aut pastoribus umbram*
> *sufficiunt saepemque satis et pabula melli.*
>
> (*Verg. G.* 2.433-436)[190]

Approaching the daily life of Sumerian and Roman farmers and the way in which they thought about it is a highly theoretical exercise. Alster (1978) published samples of Sumerian proverbs which seem to be inspired by daily life.[191] However, some scepticism is necessary, as texts such as these are just a small sample of the ancient textual corpus and should not be uncritically considered sources for ancient wisdom or empirical references which in some way represent life in southern Mesopotamia. Archaeological remains, administrative texts and certain literary texts such as the FI (Civil 1994) or the 'Latin instructions on farming' can shed some light on the practicalities of the farmer's life, although those texts do not provide sufficient evidence to provide an exact idea of the farmer's perspectives on his world and therefore, his behaviour. In this sense, seeking a prosopography on the farmer's life is a somewhat creative, speculative exercise. According to the mechanisms of semiotics, however, abstract language may offer some impressions of the way in which peasants in ancient times could describe their lives by showing the landscape of meaning that surrounded them.

On a microeconomic level, both the inhabitants of Mesopotamia and the inhabitants of *Latium* lived from a combination of (rain-fed and irrigated) cereal crops, sheep and goat herding, and the produce from small orchards and vegetable gardens. In this context, farming and herding are highly connected, with the craft of ploughing serving as a kind of a fusion

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[190] "And men hesitate to sow trees and give their care? / Why pursue greater things? Even willows and humble broom / offer leafage to the cattle or shade to the shepherd, / fences, and nectar for honey."

[191] Cf. proverb collection VII, ll.11-13, ll. 51-53, ll. 96-100 (Alster 1978). Gordon 2017 had previously commented on the relationship between Sumerian proverbs and everyday life, although following a kind of romanticized perspective (apud Veldhuis 2000). On the Sumerian proverb tradition, vide also Frahm 2010 and the Shoyen collection (Alster 2007).

of the two activities; the man working the land with oxen[192] is a kind of a herder.[193] Symbolically speaking, as a shepherd he is the ruler, the protector and the source of sustenance for the animals, which he leads in order to produce crops, as a farmer. [194]

3.1.1. The farmer

In the visual landscape, the farmer is the one who works the soil, digs canals and ditches, takes care of the crops and directly suffers the vicissitudes of nature, reflected in his harvest and his body. In this sense, he is a kind of archetype for the 'great worker'. This assumption is based on texts such as UrN G, in which Ur-namma is represented as a farmer, implying some of the signs of meaning of the agricultural way of life:[195]

Symbol: farmer
Sign: providing (l. 19)
Sign: crops (l .18)
Sign: labour (l.17)
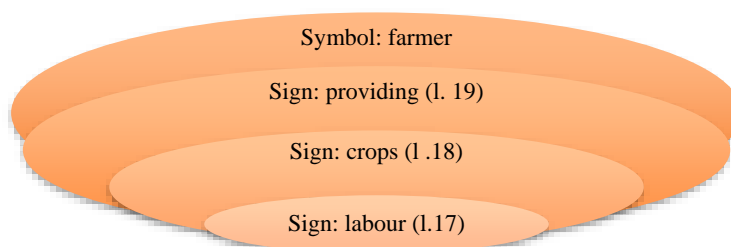
17. Ur-^{d}namma gana$_2$ ^{d}en-lil$_2$-la$_2$-ka a$_2$ ⌜šu ḫa⌝-ba-e-ni-du$_7$

18. ab-sin$_2$ gub-ba-zu im an-na si ⌜ḫe$_2$-em⌝-ma-ni-in-sa$_2$

19. lugal engar zid gana$_2$ daĝal-la eg$_2$ pa$_5$-re ki X […]

17. "Ur-Namma, when you have completed the ⌜procedures⌝ on the fields of Enlil,

18. He indeed directed the rain of heaven right into your drowned furrow.

19. King, trusty farmer,[196] you have […] the embankments and ditches in the widespread fields."

The 'engar' is someone trusty (zid), which matches the abstract concepts required for leadership, such as security or loyalty, that are converted by literature into symbolic language. Symbols, whether complex or not, come from images of a reality that inspires

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[192] On the prehistorical symbolism of the bull in the farming world, vide Watanabe 2002 99-102.
[193] On the lexicon for farming used in economic and administrative texts, vide Maekawa 1990.
[194] cf. Falkowitz 1980, pp.224-5, 134, ll.16-17
[195] For a commentary on this aspect of UrN G, vide Tinney 1999 37.
[196] Cf. Samsuiluna F l. 11 (comp.t. Alster and Walker 1989, ETCSL c.2.8.3.6); Rīm-Sim I ll. 20-30 (E4.2.14.17, RIME 4, pp.295-296); Sîn-kāšid ll. 5-10 (E4.4.1.11, RIME 4, pp.457-458); Sîn-kāšid ll. 4-11 (E4.4.1.115, RIME 4, pp.462-463)

expressive creativity, composed from visual signs of meaning such as 'providing', 'crops' and 'labour' (Šu-Suen C):

    18. u$_3$-mu-un-me ḫe$_2$-me-en u$_3$-[mu]-$^{[}$un$^{]}$-me ḫe$_2$-me-en

    19. kug ^{na4}za-gin$_3$-na u$_3$-mu-un-me ḫe$_2$-me-en

    20. mu-un-gar$_3$ še maḫ tum$_3$-me ḫe$_2$-me-en

    21. igi-ĝa$_2$ lal$_3$-bi-im šag$_4$-ĝa$_2$ ḫi-li-bi-im

    22. ud nam-til$_3$-la ḫe$_2$-en-na-e$_3$ ^{d}šu-^{d}suen […][197]

    18. "You are our lord, you are our lord.

    19. (He of) silver and lapis lazuli, you are our lord.

    20. You are the farmer who brings splendid grain.[198]

    21. He is honey to my eyes; he is happiness to my chest.

    22. May the light of life shine for him, Šu-Suen […]"

Mu-un-gar$_3$ appears to be a title based on, or constructed from, tradition. It proves that the symbolic representation of the farmer was an element in the Mesopotamian cultural matrix since in order to construct a semantic value for the Šu-Suen character, the king is associated with the image of the farmer.[199] This semantic value is not conferred by an existing complex symbol crystalized by literature or mythology. Instead, the meaning of the literary image comes from general, traditional knowledge of the agricultural framework that is composed of potential signs of meaning. However, the signs of meaning that create a symbolic image can always be traced back to a factual reality, past or present. For example, the first lines of the fragmentary text 'Šu-Suen C' describe a woman's hair (ll.1-2). The hair ('siki') is compared to a well-watered lettuce (ḫi-iz^{sar}-am$_3$) and is being arranged for the anticipated meeting between Šu-Suen and Inana. The translation of ḫi-iz as lettuce is not completely reliable.[200] However, if one agrees that the text is referring to a lettuce, it may suggest a value derived from horticultural imagery. However, as previously noted with regard to the lexicon, extracting meaning may involve a considerable amount of guesswork, since a literal interpretation may be incorrect. I have already highlighted this issue due to the

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[197] Cf. DI A ll. 47-53; chap. 4.1.
[198] Vide Sefati 1998 364. Cf. the description of Enlil as a farmer and shepherd of the land, who establishes fields and brings offerings to Enlil A ll.60-64. Cf. DI A l.55.
[199] On the ritualised relationship between the farming world and kingship in the 'The Akiti Festival', vide Scharlach 2005 22.
[200] On the translation and the metaphor, vide Sefati 1998 362, 167, 276-277.

problems that arise in trusting the lexicon to obtain a general meaning (see Chap. 2.1 and 2.2).

Regardless of the meaning of 'ḫi-iz' and its metaphorical value, this text is connected with the farming world. As Sefati (1998 360-4) explains, the female companions of Inana address the king Šu-Suen in the second person, praising him as the farmer who supplies the land with grain (Šu-Suen C ll. 18-20). Despite the potential of the mythical-religious value of Šu-Suen, he is classified as the grain provider, the mu-un-gar$_3$ (farmer, 'engar'), so he is good (lal$_3$-bi-im) for the land, because he brings prosperity.[201] Regardless of the issues involved in fully understanding the text, the basis of its semantics can be grasped because it corresponds to the abstract language of the agricultural cosmos, which can still be understood by relying on common sense derived from visual experience of the farming world.

In attesting the potential of the farmer as a provider (cf. Šu-Suen C l. 20), SF[?] demonstrates that the main requirements are covered:

20. ĝe$_{26}$-e su$_8$-ba-de$_3$ ba-ra-mu-tuku-tuku-un

21. [tug$_2$] gibil-la$_2$-na ba-ra-mi-ni-ga-ga-an

22. [siki gibil]-la$_2$-a-ni sa$_2$ ba-ra-mu-e-en (cf. Sefati 1998, p.338)

23. [ki]-sikil-ĝen me-e mu-un-gar$_3$-e de$_3$-mu-tuku-tuku-un

24. mu-un-gar$_3$ gu gun$_3$-gun$_3$-a-da

25. mu-un-gar$_3$ še gun$_3$-gun$_3$-a-da

20. "The shepherd shall not marry me! (trans. Sefati 1998)

21. He shall not make me carry his [garments] of new wool. (trans. Sefati 1998)

22. His [new wool] will not influence me. (trans. Sefati 1998)

23. Let the farmer marry me, the [young] lady;

24. the farmer who has colourful flax,

25. the farmer who has colourful grain" (…)

Using common sense, it can be deduced from this passage that the farmer also brings contentment and, by analogy, felicity; at least when considering Inana's comments. The

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[201] In a text ascribed to Ur-Namma, the king affirms that he planted gardens along the Tigris and Euphrates and dug canals (*Ur-Namma Code* ll. 22-29; comp.t. Wilcke 2002). (Greco 2015) Vide also the example of Šulgi as the king who brings abundance to Ur (Šulgi O ll. 1-4, comp.t. Klein 1976, ETCSL c. 2.4.2.15) and the example of Rīm-Sîn (Rīm-Sîn E ll. 7-12, 77-83, comp.t. ETCSLc.2.6.9.5). Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7. Cyl. A col. xvi ll. 7-12 (Edzard 1997 79) and *A balbale to Ninurta* (Ninurta F) ll. 22-31 (comp.t. ETCSL 4.27.06).

reason for this contentment lies in the signs of meaning for the image of the farmer suggested by Inana: 'crops', 'producing' and 'variety' (ll. 24-25).

Images based on farming activities contain a great deal of potential symbolic data.[202] For example, sHoe presents the farmer's daily activities and their results, providing clues to the visual landscape of the farmer's work and also the potential symbology of the man that works the earth with his tools and the overall framework in which he is situated:

94.^{ĝiš}al lum-lum-ma ^{ĝiš}al lam-lam-ma

95.^{ĝiš}al še dug3-ga ^{ĝiš}al {$^{⌈}$šabra$^{⌉}$-[…]}

96.^{ĝiš}al u3-šub-ba ^{ĝiš}al saĝ ĝal2-la-am3

97.^{ĝiš}al-am3 a2 nam-ĝuruš-a-kam

98.^{ĝiš}al ^{ĝiš}dusu niĝ2 iri du3-du3-dam

99. e2 zid al-du3-e gana2 zid al-ĝa2-ĝa2

100. gan2-ne2 zid-de3 šu daĝal-la-me-en

(…)

104. u2numun2 ḫul u2numun2 ḫul-e saĝ dub2-dub2-be2

105. ur2-ba mu-un-bur12-re pa-bi mu-un-ze2-e

106. ^{ĝiš}al-e u2ḫirinḫu-ri2-in šu-še3 al-ĝa2-ĝa2

94. "There is fecundity (attached to) the hoe, there is flourishing with the hoe.

95. The hoe is good barley, the hoe [is] {$^{⌈}$an overseer$^{⌉}$}.

96. The hoe is the brick mould, the hoe has made people be.

97. The hoe is the arm of manliness.

98. The hoe and basket are the tools that build towns.

99. It erects the right kind of houses; it establishes the right kind of fields.

100. It extends the right kind of field

(…)

104. Of bad alfalfas, it removes the head of bad alfalfas,

105. it tears out their roots, it tears out their stalks.

106. The hoe also removes the ḫirin weeds. (see FI l. 8)

(…)"

The information presented in these lines is common sense, in terms of its immediate meaning. Yet this common sense is inspired by previously acquired knowledge of agricultural work. The hoe is the force behind productivity and one of the tools that makes a person a farmer, that is to say, a guardian of prosperity, since he is responsible for generating and maintaining it.[203] In this sense, sHoe summarises the signs attached to the image of the farmer. The signs for 'growing crops' (l. 95), 'providing' (l. 94, l. 95, l. 100), 'care' (l.101-102), 'craft' (l. 97, l.98, l.99, l.100, l.101-106) and 'labour' (l. 97, l. 98, l.101-106) are compounds in the construction of symbols such as 'the provider', 'the worker', 'the creator', 'the keeper of harmony' and 'the bringer of prosperity'. The symbols of 'the keeper of harmony' and 'provider' are evoked in a similar composition by a personified plough which argues that the entire world praises him for his work and results (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 21-32)[204]. In this sense, regarding tools, it is relevant to note that the plough frequently features as a source of signs of meaning attached to the image of the farmer, sharing signs of meaning with the hoe, such as the sign for labour. [205] However, despite sharing this framework, the two tools have different purposes[206]and their visual representation also implies different signs of meaning.

As previously argued through the Ur-namma and Enlil examples, the farmer is repeatedly presented as a provider in Sumerian literature, especially in association with divine characters or kingship.[207] The following example reveals the framework for this symbology – the fields that the farmer establishes, which are the basis of sustenance (DI D₁):

42. ᵈutu e₃-ta ᵈutu šu₂-še₃

43. ᵗᵘᵐ⁹ulu₃-taᵗᵘ⁻ᵐᵘ⁻ᵘˡ⁻ˡᵘ⁻ᵗᵃ ᵗᵘᵐ⁹mir-ra-a-še₃ᵗᵘ⁻ᵐᵘ⁻ᵈᵐⁱ⁻ʳᵃ

44. a-ab-ba igi-nim-ta a-ab-ba sig-še₃

45. ᵍⁱˢḫa-lu-ub₂'-ta ᵍⁱˢerin-na-še₃ (source: ta)

46. ki-en-gi ki-uri-a ešgiri₂ šibir šum₂-mu-na-ab(source: ta)[208]

47. saĝ gig₂ dur₂-ru-na-bi nam-sipad-bi ḫe₂-ak-e

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[203] Cf. the image of a landscape where the farmer (mungar) and the hoe ('al') no longer work, in LUr ll. 271-274.
[204] Vide also the image of prosperous production with the hoe and plough in *Išme-Dagan and Enlil's chariot: a tigi to Enlil* (Išme-Dagan I)' ll. 82-87 (comp.t. ETCSL 2.5.4.09).
[205] Vide CLAM 347-367 ll. 51-54.
[206] The plough is discussed in this chapter in terms of its relationship to the farmer and the cattle (vide infra).
[207] Cf. CLAM 319-341 ll. 10-11; cf. the image associated with Išme-Dagan (Išme-Dagan S ll. 11-14, comp.t.: ETCSL 2.5.4.19).
[208] Cf. Rīm-Sîn C ll. 6-7, comp.t. ETCSL c.2.6.9.3.

48. e-ne engar-gin₇ gana₂ ḫe₂-ĝa₂-ĝa₂

49. sipad zid-gin₇ amaš ḫe₂-em-mi-lu-lu

50. gu ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂ še ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂

51. id₂-da a-eštub ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂

52. a-šag₄-ga še gu-nu ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂

42. "From sunrise to sunset,

43. from the south to the north,

44. from the upper sea to the lower sea,

45. from where the *ḫalub* tree is, to where there the cedar tree is,

46. (over all) Sumer and Akkad, grant him the staff and the sceptre!

47. May he practice the shepherd's craft with the black-headed inhabitants,[209] (vide infra)

48. may he, like a farmer, establish agricultural fields,

49. may he like a loyal shepherd make many sheepfolds, (vide infra)

50. may he be the provider of flax, may he be the provider of barley,

51. may he be the provider of carp floods in the rivers,

52. may he be the provider of barley and flax in the fields."

These lines show the agro-pastoral world, a riverine landscape moulded by the work of the 'man with the hoe' who built and maintained the canals that carry fish and water to irrigate the crops. The individual who can offer this is a great provider, as the shepherd and farmer are supposed to be.[210] Without doubt, the farmer is the 'provider', since he establishes fields (gana₂ ḫe₂-ĝa₂-ĝa₂) and canals (l.51) and also creates the state's wealth and life through the landscape. He therefore signifies life and comfort, food and protection against privation, all qualities that should be associated with leaders as, in fact, they frequently are.[211]

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[209] [ᵈMu-ul-li₂]l a-a-ka-nag-ga₂   me-na/ sipa-sag-gi₆-ga   me-na (ll. a+110-a+111, CLAM trans. 158) "Enlil, father of the nation, how long ...? / Shepherd of the black-headed, how long ...?" (CLAM 168 ll. a+110-a+111).

[210] Cf. *Summer and Winter* ll. 61-88; comp.t. ETCSLc.5.3.3.

[211] Vide supra; cf. Nur-Adad E4.2.8.2 (RIME 4 138-142), ll.1-6: ᵈnanna / lugal-a-ni-ir/ ᵈnu-ur₂-ᵈiškur/ nita-kala-ga / engar-uri₅.KI-ma / lugal-larsa.KI-ma. "For the god Nanna, / his lord, / Nür-Adad, / mighty man, / farmer of Ur, / king of Larsa"; cf. *Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta* ll. 358-367 (comp.t. ETCSL c.1.6.2).

The tools of the farmer are sources for signs of meaning because they belong to the same framework; they help to create the symbol of the farmer and in some ways give clues to his social status (*Hoe and Plough* l.57):

52.$^{\hat{g}iš}$al ḫul-bi buru$_3$-da zu$_2$ ḫul-bi bur$_{12}$-ra

53.$^{\hat{g}iš}$al im-ma kiĝ$_2$-ĝa$_2$ la$_2$-a

54.$^{\hat{g}iš}$al a-šag$_4$-ga saĝ-bi im ĝar-ra

55.$^{\hat{g}iš}$al u$_3$ $^{\hat{g}iš}$u$_3$-šub-ba im-ma ud zal-la lu$_2$-ulu$_3$ nu-luḫ-ḫa

52. "Hoe, digging evilly, tearing evilly (the soil) with your teeth;

53. Hoe, carrying the work in the mud;

54. Hoe, putting its head in the mud of the fields,

55. Hoe, spending the days with the brick-moulds in mud with nobody cleaning you. (cf. ETCSL trans.)"

(…)

57.ĝiš šu ukur$_3$-ra-ba šu nam-barag-ga-ka nu-tum$_2$-ma

58.šu arad lu$_2$-ka saĝ me-te-aš bi$_2$-ib-ĝal$_2$

57. "Wood of those who are poor, not suitable for the hands of authorities;

58. the hand of the servant is the only adornment for your head."

There is evidence here of one aspect of the social condition of the farmer: the low status of the man who uses the tool (l. 58, 'al'). Of course, this kind of assumption cannot be confirmed by any material proof of the reality in ancient Sumer, but it suggests the heavy labour of the man that works in the field to get food and water, regardless of his social status. Labouring in the fields is hard, dirty work and therefore is not expected to be done by those of a higher status (l. 57, cf. *Summer and Winter* ll. 112-120, ETCSL c.5.3.3).[212] The reason for this is simple: they could afford to have someone else do the hard, muddy work for them. Although it is probably associated with low social status, the value of the work is easily recognizable as it is constructed from signs of meaning based on observation that considers the results of the labour. In short, it is obvious that farming is hard work, but it produces harvests.

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[212] I do not intend to consider ll.117-121, where the hoe seems to praise its status. Due to the persofication of the plought and the hoe, these texts tend to be too allegorical and ambiguous to allow for any prosopography.

The activities of the man who works with the hoe include preparing the soil (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 82-83), weeding (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 84-86), digging and filling the canals (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 67-81) and probably cutting trenches for ploughing (ll. 87-90): according to the text, the hoe works eight months of the year and the plough four months (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 104-108).[213] The message is obvious: the farmer never rests, and when he is not using the hoe he is working with the plough, and essentially farming is non-stop activity. The sHoe and *Hoe and Plough* texts are 'songs of praise' that tend to be descriptive in order to make the qualities very clear and the argument of the text objective. The tradition of these texts is not discussed here, nor their potential association with proverbs or rhetorical collections and didactic functions.[214] Nevertheless, it is important to note that they may also be references to factual realities, as the scenario they describe is the same as the one the ancient rustic Sumerian would have faced and, in this sense, they evoke an empirical image.[215] In other words, through the hoe literature represents the farmer as a labourer who provides essential commodities. Since the same signs of meaning that serve for the literary construction come from a practical reality, this may have been in the mind of the Sumerian countryman. I would not argue that these texts are allegories of the factual reality in ancient Sumer or that the typical farmer would have done all these tasks, opting simply to identify the signs of meaning from the agricultural landscape. I would, however, claim that these signs would at least reflect traditional assumptions associated with farming.

The texts present the idea of farmer as a driving force in society, expressed by the task of hoeing.[216] In fact, the actual hoe says that he was the tool used by the god Enlil to create man (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 1-17).[217] In short, the farmer is the key to prosperity and therefore if his work is done properly, society survives and prospers, even after a period of chaos (cf. *Hoe and Plough* ll. 151-158; ll. 165-173):

172. ^{d}en-lil$_2$-le šu nu-me-en-dag

173. ^{ĝiš}al zu$_2$ dili bar-rim$_4$-še$_3$ ba-an-šum$_2$

174. me-en-de$_3$ en-te-en buru$_{14}$-gin$_7$ mu-e-la$_2$

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[213] Vide the pre-Sargonic example of the agricultural cycle/calendar in LaPlaca, Powell 1990; on this subject vide also Hruska 1990.

[214] For a study of Sumerian collections of rhetoric, vide Falkowitz 1980.

[215] For an example of prosopography in farming activity, vide *Letter from a governor and temple administrator to a king* ll. 109-112 (version A, from Nibru, comp.t.: Ali 1964; ETCSLc.3.3.05) which explains the need to use hoes (al) because there are not enough teams of oxen.

[216] On the tasks, vide also *Hoe and Plough* ll. 8-17, ll. 142-150.

[217] Cf. *Summer and Winter* ll. 1-11, ETCSL c.5.3.3.

172. "Enlil did not abandon us. (cf. ETCSL trans.)

173. The single-toothed hoe was struck against the dry soil. (cf. ETCSL trans.)

174. You carry the winter with the harvest for us."

Through the hoe, the farmer represents the return of harmony. When the hoe (l.173) hits the soil again, there is hope of another harvest. [218]

FI[219] will not be analysed here as it has been studied in detail by M. Civil (1994) and it would be quite a challenge to add something new to such extensive research. However, it is important to note that the instructive value of FI is in some ways reminiscent of the Latin instructional texts and I therefore agree with Civil (1994, p. XV) when he says: "In a terse style more similar to Cato's *de Agri Cultura* than to any other ancient agronomic work, FI describes, in chronological order, the proper way to cultivate cereal crops, specifically barley, from the flood season in April: May, through tilling and sowing, until the end of the harvest the following Spring."[220] Hence the text is not so rich in symbolic language, but is constructed from objective language that would reflect empirical practices.

The political context of FI and its possible intentions will not be examined here, since the construction of traditional symbols, which is the focus of this thesis, are a separate matter[221], despite the fact that the political context would have played a role in the hermeneutics of the text at some level. The focus here is on the compounding of signs that crystallise the framework of the symbol of the famer. In this sense, what matters for the identification of signs of meaning in a text is the description of the activity per se. In fact, this text was examined as a kind of reinforcement of the symbolic data referred to in sHoe and the *Hoe and Plough*. For example, in the following lines there is a parallel with the frustration of the hoe regarding the maintenance of the canal, irrigation procedures, the amount of labour and other issues that should be taken into account in farming, since there are clear references to these tasks (cf. FI ll. 41-90):

1. ud-ul-ur$_{11}$-ru dumu-ni na mu-un-de$_5$-ga-am$_3$

2. a-šag$_4$ dib-be$_2$-da-zu-ne

3. eg$_2$ pa$_5$ du$_6$ du$_8$-u$_3$-de$_3$ igi kar$_2$-kar$_2$-ab

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[218] On the process of harvesting in FI, vide ll. 74-80.
[219] Comp.t: Civil 1994; ETCSLc.5.6.3
[220] On cultivation methods in Ur III, vide Maekawa, 1990.
[221] For a study on the chronology of the text and its versions, vide Civil 1994.

4. a-šag$_4$ a de$_2$-a-zu-ne a-bi šag$_4$-ba nu-il$_2$

5. ud a-ta im-mu-e-a-ed$_3$-de$_3$-a

6. a-šag$_4$ ki duru$_5$-bi en-nu-uĝ$_3$ ak-ab ki-še-er a-ra-ab-tuku

7. gud suḫub$_2$ ĝiri$_3$ na-ra-ab-zukum-e (cf. Col. 11.2.7-8)

1. ud-ul-uru (Old man cultivator) collected advice for his son:[222]

2. "When you walk along the field,

3. inspect the embankments, the canals and mounds that have to be opened.

4. When you pour the water into the field, this water (should) not rise to the middle of it.

5. When the water is drained from it,

6. watch the wet area; for it should be fenced.

7. Do not let cattle tread there. (…)"[223]

The farmer guards the irrigation system and does preparation and maintenance work. Farming is not only about growing crops, but has to do with all the resources that come from the countryside and the knowledge of nature implied in agriculture. [224]

As the farming symbol is also about providing, when the god Dumuzi appears to be shown as capable of providing agricultural produce and is named as the one 'who hoes not' (DI A ll. 53), he represents an idealization of the agricultural cosmos – all the abundance from the fields, without experiencing the vicissitudes of farming:

51. i$_3$-ge$_4$-en mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam

52. mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-gu$_{10}$ im-mi-in-du$_{11}$-ga-am$_3$ (cf. comp.t. Sefati 1998 118-27.)

53. al nu-ak-am$_3$ guru$_7$ dub-dub-ba-am$_3$

54. še ga$_2$-nun-e sa$_2$ du$_{11}$-du$_{11}$[225]-ga-am$_3$

55. mu-un-gar$_3$ še-ni guru$_7$ šar$_2$-ra-kam

56. sipa e-ze$_2$-n[i] siki su$_3$-su$_3$-ga-am$_3$ (cf. Sefati 1998 118-27)

"51. Really, that is the man of my own heart! That is the man of my own heart!

4. a-šag$_4$ a de$_2$-a-zu-ne a-bi šag$_4$-ba nu-il$_2$

5. ud a-ta im-mu-e-a-ed$_3$-de$_3$-a

6. a-šag$_4$ ki duru$_5$-bi en-nu-uĝ$_3$ ak-ab ki-še-er a-ra-ab-tuku

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51. i$_3$-ge$_4$-en mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam

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53. al nu-ak-am$_3$ guru$_7$ dub-dub-ba-am$_3$

[222] On the work of old people in Southern Mesopotamia, vide Wilcke 1998, although there are no significant references in Sumerian texts to physical limitations on labour.

[223] Cf. the preparation of the field in FI ll.8-22 and in *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 119-142 (ETCSL c.5.5.5, Civil 1976).

[224] Cf. Nanše's literary image, checking the fields and maintaining the irrigation ditches (Nanše A ll. 17-19, ETCSL c.4.14.1). cf. *Hoe and Plough* ll. 132-138. Vide also Proverb X published by Falkowitz 1980 240-1, 162 7: engar-igi-gal$_2$-la e$_2$-a he$_2$-mu-e-da-an-ti "May a wise ploughman live with you in (your) household."

[225] 'Sa$_2$-du(g)-dug-am$_3$...' Vide. http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/nepsd-frame.html.

52. The man who speaks to my heart!

53. <u>Who hoes not</u>, (yet) there are <u>piles of stored grain</u>, (vide chap. 4.1)

54. <u>barley</u> is sent regularly to the storehouse;

55. a farmer whose <u>barley</u> lies in <u>numerous piles</u>, (trans. Sefati 1998 125)

56. a <u>shepherd</u> whose sheep are full of <u>wool</u>." (trans. Sefati 1998 125)[226]

Dumuzi is a source of richness, evident in each product he can provide. These lines are not a reference to Dumuzi's qualities as a god, but an identification of a great provider. He is the driving force behind prosperity and this is more easily explained through language based on the materiality of agricultural goods. Above all, he provides everything without effort: through its absence, a sign is being identified, namely 'work', a sign that forms part of the symbol of farmer as someone who has to struggle in order to produce.

3.1.2. Herding and farming: a shared framework

Farming and herding usually appear together in the agricultural landscape. For example, in DI D1 (ll. 42-52, vide infra) the two activities interact, as if the value of each is expressed through the other. The Dumuzi – Enkimdu *disputatio* (SF?) may be seen as a paradigm of this interaction, [227] since the qualities of both actors, representing farming and herding, are described and compared. The first part of the composition (ll. 1-34) seems to convey a dialogue between Utu and Inana[228] and although the first eight lines are quite fragmented, it may be assumed that Utu is trying to convince Inana to marry Dumuzi, the shepherd god, and her answer that seems to express her unwillingness to do so (ll. 7-9). Two values are being considered, that of the farmer and that of the shepherd. Apparently the god Utu tries to persuade Inana to marry Dumuzi by presenting her with the attributes of the shepherd. Dumuzi can produce butter (*i₃*) and milk (*ga*), which are more than simple nourishment as these products are also an optimal base for various dishes and foodstuffs. Therefore, as well as 'being the provider', the shepherd can also bring luxury. My interpretation is that Dumuzi

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[226] Cf. CLAM 193-194, ll. 10-18, ll. 33-38.

[227] On the Sumerian literary *disputatio,* vide Vanstiphout 2014.

[228] 1-9. ^{lu2}ki-sikil tur₃ […] / 2. ki-sikil ^{d}inana amaš […] / 3. ab-sin₂-na gam-gam-e […] / 4. ^{d}inana ⌈ga⌉-e-re-dib-dib […] / 5. ziz₂ ⌈AN?⌉ […] /6. in-nin […] GA […] / 7. [nu]-nus-ĝen nu-me-en ne nu-[me-en] / 8. [X X]-ta mul-ĝen nu-[me-en] / ⌈nitalam⌉ sipad-da nu-me-⌈en⌉-[X]. 1-9. "Maiden, the cattle-pen […]; / maiden Inana, the sheepfold […] / […] bending? In the furrows / Inana, let me walk (by) your (side); / the emmer wheat […] / Young lady, … […] / "I am a woman and [I won't do] that, / I, a star from […], and I will not be! / I shall not be the spouse of a shepherd!" L. 6 is quite reconstructed, and I have followed Sefati's 1998 suggestions in this translation. For a reconstruction of lines 1-6, vide Sefati 1998 336.

is identified as the provider of a variety of exquisite foods, since these products can be fermented and salted so that they can be stored as surplus goods that can be exchanged for other commodities. An image based on a kind of potential abundance is therefore constructed. This value of a certain luxury and richness may be embodied in the šuba stones Dumuzi is said to bring (l. 17). In other words, it is possible to find a relationship between the gifts promised to Inana and the goods from grazing and farming, for Dumuzi brings richness:

10. šeš-a-ni ur-saĝ šul ^{d}utu

11. kug ^{d}inana-[ra] gu$_3$ mu-un-na-de$_2$-e

12. nin$_9$-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫe$_2$-tuku-tuku su$_8$-ba-de$_3$

13. ki-sikil ^{d}inana za-e a-na-aš nu-ub-še-ge-en

14. i$_3$-ni dug$_3$-ga-am$_3$ ga-ni dug$_3$-ga-am$_3$

15. lu$_2$su$_8$-ba niĝ$_2$ šu dug$_4$-ga-ni dadag-ga-am$_3$

16. ^{d}inana ḫe$_2$-tuku-tuku ^{d}du$_5$-mu-zid-[de$_3$]

17. [unu$_2$] la$_2$ šuba la$_2$ za-e a-na-[aš] nu-ub-še-ge-en

17A. [i$_3$]-ni dug$_3$-ga-am$_3$ ga-[ni] [dug$_3$-ga-am$_3$]

17B $^{[lu2]}$su$_8$-ba niĝ$_2$ šu dug$_4$-ga-ni dadag-[ga-am$_3$]

18. i$_3$-ni dug$_3$-ga mu-un-da-gu$_7$-e

19. an-dul$_3$-e lugal-la za-e a-na-aš nu-ub-še-ge-en[229]

10. "Her brother, the vigorous warrior, Utu,

11. directs his words to holy Inana:

12. "my sister, may the shepherd marry you!

13. Maiden Inana, why are you unwilling?

14. His <u>butter</u> is <u>good</u>, his <u>milk</u> is <u>good.</u>

15. The <u>produce from</u> the shepherd's hands is bright.

16. Inana, let Dumuzi marry you.

17. You, who wear jewellery, who wear šuba stones, [why] are you unwilling?

17a. <u>His [butter] is good</u>, [his] <u>milk [is good].</u>

17b. <u>The produce from</u> the [shepherd]'s hands [is] bright.

18. He will eat his good butter with you.

19. you, patron of the king, why are you unwilling?"

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[229] Comp.t. Ni 2431 (SRT 3) + CBS 8320 (SEM 92).

Dumuzi (ll. 35-64) answers Inana's refusal (Sefati 1998 335) by comparing himself to the farmer and initiating an argument about the qualities of both gods. Dumuzi lists the qualities of the farmer, stating that for all the goods Enkimdu presents, the shepherd can offer better and more – or at least that is what Dumuzi claims by boasting about what he can provide. Despite this, the text clearly suggests that both are good candidates as they are both providers.

The semantic value of the signs of meaning that make up the image of the shepherd is crystalized in traditional thought, as are the products provided by him, which also give him a symbolic meaning in terms of the specific features of his activity. The same is true of the signs of meaning that constitute the symbolic construction of the farmer:

40. [engar-e] $\hat{g}a_2$-a-ra engar-e $\hat{g}a_2$-a-ra engar-e a-na mu-un-dirig-ga-am$_3$

41. ^{d}en-ki-im-du lu$_2$ eg$_2$ pa$_5$-ra-ke$_4$

42. $\hat{g}a_2$-a-ra engar-e a-na mu-un-dirig-ga-am$_3$

43. tug$_2$ gig$_2$-ga-ni ḫa-ma-ab-šum$_2$-mu

44. engar-ra u$_8$ gig$_2$-$\hat{g}u_{10}$ $\hat{g}e_{26}$-e ga-mu-na-ši-ib-šum$_2$

45. tug$_2$ babbar$_2$-ra-ni ḫa-ma-ab-šum$_2$-mu

46. engar-ra u$_8$ babbar$_2$-ra-$\hat{g}u_{10}$ ga-mu-na-ši-ib-šum$_2$

47. e-ne kaš sa$\hat{g}$-$\hat{g}a_2$-ni ḫa-ma-an-de$_2$-e

48. engar-ra ga sig$_7$-a-$\hat{g}u_{10}$ ga-mu-na-ši-in-de$_2$

49. e-ne kaš sig$_5$-ni ḫa-ma-an-de$_2$-e

50. engar-ra ga-ki-si-im-[ma$^?$]-[...] ga-mu-na-ši-in-[de$_2$] (…)

40. "The farmer to me, the farmer to me, in what is the [farmer] superior to me?

41. Enkimdu, the man of the dykes and canals –

42. in what is that farmer superior to me?

43. Let him give me his black garment,

44. I will give the farmer my black ewe for it.

45. Let him give me his white garment,

46. I will give the farmer my white ewe for it.

47. Let him pour me his finest beer,

48. I, the farmer, will pour yellow milk for it.

49. Let him pour me his fine beer,

50. I will pour him, the farmer [my] *kisim*-milk for it. (…)"

Dumuzi's ability to generate value can be identified in these lines when he apparently expresses his willingness to exchange goods with Enkimdu.[230] With his 'commercial skills', it can be understood that Dumuzi would be able to provide Inana with his produce and Enkimdu's. However, this assumption is, of course, an extrapolation: it could also be assumed that Dumuzi is only saying that for any product Enkimdu can offer, he can offer something better. It may in some way be an allegory that intentionally relates to and, in some aspects, combines both activities. In fact, farming and herding are complementary: ll. 65-87, describing the meeting between the three gods and the resolution of the *disputatio,* may express the correlation of the two activities, together with the earth, the point of intersection, represented by Inana.[231]
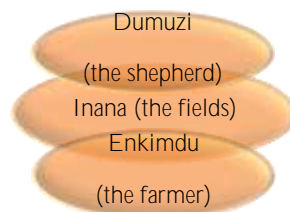
Literature describes what is common sense with regard to a riverine landscape, i.e. that herding and farming are part of the same symbolic plan since they belong to the same natural framework. In the following lines this symbolic symbiosis is clearly suggested:

73. su_8-ba ^{d}dumu-zid-de_3 edin-a-na du_{14} mu-un-di-ni-ib-mu_2-mu_2

74. $\hat{g}a_2$-a za-a-da su_8-ba $\hat{g}a_2$-a za-a-da su_8-ba $\hat{g}a_2$-a za-a-da

75. a-na-aš mu-da-ab-sa_2-e-en

76. udu-zu u_2 $peš_{10}$ ḫe$_2$-em-mi-gu_7

77. išin-$\hat{g}a_2$ udu-zu ḫe$_2$-em-mi-gu_7

[230] SF$^?$ (ll. 55-64): ḫa-ḫa-la sig_5-ni ḫa-ma-ab-$šum_2$-mu / engar-ra $\hat{g}e_{26}$-e ga i_3-ti-ir-da-$\hat{g}u_{10}$ ga-mu-na-ši-ib-$šum_2$ / ninda sig_5-ni ḫa-ma-ab-$šum_2$-mu / engar-ra ga $^[$nunuz-te$^]$-a-$\hat{g}u_{10}$ ga-mu-na-ši-ib-$šum_2$ / gu_2 di_4-di_4-la_2-ni ḫa-ma-ab-$šum_2$-mu / engar-ra ga-ar_3 tur-tur-$\hat{g}u_{10}$ ga-mu-na-ši-ib-šum / u_3-mu-ni-gu_7 u_3-mu-ni-naĝ-$\hat{g}a_2$-ta (i-zu-ba) / i_3 niĝ$_2$ dirig-ga ga-mu-na-ra-ab-šub ([wa-at]-ri-im) / ga niĝ$_2$ dirig-ga ga-mu-na-ra-ab-šub / $\hat{g}a_2$-a-ra engar-e a-na mu-un-dirig-$^[$ga$^]$-[am_3]. "Let him give me his fine 'barley flour', / I will give the farmer my *itirda*-milk for it. / Let him give me his good bread, / I will give the farmer my $^[$nunuz-te$^]$-milk for it. / Let him give me his small beans, / I will give the farmer my small cheeses for them. (…) / After letting him eat and letting him drink, (cf. Sefati 1998, p.341) / I will leave surplus butter for him (cf. Sefati 1998 341), / I will leave surplus milk for him. / In what is the farmer superior to me?" Sefati translates ḫa-ḫa-la as something like pressed beer (l.55). However, I prefer to let it remain ambiguous (cf. Sefati 1998 340; CAD H 41). On beer in ancient Mesopotamia, vide Damerow 2012.
[231] On the interpretation of lines 65-87, vide Sefati 1998.

78. a-šag$_4$ šuba unug^{ki}-ga še ḫa-ba-ni-gu$_7$

79. maš$_2$ sila$_4$-zu ^{id2}surungal-ĝa$_2$ a ḫa-ba-ni-in-naĝ

80. ^{lu2}sipad-me-en nam-nitalam-ĝu$_{10}$-še$_3$

81. engar gu$_5$-li-ĝa$_2$ na-ba-ni-in-kur$_9$-ra

82. engar ^{d}en-ki-im-du gu$_5$-li-ĝa$_2$ engar gu$_5$-li-ĝa$_2$

83. na-ba-ni-in-kur$_9$-ra-am$_3$

84. gig ga-mu-ra-de$_6$ gu$_2$ ga-mu-ra-de$_6$

85. gu$_2$-nida bir-un$_4$-na ga-mu-ra-de$_6$

86. ^{lu2}ki-sikil niĝ$_2$ za-a-ra sig$_9$-ga

87. ki-sikil ^{d}inana še giĝ$_4$ gu$_2$ MUNUS ga-mu-ra-de$_6$ (…)

73. "The shepherd, Dumuzi, from his plain provoked a quarrel with him.

74. 'I'm with you, shepherd, I'm with you, shepherd, I'm with you.

75. Why should I compete (with you)?

76. Let your sheep eat the grass of the riverbank,

77. let your sheep graze on my stalks.

78. Let them eat grain in the šuba (stones) fields of Unug,

79. let your goatlings and lambs drink water from my Surungal canal.

80. I am a shepherd, at my wedding,

81. farmer, you are going to be my companion.

82. Farmer, Enkimdu, as my friend, farmer, as my friend,

83. you are going to become (my friend) indeed.

84. I will carry wheat to you, and I will bring you beans;

85. I will bring you two-row barley from the threshing-floor.

86. Maiden, I will bring you everything you please,

87. maiden Inana, … barley or … beans, I will carry to you."

The two levels are apparently merge in this frame: the two activities generate complementary gifts and reveal how essential they are to human life. Although it is constructed from literary stylistic resources, mythology and perhaps religious or ritual beliefs, the scene evokes an image that someone in touch with rural life could easily envisage. In this sense, the semantic value of the scene would be easy to understand, thanks to previously acquired knowledge preserved by tradition and recreated over and over again

through collective experience. In short, the two activities are complementary and their traditional value can only be fully understood when they are related in a common framework.

In the SF? *disputatio*, victory is not dependent on the superiority of the goods each god can provide. From an economic perspective, both gods could exchange their surplus and provide different commodities. In the end, Dumuzi aims to convince Inana that he should win the contest through rhetoric rather than demonstrating real value in opposition to Enkimdu. In this sense, no activity is seen as being worthier than another.

The symbol of provider can be constructed with signs of meaning from the traditional landscape in which the shepherd is framed and also from the signs associated with the farmer (cf. DI D_1 ll.42-59). In this sense, the *disputatio* between the gods Dumuzi and Enkimdu shows the natural space of the shepherd and the farmer (vide supra), expressing a source of abstract agricultural images. The site is composed of the plain (edin) and the riverbank.[232] In fact, this could be considered similar to the framed landscape presented in the landscapes of DumDr (ll. 1-13), in which the shepherd god is the main character – althought apparently he is outside of the urbam space. Naturally this is the shepherd's domain, since it offers water and fresh grass for the herd. Land next to an irrigation canal is not good for farming, as seasonal changes in the water level make it impossible to grow crops without the risk of losing them to floods. However, it makes the marshes of the river perfect for grazing, as smaller green plants would always be able to grow there due to the damp, fertile soil.

Even when the symbol of the shepherd is considered in isolation – when the shepherd does represent the worker who leads the flocks to distant pastures, far away from the rural world, as a kind of nomad –[233], it seems that in the collective mind, the traditional shepherd is not a symbol isolated from the agricultural cosmos. It tends to result from the connection and sometimes symbiosis of herding with farming, as allegorically expressed in the text DI D_1[234]:

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[232] SF? ll. 65-72: ul am₃-te ul am₃-te gaba peš₁₀-a ul am₃-te / peš₁₀-am₃ sipad-de₃ peš₁₀-am₃ / sipad-de₃ peš₁₀-ᵓam₃ᵓ udu na-an-ga-am₃-ᵓmiᵓ-[ni-in-lu-lu] / sipad peš₁₀-a udu lu-a-ra / ᵞˡᵘ²ᵓsipad-ra engar mu-na-ni-[in-te] / engar ᵈen-ki-im-du ᵓmuᵓ-[na-ni-in-te] / ᵈdumu-zid lugal eg₂ pa₅-re […] / edin-a-na sipad-de₃ [edin]-a-na du₁₄ mu-ᵓunᵓ-[di-ni-ib-mu₂-mu₂]. "He was in joy, he was in joy, at the edge of the riverbank, he was in joy./ Is on the riverbank, the shepherd is on the riverbank, / indeed the shepherd ᵓwasᵓ grazing his sheep on the riverbank. / The shepherd grazing his sheep on the bank; / the farmer [approached] the shepherd there, / the farmer Enkimdu [approached him]. / Dumuzi the king of dyke and canal […]. / From his plain, the shepherd from his plain [provoked a quarrel with him] (cf. ll. 73).
[233] When referring to pastoralism, I am envisaging small livestock ventures, not large-scale activities that would imply a kind of nomadism, such as those studied by Wossink 2009 65-118.
[234] Vide also Kramer 1963 on this text.

46. ki-en-gi ki-uri-a <u>ešgiri$_2$</u> <u>šibir</u> šum$_2$-mu-na-ab (source: ta)

47. saĝ gig$_2$ dur$_2$-ru-na-bi nam-sipad-bi ḫe$_2$-ak-e

48. e-ne engar-gin$_7$ gana$_2$ ḫe$_2$-ĝa$_2$-ĝa$_2$

49. sipad zid-gin$_7$ amaš ḫe$_2$-em-mi-lu-lu

46. "(Over all) Sumer and Akkad, grant him the <u>staff</u> and the <u>sceptre</u>!

47. May he practice the shepherd's craft with the black-headed inhabitants.[235]

48. May he, like a farmer, establish agricultural fields.

49. May he like a loyal shepherd make many sheepfolds, (…)"

Clearly, the signs that make up the symbols of the farmer and the shepherd are presented independently, yet they both appear in the same scene, interact within the same natural space and work to support the community. In forming part of the same framework, their gifts are in some way merged but interdependent. Obviously, this is an assumption based on common sense and the practicalities of both activities in a riverine farming context and it should be remembered that farming and herding were the main subsistence activities in antiquity. The literary representation may have a specific function and may alter the semantic value of complex symbols, but the traditional signs of the shepherd and farmer, based on empirical practices, are crystalized and do not change.

Considering the above, I disagree with Westenholtz (2004) when he says: "The farmer image was even more popular than the shepherd in the earliest personal names, as might be expected in an agrarian society. In fact, it is the pastoral image that seems out of place". I would argue that the shepherd image is not out of place, since herding was a very important economic factor in Sumerian society and not as dependent on the seasons as farming. Hence, people would have had everyday contact with this activity, as they would have had with farming. In other words, they would have been in touch with the signs underlying the symbol that created 'talking names'. Thus, farming and herding share certain signs of meaning in addition to a common landscape.

Westenholtz's partial differentiation between the two activities seems to ignore the potential relationship between activities and their practice. The two activities were certainly complementary in economic and technical terms and despite finding no exact proof within

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[235] Cf. [^{d}Mu-ul-li$_2$]l a-a-ka-nag-ga$_2$ me-na/ sipa-sag-gi$_6$-ga   me-na (ll. a+110-a+111, CLAM 158 trans.) "Enlil, father of the nation, how long ... ?/ Shepherd of the black-headed, how long ... ?" (ll. a+110-a+111, CLAM 168).

literature regarding the connection between the two activities on a physical and empirical level, common sense leads me to believe with some certainty that both were undertaken in a complementary manner. One activity benefitted the other, such as the use of a fallow system, or small herds of cattle to clear the fields of weeds. It may therefore be inaccurate to state that one activity was secondary to the other; economic value is one thing, but social value and empirical practices are another.

In fact, Westenholtz (2004) gives some weight to this by stating "In a later Sumerian literary composition, the *Hymn to Enlil*, the farmer is equated with the shepherd: engar-ma - bi sipa-zi kalam-ma 'its august farmer is the country's reliable shepherd' (Hymn to Enlil [Enlil suraše], Line 60,)." Although Westenholtz is not defending the complementarity of both activities in practical and symbolic terms, they are associated semantically, as Enlil A also shows:

60. engar maḫ-bi sipad zid kalam-ma

61. ud dug$_3$-ga zid-de$_3$-eš tu-ud-da-am$_3$

62. engar gana$_2$ daĝal-la ḫe$_2$-du$_7$-am$_3$

63. ši-im-da-ĝen nidba gal-gal-la-da

60. "Its great farmer is the right shepherd of the Land,

61. who was born loyal on a good day.

62. The farmer, suited for the wide fields,

63. comes with great gifts;"

Although this is not actually a reference to the symbiosis or complementarity of the two symbols, it is possible to identify a kind of a crossover, as if they were two symbolic entities operating individually but appearing in the same scene in order to characterize the god as a leader and provider. The farmer is the great provider (the basis of society) and the shepherd the ruler of society, in symbolic terms.

3.1.3. The shepherd and the universality of a traditional image

Concerning the symbology of the shepherd, Westenholz (2004) says "The shepherd is one of the most important archetypal symbols and metaphors that our ancient forebears bequeathed to future generations of humanity. Encoded in the symbolism of the shepherd is an elaborate metaphysical schema of the way in which relationships, society, politics, ethics

and global consciousness are to be envisioned. If a mythic image, metaphor or symbol is to be properly understood, one must be aware of the message that it is conveying."[236]

It is important to note that the image of the shepherd's activity[237] is analysed here exclusively as a compounding element in the farming world rather than a literary figure disconnected from the agricultural universe, as the 'shepherd character' sometimes seems to be presented in literary language, in the figure of the lonely man who drives his flocks and earns a profit from them.[238]

Whilst agreeing with Westenholz's perspective, the shepherd symbol discussed here does not exactly derive from a reflection of cultural concepts such as those cited by Westenholz: instead, the herdsman studied in this thesis is a symbolic construction based on common sense. I would argue that the traditional meaning of the shepherd symbol lies in the visual description of his activity and the signs of meaning generated by the community's observation of its practice. However, I concur with Westenholz's (2004 282) analytical criteria when he states that "The first step in reaching a clearer understanding is to analyse our own presuppositions about the definition of the shepherd's profession, and then to probe the metaphoric / allegorical / symbolic meanings which may be derived by analogy from the realistic level. Multiple strata of cultural, ethical, theological, and psychological connotations overlie the base root metaphor, and need to be explored and examined carefully."

Regarding Westenholz's statement, since I consider that the basic root of the symbol is, as noted, the literal representation of the activity within the landscape, the immaterial cultural context is therefore secondary to the concept of the symbol composed from traditional signs. Instead, the natural world and culture act on the conceptualization of a complex symbol, i.e. a symbol artificially constructed from a selection of signs derived from a natural image, but associated and compounded according to a cultural perspective. Common sense based on the combined observation of the agricultural world and culture forms a semantic representation that corresponds to a complex symbolic meaning which may have an impact on traditional

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[236] Cf. UrN D ll. 11-18 (Urim version).

[237] Concerning the role of pastoralism in the constructing of Ancient Mesopotamian 'social identity' and history, vide also Porter 2012. Westenholz's 2004 perspectives on shepherd metaphors and the general image in Mesopotamian literature were followed in this thesis.

[238] DI A l. 51. i_3-ge$_4$-en mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam (…) 56. sipa e-ze$_2$-n[i] siki su$_3$-su$_3$-ga-am$_3$, "51. Really, that one is the man of my own chest! That one is the man of my own chest! (…) 56. A shepherd whose sheep are full of wool" (cf. trans. Sefati 1998 125). This example contains the sign for production which forms part of the 'provider symbol'. Cf. CLAM 193-194, ll. 10-18, ll. 33-38.

thought, although this is not only based on simplistic representations of a crystalized image. For example, the most immediate image of meaning originating in the work of the shepherd is the one described by Westenholz (2004 283): "The shepherd must lead his flock along the proper paths so that they do not fall prey to accident or predators. The shepherd walks ahead of his flock. He thus furnishes guidance and discipline." In fact, the image of the shepherd leading his flock spontaneously gives meaning to its physical representation. In other words, the act of leading the flock is a sign commonly used in in the construction of the complex symbol but it is just one sign, not a description of the full traditional image. Regarding Westenholz's description, another sign of meaning has to be considered, namely 'protection'. The recognition of these signs is so spontaneous that they tend not to be distinguished from the compounded symbol. In this sense, I do not follow Westenholz (2004) strictly, since he tends to ignore the mechanics of semiotics by not distinguishing between the signs of meaning and the shepherd symbol, stating: "Let us now look at the nuances of the Mesopotamian version of this metaphor, which is so deceptively familiar to us that we fail to examine its implications. Not only are we confident that we understand this metaphor, but we are also certain that this figurative language was considered traditional in ancient Mesopotamia, where the king was regarded as herdsman of his subjects." I consider that the symbol is only deceptive if we rely on the stereotypes that come from literary sources in our culture and ignore the reality of the shepherd's life and the practicalities implied in the work of the herdsman and also if we ignore how this activity was framed within the landscape and signs of meaning that may be generated from such an image. An ancient Sumerian or Roman peasant would have been familiar with the activity and all its practical aspects and would not have needed a long literary tradition with an engraved symbol to understand or describe its basic features. Essentially, the symbology of the shepherd predates the metaphor; it comes from observation and empirical knowledge and is always based on traditional signs of meaning, even when the metaphor is an ancient one, such as the reference to kings as shepherds. Westenholz (2004), for example, comments some of the older known examples of Sumerian writing: "The first is a clay ovoid tag with an inscription of Uruinimgina, which names an object as ᵈBau ... Uru-inim-gi-na nam-sipa-šè mu-tu "Bau, ... bore Uruinimgina for a shepherdship is its name. (…) Tags such as this were presumably affixed to cult objects, giving their ceremonial names. Since Uruinimgina is the only ruler of Lagash to mention the abstract conception of shepherdship, it is interesting to note that he is also one of the few

who claimed the title of lugal 'king.'[239] In this context, shepherdship is a synonym for kingship, but its figurative significance is not explicitly stated." On the basis of Westenholz's assumptions, it may be considered that it is not possible to completely dissect what such reference would imply in terms of politics and religion. However, it should be assumed that the possible meaning can be determined by considering the conjunction of signs formed from the image of the shepherd's activity.[240] Hence the symbol can be clearly interpreted by knowing the signs for 'leading', 'sustenance', 'custody' and 'protection'.
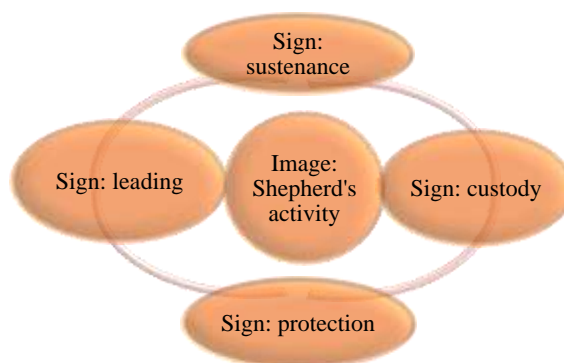
The variety of possible metaphors depends on the choice of signs. For example, the UrN A, in which the word 'shepherd' (sipad) seems to be used as a royal title, describes the fall of the leader,[241] called the 'sipad':

7. [sipad zid] ur-^{d}[namma] [ba]-ra-ab-e₃ sipad zid ba-ra-ab-e₃ (cf. UrN A ll.79-83)

7. "It made the trustworthy shepherd, Ur-[Namma], pass away; it made the trustworthy shepherd pass away."

Nowadays, we know the sign for 'leading the flock' from common sense, as a Sumerian peasant would have done and known.[242] We may assume the analogy between the title 'sipad' and the work of the herder because we know a sign for the image of the shepherd that matches the idea of a king - the man who conducts and leads – and Ur-Namma was the leader of the people.

Although the traditional symbol is prehistoric, it is curious that early names do not reflect the shepherd's ('sipad') image that much, considering Westenholz's (2004) onomastic

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[239] For a study on 'sipad' as a title and on textual references to it, vide Westenholz 2004.
[240] On references to shepherding in the bureaucratic system of the Ur III period, vide Adams 2006.
[241] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.StB, col. ii ll.8-11, col. iii ll. 6-11 (Edzard 1997 31).
[242] Cf. the apparently metaphorical language of a proverb published by Alster 2007 77-78 that compares the activity of the god with the man and his sheep (MS 3350 obv. 4). Cf. SP 3.134.

research on 'sipad'.[243] However, I would argue that this is a matter of lack of data, rather than proof of its absence in ancient titles and names.[244]

Foxvog (2011 59-98) also comments on 'lugal' in the name 'lugal-sipa', from which we can infer the potential of the traditional abstract shepherd image and the use of the symbol of the person who leads and rules to create meaning, subsequently converted into a title (lugal-sipa). However, literature does not provide irrefutable proof of the origins and antiquity of the traditional symbol and its cultural influence in terms of the semantic value of the activity; it can only be supposed that it was always in the abstract thought of the community. I would claim that it was part of common sense and people used it metaphorically or allegorically without even thinking, since shepherding was practiced and empirically observed.

The idea of shepherding or shepherd-craft (nam-sipad) is explained by the image it evokes, whereas the meaning which it generates is crystalized.[245] Obviously, literary tradition played a major role in the latter process. Nevertheless, the literary tradition may just be the consequence of a spontaneous metaphor. For example, the sign for 'custody' as a compounding sign in the shepherd symbol is clearly described and often repeated in Sumerian literature, but it is there because it is intrinsic to the empirical practice of herding:

7. umun ^{d}Mu-ul-lil$_2$-la$_2$ ga nu-du$_9$-du$_9$ ^{dug}šakir-ra i-bi$_2$-in-de$_2$

8. umun-ka-nag-ga$_2$ su$_8$-ba u$_3$-nu-ku en-nu-un-ga$_2$ bi$_2$-in-tuš [246]

7. "Lord Enlil pours into the churn the milk, which has not been churned.

8. The lord kanagga$^?$ places a guardian, a shepherd who never sleeps."[247]

"The shepherd who never sleeps" (su$_8$-ba u$_3$-nu-ku) is a perfect guardian and this value does not necessarily lie in his capacity to defend something, but simply the fact that he guards

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[243] For a more extended debate on the reference to herding in personal names, vide also Westenholz 2004. Cf. the title of Naram-Suen in CA l. 40.

[244] Pomponio 1987 155 says, "In the Fara period onomastikon, the name Lugal- sipa "The-King-Is-The-Shepherd" is unknown, while Lugal-engar-(zi) "The-King- Is-The Faithful-Farmer" does occur" (apud Westenholz 2004).

[245] References such as this can be found in LPS (ll. 7-14, comp.t.: ETCSL 3.1.19), where Enlil is described as the shepherd of the Sumerians and therefore their ruler and protector: 7. ^{d}en-lil$_2$ lugal-ĝu$_{10}$ nam-sipad kalamma KA-KA-ni ba-an-SUM. "Enlil, my lord, has … the shepherdship of the land (...)" cf. *Elum Didara, The Honoured One Who Wanders About* ll. 4-10 (CLAM 175).

[246] *Ame Amasana: The Bull in His Fold* ll. 6-8 (CLAM 153-4).

[247] Cf. *Aabba Hulauha of Enlil: The Raging Sea* ll. a+25-a+36 (CLAM 374-400); *The Bull in His Fold* l.8 (CLAM 153-165); *Utugin Eta (Come out like the Sun)* ll. b+264-268 (CLAM 106-107); *Ame Baraanara: For The Bull On His Dais* ll. c+69-70 (CLAM 323-324).

(en-nu-un-ga2). It is one of the fundamental signs of the symbol of the shepherd. When he fails in his duties, the flocks are in danger. That is also shown in CLAM 186-207 which presents a scene of destruction associated with the fall of the shepherd:

25. lul-la-bi-še a-a-mu lul-la-bi-še3 x [x] x al-nu2

26. kur-gal a-a ^{d}Mu-ul-lil2   lul

27. sipa-[sag-gi6]-ga   lul-

25. "Deceptively, my father deceptively x [x] x lies down.

26. The great mountain, the father Enlil, deceptively (lies down).

27. The shepherd [of the black-headed] deceptively (lies down)."

(…)

30. u3-lul-la ku-ku   lul-

31. umun šu-maḫ me-ri-maḫ   lul-

32. gu4 tur3-ba ti-la   lul-

33. e-ze2[248] amaš-ba ti-la   lul-

30. "(He who sleeps) a false sleep deceptively (lies down). (cf. ll. 40-41)

31. The lord of the great hand, of the great foot, deceptively (lies down). [249]

32. The ox living in its cattle pen deceptively (lies down).

33. The sheep living in its sheepfold deceptively (lies down)."

Obviously, the shepherd is not exactly the cause of destruction here (ll. 10-17): the reference to absence is also a metaphor for the power that could have prevented evil and may be a reminder of the evil that destroyed the shepherd and his flock. (cf. LUr ll.265-274, ll. 411-413.) The absence of the shepherd is a metaphor for the absence of the leader, but the signs that endorse the metaphor come from the traditional image. The context is the rural world, which includes the world of the shepherd i. e. the animals and their pens. The scene depicts the loss of the herd, not only the sheep, but the oxen too (gur4), the animal of the ploughman. This image suggests desolation, because the goods generated by the shepherd and ploughman's labour are no more and from this, starvation and all kinds of hardships can be inferred. In short, the shepherd is crucial to the harmony and balance of human society.

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[248] Emensal for 'udu'.

[249] Vide also *Elum Didara: The Honoured One Who Wanders About* ll. 7-10 (CLAM 175-185) and cf. *Ame Amašana- The Bull in his Fold* ll. b+190, b+198 (CLAM 152-174); LSUr ll. 3-20.

For this reason he should always be watchful in order to protect his flock, otherwise there may be serious consequences.

UrN A clearly presents the theme of destruction associated with 'the shepherd that is no more'.[250]

5. [(X)] ⌈niĝ₂⌉-daĝal-ba iri ⌈ba⌉-an-gul uĝ₃-e ni₂ bi₂-in-te

6. ⌈urim₅⌉ki-ma ḫul-ĝal₂ im-ši-DU sipad zid ba-ra-ab-e₃

7. ⌈sipad zid⌉ur-d⌈namma⌉ ⌈ba⌉-ra-ab-e₃ sipad zid ba-ra-ab-e₃

5. "[(X)] cities were ⌈completely⌉ ⌈destroyed⌉; the people were seized by fear.

6. Evil came to ⌈Urim⌉ and made the trustworthy shepherd withdraw.

7. It made Ur-⌈Namma⌉, the ⌈trustworthy shepherd⌉, withdraw; it made the trustworthy shepherd withdraw." (cf. LSUr ll. 34-37)

In order to introduce the fate of the city, it first refers to the death of the shepherd. With the shepherd's death, the city is abandoned; the world is doomed since there is no one to guide and provide for the people (cf. LUr ll.265-274). The absence of the shepherd means abandonment and emptiness, which recalls one of the traditional signs of meaning in the shepherd symbol. These signs are made clear by analogy with what happens if there is no shepherd (cf. LUr ll. 1-18).

The text *Ame Amašana* emphasises the corruption of the shepherd's functions in order to show the social results of having not a shepherd to serve the people (CLAM 152-174 ll. b+210-b+211):

b+210. u₈ sila₄-[zi-da] kur₂-[re ha]-an-ze₂-[em₃]

b+211. [uz₃ maš₂-zi-da kur₂-re]

b+210. "You hand over the ewe and (its) lamb to the [foreigners].

b+211. [You hand over the goat and (its) kid to the foreigners]." (trans. Cohen 1988 170)

The loss of herds to foreign people may be a metaphor for the Sumerian people who fell to the invaders. However, in terms of this thesis, what matters is the semantic value of the

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[250] Cf. *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the moon* (Version A from Nibru) ll. 1-15, comp.t.: Ali 1964; ETCSLc.3.3.02. cf. LSUr l. 68, ll. 266-268. Vide supra.

symbol of the shepherd: the fact that the lambs 'fall' means that the shepherd, Enlil, is not there.[251]

Regarding the symbolic construction of the leader and protector, it is quite common to find anthropomorphic gods described by the symbology of the farming world. Enlil is one of the most important gods in the Sumerian pantheon,[252] which may justify his association with the image of the shepherd, as he ranks higher than the others:[253]

93. za-e umun-bi bi$_2$-men$_3$ de$_3$-ra-ab-be$_2$ a-ra-zu de$_3$-ra-ab-be$_2$

94. za-e sipa-bi bi$_2$-men$_3$ de$_3$-ra-ab-be$_2$ a-ra-zu [254]

93. "Indeed, you are its lord! May each (god) say a pray to you, may each (god) say (a pray) to you.

94. Indeed, you are its shepherd! May each (god) say a pray to you!"

However, as previously noted, the shepherd god 'par excellence' is Dumuzi, despite the fact that his representation in Sumerian literature in many ways surpasses the simple idea of the 'shepherd king' or 'the leader' and protector of the flock, especially when he appears together with Inana.[255] As the great shepherd, he is the leader whose abundant livestock brings prosperity (DI D$_1$):

47. saĝ gig$_2$ dur$_2$-ru-na-bi nam-sipad-bi ḫe$_2$-ak-e

(…)

49. sipad zid-gin$_7$ amaš ḫe$_2$-em-mi-lu-lu

47. "May he practice the craft of the shepherd with the black-headed inhabitants,[256]

49. may he, like a loyal shepherd, make many sheepfolds."[257]

Essentially, Dumuzi's literary image combines all the signs that make up the shepherd's frame and when the shepherd symbol is invoked, the signs for sustenance, leadership and

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[251] As UrN A ll. 17-21 describes through the weeping of the people for the disappearance of their 'sipad zid', Ur-Namma.

[252] Adam Stone, 'Enlil/Ellil (god)', Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses, Oracc and the UK Higher Education Academy, 2016 [http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/enlil/].

[253] Cf. *Enemani Ilu - His Word is a Wail, a Wail!* ll. B+77-79 (CLAM 195-200).

[254] *Elum Didara - The Honoured One Who Wanders About* (CLAM 152-174, ll. 93-94).

[255] On the literary figure of Dumuzi, vide Alster 1972 and Sefati 1998.

[256] Cf. [^{d}Mu-ul-li$_2$]l a-a-ka-nag-ga$_2$ me-na/ sipa-sag-gi$_6$-ga   me-na (ll. a+110-a+111, CLAM 158 trans.) "Enlil, father of the nation, how long ...?/ Shepherd of the black-headed, how long ... ?" (ll. a+110-a+111, CLAM 168)

[257] The same epithet of the faithful shepherd referring to the leader of men can be found in *mutin nunuz dima - Fashioning man and woman* l. c+291 (CLAM 221-250) and Išme-Dagan S l. 28.

custody are universally implied.

3.1.4. The driver of the plough: a herder working in the fields

The farmer who controls and directs the animals which pulls the plough is in some way a herder, given the practicalities of the activity. However, the ploughman puts animals to work not to pasture and therefore produces a different type of profit to the shepherd, since his animals serve more as tools than produce.

In terms of agricultural productivity, oxen were, without doubt, the main reference for labour in comparison to human efforts.[258] These animals were the great machines of antiquity and, in relation to the signs for the animal symbol and the agricultural cosmos, the notion of such strength working the fields would inevitably generate symbolic constructions based on the 'the puller' of the plough.[259] The ox, driven by man, and the fields under the plough create an intersection of two normally separate levels when complex symbolic constructions are produced.

Symbol of the shepherd	Symbol of the ploughman	Symbol of the farmer
Sign: leading	Sign: leading	Sign: sustenance
Sign: custody	Sign: custody	Sign: producing
Sign: protection	Sign: producing	Sign: work
Sign: sustenance	Sign: work	Sign: craft
Sign: submission by control	Sign: sustenance	Sign: physical strength
	Sign: physical strengh	Sign: crops
	Sign: submission by control	
	Sign: crops	

All kind of tasks in the fields that required brute force would have been facilitated by the use of oxen. In fact, the canals that irrigated and fertilized the land may have been constructed by herdsmen.[260] In this sense, the intersection of the two activities may also be seen in the prosperity brought by canals, as can be seen in UrN D (vide Tinney 1999 34), even though ll. 1-12 suggest the reverse, i.e. the loss of the one who should be ploughing the fields. The announcement of shepherd's death, associated with the doom of the people,

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[258] Vide Renger 1990 for some technical aspects of working with a plough in southern Mesopotamia.
[259] On the productivity of oxen in a field versus man and other animals, vide Halstead 2014 33-66.
[260] On the contribution of the plough to the construction/maintenance of canals cf. *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 92-118 (comp.t. ETCLS c.5.5.5).

shows the natural value of the herdsman, since he leads, protects and builds canals (ll. 6-12).[261] Therefore, the shepherd performs the functions of farmer and herder, revealing the complex symbology of the leader. The idea of protection and care creates an association with other benefits provided by the leader, such as canals.[262]

In Angim, the god Ninurta appears as a hero of civilization because he domesticated cattle (Cooper 1977 62). Ninurta's symbol represents a provider because of the implications, for the community, of owning cattle. Ninurta provided animals to work in the fields, which improved production:

51. [ur-saĝ] [^{d}nin]-urta a$_2$ nam-ur-saĝ-ĝa$_2$-[ni]-[še$_3$] [šu$^?$ na$^?$-mi$^?$-ni-in-gi$_4$$^?$]

52. [^{ĝiš}gigir] [za]-gin$_3$-na ni$_2$ ḫuš gur$_3$-[ru]-[na]

53. am dab$_5$-dab$_5$-ba-ni ^{ĝiš}gag-a bi$_2$-in-la$_2$

54. ab$_2$ dab$_5$-ba-ni a$_2$ ^{ĝiš}šudul bi$_2$-in-la$_2$ [263]

51. [The warrior] [Nin]urta, [with] [his] heroic strength, [wreaked his vengeance [(?)]].[264]

52. On his shining [chariot], which inspires terrible fear,

53. he harnessed his seized wild <u>bulls</u> to the <u>axle</u>,

54. harnessed his seized <u>cows</u> to the <u>yoke</u>.

Later the text mentions Ninurta leading the captured cattle into the temple as bounty (ll. 99-104). Ninurta is a civilizer who can sustain society: the only way to maintain a civilization was through prosperity, otherwise it would collapse. Ninurta therefore provides the herds that will establish the shepherd's productivity and labour for the ploughman.[265] Together the farmer and the shepherd support society: they provide food and therefore sustain life.[266]

Ninurta is the leader and the ultimate provider. The signs which make up the symbol of the ploughman are connected with those of the shepherd, even though the ploughman is a farmer. One of the most obvious signs is that of the leader; the ploughman leads and rules the animal, submitting it to his will in order to optimise production.

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[261] Vide UrN D, Nippur version, ll. 1-12; vide chap. 4.1.

[262] Cf. the example of the Ur-Namma royal inscriptions recording the digging of the canals dedicated to Enlil and Nanna-Suen, with a commentary by Tinney 1999 33 (cf. UrN D ll. 1-12, Nippur version; UrN D ll. 11-28, Urim version).

[263] Comp.t.: ETCSL c.1.6.1. cf. Hercules' work with the cattle of Geryon (Verg. *A*. 8.196-204) and vide Ambühl's 2016 commentary on the Virgilian Hercules as a herdsman associated with proto-Rome.

[264] ETCSL's translation of line 51.

[265] Cf. *Summer and Winter* ll. 19-25, ETCSL c.5.3.3.

[266] Cf. *Hoe and Plough* ll. 21-32.
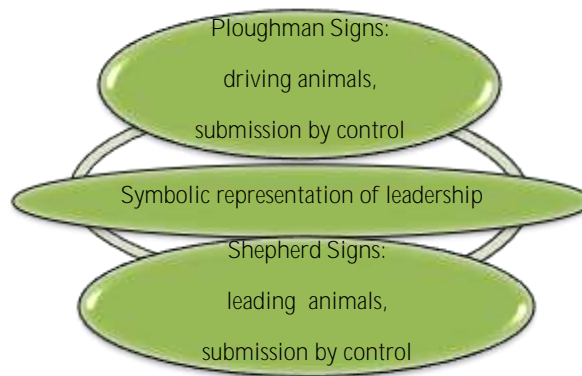
The image of the plough was crystalized in Sumerian culture and popular thought.[267] One example of this can be seen in the text *Hoe and Plough*, when the hoe, addressing the plough, enumerates the things the plough cannot do (ll. 7-18), implying general knowledge of what the tool could do. Given the interlocutor's previous experience of 'knowing by having seen' the practicalities of ploughing, the limitations attributed to the tool are shown through its technical applications. This means that the description of these applications were part of the collective mind and the signs of meaning representing their activities are a compounding element in abstract speech. These considerations belong to common sense as they would have been established in the collective mind: the plough's performance is the origin of the symbol attributed to the plough. Everything that it could do was a potential sign that compounds its symbol and therefore the results of its work are also part of its framed image, which coincides with that of the farmer. For example, in *Hoe and Plough* the plough is personified and talks about the consequences of his work, which in fact reflect the farmer's production methods:

34. ab-sin$_2$ gub-ba-ĝu$_{10}$ edin me-te-aš bi$_2$-ib-ĝal$_2$

35. išin-na a-šag$_4$-ga ĝal$_2$-la-ĝu$_{10}$-uš

36. maš$_2$-anše lu-a ^{d}šakkan$_2$-na im-ši-gam-e-de$_3$-eš

37. še šeĝ$_6$-ĝa$_2$ kiĝ$_2$-ĝa$_2$ gub-ba-ĝu$_{10}$-uš

38. dugšakir$_3$ lu$_2$sipad-da dug$_3$ ĝar-ra-am$_3$

39. zar-maš-ĝu$_{10}$ a-gar$_3$-ra sal-la-a-bi

40. udu ^{d}dumu-zid-da dug$_3$ ĝar-ra-am$_3$

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[267] On the technical aspects of ploughing in FI, vide ll. 23-29 and Civil's commentary (1994 58); on the process of ploughing presented in FI, vide ll. 30-45 and Civil's commentary (1994 76); cf. *Hoe and Plough* ll. 91-103.

34. "The furrows I made extend over the plain.

35. The stalks were erected by me in the fields,

36. the abundant herds of Šakkan kneel down,

37. the barley ripped by my labour appears,

38. the shepherd's churn is improved. (trans. ETCLS)

39. By my sheaves spread over the meadows, (trans. ETCLS)

40. the sheep of Dumuzi are improved." (trans. ETCLS)

The representation of a worked landscape can be identified here, including fields for farming and pastureland for animals. In other words, the two levels are interconnected, reflecting farming and grazing in the same image. Moreover, the farmer would often also produce for the cattle and therefore it is not only the landscape and the nature of rural subsistence that intersects with farming and grazing through ploughing, but also the practicalities of the activity.

Linking the man that drives the oxen with the figure of the shepherd is a quite obvious connection, since both involve a person leading animals. [268] Moreover, if the ploughman is preparing the earth for sowing, he is also a farmer (cf. *Hoe and plough* ll. 20-23). For example, the first lines of *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta*[269] include a call to the oxen, [270] which belongs to the world of the herdsman sphere, although the overall objective is agricultural production (cf. ll. 7-148).

This symbiosis is also suggested in the text *Elum Didara: The Honoured One Who Wanders About* (CLAM 1988 176) since, metaphorically speaking, the ploughman is said to lead people. The god Enlil is symbolically shown as the shepherd of the Sumerians (l. 7) and hence their ruler and the one to whom they submit, as if he was the ploughman and the people were the oxen:

12. am-gin$_7$ dugud-da: gu$_2$-GAM-da da-mu-un-la$_2$ [271]

12. Like a heavy bull, may I bend over to him! (trans. Cohen 1988 181)

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[268] Cf. *Lugalbanda and the Anzud bird* 164. gud erim$_2$ du-us$_2$-a sig$_{10}$-ge$_5$-dam \ 165. anše dub$_3$ guz-za ḫar-ra-an si sa$_2$ dab$_5$-be$_2$-dam inim-inim ma-gub ga-ri-gub. "A wilful plough-ox should be put back in the track / a balking ass should be made to take the straight path" (trans. Vanstiphout 2003; comp.t. ETCSL 1.8.2.2; Vanstiphout 2003).

[269] Comp.t. Civil 1976 83-95; ETCSL c.5.5.5.

[270] 1-3. [e-el-lu] ⌈ma⌉-al-lu / gud ĝen-a ^{ĝiš}⌈šudul⌉-[a] gu$_2$ ĝar-i$_3$ / [gud ĝen-a ĝen-a ^{ĝiš}šudul]-a gu$_2$ ĝar-i$_3$ / "⌈ellu⌉ ⌈ma⌉llu! Go, oxen, go, put the necks [under] the ⌈yoke⌉! [Go, oxen, go, put] the necks under [the yoke!]

[271] Com.t.: CLAM 175-185.

In a simple statement like this, certain signs can be identified that constitute a real image and its immediate abstract meaning: power, control and submission, all signs that play a role in the ploughman and shepherd symbols:

Bull = sign of power

Domesticated bull = sign of power (by submission)

Herder: symbol of the leader
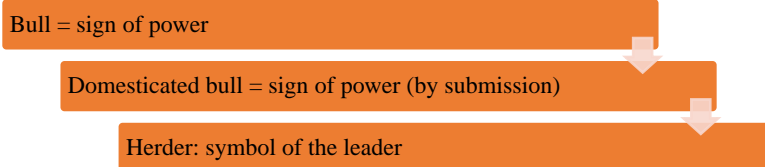
The animal is the main connection between the shepherd and the farmer, since the plough unites the shepherd who drives the animals with the farmer who sows and ploughs the land. The submission of the animal to the shepherd, who is also the farmer and herder (cf. above) and makes the crops grow, shows the semantic union of both activities, as the ploughman is the one who leads people and provides for them. This image has remarkable potential in terms of creating an analogy between the paths of the people and the will of a ruler. In fact, rulers are frequently described through the sign of leading (cf. Watanabe 2002 57-64), a compounding sign in the image of the plough (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 29-33):

29. lugal-e a$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ šu bi$_2$-in-du$_8$

30. gud-ĝu^{10} ^{ĝiš}šudul-e si ba-ni-in-sa$_2$

31. barag-barag gal-gal zag-ĝu$_{10}$-ta im-da-sug$_2$-sug$_2$-ge-eš

32. kur-kur-re u$_6$ dug$_3$-ge-eš mu-e

33. uĝ$_3$-e igi ḫul$_2$-la mu-un-ši-bar-bar-re

29. "The king holds my arms in his hands

30. and harnesses my oxen to the yoke.

31. All the great rulers stand by my side.

32. All the lands wonder at me.

33. The people watch me in joy." (ETCSL trans.)

The agricultural landscape provides the basis for abstract expression and semantic constructions. For example, we can clearly understand what happened to the city of Ur, once powerful as a bull, now bent, as an ox would be (LUr):

259. urim$_5$^{ki} am gal u$_3$-na gub-ba-gin$_7$ gu$_2$ ki-[še$_3$ ba-ab-ĝar]

259. "Ur, like a great and aggressive bull, [bowed] its neck [to the ground]."

The metaphor can be interpreted as a representation of the city of Ur, now controlled as an ox would be by his master, since the wild bull ('am') seems to have been domesticated like the ox that pulls the plough and has no free will.

It is important to note that the symbol of the ploughman is a compound of various signs. Some of those signs are shared with the symbol of the farmer and others correspond to the image of the shepherd's work, but they all come from an image of the natural world. They are rooted in a crystalized picture which flows through the traditional thought of a community that recognised the abstract framed image as a construction based on signs of meaning. The semantic value of the image comes from the common-sense assessment made by the interlocutor of the daily activities of the ploughman; the listener or reader of a text like LUr would understand spontaneous analogies between his notion of the materiality of the ploughman's work and its abstract representations, which had an exact linguistic meaning. The process of transforming the surrounding natural world into a creative source for the construction of traditional thought and abstract language is, without doubt, universal and transversal. Moreover, it is identifiable in abstract language, even when the signs of meaning are deduced from their absence. Maybe the lines of the text published by Cohen, *The Bull in His Fold*,[272] describing the grieving of a bull (ll. 1-2), is a reference to the suffering of the animal due to the absence of the ploughman, although this is just one interpretation of the text. In the scene, a bull mourns, representing an entire country that has been invaded (ll. 9-16). The allegory is clear, but the hermeneutics of the text are not immediately decodable:

1. am-e amaš-a-na še gig-bi bi$_2$-ib$_2$-ša$_4$

2. amaš-a-na am-e amaš-a-na še gig-bi

1. "The bull in his fold moans painfully,

2. in his fold, the bull in his fold (moans) painfully." (vide Chap. 3.2.2)

Another example can be identified in LSUr ll. 1-37, which starts by referring to abandoned cattle, suggesting a compromised future.[273] The destruction of the city heralds

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[272] Cf. CLAM 152-4, ll.1-5.
[273] I interpret the butchering of cattle by analogy with the text *Utugin Eta - Come out like the Sun*, CLAM 105, ll. a+227-232.

the end of the goods from pasture and harvesting and once again, the image of the ox helps to construct meaning for a disrupted society:[274]

52. urim$_5$^{ki} am gal u$_3$-na gub-ba ni$_2$-bi-ta nir-ĝal$_2$

53. iri numun i-i nam-en nam-lugal-la ki sikil-la du$_3$-a

54. gud-gin$_7$ saman ul$_4$-la-bi šub-bu-de$_3$ gu$_2$ ki-še$_3$ la$_2$-e-de$_3$

52. "Urim, a great charging wild bull, confident in its power,

53. the city that was the seed for lordship and kingship, erected on sacred ground.

54. bows its neck to the ground like a roped ox."

The metaphor refers to a factual image made up of the signs of meaning for 'power' and 'leading'. In addition to the destruction, this text also recalls the value for the ploughman, as he is the one who controls the powerful bull.

A chain of relations connects the semantics of the crystalized images of the farmer, shepherd, ox and plough. Through the animal, the image of the leader (shepherd) is potentially related to the plough, as the ruler is the one who drives the ox.[275] The herd provides the semantic context for the symbol of the ruler. Nevertheless, the plough is mainly the tool of the farmer,[276] since it helps provide sustenance through farming:

41. du$_6$-ĝu$_{10}$ edin-na du$_8$-du$_8$-a-bi

42. ḫur-saĝ sig$_7$-ga ḫi-li gur$_3$-ru-am$_3$

43. guru$_7$-du$_6$ guru$_7$-maš-a ^{d}en-lil$_2$-ra gu$_2$ mu-un-na-ab-gur-re

44. ziz$_2$ gig-bi gu$_2$ mu-un-na-ra-dub-dub-be$_2$

45. araḫ$_4$ nam-lu$_2$-ulu$_3$-ka $^{[}$še$^{]}$ mi-ni-ib$_2$-si-si-$^{[}$en$^{]}$

41. "My mounds are spread in the plain.

42. The peaks are green in beauty.

43. I assemble piles and heaps of grain for Enlil.

44. I heap up emmer and wheat for him.

45. I fill the storehouses of humanity with $^{[}$barley$^{]}$." (vide also ll. 46-51)

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[274] Cf. ll. 8'-12', CUNES 53-08-060, Cohen 2013 37-49.

[275] Vide Umanaba's example in *mutin nunuz dima - Fashioning man and woman* ll. c+290-c+296 (CLAM 221-250).

[276] Despite being a fragmented text, vide the preparation of the animal for working in the fields in *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 143-148.

When harvesting is the main focus and is dependent on the ploughman's labour, the idea of the herder is not absent, since his skills are needed to drive the plough. Moreover, even though the 'plough' is compared with the dusty work of the hoe in *Hoe and Plough*, it still signifies hard work for man and beast (*Hoe and Plough* ll. 52-56). However, the ox helps to reduce the heavy work for man, as can be seen in non-literary documents such as the *Letter from the Governor and Sanga to the King*[277], where the difficulties of working the fields only with hoes are suggested: in short, without oxen, working in the fields is a burden.

The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta (ll. 38-61)[278] directly draws on the value of the ox without directly invoking its signs, except for the work that is supposed to be done by the ox but has not been assumed by the young bull, the main character in the text (ll. 53-54). This implies a general recognition of the work of the ox, without the need to rely on complex symbolic language. In fact, the ox is part of the machinery of farming and its symbolic representation connects the frames for the farmer and the shepherd. The reason does not lie in the symbolic language, but in the reality of the activity (ll. 62-65).

The yoke connects the herder's animal to the farmer's craft and this is socially recognised in the metaphorical language of the *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the moon*,[279] a complaint addressed to the king:

6. udu-gin$_7$ ka u$_2$ gu$_7$-ĝu$_{10}$ (…)

7. gud ^{ĝiš}šudul$_4$-a nu-ub-ḫa-za la$_2$-gin$_7$ edin-na ba-ab-ĝen-ne-en

(…)

12. i-si-iš sila nibru^{ki}-ka mu-gu$_7$-e-en

13. iri kur$_2$ iri-ĝa$_2$ mu-da-an-kur$_9$ lu$_2$ en$_3$ tar-re la-ba-tuku

6. "I eat grass with my mouth like a sheep (…)

7. Like an ox bearing a yoke that cannot be held, I have been led into the open country.

(…)

12. I am consumed by grief in the streets of Nibru.

13. Another city controls my city and I have no one to protect me."

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[277] Letter B 11, ll. 10-15 (Civil 1994 180-182; ETCSLc.3.3.05). Vide Civil's 1994 181-182 commentaries on this passage.
[278] Comp.t. ETCSL c.5.5.5
[279] Version A (from Nibru), comp.t.: Ali 1964; ETCSL c.3.3.02.

This metaphor originates in a crystalized image from the farming and grazing cosmos. Here, the man who acts like a sheep because he has nothing more to eat is showing his grief at having been reduced to the condition of an animal. However, it is possible extend the allegory to a critique of the ruler who should have provided for him, as a shepherd provides for his herd. In the same sense, the ox that cannot support the burden refers to the hardship of having to work. The image that gives meaning to the reality of the man is based on signs of meaning known by everyone. A powerful ox that cannot push the plough presents a powerful statement about being overburdened.

In *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* (ll. 38-91), the scenario can be grasped but the context, which would be a valuable resource in terms of collecting signs of meaning, is far from clear. However, ll. 62-65 seem to clearly connect farming and herding as elements within the same level; the character seems to be both the working farmer and the herder. This telluric presentation, compounding two frameworks and showing the complementarity of the two symbols for human subsistence, draws on the practicalities of such activities (ll. 92-148), recognisable in the heaviness of the yoke. This is a commonplace in ancient languages and recalls a traditional, widespread image from agricultural world.

3.1.4.1. Sex and ploughing

With regard to the animals in the herd, the figurative construction of the symbol of the cow, which was based on nature, differs greatly from that of the bull, since the female tends to be represented as a passive 'field' that provides food and sustenance.[280] The image of the cow often symbolizes motherhood, as can be inferred in textual passages such as the following (LE):

7. nin-bi <u>ab2</u> zid arḫuš-a kug ᵈdam-gal-nun-na

8. gaba-ni i3-ḫur-[re] igi-ni i3-ḫur-re gu3 nir-ra im-me

7. "Eridu's lady, the faithful <u>cow</u>, the compassionate one, holy Damgalnuna,

8. clawed [at] her chest, clawed at her eyes. She uttered a frenzied cry." (trans. ETCLS t.2.2.6)

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[280] It is possible to find some examples of this in the literary figure of the goddess Inana, in terms of her symbolic relationship with the god Dumuzi. Vide Sefati 1998.

In the cow epithet, the element of reality that served as a reference for the metaphor is not clear. Understanding the meaning of an epithet in terms of the semantics of its symbolic expression is a matter of guesswork for many examples from Sumerian literature, since it does not describe signs of meaning and therefore the latter cannot be identified without interpretations based on the interlocutor's cultural context. One can extrapolate from the cow's behaviour in the fields, since it is calm and dependable and, in this sense, represents motherhood because it provides care and sustenance.

Sign: passivity + Sign: maternity + Sign: provider + Sign: green landscape = SYMBOL animal motherhood

Since Inana is often associated with fields that will be ploughed – and therefore with a fertile mother – she can be used as a reference for understanding the semantic values of the cow (ab_2). The cow's symbolic construction is based on images of herding identified by common sense. In other words, the traditional signs representing 'calm' and 'motherhood' were selected from the traditional image created from observation of the behaviour of this animal:[281]

8. ab2 amar-bi nu-ub-da-la2-a-gin7 gu3 arḫuš-a im-me

9. u8 sila4-bi e2-ubur-ra dab5-ba-gin7 šu-ni ba-ab-dab5-be2

8. "Like a cow whose calf is not close to her, I cry out for compassion.

9. Like an ewe whose lamb is seized in the milking pen, hands seize me."

The association between abstract language and the natural world is supposedly direct and spontaneous, although conversion into a literary symbol or epithet makes it a symbol whose interpretation depends on contextual variables such as religion, politics, literature and culture. Therefore, traditional signs may not be clearly identifiable.

In addition to the analogy with the receptor of the seed, the abstract idea of motherhood is completed with care of the calf.[282] The cow suffers when she cannot care for her calf and this apparent personification of feelings seems to reflect natural behaviour, previously

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[281] *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the moon*, (Version A from Nibru), Comp.t.: ETCLS c. 3.3.02; cf. *Summer and Winter* ll. 50-60 (comp.t.: ETCSL c.5.3.3). Vide also the image in ELA ll. 528-530 ab2 kal-la-ga-ni kur me sikil-la-ka tud-da-ar / saḫar unugki-ga-ka a2 e3-a-ar / ubur ab2 zid-da-ka ga gu7-a-ar "The mighty cow give birth to his illustrious essence on the mountain, / to him who grew up on the soil of Aratta, / to him who was fed by the teat of the true cow."

[282] Foxvog 2011 59-98 comments on the word 'ama' (mother) as an element in compound names but does not relate it to the symbology of herding.

observed and used as a semantic image to convey the idea of loss and yearning. The image brings drama to the scene and the epithet of Shulgi, as a good calf i.e. a good son, (amar kug), expands the symbology. If the cow is the perfect mother, the calf is the well-cared for son:

22. šul-gi amar kug tud-da-ĝu$_{10}$-me-en$_3$

23. a $^\lceil$dug$_3$$^\rceil$ dlugal-ban$_3$-da-me-en$_3$

24. ur$_2$ kug-ĝu$_{10}$-a mu-ni-ib$_2$-buluĝ$_3$-en$_3$

25. ubur$_2$ kug-ĝu$_{10}$-a nam ma-ra-ni-tar [283]

22. "Shulgi, you are a <u>pure calf</u>, born to me.

23. You are a good seed of Lugal-Banda.

24. You flourished in my holy lap.

25. Your destiny was decided in my holy breasts."

Here the meaning is based on general knowledge of natural things. The interlocutor knows what a pure calf (amar kug) as a symbol means because he knows the signs of meaning that come from visual, empirical reality.

Another example of the semantic symbiosis between the cow and the calf can be seen in LUr:

101. ka-na-aĝ$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ aĝ$_2$-gig-ga ba-ĝal$_2$-la-ke$_4$-eš

102. ab$_2$ amar-ra-gin$_7$-nam ki šu ḫe$_2$-em-mi-ib-ak

101. "Because there was suffering in my Land,

102. I trudged the earth like a cow for its calf." (ETCSL trans.)

The metaphor cannot be understood literally but it contains two traditional symbols, the calf and the cow, and therefore, some traditional signs must also be there, giving a spontaneous meaning to the text.[284] Animals are part of a framed landscape and so their image implies signs of meaning. Other animals can generate similar kinds of meaning for motherhood in different cultural contexts because they interact in a similar evocative way within the agricultural landscape.

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[283] *A praise poem of Šulgi* (Šulgi P), Segment C, ETCSL c.2.4.2.16. Vide also May's commentary on the iconographic value of this image (2013 203-204).

[284] Cf. *Lugalbanda and the Anzud bird* l. 307. ab$_2$-šilam amar-bi la$_2$-a-gin$_7$ erin$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ mu-da-la$_2$ "My men are bound to me as a calf to its mother cow" (comp.t. ETCSL 1.8.2.2; Vanstiphout 2003).

Essentially, the key to the symbology lies in the manifestation of maternity in the rural landscape. The signs of meaning for care and sustenance are visually identifiable in the landscape and traditionally assumed by the community as common sense. These signs are crystalized in abstract language and can be used as semantic sources, even when the objective is to show the opposite of what should be common sense. A lamb, for example, abandoned by the same ewe that should be taking care of it, is mentioned in CLAM 155, ll. 30-33 to present a scenario of despair. The situation is so chaotic that common sense facts such as a mother caring for her offspring are distorted - the animal world is the basis for the meaning of the scene.[285]

3.1.4.2. Ploughing and fertility

The songs of Inana and Dumuzi are remarkable examples of Mesopotamian mythology and symbolism. From a subjective perspective, it may be said that these gods embody the union of the fertility of the fields, represented by Inana, and the prosperity provided by the herds, represented by Dumuzi. As the divine shepherd and bringer of happiness, Dumuzi's main quality is his ability to generate abundance and prosperity from his herds. DI C may reflect this aspect of the relationship between the two gods, although this text makes no mention of their names. The lack of context and, as Sefati (1998 140-1) says, of "poet's notes", lead to speculation about the characters, but the material imagery stated in the text seems to be clear.

32. $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-laḫ}_5$ $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-laḫ}_5$ $\text{i}_3\text{-i}_3$ $\text{gara}_2\text{-bi}$ ga-na $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-laḫ}_5$[286]

33. $\text{nin}_9\text{-ĝu}_{10}$ e$_2$-a ga-mu-u$_8$-da-laḫ$_5$

34. u$_8$-gin$_7$ sila$_4$ $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-em-tum}_2$ $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-em-tum}_2$

35. $\text{nin}_9\text{-ĝu}_{10}$ e$_2$-a ga-mu-u$_8$-da-laḫ$_5$

36. ud$_5$-gin$_7$ maš$_2$ $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-em-tum}_2$ $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-em-tum}_2$

37. $\text{nin}_9\text{-ĝu}_{10}$ e$_2$-a ga-mu-u$_8$-da-laḫ$_5$

38. u$_8$-gin$_7$ sila$_4$ sa$_6$-sa$_6$-ga ḫe$_2$-a

39. $\text{nin}_9\text{-ĝu}_{10}$ e$_2$-a ga-mu-u$_8$-da-[laḫ$_5$]

40. ud$_5$-gin$_7$ maš$_2$ gun$_3$-gun$_3$-a ḫe$_2$-a

41. $\text{nin}_9\text{-ĝu}_{10}$ e$_2$-a ga-mu-u$_8$-da-laḫ$_5$

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[285] Cf. the metaphor for the city of Ur as a goat whose offspring has perished (LUr ll. 66-68, vide Fleming 2003).

[286] For a translation and linguistic commentary on this line, vide Sefati 1998 147-8.

42. i-da-lam gaba-ĝu₁₀[287] ba-gub-gub

43. i-da-lam gal₄-la-ĝa₂[288] siki ba-an-mu₂[289]

32. "Let him bring, let him bring, come on, let him bring dairy produce[290]!"

33. "My lady, I will bring them with me into the house" (cf. Sefati 1998 136).

34. "Let him bring <u>lambs</u> as well as <u>ewes</u>, let him bring."

35. "My '[lady]', I will bring them with me into the house."

36. "Let <u>him bring 'offspring'</u> as well <u>as goats, let him bring.</u>"

37. "My lady, I will bring them with me into the house."

38. "May the lambs be as enjoyable as ewes!" (trans. Sefati 1998 136)

39. "My lady, I will [bring] them with me into the house."

40. "May the '<u>offspring</u>' be as good <u>as the goats</u>!"

41. "My lady, I will bring them with me into the house."

42. "Right now, my breasts have become firm,

43. "right now, my vulva has germinated hair".

The sexual appeal of this text is easily identifiable, but its reception or context is not so clear. Therefore, regardless of the purpose of this study, I intend to ignore the potential praise of fertility and also its potential religious value [291] and instead focus on the goods brought by the lover, in order to please his bride. Here is possible to see animals as household goods representing prosperity and, at the same time, a happy phase in a romantic relationship. The lover is proving his value by showing how much he can provide for his bride. It does not matter if he is a god or which global social/religious/political function this text may have had, the immediate information obtained here is that this entity shows that he can provide for the house and for his lover, who is waiting for him to consummate this prosperous relationship. At least, this is how it may have sounded to a Sumerian listener used to the abstract value of such goods attributed to Dumuzi. The scene of the happy couple does not materialize exclusively through the image of sexual intercourses and lust. In order to be completely understandable to the interlocutor it was necessary to present something that

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[287] Variant '–me' (our).
[288] Var. 'gal₄-la-me' ("my").
[289] Cf. Kramer 1963.
[290] Sheep, subsequently referred to in the text.
[291] Vide Tinney 1999 37. Vide also the myth in *Enki and the World Order* ll. 52-60 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.1.3), in which the god literally inseminates the natural cosmos.

could convey the idea of continuity and surpass the romantic moment, as one would call it nowadays, and this idea comes with the goods that the lover can provide, which bring continuity to the prosperous relationship. Again, as is frequently the case in the DI texts, there may be a more profound metaphor associated with the goats and the offspring that those gods can bring to life, conveyed by Inana having sexual intercourse with 'the Shepherd', Dumuzi. Moreover, this is clearly related to the sowing of the field: in this scene, the shepherd, i.e. the provider of the herds, is the bearer of the seed and Inana is the field to be cultivated (cf. *Enlil and Ninlil* ll. 65-90). However, it should be noted that this last statement is an interpretation based on an analogy with another text in the DI corpus (DI P, vide infra). L. 40 reveals the continuity and hence the prosperity that may come from stability and not necessarily from improvement. In a more hermeneutic analysis Inana could be interpreted as the soil in which the seeds produce crops, in this case, calves.

Dumuzi is often given the epithet of 'wild bull' ('am', vide CAD 14 359-363 *rimu*), probably because of his power as a god or king. However, he is the bull that ploughs the earth in order to obtain its fruits. Dumuzi's metaphor in DI P may have been suggested by other texts in which Inana refers to herself as the land to be ploughed.[292] Inana is his land, and the image of the bull is not only that of the 'powerful breeder' and therefore a masculine epithet, but also that of the animal that pulls the plough, taking care of the land that will generate crops:

5. X X tug$_2$ kalag-ga <ga>-ša-an[293]-an-na-me-[en]

6. gala-e šir$_3$-ra mu-ni-ib$_2$-[…]

7. nar-e en$_3$-du-a mu-ni-ib$_2$-[be$_2$]

8. mu-ud-na-ĝu$_{10}$ mu-da-an-[ḫul$_2$-le]

9. {am} {(1 ms. has instead:) u$_3$-mu-un } ^{d}dumu-zid mu-da-an-[ḫul$_2$-le]

5. "(to me), I am 'Inana' …… of the glorious garment.

6. The gala singer sing[s…] there a song.

7. The musician perform[s…] a song there.

8. My spouse rejoice[s….] beside me.

9. The {wild bull} {(1 ms. has instead:) lord} Dumuzi rejoice[s…] beside me." (trans. ETCSL)

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[292] Vide infra. This must mean one of two things: i) the receptors of texts like DI P would have been familiar with the other texts; ii) the mythical symbol would have been widespread.

[293] 'ga-ša-an', Emesal for 'nin', cf. Foxvog 2004.

I have followed Sefati's (1998) interpretation of this passage as having sexual connotations, since the text is quite fragmented. Symbolically speaking, sex and farming were correlated, since both aim to create life through similar symbolic mechanisms: seed and womb/soil. Clearly, I am ignoring recreational proposes and romantic perspectives in my interpretation: the assumption is based on the analogies that common sense can provide. The relationship between the bridegroom and the carrier of the seeds seems to be the metaphorical farming act per se.

If this text refers to a bull ('am'), it is probably not the bull that pulls the plough ('gud'),[294] but the powerful breeder that carries the seed.[295] In DI C ll. 40-42 Inana appears as a field to be cultivated ('kislaḫ'), i.e. covered by the breeder, but also metaphorically ploughed by the ox. It should be noted that the visual results of the bull ploughing are the signs for an image that includes the bull, the ploughman and the field. Inana is the passive element in the 'visual relation', as she is the metaphor for the field (DI P):

22. kislaḫ (KI.ZALAG) ne-en edin-na šub$^?$-[…]

23. a-šag$_4$$^?$ uz^{mušen} ne-en uz^{mušen} dur$_2$-[ra]-$^{[}$ĝu$_{10}]^?$ (cf. Sefati 1998 232)

24. a-šag$_4$ an-na ne-en a ma-ra-ĝu$_{10}$

25. ma-a gal$_4$-la-ĝu$_{10}$ du$_6$ du$_8$-du$_8$-a a ma-«a»-ra

26. ki-sikil-ĝen a-ba-a ur$_{11}$-ru-a-bi

27. gal$_4$-la-ĝu$_{10}$ ki-duru$_5$ a ma-ra

28. ga-ša-an-ĝen gud a-ba-a bi$_2$-ib$_2$-gub-be$_2$

29. in-nin$_9$ lugal-e ḫa-ra-an-ur$_{11}$-ru

30. ^{d}dumu-zid lugal-e ḫa-ra-ur$_{11}$-ru

31. [ša-ab]-ma$_3$ ur$_{11}$-ru mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam (DI P; Sefati 1998)

22. "This uncultivated land (empty) is forsaken$^?$ […] in the plain,

23. this field of ducks, where ducks sit,

24. that (is) my high well-watered field:

25. my own vulva, a well-watered, an opening mound.

26. (I am) the maiden, who will sow it?

27. My vulva, moist and well-watered land.

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294 The wild bull and the ox form a kind of contrast in terms of farming: am-e niĝ$_2$-gig-giš-apin-na-kam. "The wild ox is an aberration for the plough" (Falkowitz 1980 160, l. 14).
295 On the symbol of the seed in literature, vide Ferber 2007 183-185.

28. (I am) the lady, who <u>will put there an ox</u>?"[296]

29. "Lady, the king may plough it for you;

30. <u>Dumuzi the king may plough it for you</u>."

31. "Of my [heart], the ploughman is the man of my heart!" …

Inana is a field to be ploughed. The meaning of the text or its function may have two different readings that may well be complementary:

a) A ritual metaphor related to the cult of the gods, as their union is the realization of nature in motion.

b) A metaphor for sexual intercourse based on the farming image.

Obviously, these two possibilities are interconnected and do not exclude each other, but they may represent different dimensions: a religious level and the transcription of traditional thought. The religious interpretation reflects specific ritualized codes that may be inferred from the significance of the object described. The other dimension implies an image directly related to the link between sexual intercourse and farming via metaphor. The male taking care of the 'excited' woman's genitalia (gal$_4$-la-ĝu$_{10}$ ki-duru$_5$ a ma-ra) in order to penetrate and fertilize her, has parallels with the ploughman working the field in order to sow the seed; the construction of the metaphor is simplistic but not directly connectable with the signs of the ploughman, since a chain of relations between the signs is needed in order to give semantic meaning to the image. However, I would argue that this image is far from being a simple manifestation of a fertility ritual and contains the essence of abstract cultural thought: the image as a source for constructing meaning. If he is outside a ritual context, the interlocutor must consider the way in which work is carried out in the fields in order to connect it with a scene of sexual intercourse and then understand the implied sensuality. In fact, it is important to remember that the image is a love scene, although the relationship between these two divinities who are important for human subsistence cannot be just a representation of a mundane sexual act. An image of dedication, care and transcendence is needed, which the farming symbol can provide through common sense analogy and

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[296] The word 'gud' can be found as an epithet, although its meaning is not clear when the context is not presented. Cf. *Letter from Ur-saga to a king fearing the loss of his father's household ll.* 1-2, Comp.t.: ETCSL c.3.3.01; Ali 1964 80-84.

traditional thought.[297] In fact, this is confirmed by Inana's receptivity in subsequent lines (cf. DI P ll. 32-46):

> 41. nin$_9$-ĝu$_{10}$ e$_2$-a ga-mu-u$_8$-da-laḫ$_5$
>
> 42. i-da-lam gaba-ĝu$_{10}$[298] ba-gub-gub
>
> 43. i-da-lam gal$_4$-la-ĝa$_2$[299] siki ba-an-mu$_2$
>
> 41. "My lady, I will bring them with me into the house."
>
> 42. "Right now, my breasts have become firm".
>
> 43. "Right now, in my vulva grows hair".

We may infer that the use of the verbal form 'ba-an-mu' has metaphorical connotations; I would argue that it cannot simply be coincidence due to vocabulary restrictions. However, the translation of ba-an-mu can just mean generically 'to grow' and its precise meaning is given by the context, meaning that it may not have not been an allegory. However, I believe it is allegorical, since its hermeneutic context is inspired by an agricultural framework.[300]

DI D$_1$ apparently deals with the sacred marriage ceremony of an anonymous king, which seems to personify the union between Dumuzi and the goddess Inana (Sefati 1998 306-7).[301] The announcement of the arrangements for the marriage ceremony (ll. 1-32) is followed by what could be considered a prayer for happiness and prosperity. The blessings reflect the two levels on which both gods act and, at the same time, the material result of their symbolic union. The richness of the land will be improved by the union of Dumuzi, who is also presented as farmer and ploughman, and Inana (DI P ll. 22-31), as Inana desires in the following lines:

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[297] Tinney 1999 34-36 suggests a parallelism, regarding sexual metaphor, between DI C and UrN D (Nippur version): "It seems only natural to draw the conclusion that in the context of the Nippurian version of our Ur-Namma text, the act of canal-digging must be taken as a metaphor for sexual intercourse. On its own, this observation may be seductive, but it is not conclusive. The context alone does not absolutely prove that id... ba-al, "to dig a canal;' is a figure for intercourse, and even if it were, that would not be enough to prove that Abamunbale can be read on this other level. There is, however, both internal and external evidence that seals the case. The latter consists of a speech placed in the mouth of the goddess Nanaya, a manifestation of Inana, who describes the cost of performing various sexual acts."

[298] Variant '–me' (our).

[299] Var. 'gal$_4$-la-me' ("my").

[300] "The ploughing metaphor, which we often find in the Bridal Songs, is then not just a general euphemism for sexual intercourse, but applied more specifically to the first penetration of the vagina. The young woman is compared to a field waiting to be rendered fertile, by the plough (i.e. the penis) driven by the bull (i.e. the man). It is in the context of marital intercourse that the male sexual role defines itself as the provider of fertility. The woman joyfully participates and declares her readiness 'to be ploughed'" (Leick 2003 91).

[301] On bridal songs, vide Leick 2003 64-79. On sacred marriage in the Sumerian literary context, I have followed Lapinkivi 2004, 2008 and Jones 2003.

42. ᵈutu e₃-ta ᵈutu šu₂-še₃

43. ᵗᵘᵐ⁹ulu₃-taᵗᵘ⁻ᵐᵘ⁻ᵘˡ⁻ˡᵘ⁻ᵗᵃ ᵗᵘᵐ⁹mir-ra-a-še₃ᵗᵘ⁻ᵐᵘ⁻ᵈᵐⁱ⁻ʳᵃ

44. a-ab-ba igi-nim-ta a-ab-ba sig-še₃

45. ᵍⁱˢḫa-lu-ub₂ʼ-ta ᵍⁱˢerin-na-še₃ (source: ta)

46. ki-en-gi ki-uri-a ešgiri₂ šibir šum₂-mu-na-ab (source: ta)

47. saĝ gig₂ dur₂-ru-na-bi nam-sipad-bi ḫe₂-ak-e

48. e-ne engar-gin₇ gana₂ ḫe₂-ĝa₂-ĝa₂

49. sipad zid-gin₇ amaš ḫe₂-em-mi-lu-lu

50. gu ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂ še ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂

51. id₂-da a-eštub ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂

52. a-šag₄-ga še gu-nu ḫe₂-en-da-ĝal₂

53. ambar-ra ku₆ mušen gu₃ ḫu-mu-da-ra-ra

54. (ᵍⁱˢgi) mu-gi-e gi sumun gi ḫenbur ḫe₂-en-da-an-mu₂

55. an-edin-na ᵐᵘMAŠ-GURUM ḫe₂-en-da-an-mu₂

56. tir-tir-ra šeg₉ šeg₉-bar ḫe₂-en-da-lu

57. pu₂ ᵍⁱˢkiri₆ lal₃ ĝeštin ḫe₂-en-da-il₂

58. mu₂-sar-ra ḫi-izˢᵃʳ za₃-ḫi-liˢᵃʳ ḫe₂-en-da-mu₂

59. e₂-gal-la zi-su₃-ud-ĝal₂ ḫe₂-en-da-an-ĝal₂

42. "From sunrise to sunset,

43. from the south to the north,

44. from the upper sea to the lower sea,

45. from where the *ḫalub* tree is, to where there is the cedar tree,

46. (over all) Sumer and Akkad, grant him the staff and the sceptre!

47. May he practice the craft of the shepherd with the black-headed inhabitants.[302]

48. May he, like a farmer, establish agricultural fields.

49. May he like a loyal shepherd make many sheepfolds,

50. may he be the flax provider, may he be the barley provider,

51. may he be the provider of carp floods in the rivers,

52. may he be the barley and flax provider in the fields,

53. may fish and the birds 'make noise' in the marshes,

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[302] Cf. CLAM 176, ll. 8-10. On the shepherd as the leader of the black-headed (saĝ gig₂), vide also CLAM 152-174, ll.93-94; CLAM 222-243, ll. a+57; CLAM 222-243, l. a+80.

54. may the old reeds and the young reeds sprout under him in the reed thicket

55. may the *mašgurum*[303] plant sprout under him on the high plains,

56. may the wild sheep[?] (wild boar[?]) and wild rams be abundant under him in the forests.

57. May the <u>fruit gardens</u> and <u>orchards</u> produce under him <u>syrup</u> and <u>wine</u>.[304]

58. May <u>vegetables</u> and <u>plants</u> (cress[?]) grow in the garden plots under him;

59. may a long life in the palace be given by him."

All the qualities of a provider based on the agricultural landscape are brought together in the bridegroom, that is, the shepherd and farmer. These qualities cannot be directly related to the ploughman as the text does not do so, but it is perfectly clear that prosperity depends on farming and herding skills.

Following the description of how Niniubur, steward of Eanna (ll.33), takes Dumuzi, or the king, by the hand and brings him to Inana's lap (ur₂), Inana expresses her expectations of prosperity in terms of what Dumuzi can bring to the palace and the country. The fertile fields and the barns replete with products result from the symbiosis of the attributes of the two gods. The fields feed the herds and the animals fertilize the fields. Together, they both bring prosperity to the land, and the last lines of the text (ll. 47-66) materialize and personify their union by showing a scene of sexual intercourse. Their union expresses the symbolic prosperity of the land, since everything is in perfect harmony when Dumuzi is by Inana's side: 'fields' are established, even though he is the shepherd god, not the farmer god – such a god would be Enkimdu. Therefore I would claim that this is not a merely mythological narrative. The text reveals a semantic image constructed to show prosperity – and real, factual prosperity could only by conceived through the perfect symbiosis of all the elements that constitute the rural landscape.

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[303] Vide Sefati 1998 311.
[304] For examples of the administrative roles of gardens in Ur III (Ĝirsu), vide Greco 2015.

3.2. The farmer and his place in the social mind

Si agricolam arbor adfructum perducta delectat, si pastor ex fetu gregis sui capit voluptatem, (…), quid evenire credis iis qui ingenia educaverunt et quae tenera formaverunt adulta subito vident?

(Sen. *Ep*. 34.1-2)[305]

Jean-Jacques Aubert (2001 96) has pointed out that: "Revenues from agriculture[306] and other natural resources are held in higher esteem than those from crafts and trade, because they are derived from the generosity of the earth, and not from other people's good will or compulsion." In addition to issues concerning social morality, this kind of assumption reflects the fact that agriculture had a huge impact on the Roman economy itself, since other kinds of production were considered less important, probably because they were less essential for survival: taxes from other activities were secondary, hence farming was of great social value and economic interest. Thus, as J. F. Drinkwater argues (2001 297-308), the authorities failed to recognise problems in the economy, such as the lack of any trading/production dynamics and the failure to develop sustainable production. In fact, there seems to have been a minimalist attitude towards taxation, which was concentrated on agriculture, meaning that the revenue of the Roman state and the great fortunes of the aristocrats were derived almost exclusively from landowning and farm production, either directly or indirectly (see Rosenstein 2008). Whilst it cannot be entirely claimed that this inability to understand socio-economic dynamics was the reason for the many economic crises in the empire or possibly the collapse of the empire itself, it can at least be said to have contributed towards a social and economic framework based on agriculture. Therefore, the good and trustworthy profits would ultimately have come from farming and livestock and, by extension, the wealth of the Roman emperor, the aristocracy or the citizens in general, thus perpetuating the traditional socio-psychological classification of these activities as related to sustenance, while other activities, such as trading, always were viewed with a kind of mistrust when compared to agriculture. Following this argument, trustworthy prosperity

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[305] "If the farmer is pleased with the tree bearing fruit, if the shepherd takes pleasure from the offspring of his flocks, (…) what do you believe those who have trained a young mind feel, when they see it suddenly come to maturity?" For a view on the economic role of caprines in Roman Italy, vide Mackinnon 2004.
[306] On farming taxation (264-49 B.C.), vide Tan 2017 40-67.

lay in the farms and the farmer was therefore the pillar of all social systems. As a consequence, the farmer or, to be more precise, the semantics of the images constructed from the farmer's activities, would have generated a kind of linguistic imagery of meaning. The resulting semantic values were reflected in traditional thought, and the image of the farmer would engender a symbol compounded of a group of signs of meaning (vide Chap. 3.1).[307]

Cato explained the ideal image associated with the farmer, stating (Cato *Agr. pr.*2-3):

Et virum bonum quom laudabant, ita laudabant: bonum agricolam[308] bonumque colonum; *amplissime laudari existimabatur qui ita laudabatur.*

"And when they praise a good man, they laud him in this manner: 'good husbandman' or 'good farmer'. One so praised received the greatest tributes."

Cato explicitly voices the idea commonly accepted, at least amongst the Roman aristocracy, that the farmer is a moral ideal (vide infra). In fact, aristocrats would have been the main target of his *De agri cultura,* which may present a problem given that literary language is used to identify popular linguistic symbols: it apparently cannot reflect what the common man in the illiterate rural world would have thought or believed.[309] However, it is important to point out that the information there could easily have be directed towards the practices of owners of small properties, tenants, bailiffs (*vilicus*) and slaves. In fact, this is a recurring issue in all the ancient texts that served as sources for this study. However, I would argue that the artificiality of literary language is a 'non-problem', since the image of the good farmer is a cultural construct which predates any literary references. In this sense, all individuals would have been aware of it or, at the very least, anyone who knew the agricultural world would have recognized the images in its pluri-linguistic spectrum. Their understanding would have depended solely on abstract ideas, not previous knowledge of the literary metaphor. The image would have been generalized, since everybody would have immediately and spontaneously recognized the abstract meaning of '*bonum agricolam*' without the need for any kind of inquiry into the compound processes involved in the farmer's work.

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[307] Spanier's (2010) thesis is very accurate, although I have not followed his political and rhetorical approach to the works of Cato, Varro and Columella as it is not suitable for a prosopographic approach to Roman culture through literature.

[308] For a debate on the literary origin of *bonus agricola,* vide Spanier 2010 42-98.

[309] On the aristocratic representation of Roman owners by Cato and his definition of himself as an aristocratic farmer, vide Reay 2005.

3.2.1. The value of rustic hands: wisdom, resistance, morality and labour

3.2.1.1. The farmer and the signs of meaning: between reality and symbolic language

Given that Cato's statement quoted above (Cato *Agr. pr.* 2-3) includes a symbol based on traditional signs and that labour is one of the signs of meaning included in it, it may be affirmed that labour was traditionally recognised as 'character building' (Col. 11.1.26):

> *nam illud verum est M. Catonis oraculum: Nihil agendo homines male agere discunt.*

"Indeed, that oracular saying of M. Cato is true 'By doing nothing men learn to do evil'."[310]

Columella's assumption is reinforced by a crystalized metaphor that defines the farmer as the traditionally honest and wise worker, since all his profits come from the earth and his hard work, supported by his empirical knowledge of the natural world,[311] and are therefore deserved (cf. Cato *Agr. pr.* 2-3). In addition, the farmer endures and prevails even when conditions are hard and this is achieved through his work and awareness of the nature of his labour (Verg. *G.* 4.127-33):

> *Corycium vidisse senem, cui pauca relicti*
> *iugera[312] ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuvencis*
> *nec pecori opportuna seges nec commoda Baccho.*
> *hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum*
> *lilia verbenasque premens vescumque papaver*
> *regum aequabat opes animis, seraque revertens*
> *nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.[313]*

> "I saw old a Corycian that just counted on a few
> acres of rural land, not fruitful for bullocks,

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[310] Cf. Var. *R.* 2.1.1-6: *Viri magni nostri maiores non sine causa praeponebant rusticos Romanos urbanis, ut ruri enim qui in villa vivunt ignaviores, quam qui in agro versantur in aliquo opere faciendo, sic qui in oppido sederent, quam qui rura colerent, desidiosiores putabant.* "Our ancestors, not without reason, put the rustic Romans ahead of the urban Romans. For, indeed, in the country, those who live in the villas are lazier than those who are engaged in carrying out work in the fields, so they thought that those who live in town were more indolent than those who dwelt in the country" (cf. Col. 1.*pr.*17.9-11).

[311] White 2013 195-199 presents some examples of metaphors based on the traditional image of the farmer frequently used in Greek literature.

[312] Vide Col. *Arb.* 4.2-3.

[313] Cf. Verg. *G.* 1.60-66. Vide Henderson's 2004 128 commentary on this passage. On the theme of labour in the *Georgica,* vide Quartarone 1996 104-236. I have not examined the theme of labour in Virgil in great detail as it has been extensively studied in dissertations such as those by Schott 1994 and Siciliano 1999.

no good for the herd, nor suitable for wine.

Still, here between brambles, he had in rows

white lilies in a ring, vervain and a few poppies.

He equalled the wealth of kings in essence, when later at night,

 having returned home, he covered his tables with unbought feasts."

Despite the disadvantages of the site, the old Corycian can produce a good harvest. Labour, together with skill, transforms the landscape and the association between an activity and its visual frame favours the construction of meaning based on an image that would have been crystalized in the collective mind, influencing language and abstract expression, as literature often shows.[314]

In terms of the literary character working the fields, a distinction must be made between the farmer and the owner or manager, such as the *vilicus*.[315] Symbolically speaking, apart from the coincidence of the signs of meaning associated with land and crops, there is no great immediate connection between the landowner and the farmer's work in terms of profit or the materiality of property. In other words, in the conjugation of signs of meaning based on common sense the symbol of the farmer is an image compounded by signs regardless of the social status or cultural assumptions associated with a particular professional activity. If the husbandman is a slave, he may not be representative of an 'artificial cultural symbol', but his activities reflect the signs of meaning underlying the symbology of the farmer.[316]

The Roman Empire was based on slavery. In fact, it may be said that slavery alone enabled Roman society to realise its achievements.[317] The percentage of independent labourers working on farms can only be surmised by guesswork [318] and there is no systematized information on the percentage of owners of small properties in the Italian Peninsula.[319] Slavery is an issue when the real perspective of farm owners regarding labour

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[314] For perspectives on the quantity and typology of labour during harvesting, vide Shaw 2013 3-47.

[315] On leadership of the workers in the fields and their expression in literature as loyal soldiers following models of behaviour given by a good *vilicus*, vide Col. 11.1.17-18. Cf. Cato *Agr. pr*. 4.

[316] On the Roman 'slave institution', vide Harris 2011 57-112.

[317] "Early in the *De Agri cultura*, then, Cato unequivocally discriminates between the work of the *dominus / pater familias* (sizing up the *status quo* of the farm, questioning the *vilicus*, etc.) and the work that others could, and presumably actually did, perform" (Reay 2005).

[318] On the concept of freedom in the imperial Roman socio-economic context, vide Mirkovic 1997 and Fabre 1981.

[319] Vide Kron 2008 on production on small farms and also Rathbone 2008, Gualtieri 2008, Rich 2008 and Roselaar 2008. Vide also a survey of the Sabinian region of the Tiber in Di Giuseppe, Sansoni, Williams and Witcher 2002.

and the social role and opinions of the farmer who did not own property have to be considered. I would argue that the image of the farmer is independent of the reality of the Roman citizen who was the owner of great villas or *latifundia,* and the actual status of the person who worked in the fields as a citizen, freeman or slave.[320] The reference for the symbolic image is not directly generated by professional or social activity per se, but by the symbolic values implied in the work of the farmer, i.e. his tasks. The farmer is in touch with nature and makes it grow by his labour;[321] at the same time, his work establishes the 'know how' for cultivating and maintaining life through sowing and harvesting. Thus, in some aspects the farmer is an entity with a kind of semi-divine power whose main attribute is the gift of creation and the wisdom of his 'practical expertise' in such extraordinary matters. Therefore, it can be said that the traditional linguistic symbol is not connected with the reality of a concrete real life, or with the materiality of the condition of an individual, but with a crystalized image that framed an activity and its results on the landscape. In other words, the idea of the 'famer' in traditional abstract thinking has no connection with the concept of a real person and historical life experience.

For example, there is a kind of morality in the symbol of a man who works the fields, as suggested above. However, when referring to this symbol, the ancient authors would not have been thinking of a slave working the fields. The farmer as an image which represents an activity is a compounding of signs of meaning and not a factual symbol of a worker. The symbolic construction depends on the abstract context that receives and processes these signs of meaning in order to generate or explain a more complex symbol. In other words, culture constructs the symbol and the framed landscape generates the signs of meaning.

In contrasting the man who owns his production and life with the slave, Columella notes the responsibilities of the freeman. A tenant that takes a leased field works it better, as he will manage the produce efficiently and, as a professional farmer, will take a good care of the administration of the farm. Meanwhile the slave will only look for profit for himself and cause damage by mismanagement, knowing that the produce and the farm do not belong to him (cf. Col. 1.7.6-7). Comparing the two types of workers and assuming that the slave would not be the best worker for a farm, Columella emphasises the special relationship that a farmer has with the land, even if it is not his own property. However, Columella's

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[320] I have not examined economic issues in farming, such as the labour force. For a discussion, especially regarding Roman Northern Africa, vide Shaw 2013 48-92.
[321] Cf. Col. 10.1.1.139-149; vide Chap. 4.2.

assumption is based on a cultural symbol associated with social behaviour and not a crystalized representation of the activity. It is the preconception of the behaviour of the slave that provides the grounds for considering him unsuitable for farming, but this has nothing to do with the visual representation of the activity.

Given the lack of archaeological evidence of villas such as those described by Varro,[322] it has been emphasised that most of the agronomists' instructional texts reflect an idealised rather than a precise description of how things were done in practice (Roth 2007). In other words, they would not have represented the general economic activity accurately, nor its visual manifestations in the landscape. Even if we disagree with such assumptions, since it is hard to admit artificiality in these texts solely on the basis of a lack of archaeological remains, it should be accepted that the explicit portrait presented in the writings of the agronomists is an idealised view of life in the Roman countryside. However, I would disagree with the general idea that the Roman senator, the supposed 'gentleman farmer', is the main subject of the descriptions which appear in the Latin instructions on farming since, as previously stated, the connection between the farmer and the natural world transcends any identification of his *status quo* or defence of the traditional *mors maiorum*. The aristocrat is the receptor of the traditional image, but he does not precede it. Moreover, it is aristocratic discourse that attempts to associate the traditional image with an idealized and politicized farmer symbol: there was great potential for using agricultural allegories in public speech or, more precisely, political rhetoric and this must therefore be expected (cf. Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*4.7),[323] although it is based on a common sense postulated by tradition. I tend to believe that the association between the 'farmer of the instructions' and the Roman aristocrat is based not only on assumptions concerning property and good management, but also on preconceptions of the social status of the authors and their political activity.[324] Modern readers tend to ignore the fact that the main object reflected in these texts is the practice of agriculture and its optimization in terms of effort and profit. When empirical matters are debated in the texts the farmer is not a character but an 'undescribed figure' whose presence is evident in the activities that are described. Therefore, he does not represent a person, only an activity in its purest empirical and visual manifestation.

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[322] Vide the examples of agricultural territories in Goodchild 2007 78-120.

[323] Connors 1997 comments on some examples of agriculture as subjects and stylistic resources in rhetoric.

[324] Lelle and Gold 1994 2 note the following: "Columella, unlike Cato, Varro, and Pliny, was a professional agriculturalist who had little involvement in affairs of state. Columella is essentially about the trees and cultivation techniques concerning him."

As previously mentioned, it is the representation of farming activity that serves as the source for an abstractly constructed image that featured in the linguistic spectrum of the ancient speaker. Working the land by ploughing and tilling is a compelling example of how a concrete activity and its results can be crystalized into a meaning applicable in a variety of expressive contexts. Columella uses Virgil's metaphor of the ploughman's *imitatio* of nature in his attempt to transform bad soil into perfect soil for crops (Col. 5.4.2.5-6):[325]

Quae tamen ipsa paene supervacua est his locis, quibus solum putre et per se resolutum est:

'namque hoc imitamur arando' ut ait Vergilius, id est etiam pastinando.

"Which indeed is superfluous in places where the soil is rotten and quality lost, for, as Virgil says: 'this is what we imitate by ploughing'. In fact, that is to say by trenching."

It is possible to identify an unexpressed idea in this passage. The farmer is not only the best worker; he is the worker 'par excellence' in comparison to other individuals because, in realising the potential of nature, he is a reference for attitudes towards labour and life. As previously observed, the farmer behaves like a supernatural entity, generating life not only by manipulating nature but also by literally imitating its procedures. The intention of the author is to extract meaning from an image which refers to the activity. The symbol that is generated is a 'potential' metaphor but prior to being used as such, it is a compounded image. In other words, the ploughman tries to restore the potential for growth which nature has neglected (Col. 10.1.68-74).

The general preconception of the farmer's activities supports the argument that the farmer was represented in linguistic thought in the way Varro describes (Var. *R*. 2.1.1-6), since the farmer's labour implies obedient sacrifice to the will of nature, regardless of his strength or ability to bear the burden of a hard life.[326] Without dedication, the land will not bear fruit; therefore, the farmer must keep his hands and eyes on the fields in order to provide what is needed.

This kind of existential behaviour implies an extraordinary responsibility and a number of qualities. The most immediate symbol created from these special skills and activities is that of the diligent working man. In fact, this symbol is easily recognisable in common sense.

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[325] On the technical practice and the tools of ploughing and reaping in the Roman context, vide Shaw 2013 120-147.

[326] Cf. St. Augustine's metaphor on the hard life of the farmer (August. *C. D*. 22.22).

It combines the signs for work, hardship, crops and craft. Literature simply rearranges the signs of meaning to transmit a symbol that is dependent on context but still maintains a connection with an empirical agricultural framework (Col. 11.1.8):

Quippe aliqua sunt opera tantummodo virium tamquam promovendi onera portandique, aliqua etiam sociata viribus et arti, ut fodiendi arandique, ut segetes et prata desecandi; nonnullis minus virium, plus artis adhibetur, sicut putationibus insitionibusque vineti; plurimum etiam scientia pollet in aliquibus, ut in pastione pecoris.

"Indeed the nature of each task must be taken into consideration: as much as some jobs just require strength, such as the moving and carrying of heavy loads, likewise others require a combination of strength and skill, as in digging and ploughing, harvesting crops and clearing meadows; and in some less strength and more craft is employed, as in the pruning and grafting in a vineyard, and furthermore, some knowledge of feeding and, at the same time, doctoring of cattle is crucial."

Skill and physical aptitude are necessary in order to be considered a capable farmer (cf. Col. 11.1.7). This reinforces the symbol of the great working man evident in Columella's commentary on forcing a man that is not fit for farming. The farmer symbol acknowledges the following: working the soil is hard and involves craft and dedication; agricultural labour is hard work that requires a combination of skill and strength (Col. 3.10.6-7).

A large part of Columella's commentaries on the skills required for farming does not concern metaphorical language. Usually they are just commentaries that recall a characteristic of the farmer probably derived from common sense: the farmer must be a capable person, otherwise he cannot do his job properly or, in other words, would not be a farmer.[327] Concerning the qualities of the workers in the fields, particularly the *vilicus*, Columella reinforces the idea that the best *vilicus* should have a combination of physical strength and experience (Col. 11.1.3):

Vilicum fundo familiaeque praeponi convenit aetatis nec primae nec ultimae. Nam servitia sic tirunculum contemnunt ut senem, quoniam alter nondum novit opera ruris, alter exsequi iam non potest, atque hunc adulescentia neglegentem, senectus illum facit pigrum.

"It is best that a vilicus in charge of the farm and the household is neither in the first nor in the last stage of life. For slaves disdain a young beginner as much as an old man, because

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[327] Cf. Columella's sententious quotation from Xenophon (*Oec.* 22.16) on the best worker.

one has not yet learned about agricultural work and the other can no longer manage it; moreover, youth makes the beginner careless, while age makes the old man slow." [328]

Obviously, the *vilicus* is not exactly a farmer, so it is an extrapolation to consider this professional activity a direct reflection of the traditional farmer symbology. However, the *vilicus* is part of the farming world and therefore must reflect the qualities required for transforming land into productive fields. The two signs of the farmer, namely 'craft' and 'hard work' are mentioned, but need to be balanced. Wisdom tends to come with experience and experience comes with age, although age also undermines the ability to apply knowledge to physical endeavours, as the body has to be prepared for the hard work needed for farming activities. Therefore, the farmer should be neither too young nor too old to work efficiently (cf. Col. 11.1.3). The description of the ideal worker reveals an image which, despite being idealized, corresponds to a kind of reality identifiable by observation. The resulting signs for the image of the activity in this textual example would be 'strength', 'work' and 'craft'. Those signs can create abstract language expressed through compounded symbols such as 'resistance' and 'knowledge of natural things'. This refers to a servant, not an ideal farmer (cf. Col. 11.1.4), [329] although it can be extended to owners of small farms or simply to individual workers and the image their work generates in the collective mind.

Thus, according to Columella's assumptions regarding physical and mental fitness, the middle-aged man seems to be the ideal person for farm work. Knowledge (the sign for craft) and physical strength (the sign for 'labour' + 'strength') are required to succeed in agriculture. The *vilicus* should be an example to the servants, so that they can imitate his skills and attitude to work (cf. Col. 11.1.14-15).

The empirical experience that provides the grounds for the idea of the farmer as a superior individual in terms of work and attitudes to nature leads to idealization.[330] However, it is important to note that the factual social status of the farmer is not discussed in the instructions. Instead, by approaching the activity, the instructions show signs of meaning associated with the farmer's framework that can be transposed to symbolic language and therefore justify the traditional symbol of the farmer.

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[328] Cf. Col. 11.1.8. On the vilicus, vide also Cato *Agr.* 2.1-2.2.
[329] Columella insists that the vilicus needs knowledge of the craft in Col. 11.1.4.
[330] For a study on the idealization of rustic life in Roman agronomy, vide Wine 1985.

The ideal image of the farmer based on a compounding of signs of meaning from an empirical image may constitute a linguistic aid to defining social morality. For example, the man who steers the plough and suffers the vicissitudes of hard work may also sometimes suffer from exploitation and dishonesty, which would reflect social corruption, as can be seen in Cicero's angry speech *In Verem*. Cicero comments on the exploitation and the injustice of depriving the worker of his own produce, after all his efforts (Cic. *Ver.* 2.3.27.5):

(…) *tu de optimo, de iustissimo, de honestissimo genere hominum, hoc est de aratoribus, ea iura constituebas quae omnibus aliis essent contraria?*

"Would you (despoil) one of the worthiest, the fairest and most honest of humankind, the man from the farming class, and allocate his rights to those that in all senses are his opposite?"

The exploitation of the farmer is the greatest injustice in society because of his value to the community and those who exploit farmers are the worst and most dishonest men of all. In this scale of opposites - the worst versus the best - the extremes of a social value can be identified on both sides, with the farmer defined as the good man 'par excellence'. He is a benign element in the world, since he is an individual who dedicates himself to the work of the land and to producing goods needed by the community. When the farmer is attacked in some way, the whole of society is threatened because the image of productive fields is destroyed (Cic. *Ver.* 2.3.27.10-28.1):

qui singulis iugis arant, qui ab opere ipsi non recedunt, – quo in numero magnus ante te praetorem numerus ac magna multitudo Siculorum fuit, – quid facient cum dederint Apronio quod poposcerit? Relinquent arationes, relinquent Larem familiarem suum?

"Those (farmers) who plough with a single yoke of oxen, and do not abandon their work – a great number and a large number of the Sicilians belonged to this class, before you became governor – what shall they do when they have handed over to Apronius what he demanded? Shall they leave their fields and homes?"

When farmers have to leave their land, this is a sign of a deteriorating society (cf. Cic. *Ver.* 2.3.27.10-28.1). It inevitably means a loss of value for the whole social community, even if the farmers only have 'a single yoke of oxen' (*qui singulis iugis arant*) or, in other words, are not great landowners, but instead are hard workers, as can be assumed from Cicero's *In Verrem*.

152

Considering the simple symbol present in popular ideas and expressed in political speech, it should not be forgotten that the state's revenue was very closely tied to the cultivation of land and therefore state policies could interfere directly in the production/property dichotomy through legislation.[331] Thus, considering what would have been a general assumption when composing an *apologia* for agricultural activities, Cicero deploys a kind of propaganda that promotes harmony and peace in the state, although care must be taken not to make too many assumptions from a text of this nature and from the image presented in *In Verrem.*

It seems that the Romans had a long tradition of identifying the farmer as the good citizen and consequently there was great potential for analogies with the good statesman. For the established political elite, farming and herding represented the traditional, original occupations associated with Roman identity and way of life (cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.63). This could, in fact, have played a role in propaganda and affirmation of status, as it was considered a source of authority for the ruling classes. The reason is simple: they owned land and their property provided wealth for the state (cf. Var. *R.* 2. *pr.* 4.7, Cato *Agr.* 2; vide supra).[332] The examples of Cato and Varro cannot be ignored, since they were important statesmen, from illustrious, families who wrote about agriculture.[333] However, I will not pursue this discussion, as it has more to do with hermeneutical analysis and the political context of the texts than with traditional thinking based on common sense.

Extending the value from the individual to the identity of the people and thus to a cultural value, Kapteyn (2015 22-23) comments that "The association between husbandry and Roman identity noted by Cato himself were co-opted into political rhetoric as Rome as a city grew larger and more important and Rome as a state grew more powerful and – in the opinions of some – more corrupt. The traditional way of Roman life, spent in the fields rather than the forum, was held up as one of moral supremacy, the way to counteract moral decay."

Kapteyn's statement implies a profound consideration of the social value of agricultural work, rather than an intuitive interaction between meaning and abstract image. However, Kapteyn's commentaries on Cato's social criticism are based on traditional presumptions, i.e. the same prejudgments that gave meaning to the symbolic image of the farmer in an

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[331] Kosso 1993 presents a study on this subject in Late Roman Greece, which justifies the state's interference and attempts to influence the rural economy on a global scale.

[332] On the state/production relationship in the Roman agrarian economy, vide Kehoe 2013. On the relationship between food and politics, vide Garnsey 1999 198-217.

[333] On the relationship between Cato's writings on agriculture and his aristocratic role, vide Reay 2005.

aristocratic context. Thus, the criticism would have been based on traditional assumptions concerning farming activities as opposed to the empirical social reality: who the land owner really is rather than what kind of person a farmer should be. In other words, owning a farm was one thing and farming was another.

I also believe that Kapteyn reveals a more spontaneous meaning in the text in stating: "Through this ideological process, rural spaces – fields and pastures –become landscapes of morality, spaces opposed to the decadence and turpitude of the increasingly cosmopolitan city, even as the statesman farmer, who serves the state when needed and cultivates his field the remainder of his time, is idealized as the model Roman citizen, a moral and political exemplar. In this way, Cincinnatus and Dentatus become paradigms of the Roman statesmen farmers for Cato the Elder, who participates in the complex of ideologies surrounding farming in his *de Agri cultura* when he equates agriculture with morality and the farmer with bravery and stability, and who uses his treatise to establish himself as in line with the *maiores* and their rural traditions" (Kapteyn 2015 23).

I would argue that the meaning of the symbol of the farmer predates the growth of Rome and is a complementary part of the cultural matrix, since the entire society was constructed upon it. Although Kapteyn may be right about Cato's objectives, he is not referring to something that Cato's culture would have taken for granted: the value of farming as opposed to other occupations (vide supra). In other words, the moral value of farming is not based on the figure of the nobleman who preferred his farm to city life; the value lies in the activity itself and the goodness of the individual who chooses it as a way of life. This may explain the reason for the traditional metaphor of the honest worker, since all his profits come from the earth and his hard work, and are therefore deserved.[334]

The symbolic value of the farmer also lies in his capacity to change the nature of things, in order to reap benefits from the soil (Var. *R. 2. pr.* 4.7):

Armentum enim id quod in agro natum non creat, sed tollit dentibus. Contra bos domitus causa fit ut commodius nascatur frumentum in segete et pabulum in novali.

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[334] In the same sense, although referring to the *Georgica*, Spurr 1986 says: "Moreover, several of these topics such as the historical-moralising tradition of praising the past, when Rome was supposedly self-sufficient, not reliant on imported foodstuffs, when urban avarice, sloth, and luxury did not exist, and when ancestral moral and religious values were focused in the countryside, belong also to the tradition of the agricultural prose writers, as always an important key to the correct understanding of the *Georgica*."

"Certainly the herd do not produce what grows in the field, but tear it off with their teeth; in opposition, the domestic ox becomes the cause for the grain to grow easily in the ploughed land, and the fodder in the fallow land" (cf. Col. 5.4.2.5-6; Var. *R. 2. pr.* 5).

In this example, the farmer transforms herds which eat and destroy all the crops (cf. Col. 11.2.7-8; FI ll.1-7) into productive cattle. The farmer creates value where it had not existed before and therefore is the perfect producer and the best of men (Col. 11.29.5-30.1):

Res est agrestis insidiosissima cunctanti; quod ipsum expressius vetustissimus auctor Hesiodus hoc versu significavit: Αἰεὶ δ' ἀμβολιεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄταισι παλαίει. Quare vulgare illud de arborum positione rusticis usurpatum Serere ne dubites, id vilicus ad agri totum cultum referri iudicet credatque praetermissas non duodecim horas, sed annum perisse, nisi sua quaque die, quod instat, effecerit.

"For agriculture is very insidious to the dilatory man; something which the very author Hesiod has pointed out forcibly in this line through the very ancient expression: 'He who always delays wrestles with ruin' (Hes. *Op.* 413). Wherefore let he (*vilicus*) hold that the common opinion among rustic people about planting trees, 'the husbandmen never hesitate to plant,' extends to all farming, and let him know that not only twelve hours but a whole year has been lost if pressing work is not carried out on the proper day."

The processes associated with the farmer's craft may imply great hardship and therefore resilience is needed, in addition to an aptitude for labour. The farmer endures by suffering; despite being wise and good worker he is always dependent on nature and therefore must be aware of the misfortunes that natural phenomena can bring. This translates into the idea of accepting suffering and relying on hope (*invitae properes anni spem credere terrae*), in Ver. *G.* 1.219-224:

at si triticeam in messem robustaque farra

exercebis humum solisque instabis aristis,

ante tibi Eoae Atlantides abscondantur (cf. Col. 2.8.1-4)

Cnosiaque ardentis decedat stella Coronae,

debita quam sulcis committas semina quamque

invitae properes anni spem credere terrae.

"But if for a harvest of wheat and robust spelt,

or corn, you work the earth and stir the soil

before the Pleiades, daughters of Atlas, became invisible to you,

and the Star of Knossos, the shining Northern Crown, retires

to the furrows the seed that belongs to them

and entrusts to the reluctant earth the hope of a year."

The farmer understands the cosmos and knows how the constellations behave, since he must adapt to them (vide infra). Yet, as these lines show, knowledge and dedication are not enough and there is a great reliance on hope, always sustained by work. The uncertainty of nature defines the high risks involved in agricultural work and the insecurity of a life which depends on it. In short, farmers are particularly resistant to adversity as they are used to struggling with different threats, especially those which come from the unstoppable power of nature (cf. Col. 10.1.329-341, 11.3.63-64; Verg. *G.* 1.311-50). It is in that sense that Virgil presents the farmer as a warrior who fights all kinds of enemies with weapons that bring life instead of death (Ver. *G.* 1.160-168):

Dicendum et quae sint duris agrestibus arma,

quis sine nec potuere seri nec surgere messes:

vomis et inflexi primum grave robur aratri,

tardaque Eleusinae matris volventia plaustra,

tribulaque traheaeque et iniquo pondere rastri;

virgea praeterea Celei vilisque supellex,

arbuteae crates et mystica vannus Iacchi;

omnia quae multo ante memor provisa repones,

si te digna manet divini gloria ruris.

"Also, I must say how vigorous the weapons of the rustic people are,

without which the crops could not be sown or sprouted:

first the plough and the curved share's solid board,

and carts of the Eleusina Mother rolling slowly,

threshing-sledges and drags and hoes with great weight;

beyond this, the lighter implements of rods of Celeo,

the hurdles of arbutus and the winnow of Iaccho's secret rites.

you will store all of these, thinking ahead with foresight,

if the glory proper of a divine farm is to stay yours."

The metaphor of the farmer warrior reflects the adversities of nature, since there are problems that are part of the natural flow of events, which the farmer must understand and master through work and craft. They are part of the framework within which the farmer is represented, which means that they generate signs of meaning that are part of the farmer symbol (Ver. *G.* 1.178-186):

area cum primis ingenti aequanda cylindro

et vertenda manu et creta solidanda tenaci,

ne subeant herbae neu pulvere victa fatiscat,

tum uariae inludant pestes: saepe exiguus mus

sub terris posuitque domos atque horrea fecit,

aut oculis capti fodere cubilia talpae,

inventusque cavis bufo et quae plurima terrae

monstra ferunt, populatque ingentem farris acervum

curculio atque inopi metuens formica senectae.

"First, your threshing floor must be levelled with a heavy roller

and worked by hand, then made solid with firm chalk

so that the weeds do not cover it, crumbling it to dust.

And then various plagues will mock you: often a small mouse

will make its nest underground and hoard grain,

or moles, deprived of vision, excavate tunnels and nests;[335]

the toad lurks in holes, and the horde of monsters that scuttle

forth from the earth,[336] and the weevil that devours a great quantity

of grain, as does the ant, fearing the weakness of old age."[337]

In the face of such adversities, the farmer is a soldier although instead of killing, he gives life. The description of the difficulties faced by the farmer provides the basis for the symbol of the farmer, since these hardships are common sense within the cultural matrix. Difficulties and the knowledge of how to overcome them bring wisdom through an understanding of natural phenomena.[338] At the same time, these hardships inspire a constructive reaction to

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[335] Cf. Palladius, *Opus Agriculturae* 1.35.16.
[336] Cf. Col. *Arb.* 20.2.
[337] Cf. the disasters mentioned by Columella in *Arb.* 14-15.
[338] See Catto 1981 288-90: "In the fourth Book Virgil in passing mentions gardens and recalls an old Corycian gardener who had great success not only with bees but with all other things as well. (...) This humble old man

natural phenomena by linking the famer's craft to processes in the natural world. In fact, it may be said that it is not resistance, but assimilation that results in survival and profit (Verg. *G.* 1.300-301):

frigoribus parto agricolae plerumque fruuntur

mutuaque inter se laeti convivia curant.

"During cold weather farmers mainly enjoy their produce,

and share it together in cheerful company."

Thus, farmers are able to enjoy their brief leisure time – even though they still have to work in the winter (cf. Ver. *G.* 4.134-143). The opportunity to enjoy the harvest is due to their previous, steady labour (Verg. *G.* 2.35-38):

Quare agite o proprios generatim discite cultus,

agricolae, fructusque feros mollite colendo,

neu segnes iaceant terrae. (...)

"Therefore, you till the land, oh learn the way of growing

according to species and tame wild fruits with gardening.

Do not let your fields lie fallow. (…)"

The figure of the farmer as a symbol of the producer is common sense and is identifiable in the instructional texts through the procedures described and also in the metaphorical language of literature. For example, in order to create a metaphor to describe his rhetorical technique, Pliny the Younger (C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus) uses the farmer's techniques for improving production and overcoming difficulties through avoidance and resistance (Plin. *Ep*. 1.20):

Vtque in cultura agri non vineas tantum, verum etiam arbusta, nec arbusta tantum verum etiam campos curo et exerceo, utque in ipsis campis non far aut siliginem solam, sed hordeum fabam ceteraque legumina sero, sic in actione plura quasi semina latius spargo, ut quae provenerint colligam. Neque enim minus imperspicua incerta fallacia sunt iudicum ingenia quam tempestatum terrarumque.[339]

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is, then, the unexpected hero of this agricultural story. He is the exemplification of Vergil's motto of man's glorification through the humility of labour. He lives in harmony with nature because he understands the nature of his particular soil and has acted accordingly, using it to its best advantage"; cf. Verg. *G.* 4.125-146).

[339] Cf. Cic. De *Orat*. 2.89, 2.96, 2.130-131; Var. *R*. 1.29.1; Tac. *Dial*. 40.4; vide also Tacitus' metaphor comparing oratory to uncultivated plants (Tac. *Dial*. 6.6).

"With agrarian land, as with vineyards, I take care and oversee my fruit trees and fields, and in the fields, as well as spelt and siligo, I sow barley, beans and other legumes; so when I am making a speech I sprinkle various ideas around like seeds in order to assemble whatever crop comes forth. There are as many obscure and uncertain artifices in the minds of judges as there are in the uncertainties of weather and soil."

Obviously, this is metaphorical language and not an example of traditional thought, but the image that serves as the basis for the metaphor comes from the common sense that identifies signs of meaning in the agricultural landscape and this framework is described in the Latin instructional texts.

The value of the farmer and his endurance are not simply the result of an emotional / physical hardiness developed by the arduous nature of his work; they are also generated by an acceptance of difficulties and the capacity to work hard to overcome them (Ver. *G.* 1.118-121):[340]

> *Nec tamen, haec cum sint hominumque bovumque labores*
>
> *versando terram experti, nihil improbus anser*
>
> *Strymoniaeque grues et amaris intiba fibris*
>
> *officiunt aut umbra nocet.* (…) (cf. Lucr. 2.1160-1167)
>
> "Despite the efforts of man and beast
>
> to till the earth: the insistent geese
>
> and the Strymon cranes and the bitter roots of chicory,
>
> and the hurtful shadow cause damage. (…)"

In fact, considering the hermeneutics of Virgil's text, the natural processes of the life cycle compete with the farmer's creative labour, as if two supernatural entities were working within the same frame (Verg. *G.* 1.121-124):

> (…) *pater ipse colendi*
>
> *haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem*
>
> *movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda*

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[340] In addition to all the difficulties of his work, the farmer lives a lonely life, precisely because he is outside urban space. In the Roman context, comparing city life with rural life this may be considered a value, but at the same time a hardship, given all the implied comforts of urban life (cf. Col. 8.11.1).

nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.[341]

"(…) The Father himself willed

that husbandry would not be easy at all, and he was the first, through art,

to stir the fields, exciting mortal hearts with worries,

not letting his kingdoms sink into a heavy torpor."

An understandable, albeit literary, language is possible because the signs of meaning are known. The symbol for resilience, generated from the image of the farmer, is dependent on observation of farming the landscape and the information contained in these verses does not concern mythological narrative. Using symbolic language, Virgil defines the hardship that is completely unavoidable, since it has been ordained by the gods or by nature itself.

The symbol of the farmer as the good man uses 'hard work', 'wisdom' and 'steadfast dedication to labour' as its semantic markers. Clearly, it also implies a kind of a pessimistic perspective on farming life, since the good man has to endure all kinds of suffering in order to merit this title. Kronenberg (2009 94) notes this possible interpretation of the *Georgica* stating: "The cycles of pessimism and optimism in the *Georgica* show that the farmer's attempts to order the world are never permanent accomplishments because they try to shape nature into something it is not." Kronenberg's argument is persuasive (2009 183) but it is possible to find a more profound but simple landscape of meaning in the apparent pessimism of the *Georgica*: hardships and the capacity to overcome them. Therefore, it may be said that the *Georgica* portrays the resistant farmer who struggles against adversity and failure, probably because there is no other way due to the laws of nature, but in the end overcomes them. From sunrise to sunset, year by year, the farmer must continue his work (cf. Verg. *G.* 2.399-412) as if he was part of a natural process, acting in accordance with the life cycle and responding to hardships by constantly labouring, but achieving his aims (Ver. *G.* 2.513-518):

Agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro:

hic anni labor, hinc patriam parvosque nepotes

sustinet, hinc armenta boum meritosque iuvencos.

nec requies, quin aut pomis exuberet annus

aut fetu pecorum aut Cerealis mergite culmi,

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[341] Cf. Ver. *G.* 1.118-121. Vide Siciliano's (1999 51-67) commentary on this passage.

proventuque oneret sulcos atque horrea vincat.[342]

"The farmer has opened the soil with his curved plough:

the year's work depends on it; with this, he supports his fatherland and his little grandchildren;

and also the herds of cows and worthy steers.

Without rest, indeed the season abounds in fruits,

and new calves and lambs, or sheaves of Ceres' grain

packing the furrows in spring and filling the granaries."

Harmony with nature reflects a balanced landscape and knowledge of the natural phenomena. As noted by Catto (1981 257), "The *durus agrestis*, then, must exercise *dura imperia* over the earth. Unlike in Lucretius, to whom *Natura* was the supreme force to which man had to patiently submit, here the earth, part of the larger *natura*, is subordinate to the efforts of man. Without man's aid earth is infertile, at least from the human perspective. The earth's infertility is not, as in Lucretius, one manifestation of the impersonal, uncaring workings of *Natura*." Resistance is therefore one of the symbols that may form part of the abstract image of the farmer, since he empowers nature through work. In the end, all the symbolic language that can be composed from the symbol of the farmer is based on the signs of meaning derived from an activity crystalized in an image.

3.2.1.2. The path to understanding natural phenomena and productivity

As previously stated, the farmer that works with nature understands it through his labour, which means that character of the farmer connects economic activities with the natural world. The essential knowledge implied in farming and its value for ancient societies suggests that tradition would recognise the farmer as someone who understood the universe, followed the rhythm of the seasons and elements and was aware of the unpredictability of the natural world (cf. Verg. *G.* 1.121-124, vide supra). Symbolically speaking, the farmer is patient and resilient, and associated with the simplest and, at the same time, most profound knowledge, since nature rules the surrounding universe and he knows this through his senses.

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[342] Cf. Lucr. 5.206-5.217. Vide Siciliano's commentary (1999 68-93) on Virgil's perspectives on labour in Verg. *G.* 2.458-549.

Columella notes this, stating that agriculture is almost synonymous with 'building knowledge' (Col. 1.*pr*.4.6-5.1):

(...) denique animi sibi quisque formatorem praeceptoremque virtutis e coetu sapientium arcessat, sola res rustica, quae sine dubitatione proxima et quasi consanguinea sapientiae est, tam discentibus egeat quam magistris.

"(…) and then, everyone calls on the company of the wise a man to fashion his intellect and instruct him in virtue; but agriculture alone, which is without doubt most closely related and almost a sister to wisdom, lacks learners and also teachers."[343]

As Columella says, while there are schools for all kinds of studies and even schools of vices or vanities (Col. 1.*pr*.5-6), there are few self-professed teachers or students of agriculture. Of course this is not a factual truth but belongs to the world of rhetoric:[344] there are several known Latin instructional texts on farming and therefore it was taught, at least to those who had access to them. Columella notes how hard it is to find the necessary commitment to farming in order to learn and teach it properly, probably because of the hardships associated with the activity, but also due to the need for knowledge of the very different aspects of the relationship between the practicalities of agriculture and the natural world. Columella's idea that agriculture is profoundly linked to the concept of wisdom (*quae sine dubitatione proxima et quasi consanguinea sapientiae est*)[345] is to some extent a generalised assumption in Latin instructional texts which probably reflects 'social thinking'.[346]

A *vilicus* who has no connection with the specific nature of an area of land cannot exercise this wisdom. In order to produce, a farmer must understand nature and possess the different skills needed to work the land.[347] For example, amongst the Roman aristocracy,

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[343] Cf. the difficulties of teaching a good bailiff all the practicalities of farming in Col. 11.1.12.

[344] *Agricolationis neque doctores, qui se profiterentur, neque discipulos cognovi...* (Col. 1.*pr*.5.6).

[345] Regarding the assumptions that knowledge is a moral value, the idea of the wise man who is a good man by nature will not be discussed here, since philosophy and rhetoric have been discounted as sources for traditional semiotics. Vide Hitchcock 1985 for a commentary on the defence of knowledge as moral value in Plato's *Republic*. For a discussion on moral value and the intrinsic semantic value in the work of the farmer, vide Gale 2000 78-88.

[346] In this sense, Varro's approach to the theme of the wise farmer is even more specific than that of Cato (Roth 2007).

[347] Col. 11.1.12: *Verum tamen ut universae disciplinae vix aliquem consultum, sic plurimos partium eius invenias magistros, per quos efficere queas perfectum vilicum. Nam et arator reperiatur aliquis bonus et optimus fossor aut foeni sector nec minus arborator et uinitor, tum etiam ueterinarius et probus pastor, qui singuli rationem scientiae suae desideranti non subtrahant* "Nevertheless, there is scarcely anyone mastering the whole art, yet there are many masters of parts of it, with whom you can train the perfect bailiff (*vilicus*).

representing oneself as a farmer was a matter of pride and nobility, implying that the farmer could adjust to any kind of dignified activity because his activities had provided him with the essential wisdom and skills. Thus Columella tells the story of Quintius Cincinnatus who was summoned from his farm to the dictatorship in 458 B.C. to save the Roman army besieged by the Aequians in Algidus (Col. 1.*pr*.13-14). According to tradition, he then resigned and returned to his small farm after holding office for sixteen days (cf. Liv. 3.26-9). This refusal of power and the honour of serving the state with the greatest competence and without self-interest shows the value of the simple man, whose greatness lies in his modest ways and ambitions (cf. Col. 12.46.1.6-7). This is the behaviour of the ploughman, the noble worker who takes all that he needs from the land. Quinctius Cincinnatus was summoned from the plough to lead the state and he steered the army to victory, as one may assume he would have done with the beasts in the fields. Columella is attempting to glorify the man, but probably had no intention of creating an allegory on controlling the state and the plough. I prefer to interpret this passage in terms of the value ascribed to the man who is moulded by farming and learns how to apply this profession to his life. The skills needed for ploughing are traditionally known and based on common sense and can easily be imported as semantic signs for the symbol of the perfect statesman (vide infra).

This knowledge of agricultural activities and their positive impact on society seems to derive from the relationship between land and traditional farming practices, together with the skills used to sustain human culture (Col. 1.*pr*.6-7):

Cum etiam si praedictarum artium professoribus civitas egeret, tamen sicut apud priscos florere posset res publica – nam sine ludicris artibus atque etiam sine causidicis olim satis felices fuerunt futuraeque sunt urbes; at sine agri cultoribus nec consistere mortalis nec ali posse manifestum est.

"Still the common wealth could prosper as in the times of the ancients – for without the theatrical profession and also without pleaders, cities were once happy enough and will be so in the future; however it is clear that without farmers mankind can neither subsist nor be sustained."

For a good ploughman can be found and also an excellent digger or mower, and a pruner of trees and vinedresser, and then a veterinarian and a proper shepherd, and none of them would refuse to impart the principles of his art to one desirous of learning."

The farmer is an indispensable element of society: Roman cities were not self-sufficient and were highly dependent on agricultural production in rural areas (see Erdkamp 2005). In fact, this was the general rule with regard to the economy in Roman cities (Erdkamp 2001). Hence, farming knowledge was essential because it was needed to support society. This echoes the words of Varro´s character Scrofa, who that claims that farming is not only an art, but also a science that generates productivity (Var. *R.* 1.3).[348] In short, knowledge was imperative for good farming and future prosperity. Conversely, ignorance could be fatal in farming projects, since maintaining the fragile balance of the natural elements required skill and care (Col. 11.28):

Knowledge plays an important role in enquiring on nature. However, a philosophical approach has been avoided in this thesis because it would distort the traditional preconceptions by adding complex meanings based on individual reflection and specific cultural contexts. This is the main reason why I have not used Lucretius' *De rerum natura* as a source, despite its importance in Roman literature, Roman philosophical thought, attitudes toward the natural world and, in some aspects, its instructive approach to nature.[349] The idea contained in the language of the farmer as a symbol of pure wisdom extends beyond literary proposes; it may be converted into a metaphor or an analogy for philosophical or political speech, but it takes an observable reality as its source. In this sense, all kind of metaphors or allegories that have agricultural themes can be associated with original signs of meaning based on common sense. For example, Plato's allegory on writing (*Phdr.* 276d1-277a4), which uses techniques for growing crops as its reference point, recalls a universal image that draws on the signs of meaning for craft and crops to construct an analogy between agricultural production and the development of knowledge (Worman 2015; cf. Danzig 2003).

The farmer's knowledge enables him to survive disasters; his resilience and natural wisdom results in profit or personal fulfilment (Verg. *G.* 4.127-133).[350] In the Old Corycian passage, Virgil expresses the wisdom of accepting natural circumstances and moving on, in order to overcome them not by fighting them, but by adapting to them. Catto's (1981 288-90) commentary on the character of the old Coricyan gardener (Verg. *G.* 4.127-133) may be

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[348] *Ille non gravatus, Primum, inquit, non modo est ars, sed etiam necessaria ac magna; eaque est scientia, quae sint in quoque agro serenda ac facienda, quo terra maximos perpetuo reddat fructus.* On Scrofa as a character in *Res rusticae,* vide Nelsestuen 2011.

[349] On the concept of *natura* in Lucretius and its reflection in Virgil's *Georgica,* vide Catto 1981.

[350] Vide supra; cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.63.

considered to summarise what a good farmer meant for Virgil: "This humble old man is, then, the unexpected hero of this agricultural story. He is the exemplification of Virgil's motto of man's glorification through the humility of labour. He lives in harmony with nature because he understands the nature of his particular soil and has acted accordingly, using it to its best advantage." Ultimately, the wisdom implicit in the farmer's expertise and labour recompenses the man under the most unfavourable conditions. Essentially, the farmer's knowledge comes from experience, observation and symbiosis with nature and this enables him to transform the natural world into productive fields (Var. *R. 2. pr.* 5.1-4):

Coloni ea quae agri cultura factum ut nascerentur e terra (…)

"in that place of the husbandman where things are made to spring from the earth by cultivation of the land (…)"

Thus, the wise man can generate more with fewer resources, even if he is not looking for wealth, only sustenance (Verg. *G.* 4.134-143):

Primus vere rosam atque autumno carpere poma,

et cum tristis hiems etiamnum frigore saxa

rumperet et glacie cursus frenaret aquarum,

ille comam mollis iam tondebat hyacinthi

aestatem increpitans seram Zephyrosque morantis.

ergo apibus fetis idem atque examine multo

primus abundare et spumantia cogere pressis

mella favis; illi tiliae atque uberrima tinus,

quotque in flore novo pomis se fertilis arbos

induerat, totidem autumno matura tenebat.

"He was the first to pick roses in spring and apples in fall,

and when harsh winter had already broken the rocks

with its coldness and restrained the flow of water with ice,

he, at this time, was pruning the hyacinth's soft foliage,

challenging tardy summer and the dallying Zephyrus.

So, to be rich in productive bees and numerous swarms,

he was first, and when he pressed the honey-combs

he collected foaming honey, and also had lime trees and the most luxuriant pines;

as many fruits in new flower clothed his fertile trees,

so many had they during autumn's fullness."

An obvious conclusion can be drawn from one key statement: he was productive due to his hard work and acquired the knowledge that made him productive through the experience of tilling and harvesting. This seems to have been ignored by the Roman patricians, who delegated this knowledge to others (Col. 1.*pr*.12.1-4):

Nunc et ipsi praedia nostra colere dedignamur et nullius momenti ducimus peritissimum quemque vilicum facere vel, si nescium, certe vigoris experrecti, quo celerius, quod ignoret, addiscat.

"At present, we disdain tilling our lands ourselves, and we consider it of no importance to appoint someone who is very experienced as *vilicus* (bailiff) or, if he is inexperienced, one who is determined and active, so he may learn more quickly."

The value of agricultural knowledge should not be underestimated, and experience and dedication to learning are necessary. This notion is fundamental to what seems to have been traditional thought. Skills are needed to farm properly and agricultural labour develops the visual values implied in its signs of meaning in the worker. As Catto (1981 286) says: "The earth cooperates happily with man if he will expend labour. The result of this cooperation is fertility. The life of the farmer, though necessarily full of labour, is nonetheless one of plenty. Moreover, along with this plenty comes contentment with his life." This results in harmony and happiness, the perfect state of affairs which only a good working man can hope to achieve. The farmer carries this symbolic potential and the symbol is based on a simple and objective crystalized image that frames 'labour', 'crops', 'harvest', 'man' and 'natural cosmos'.

3.2.1.3. Labour as the path to traditional morality and social reality

Virgil commented on the good fortune of the farmer who lives far away from the battlefield (Verg. *G.* 2.458-460):

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,

agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis

fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.

"O farmers! If they knew how much luck they have,

being far removed from the quarrels of war,

where sustenance flows from the earth."[351]

When only farming is at stake, there is peace and harmony because life is ruled only by the laws of nature (Verg. *G.* 2.500-502):

Quos rami fructus, quos ipsa volentia rura

sponte tulere sua, carpsit, nec ferrea iura

insanumque forum aut populi tabularia vidit.

"The fruits of the branch, that the fields bring willingly and

Spontaneously, giving no thought to inflexible laws

and the madness of the marketplace or the public record."

Obviously, this is an idealised description, since farming is an activity that aims to provide subsistence and in the Roman state agriculture was often dependent on state control or the economic interests of landowners. Virgil's verses present a contrast between the natural world and human society. Life amidst all the worries of the city is not natural, and therefore not accepted as good. Nature, moving at its own pace, and the absence of artificiality, absorb the farmer into the natural cycle. The farmer is part of nature, lives according to its rules and can enjoy its fruits without becoming involved in the social struggle for survival. This, in fact, seems to be a characteristic of the *locus amoenus*, in some ways idealized by Virgil's images of the farmer and shepherd's lives (Verg. *G.* 2.467-471):

At secura quies et nescia fallere vita,

dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis,

speluncae vivique lacus, at frigida tempe

mugitusque boum mollesque sub arbore somni

non absunt; (…)

"Yet they rest free from care, a life ignorant of being deceived

and rich in various treasures; moreover, leisure is plentiful:

caverns, and lakes with life, and cool valleys,

the lowing of oxen, and the gentle slumbers

beneath the trees are not absent (…)"

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[351] Cf. the images that come from the '*Thessalia infelix*' in Lucans' *Bellum civile* of crops and fields covered in blood (Luc. 7.847-872; cf. Ambühl 2016).

However, such a picture is more than a literary *topus* (*locus amoenus*). Despite the highly idealized reality, it invokes a landscape of easy production and therefore of social harmony based on prosperity. Moreover, the signs that help to construct such scenario come from reality (cf. Col. 7.3.23). It is a reality that is certainly hard to achieve but still a potential reality: it does not matter whether it existed or not. Nature, together with the farmer's work, offers the means to make a prosperous landscape real. This assumption, based on labour, shows the rustic Roman as in some way superior to the rest of Roman society, although it cannot be considered to apply to the social status of the factual men who worked in the fields.

Spurr (1986) discusses the issue of the reliability of the *Georgica* in terms of understanding social reality by comparing it to Virgil's biography.[352] However, I am not sure that Virgil's life can be used to identify the specific prototype farmer created by Virgil. In fact, I would argue that Virgil is not aiming to describe any specific group of rustic people, just the activity, devoid of social implications, and this may be the reason why he does not refer to slavery. [353] He is referring to an abstract theme and not a concrete reality, and therefore it is not possible to agree totally with Spurr (1986) when he says: "Nevertheless the deliberate exclusion of slavery from the *Georgica* can only be seen as highly significant: the contrast with the contemporary assumptions of Varro, a large landowner, is striking. Virgil's lack of any direct discussion of slavery can only be seen as an example of his selectivity. There was nothing inherently poetic about agricultural slavery and thus it was an obvious choice for suppression. By convention also, slaves did not appear in serious literature." I believe that slaves do not appear simply because they were irrelevant to Virgil's proposals and teachings. As previously argued, Virgil's subject is the activity of farming and the image of meaning materialized in the figure of the farmer, rather than a social condition or existence beyond the agricultural *topoi*. Virgil composes his discourse from the common sense of a traditional symbol, in which the complexity of society has no place. For this reason, his farmer is moral and, in a sense, stands apart from the reality of other men,

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[352] "One apparent reading of the Life of Virgil compiled by Probus, that his father's land was of sufficient size to settle sixty veterans, may not have been far from the truth. As the son of a wealthy landowner he naturally wrote about the type of farming he knew best. One objection to all this is that slaves are not discussed in the *Georgica*. Villa estates were staffed by slaves and thus omission of this topic is taken to confirm the view that Virgil's subject is the subsistence cultivator. Most of Italy consisted of rough upland pasture exploited for absentee landlords of huge estates by slaves under a bailiff, not by those to whom the poem is addressed: farmers working a smallholding with their own hands..."

[353] Vide the example of slaves working on farms directed by a landlord feature in Cato *Agr.* 2 and Col. 1.3.

expressing more than a representation of an economic activity. The Virgilian husbandman is an idea without the inherent perversions of the condition of man, even though he is a man himself.

The idea of morality reflected in agriculture should be considered on the basis of the expression of an image and its signs of meaning, instead of applying contextual interpretations, since the semantics of literature are always complex and depend on a very precise context. Hence, considering context, Kronenberg (2009 94) argues that there may also be a satire of an aristocratic society within the instructions on farming, as in the comic and satirical genres. "In Greek and Roman satire and comedy, the city is the place of vice and the country the place of virtue. These genres pick up on the moralizing tendencies of their cultures and decry the greed and luxury of the city as opposed to the country, as well as the loose morals of the modern age as compared with those of the past. That said, moralizing in satire and comedy often has an ironic edge, and the moralizing characters frequently appear hypocritical or are somehow undermined in the course of the work."

In fact, despite my intention to avoid considering contextual matters in analysing the symbology of the farming cosmos, such potential irony in the moral symbol of the tenant in literature reflects the assumptions argued throughout this dissertation regarding the value of traditional symbols. The traditional symbols were based on common sense and were quite generalized and hence could be used in satire, as they do not represented the real life of the farmer in terms of his social status. At the same time, it is due to the traditional representation of the farmer that irony, if there is any, can be understood in those texts, as the simplistic symbol of the great, honest worker cannot be associated with the aristocrat farmers who did not work the land or suffer the vicissitudes of a real husbandman and did not struggle with nature to obtain provisions. Hence, these aristocrats are a potential subject for irony as they do not correspond to the traditional image based on an empirical activity. Nevertheless, this thesis is dedicated to searching for abstract language with a simple and direct meaning, not the kind of meaning imposed by an intellectual or politicized culture.

However, I must note that I have some doubts regarding Kronenberg's (2009 94) interpretation in terms of the satire on traditional morality associated with the farmer, at least considering the Latin instructional texts.[354] The main reason for this concerns the fact that

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[354] "I argue that it (*De Re Rustica*) is a subversive work, which uses farming as a vehicle to expose the hypocrisy and pretensions of Roman morality, intellectual culture, and politics in the Late Republic. It does

the semantic value of the farmer extends beyond the literary topic and its meaning is supported much more by common sense (vide supra). I also disagree with the comment that: "Recent studies have located this kind of ironic moralizing in Horace's and Juvenal's *Satires* and the plays of Plautus, as well as in Varro's *Menippean Satires*; however, the moralizing of the *De Re Rustica* has generally been taken at face value. I hope to show that Varro undermines moralizing in this work, too, and that he also undermines the conventional morality of Roman culture. There is again a humorous and a serious aspect to Varro's satire as he reveals that behind the Roman esteem of farming lies a profit-motive that is at the core of the Roman value system."

Without doubt, there is a notion of profit (cf. Cic. *Off*. 1.63) but the farmer's work and its characteristics are not directly connected with this. It is the nature of man and society that leads to this kind of interpretation. I believe Kronenberg's arguments are based on an evaluation produced out of context, as they do not take text's interlocutors into account or the mechanisms of linguistic expression. The idea of the satire on profit ignores how natural it would be to aim for higher production. Of course, Horace's satires (*Epod.* 2) contradict this assumption, since one character (Alfius) praises country life, but speculates with money loans and has no intention of living outside the city (Kronenberg 2009 74). However, the objective of Horace is to satirise the man's intentions, not the work of the potential farmer. The criticism focuses on those who idealize an activity but do not intend to live according to its common practices: the man's behaviour and desire to make a profit is one thing, but the activity per se is different. Therefore I would argue that the satire is not based on the activity, but the idealized symbolic practice that suggests moral value to society but does not reflect the real practices of those who idealize it, namely the average person who wants to be rich but does not involve himself in the real practical work of the farmer.

Considering the moral value of the farmer's symbol and the implied empirical reality, Spurr (1986), quoting Wilkinson (1982, apud Spurr 1986 323, 320), states that: "...there was a feeling abroad among thinking people, reflected also by Horace, that a simple, Sabine-type, peasant life was happier and morally healthier." Wilkinson's statement suggests that the farmer lives a happier life than other people, which seems to be a generalised preconception. Moreover, it does not matter whether this coincides with the idealized notions

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this primarily by debunking the cultural myth of the virtuous farmer. While a satirist like Horace revealed the hypocrisy of urban fantasies about rustic life in Epode 2" (Kronenberg 2009 74).

transmitted by the aesthetics of literary art or by propaganda defending Roman traditions. My position is that the symbolic farmer is happier because he expects less, lives in harmony with the natural world and is capable of supporting himself. However, it may be very deceptive to use the *Georgica* as an approach to the farmer as the happiest of men, due to the pessimism implied throughout the text and the idealized portrayal of rural life, which is not as spontaneously identifiable and does not correspond to the meanings sought in this research.

3.2.1.4. Hardship as a morality builder

It is not so much the idea of property and wealth which demonstrates the value of the farm, but the quality of life it can provide in terms of a typical happy life or, in other words, easy work and good productivity. Perhaps because of this Columella uses Virgil's maxim (*G.* 2.412-413)[355]:

laudato ingentia rura,

exiguum colito.

"Praise large farms,

cultivate small ones".

Labour which surpasses necessity is no longer beneficial and, in fact, could become a major problem, as the hardships are disproportionate to the yield (Col. 1.3.9):

(…) quippe acutissimam gentem Poenos dixisse convenit inbecilliorem agrum quam agricolam esse debere, quoniam, cum sit conluctandum cum eo, si fundus praevaleat, adlidi dominum. Nec dubium, quin minus reddat laxus ager non recte cultus quam angustus eximie.[356]

"(...) the Carthaginians, a very sharp people, used to say that the farm should be more feeble than the farmer; for as he must wrestle with it, if the land prevails, the master is crushed. And there is no doubt that a wide field, not properly cultivated, gives back less, than a small on tilled with extraordinary care"

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[355] Cf. Col. 1.3.8. On the concept of labour and the hermeneutic interpretations of this word in the *Georgica,* vide Catto 1981 204-58.
[356] Cf. Col. 1.2.3.

In this sense, the idea of a good life in harmony with nature and oneself implies a kind of freedom and avoidance of superfluous labour. If the farm requires excessive effort, instead of being supported by agriculture, the farmer will be consumed by it. However, if he can overcome all the difficulties, working the land can represent self-achievement. In addition to the practical benefits of being 'self-made', the experience of cultivating the land generates precious know-how that can be converted into the supply of goods (Col. 1.*pr*.12.1-4).

The farmer's life is hard because he struggles against nature and adversities and the visual hardships of agriculture are an important source for the symbol for morality.[357] For example, when Virgil describes "Aristaeus' emotional devastation upon the loss of his hive to 'sickness and famine', he is voicing some of the frustrations of the farmer" (Kronenberg 2009 76) who has to experience struggles (vide Ver. *G*. 4.321-32).[358] The farmer risks losing the fruits of his labour, which means losing part of his existence, since he lives to till and harvest the land. This is why the farmer must be resilient, in order to be prepared and resist the misfortunes associated with dependence on agricultural production.

In this sense, it can be assumed that being a ploughman would have been considered the most dignified activity a man could have, in abstract terms, and the moral person needed by the state could only be found in the farms of Latium. This idealization based on the signs of the symbol was noted by Columella when he quoted Varro on the same matter. According to Columella, Marcos Varro (cf. Var. *R*. 2. *pr*.3) complained about the abandonment of the plough, saying that it could corrupt society, as people moved inside the 'city walls' and used their hands for the pleasures of circuses and theatres rather than in the grain fields and vineyards (Col. 1.*pr*. 15.2-5):

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[357] I disagree with Kronenberg 2009 23, when he states: "The main difference between my approach and most previous ones, then, is that I see the agricultural allegories present in these works as embodying negative ethical and political behavior, and not as the models of wise and virtuous activity they are traditionally set up to be". This statement and his approach fail to recognise the intrinsic social meaning of agriculture in Roman thought and economics.

[358] Kronenberg 2009 176-177 says: "Aristaeus voices all of the frustrations that have been scattered throughout the *Georgica* when man's expectations have been dashed by natural disaster. Aristaeus faces the loss not just of his bees, but of his faith in a morally ordered world in which good deeds are rewarded and there is compensation for death. He responds to this loss not with acceptance but with anger and an increased desire to rectify the situation. Thus, he is the archetypal farmer not just in his livelihood but in the way he reacts to disaster. (…) His words also imply that he has relied upon all of the different strategies of the farmer for creating meaning and order in the *Georgica*, namely *religio* and a hope for immortality (*quid me caelum sperare iubebas?*, 325) *ratio/ars* (*custodia sollers*, 327) and *gloria* (*meae . . . laudis*, 332)."

172

Omnes enim, sicut M. Varro iam temporibus avorum conquestus est, patres familiae falce et aratro relictis intra murum correpsimus et in circis potius ac theatris quam in segetibus ac vineis manus movemus.

"Indeed, even as Marcus Varro complained in the days of our grandfathers, all of us who are heads of families have quit the sickle and the plough and have crept within the city walls; and we occupy our hands in the circuses and theatres rather than in the grain fields and vineyards."

This is a critique of citizens who are alienated from their obligations. A farmer would have known what needed to be done because he was aware of his situation and place in the world. The plough would have represented the nobility of the man committed to his duties, despite the implied harshness of this way of life (see Verg. *G*. 2.61-62). Columella reiterates this idea, stating that those who feel protected within the walls are merely considered lazier than those *qui rura colerent* ('who worked the fields') (Col. 1.*pr*.17.9-11):

ut enim qui in villis intra consaepta morarentur, quam qui foris terram molirentur, ignaviores habitos, si eos, qui sub umbra civitatis intra moenia desides cunctarentur, quam qui rura colerent administrarentve opera colonorum, segniores visos.[359]

"Indeed, those who lived within the confines of the country houses were accounted more sluggish than those who tilled the soil outside, likewise those who spent their time in the shadow of the city, inside the walls, were perceived as lazier than those who tilled the fields or managed the labour of the tillers."

These citizens seem to be out of touch with work and nature, which means they have lost contact with the teachings of farming. Agricultural labour "builds morality"; without it, the cultivation 'of moral values' is also abandoned. Of course, this is a potential philosophical theme, since the image formed by a compounding of signs of meaning could not be extended so directly to the concept of morality. It is important to bear in mind that morality is a highly speculative concept which depends on cultural context and in which idealization plays a major role. Nevertheless, the idea is constructed from signs of meaning such as those from the frame for an individual working the land.

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[359] Cf. Var. *R*. 2.1.1-6.

It can be said that the farmer was a model of virtue in the popular mind. This virtue was not inherent to the man but came from the occupation and the tasks that prevent alienation (cf. Col. 1.*pr*.17.9-11). The man does not bring nobility to farming, it is agriculture that fosters virtue in the man, regardless of the fact that the concept of morality is an interpretation based on the semiotics of an image taken from empirical reality or resulting from a crystalized traditional symbol. This idea of morality can also be found in perspectives on profit, since wealth from farming is more reliable and honest and is therefore suggested as a good way to increase assets (Col. 1.*pr*.10.6-11.1):

Quae si et ipsa et eorum similia bonis fugienda sunt, superest, ut dixi, unum genus liberale et ingenuum rei familiaris augendae, quod ex agricolatione contingit.

"If good people are to avoid these pursuits and others which are similar, as I have said, there remains one way of increasing the family assets of a free-born man or gentleman, and this is to be found in agriculture."[360]

This kind of instruction is connected with the idea of the farmer as representative of moral value and Cato presents a sententious summary in terms of the virtue created from rural life (Cato *Agr. pr*.2):

Et virum bonum quom laudabant, ita laudabant: bonum agricolam bonumque colonum. amplissime laudari existimabatur qui ita laudabatur.

"And when they would praise a good man, they would praise him in this manner: 'good husbandman,' 'good farmer'; one praised in this way would have merited the greatest eulogy."

In fact, the peasant farmer is the stereotype of the honest and virtuous man whose wealth is the fruit of his work and comes from interaction with nature. Varro notes the same value, recalling the traditional comparison between the Roman countryside and the city; Romans living in urban spaces are lazier than those who work in the fields (cf. Var. *R.* 2.*pr*.1.1-6). Moreover, for the Roman aristocracy, a good man also had to be a good soldier and this seems to be guaranteed by agricultural life (Cato *Agr. pr*.4):

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[360] Cf. Kronenber's 2009 view on satire in the idealization of the farmer and farming.

at ex agricolis et viri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur, maximeque pius quaestus stabilissimusque consequitur minimeque invidiosus, minimeque male cogitantes sunt qui in eo studio occupati sunt.

"Yet from rustic people come both the bravest men and the strongest soldiers and their livelihood is especially respected as it is the most secure and least susceptible to hostility: those engaged in this pursuit are least likely to be disaffected."

Hence, the fact that the farmer's subsistence comes from his own labour and his ability to produce directly from earth without prejudice to other men favours the image of the nobility of this activity (Foxhall 1990). The farmer represents an activity that is crucial to a balanced society and implies a hard life. Therefore, he is a kind of barometer for harmony which preserves morality by guaranteeing honest subsistence to other people (Col. 1.*pr*.6.5-7.1):[361]

At sine agri cultoribus nec consistere mortalis nec ali posse manifestum est.

"Moreover, without tillers of the land it is evident that mankind can neither subsist nor be fed."

In this sense, the farm also mirrors social dynamics and events, since any value, action or disruption in the farming cosmos may affect social life (Verg. *Ecl.* 1.70-72):

impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit,

barbarus has segetes. en quo discordia civis

produxit miseros: his nos consevimus agros![362]

"so an impious soldier will have my new tilled fields,

a barbarian will have these crops. See to what point discord has

brought the wretched citizens: we have planted our land for these people!"

When farmers endure suffering, it is not only the farmer's life, but the whole of society that is disrupted (vide supra). When the farmers are not at peace, nor is society. The farmer is a human extension of the agricultural reality. Thus, the signs of meaning for productive land reflect an image that includes the land being worked by the farmer.

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[361] Cf. Var. *R.* 2.*pr*.4.7, vide infra Chap. 3.3.
[362] For a study of bucolic themes in *Eclogae,* vide Saunders 2009. The pastoral dimension in Latin literature will not be discussed in this thesis. Karakasis 2011 is followed with regard to this subject.

3.2.2. The plough and the animal

The image generated by the individual leading the ox yoked to the plough is a remarkable example of the symbiosis of herding and farming on a symbolic and empirical level. Considering the image of the bull in the 'Latin instructions', Columella gives an example that suggests that both the ploughman and the shepherd shared a capacity for leadership, expressed by the sign of meaning for leading (Col. 6.2.10):[363]

Si vero non pigeat iugum fabricare, quo tres iungantur, per hanc machinationem consequemur, ut etiam contumaces boves gravissima opera non recusent.

 "If one really has no objection to constructing a yoke to which three animals can be fastened, we shall by this artifice ensure that even obstinate oxen do not refuse the heaviest tasks."[364]

The ploughman had to be able to put the animals to work, even when this involved hard labour. Therefore, Columella explains how to control or drive a bull using the idea of a group to handle the herd. Two signs of the ploughman coincide with those of the herder (vide infra): the ability to control a powerful animal and the capacity to drive animals in productive work. He may have to convert the strong, wild bull into a working animal and the lazy oxen into productive animals.[365]

The instructions on the management of oxen suggest the potential for such an image to create a powerful analogy with the leader commanding the state (cf. Col. 1.*pr.*13-14). Although this quotation provides technical[366] advice rather than a literary symbol, it refers to the qualities of leadership as well as envisaging the actual image of the ox in an

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[363] Regarding the traditional signs of meaning for the shepherd constructed from an image based on nature, vide Chap. 3.1.3.

[364] Columella notes some characteristics of the work capacity and potential of bulls from different regions, such as Umbria, Etruria, Latium and Apennines (Col. 6.1-2).

[365] Cf. Col. 6.2.10: *Nam ubi piger iuvencus medius inter duos veteranos iungitur aratroque iniecto terra molli cogitur, nulla est imperium respuendi facultas; sive enim efferatus prosilit, duorum arbitrio inhibetur, seu consistit, duobus gradientibus etiam invitus obsequitur, seu conatur decumbere, a valentioribus sublevatus trahitur, propter quae undique necessitate contumaciam deponit et ad patientiam laboris paucissimis verberibus perducitur.* "For whenever an indolent young bullock is yoked between two veteran oxen and forced to till the ground with the plough in place, he has no capacity to resist the order which has been given; for, if he has become fierce and rushes forward, he is restrained by the authority of the other two; if he stands still when the other two pace along, he also follows, even unwillingly; if he tries to lie down, he is raised up and dragged along by the more powerful companions. Hence he is compelled from all sides to lay aside his stubbornness, and it takes very few blows to induce him to work."

[366] Thommen 2012 83: "team of oxen could plough only approximately 0.25 ha (1 *iugerum*: Plin. *Nat.* 18.9) a day (...)". On technical matters concerning the plough, vide also Cato *Agr.* 5.6-8.

agricultural context. Thus, it presents signs of meaning based on a visual landscape: a sign representing the idea of leading, a sign representing work and a sign representing strength.

Columella expands on the subject of herding with a metaphor: a military plan gives meaning to the discipline imposed on the cattle by a herder engaged in farm work, i.e. ploughing (Col. 6.23.3):

Hic enim recognosci grex poterit numerusque constare, si velut ex militari disciplina intra stabularii castra manserint. Sed non eadem in tauros exercentur imperia, qui freti viribus per nemora vagantur liberosque egressus et reditus habent nec revocantur nisi ad coetus feminarum.

"Here it will be possible to inspect the herd and verify its numbers, just as if, under military discipline, they occupy their quarters in the stalls. However, similar rules are not imposed upon the bulls, which, relying on their strength, wander about, are free to go out and return and are only recalled when they are required to cover the females."[367]

The factual control of the herder and the power of the bull are mentioned but the ploughman is not; however, the signs of his great tool, the strength of the bull, are evident. Although the text does not use complex literary constructions, i. e. there is no abstract language, the factual image can be identified in the scene which is presented and its description is, in fact, a reference to the original natural image in which the traditional symbol is rooted.

The farmer can change the nature of things in order to reap benefits from the fields and he does so in symbiosis with the animal, exercising control over the beast, literally or metaphorically (Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*4.7):

Armentum enim id quod in agro natum non creat, sed tollit dentibus. Contra bos domitus causa fit ut commodius nascatur frumentum in segete et pabulum in novali.

"Certainly, the herd do not produce what grows in the field but tear it off with the teeth; conversely, the domestic ox becomes the cause for the grain to grow easily in the ploughed land, and the fodder in the fallow land."[368]

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[367] Cf. the call to the oxen in *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 1-3.

[368] Cf. Col. 5.4.2.5-6; Lucr. 5.206-5.217; Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*5.

The farmer converts the herds (which normally eat and destroy crops) into productive cattle. He is like a shepherd, but at same time he is more, as he interacts with nature in a way that modifies it and makes it productive. This farmer is a shepherd, and this shepherd is a ploughman, and the ploughman is a farmer.
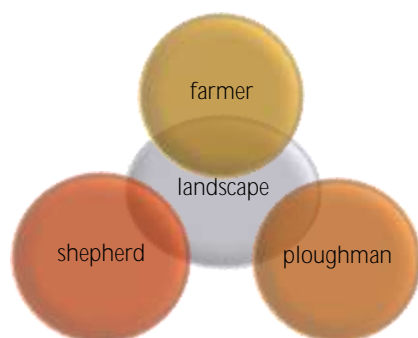
The farmer must deal with different aspects of production, each involving specific abilities and qualities, which can favour the construction of archetypes for moral values. When dealing with immensely strong animals such as oxen, whose symbol contains the signs for strength and fertility, the ploughman must himself be remarkable.[369] He has to understand the animals and use this knowledge to make them do the particular work he wants them to do. In order to achieve this, the herder needs natural intelligence. Such intelligence is not based so much on pure knowledge and reason; the ploughman needs a sensorial comprehension of natural things. He must know how to harness their power and create a symbiosis between plough and beast, using the qualities of a herder (Col. 1.9.2):

Bubulco quamvis necessaria non tamen satis est indoles mentis, nisi eum vastitas vocis et habitus metuendum pecudibus efficit.[370]

"For the ploughman, however necessary, quality of mind is still not enough, unless a powerful voice and condition makes him frightening to the cattle."

The ploughman's skill in exercising power is important in bringing earth and animal under control and making them productive; the ploughman is therefore similar in some ways to the shepherd. However, like the farmer, he reaps his harvest from his hard work and suffering (Verg. *G.* 1.118-121):

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[369] On the symbol of the bull, vide also Ferreira 2012 16-55.
[370] Cf. CLAM 176-185 ll. 11-12; *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 1-3.

Nec tamen, haec cum sint hominumque boumque labores

versando terram experti, nihil improbus anser

Strymoniaeque grues et amaris intiba fibris

officiunt aut umbra nocet. (…)[371]

"Despite the efforts of man and beast

 to till the earth, the insistent geese

 and the Strymon cranes and the bitter roots of chicory,

and the hurtful shadow cause damage."

Acting in accordance with the life cycle and responding to difficulties by constant labouring, the farmer reaps his rewards through the plough that is pulled by cattle, and thus animal and man take part in the process of creation. The man is the leader and shares the symbol with the cattle. In other words, the concept of cattle is, in fact, a compounding element in the image of the ploughman (Ver. *G.* 2.513-518):

Agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro:

hic anni labor, hinc patriam parvosque nepotes

sustinet, hinc armenta boum meritosque iuvencos.

Nec requies, quin aut pomis exuberet annus

aut fetu pecorum aut Cerealis mergite culmi,

proventuque oneret sulcos atque horrea vincat.

"The farmer has opened the soil with his curved plough:

the year's work (depends) on it; with this, he supports his fatherland and his little grandchildren;

and also the herds of cows and worthy steers

without rest: indeed the season abounds in fruits,

and new calves and lambs, or sheaves of Ceres' grain

loading the furrows with abundance and overwhelming the granaries."

Together farmer and animals generate a landscape of life and abundance. The symbol of the ploughman would definitely have been generated by an image of symbiosis between man

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[371] Cf. Col. 10.1.329-330: *Saepe ferus duros iaculatur Iuppiter imbres, / grandine dilapidans hominumque boumque labores (...)* "Often the fierce Jupiter throws powerful rains, / man and ox are consumed by the heaviness of the work."

and cattle. Furthermore, the ploughman is hardened by his work and his strength resides in his ability to use suggestion and power, rather than brute force (Col. 1.9.2):

Sed temperet vires clementia, quoniam terribilior debet esse quam saevior, ut et obsequantur eius imperiis et diutius perennent boves.[372]

"Yet he should temper his strength with gentleness, since he should be more terrifying than cruel, so that the oxen may obey his commands and at same time last longer."

As a herder, the ploughman can only prevail over the will of the beast by controlling rather than crushing it. In this way, the shepherd-farmer avoids the animal rebelling, as a great king would do with his subjects. This latter statement is of course an extrapolation: I have used a description from Columella to evoke the symbol of the good king, as people in ancient times would have done, using a traditional image to create a symbolic classification (cf. Col. 1.*pr*.18.4-6). The symbol seems to be universal, as it is constructed from invariable signs of meaning that are dependent on experience of agricultural life. Columella's picture contains a description of what would have been a common-sense symbol with a great metaphorical potential in the world of politics (cf. Col. 1*pr*.18.4-6).

However, as mentioned above, cattle can also be harmful to agriculture and disturb the harmonious agricultural landscape.[373] Notheless, through work (cf. Lucr. 2.206-212) and practical wisdom the farmer, together with the cattle, overcomes barrenness and at the same time protects his crops from the cattle (cf. Ver. *G.* 2.371-375). He is also the farmer who steers the plough. In fact, since the ox is so closely related to farming, and agriculture is so crucial for social life, there are references to oxen in foundational traditions and legends.[374] In short, the ox has a place in traditional rustic thought that is generated through its relationship to farming and interaction with the landscape. If the empirical practices of rustic life in antiquity are considered, the symbiosis of herding and farming is clear, especially when draught animals were used.

During what Columella considers 'remarkable times', leaders would come from the fields, probably because of the skills they had obtained there (Col. 1.*pr*.18.4-6):

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[372] Cf. the herder who makes the cattle bound (CLAM 181, ll. 11-12).

[373] Col. 11.2.7-8: *Apricis etiam et macris aut aridis locis prata iam purganda et a pecore sunt defendenda, ut faeni sit copia.* "and furthermore, in places exposed to the sun, poor and arid, the meadows must now be cleaned up and protected against cattle, so that an abundance of hay may be produced."

[374] Vide Col. 6.*pr*.7 and also the lines that follow this passage for the Greek myth relating Demeter (Ceres) to the ox and the cultural consequences of this in Attica.

Enim temporibus, ut ante iam diximus, procures civitatis in agris morabantur et, cum consilium publicum desiderabatur, a villis arcessiebantur in senatum.[375]

"During those times, as we previously said, the persons leading the state used to pass their time in the fields and when advice on public matters was wanted, they were summoned from their farms to the senate."

One cannot ignore the idealization and, at same time, disconnection from the reality of the farmer's actual work, since a great number of those working on farms were slaves and servants, labouring to create profits for others. Nevertheless, the idealized image is there because it is constructed from the elements that constitute the performance of the activity (cf. Col. 11.1.8). Those elements give rise to the analogy with the abstract image and its resulting signs of meaning, which may be sources for abstract language resources such as metaphors:

Sign: leading – good commander (symbol/metaphor)

Sign: strength (control over a bigger animal) –power over subjects (symbol/metaphor)

Sign: labour – the strength and resilience of man (symbol/metaphor)

Sign: producing (the crops generated by a farmer's work together with the animal) – the leader that provides prosperity (symbol/metaphor)

3.2.3. Shepherds vs. farmers: reality and literature

Varro comments on the prehistory of the Roman people as farmers when he differentiates shepherds from tenants, stating that the shepherds who founded the city taught their offspring to cultivate the land, but their greedy descendants turned cropland into pastures, ignoring the fact that agriculture and grazing were not the same (Var. *R.* 2. *pr*.4.7):[376]

Itaque in qua terra culturam agri docuerunt pastores progeniem suam, qui condiderunt urbem, ibi contra progenies eorum propter avaritiam contra leges ex segetibus fecit prata, ignorantes non idem esse agri culturam et pastionem.[377]

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[375] Cf. the return of Quinctius Cincinnatus to the fields, after exercising his social role and ignoring power (Col. 1.*pr*.13-14). Vide also Cic. *Sen*. 56.

[376] Virgil suggests in the *Aeneid* (Verg. *A*. 7.572-574, 11.566-569) that shepherds were a separate group in the early days and Frayn 1974 says "it was literally true".

[377] Cf. also Cat. *Agr*. 2; Col. 1.3, 6.*pr*.4.1-5.1.

"Thus, in a land where the shepherds who founded the city taught their offspring the cultivation of the fields, there, their descendants, from greed and against the laws, made pastures out of grain fields, ignoring the fact that farming and grazing are not the same thing"

The main objective of the Roman agronomist is to note that the farmer does not work for greed. This assumption leads to a simplistic although quite accurate analogy: the farmer does not aim to be rich, therefore he is more honest. This is a common concept and quite easy to extrapolate to what may anachronistically be termed 'modern thinking', since we still use the same process for constructing meaning. It should be remembered that the Romans were initially rustic people, or at least, that would have been the traditional view according to the ancient Latin authors (vide Hor. *Ep*. 2.1.156-160), and given the characteristics of the Italian landscape, rural life would to some extent have been divided between herding and farming.

In the Latin lexicon, *pastor* usually means a slave or a free man who is employed to look after the animals of a landowner (see Roth 2007). However, there is a distinction between the practical reality in which a man of low social status would be the *pastor* and the linguistic symbol that indicates the *pastor* as the one to be blindly followed and trusted. The issue is not the economic activity or social function per se, but the compounding elements of the practical activity that draw up the defining lines of the symbol: protection from external danger, a watchman, a guide that provides directions to a source of sustenance.

practice: the shepherd leads the cattle

converction of the image into a sign of meaning

visual sign: man leading
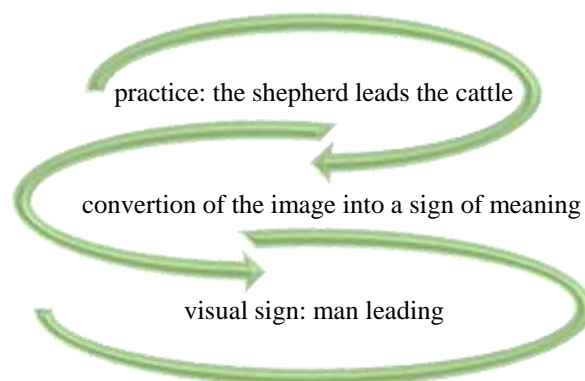
These signs of meaning coincide with the idea of a leader, rather than a subordinate worker who follows orders and must preserve the property of his patron or owner. However, I would argue that there is a difference between the concrete economic activity and the semantics implied in its empirical practicalities.

One of the issues involved in defining a traditional shepherd symbol based on signs of meaning in the popular culture and, by extension, for identifying a symbol that could be interpreted as showing an activity that reflects a kind of social or moral value, may lie in the fact that this craft was associated with slavery, which is problematic when considering a social value based on tradition. It is hard to imagine that an activity so closely connected with slavery would have been attributed a positive symbology. However, with regard to the farmer, as argued above there is no exact relation between the symbol of the shepherd and the profession and we should also trust in the capacity of Roman popular culture to differentiate social status and virtue from practical activities that generate signs of meaning. Nevertheless, it is important to consider slavery in understanding farming and herding as a social theme, in terms of the complex symbolic constructions and actual practices and their social reception, since there are big differences between literature and factual reality.

Considering slavery in relation to herding and farming, Spurr (1986) writes: "If Virgil's own *Eclogues* are an important exception to this, that is because they belong not to reality but to the 'imaginary world of ideas'. Moreover, it is most important to observe that Varro, and later Columella, once they had discussed that section of the farm's *instrumentum*, 'equipment' (as Varro defined slaves), make very little direct mention of them thereafter. Their presence is instead tacitly assumed and the landowner-reader is addressed and advised throughout in the second person singular. That is to say, were the 'slavery sections' omitted from the works of the prose writers, the agricultural instructions could conceivably (but of course mistakenly) be understood as directed at a peasant cultivator." However, I would argue that the omission of slavery has more to do with the instructional nature of the text than the economic activity, as it focussed on factual agricultural practices, regardless of whether the interlocutor was a peasant, a slave or an aristocrat.[378] Of course, the presence of slaves could simply be assumed, but this is unnecessary when the subject in question is the teaching of an activity. In this sense, the practicalities of the work are the basis of the traditional symbol, not the actual economic context.

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[378] On the social status and work of peasants in Roman society, together with their history, vide Garnsey, Scheidel 2004 91-150.

3.2.3.1 Framing the animal symbol within the image of the shepherd's landscape

The explanation provided by Varro's character for the origin of the surname *Scrofa* is an example of how domesticated nature is introduced into the language. By comparing the behaviour of the enemies confronting his grandfather to that of the offspring of a sow, Varro uses the common image of power exercised by the pig over her piglets (Drake, Fraser and Wear 2008): just as the sow scatters her offspring, so Scrofa routed his enemies and thus acquired his surname (Var. *R.* 2.4.2-4):

Avos, cum cohortaretur milites ut caperent arma atque exirent contra, dixit celeriter se illos, ut scrofa porcos, disiecturum, id quod fecit.[379]

"My grandfather, when he was exhorting the soldiers to seize arms and depart against the enemy, said that he would scatter these people as a sow scatters her pigs."

The justification for the family's noble origins is not a matter to be analysed here,[380] although this episode serves the purpose of identifying crystallized signs generated by observation of nature. In this case, the reason why the story and the name make sense spontaneously is understandable: the reality contains a potential semantic value that can be converted into language and the image comes from herding. Although, it may be considered a complex metaphor in terms of Varro's texts, it is the interlocutor's familiarity with the visual context that makes its meaning spontaneously understandable. The animal and its natural behaviour are the semantic source for the metaphor. Moreover, Varro may have had this in mind when he cites names from the animal world in his dialogues, although I do not intend to discuss this here.

3.2.3.1.2. Power: the wisdom of the wise or the dictatorship of the strongest

As already noted, herding may be a cause of hardship, since animals are a threat to crops, given that they use them as pasture or may trample on plants and seeds (Ver. *G.* 2.371-375):[381]

Texendae saepes etiam et pecus omne tenendum,

praecipue dum frons tenera imprudensque laborum;

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[379] Macrobius provides a different version of this story (*Saturnalia* 1.6; vide Henderson 2006 352).

[380] I do not intend to focus on animal symbology in terms of textual hermeneutics; on this subject, vide Kronenberg 2009 114-115 and Ferreira 2012.

[381] Cf. Col. *Arb.* 18; Var. *R.* 2.*pr.* 4.7; cf. SP 3.23, Alster 2007.

cui super indignas hiemes solemque potentem

silvestres uri adsidue capreaeque sequaces

inludunt, pascuntur oues avidaeque iuvencae.

"Also, a fence must be built and all the cattle penned,

mainly when the leaves are tender and unaware of misfortune,

for besides the hard winters and the powerful sun,

the wild bison and sequacious goats trespass constantly

 and sheep and voracious heifers graze there."

As previously stated, the herder has the capacity to transform danger into profit, although even when they are under control animals may still be harmful to farming, so the farmer's knowledge of the beast and his craft is a value that should be considered.[382] In fact, the relationship between the farmer and the ox shows a kind of *humanitas* in Latin literature with regard to the plough[383] and connects it with the idea of a good shepherd who understands and controls his animals (Ver. *G.* 3.515-524):

Ecce autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus

concidit et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem

extremosque ciet gemitus. it tristis arator

maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuvencum,

atque opere in medio defixa reliquit aratra.

non umbrae altorum nemorum, non mollia possunt

prata movere animum, non qui per saxa volutus

purior electro campum petit amnis; at ima

solvuntur latera, atque oculos stupor urget inertis

ad terramque fluit devexo pondere cervix.

"Nevertheless, behold the ox collapsed, steaming from the heavy work,

vomiting blood mixed with foam from his mouth

and groaning in his flanks. The sorrowing ploughman goes

to unyoke the young ox that mourns its companion's death,

and in the middle of the work leaves the fastened plough.

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[382] For an example of problems involving oxen yoked to the plough, vide Col. *Arb.* 12.2.

[383] cf. *The Bull in His Fold* ll. 1-2 noting the grieving of a bull. Vide also the image in LSUr ll.1-37, ll. 52-57 (Chap. 3.1.3).

Neither the shade of the deep groves, nor the tender meadows

can disturb his spirit, nor the stream purer than amber rolling

down rocks as it seeks the plain; yet the flanks sag loose

beneath him, and stupor forces the inert eyes,

and his neck falls down toward the earth under a pressing weight."

If the herder fails, his subjects, i. e. the cattle, suffer and he, as their leader, will suffer too. If we consider the literary image of the herder by focussing on shepherding itself, as the ancient world would have viewed and experienced it, we find a herder who is different from the one Kronenberg (2009 113) identifies: "Socrates' philosopher-kings are problematic, since true philosophers have no desire to rule a city and must be forced to become "leaders of the hive" (520b); thus, those who become shepherds willingly must do so from a materialistic motive, and this is the model of shepherd that is found in Varro's "republic." (…) Indeed, throughout the book, the goal of profit and the self-interest of the shepherd are kept at the forefront of the discussion, and any incidental benefits for the flock, such as soft bedding (2.2.8) or warm shelter (2.5.15), are motivated only by a concern for profit."

Kronenberg's assumptions are based on an analysis of the contemporary economic activity, not the tasks of the shepherd engaged in the work that gives meaning to the symbol. In fact, Varro relates *avaritia* (Var. *R.* 2*pr*.4) to herding and Scrofa talks about maximizing profits (Var. *R.* 2.1.11)[384] from herding but this does not reflect a sign of the activity 'per se'; it simply translates a social attitude towards profit. As a social and economic phenomenon, the activity does not interfere with the traditional symbolic construct since it is dependent on signs of meaning based on the agricultural cosmos.

The traditional image of the herder living in the farming world is mentioned in farming instructions,[385] although Columella, like Varro, claims that the two activities can conflict due to the problems they may cause for each other. However, this problematic coexistence is more a question of the management of resources than genuine competition, despite the fact that Varro differentiates between the two activities, claiming one is productive and the other destructive to agriculture (Col. *6.pr*.1-2.5):[386]

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[384] Cf. Col. *6.pr*.4.1-5.1; Chap. 4.2.
[385] On Greek and Latin pastoral literature, vide Fantuzzi, Papanghelis 2006.
[386] Cf. Var. *R.* 2.*pr*.4.7: *Alius enim opilio et arator, nec, si possunt in agro pasci <armenta>, armentarius non aliut ac bubulcus. Armentum enim id quod in agro natum non creat, sed tollit dentibus.* "Indeed, the shepherd is one thing and the ploughman another; and it is not because cattle graze in a field that the herdsman

Scio quosdam, Publi Silvine, prudentis agricolas pectoris abnuisse curam gregariorumque pastorum velut inimicam professionis suae disciplinam constantissime repudiasse neque infitior id eos aliqua ratione fecisse, qua sit agricolae contrarium pastoris propositum, cum ille quam maxime subacto et puro solo gaudeat, hic novali graminosoque, ille fructum e terra speret, hic e pecore, ideoque arator abominetur (…).

"I am aware, Publius Silvinus, that there are some versed farmers who have refused to have cattle and have consistently rejected that craft as hostile to their profession. I do not deny that they have some reason for doing so, since the aim of the farmer is contrary to that of the shepherd, as the farmer is pleased with land which is tilled and cleared as much as possible, while the other is pleased with fallow and grassy land; one trusts in the fruits of the earth, the other in the production of his cattle."

This, in fact, is a common-sense issue: only on an idealized farm would both activities be in harmony. They have to be carefully managed in order not to threaten for each other, which reflects the traditional image of the herder as a skilled leader even more. In fact, Columella corrected his own statement by directly identifying an alliance (Col. *6.pr.*1-2.5):

Sed in is tam discordantibus votis est tamen quaedam societas atque coniunctio, quoniam et pabulum ex fundo plerumque domesticis pecudibus magis quam alienis depascere ex usu est et copiosa stercoratione, quae contingit e gregibus, terrestres fructus exuberant.

"But, besides these opposing desires, there is a certain alliance and union between them, since it is better to use the nourishment from his own farm for the cattle than feed those belonging to other people; and it is the abundant manure from the herds that ensures the fruits of the earth will flourish in abundance."

Columella comments on this connection by giving a technical instruction although, regardless of the technicalities, the explanation comes from common sense. The two activities were, in fact, connected and were profitable if used complementarily. The shepherd is a guardian who provides sustenance and protection; the farmer provides this by harvesting crops from the earth, whereas the shepherd provides from his flock (Col. 7.3.26):

is the same as the ploughman. In fact, cattle do not generate what grows in the field, but destroy it with their teeth."

Tum qui sequitur gregem circumspectus ac vigilans – idquod omnibus et omnium quadripedum custodibus praecipitur – magna clementia moderetur idemque propior quia silent et in agendis recipiendisque ovibus adclamatione ac baculo minetur nec umquam telum emittat in eas neque ab his longius recedat nec aut recubet aut considat. Nam nisi procedit, stare debet, quoniam quidem custodis officium sublimem celsissimamque oculorum veluti speculam desiderat, ut neque tardiores gravidas, dum cunctantur, neque agiles et fetas, dum procurrunt, separari a ceteris sinat, ne fur aut bestia halucinantem pastorem decipiat.

"Then, he who follows the flock should be cautious and vigilant – something that should be practiced by all guardians of every kind of four-footed animal – and should practice moderation with great calm, and also keep close to them because they are silent, and when driving them out or leading them back home, he should threaten them by shouting or with his staff but never cast any missile at them, nor should he stand too far away from them, nor should he lie or sit down; unless he is advancing he should stand upright, because a guardian needs a lofty and commanding elevation from which to see, so that he may prevent the slower, pregnant ewes from delaying, and those which are active and have already borne their young, from rushing ahead and becoming separated from the rest, so no thief or wild beast deceives the shepherd while he is distracted."

In this description Columella presents an image from which the symbol of the shepherd is universally constructed:

Sign: observation

Sign: surveillance

Sign: caution

Compounded Symbol

Sign: care

Sign: patience / composure

Sign: protection
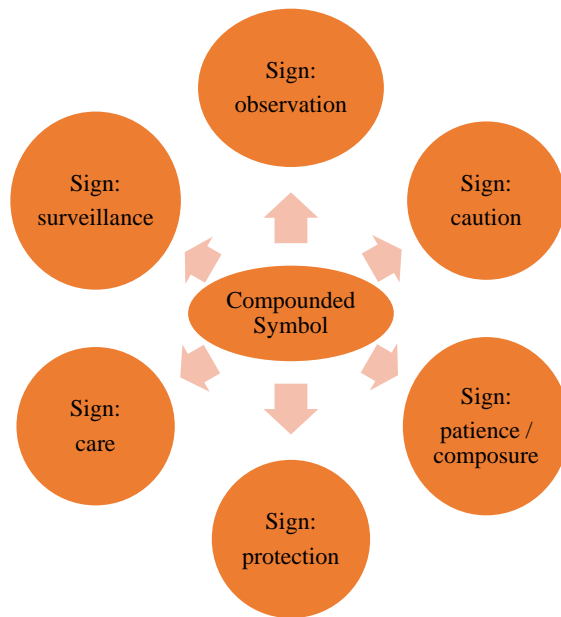
Columella distinguishes between the two activities and at the same time shows how connected they are, unlike Varro, who differentiates between the skills of the man who profits from farming and the other who profits from herding (Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*4-5). However, Varro also affirms the potential and beneficial links between the two crafts, stating that a farm owner should, in fact, know how to work in both[387]

The reason for this statement (Var. *R.* 2.*p*r.5) comes from the practical association between the two activities. In fact, even if grazing and farming are essentially different, those who do not know much about them cannot draw a dividing line between them but still be fully aware of the links. The reason for this may lie in the land itself, as it provides the basis for both activities. The pastures stand for the cattle, as the ploughed fields stand for man, and both serve to provide sustenance for humans. There is a common link between these two activities and nature; they are a source for life and human sustenance. In fact, Varro identifies this and comments on it by telling the story of the origin of these activities and how they were first combined in the Sabine Country (vide below and cf. Var. *R.* 3.1.6-7), where both planting and grazing were developed at same time, with no distinction.[388] He seems to be giving an account of how agriculture developed from pastoralism, in which he also implies that the mixed rural economy was a stage in the development of Roman farming. A technical analysis of Varro's assumptions would have to take into account the fact that the two

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[387] *qui habet praedium, habere utramque debet disciplinam, et agri culturae et pecoris pascendi, et etiam villaticae pastionis* (Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*5).

[388] Columella also includes farming and grazing in the same category, in terms of agriculture and Roman history (Col. *6.pr.*4.1-5.1).

activities need to be connected to establish a better balance between production and sustainability. They complement each other in terms of produce as well as processes. The fallow system for example, which involved resting the arable land, was normally used (Verg. *G*. 1.71-76). During this time, the land provided pasture for the cattle which, in turn, fertilized it. In fact, it is generally recognised that the "Roman texts on agriculture were agreed that the same piece of land could not bear the same cultivation two years running" (Pritchard 1972), and therefore Roman farmers either rested the land after one crop by sowing it with another (*ager restibilis*)[389] or allowed it to lie fallow (*ager novalis*)[390]. In sum, in terms of optimising resources, fallow land would be used for grazing.[391] Pliny argues that *ager novalis* was the best method, because the more often the soil is rested, the better it is for the cultivation of cereals (Plin. *Nat*. 18.187).[392] It seems this was common practice, as a metaphor explaining how leaving a substantial quantity of honey on the hive may boost future production suggests (Var. *R*. 3.16.33-34):

In eximendo quidam dicunt oportere ita ut novem partes tollere, decumam relinquere: quod si omne eximas, fore ut discedant. Alii hoc plus relincunt, quam dixi. <u>Vt in aratis qui faciunt restibiles segetes, plus tollunt frumenti ex intervallis</u>, sic in alvis, si non quotannis eximas aut non [qu]aeque multum, et magis his assiduas habeas apes et magis fructuosas.

"Some hold that in collecting honey it is proper to take nine-tenths and leave one-tenth; for if you take all, the bees will quit the hive. Others leave more than this amount. Just as in tilling, those who let the ground lie fallow harvest more grain from the intervals, so in the matter of the hive: if you do not take off all the honey every year, or too much of it, you will have bees which are busier and more productive."

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[389] Varro explains the first as *ager qui restituitur ac reseritur quotannis* (*De Lingua Latina* 5.39).

[390] On the second method, Pliny states that *quod alternis annis seritur* (Plin. *Nat*. 18.177).

[391] Halstead 1987 argues that the fallow system was not used as much as the ancient authors seem to suggest for grains given certain practicalities relating to the volume of consumption/production and the loss of nutrients or water in the soils. However, since a riverine landscape is being considered in this study, his conclusion will not be taken into consideration in the argument.

[392] On this matter Thommen 2012 79 states: "Agriculture in Italy was very diverse. Farmed fields with crop rotation predominated (Var. *R*. 1.44.2; Verg. *G*. 1.73ff.; Plin. *Nat*. 18.49ff.); to some extent, the Romans had already initiated the later three-field system, although two-field rotation was still the most common method. A year of cultivation would hence be followed by a year lying fallow, during which time the field could be used by cattle for pasture. Various cereals and types of vegetable could be grown alternately. Use of fertiliser made more regular use possible, so that fallow years could be avoided. Animal dung, compost and ash were the available fertilisers (Var. *R*. 1.38.1ff.; Plin. *Nat*. 17.42ff., 18.192ff.). According to Columella (2.1.1ff.) in the first century AD, soils should not age if fertilisers were used. If no fertiliser was used, half the fields were left unfarmed every other year, and had to be ploughed fairly often during this time (Verg. *G*. 1.71-2; Col. 2.9.15; Plin. *Nat*. 18.176-7). Virgil, who recommended crop rotation and the use of fallow fields and of fertilisers, also mentioned burning off fields."

Furthermore, it should be noted that planting trees is part of farming and is highly compatible with grazing, since the potential for cattle to fertilize the soil and clear the weeds provides more space for growth. [393] However, on this matter, Columella is silent in his treatise on trees (*de arboribus*).

Returning to the image of the shepherd framed in the agricultural landscape, the signs of caution and care are crucial to the construction of the traditional symbol in the Roman context, at least in terms of the instructional texts, which may reflect good practices leading to greater efficiency (Col. 11.1.18):

Atque ubi crepusculum incesserit, neminem post se relinquat, sed omnes subsequatur more optimi pastoris, qui e grege nullam pecudem patitur in agro relinqui. Tum uero, cum tectum subierit, idem faciat, quod ille diligens opilio, nec in domicilio suo statim delitiscat, sed agat cuiusque maximam curam.

"And when the twilight comes, he should leave no one behind and should follow them, like a good shepherd, who suffers no loss of the flock in the field. In fact, when he has entered the quarters, he proceeds like the careful shepherd and does not instantly hide in his house but leads each one of them with care."

Hence, there is a shepherd that guards and takes care; a shepherd that probably never sleeps[394]; a shepherd that looks after each animal for *qui e grege nullam pecudem patitur in agro relinqui.*[395]

In terms of classical antiquity, the 'wise leader' or 'philosopher-king' may be recalled as figures that could be analogous with the symbol of the shepherd.[396] The primary semantic source for the creation of this complex symbol is the traditional symbol - generated by observation of activities and the crystallization of an image whose meaning is derived from common sense. However, 'the symbol of the king' is a complex construction, based on metaphor rather than spontaneous analogy. In other words, the traditional symbol of the

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[393] Take, for example, the Alentejo *montados*, where swine and cattle grazing supplements production dependent on trees such as holm oak (Quercus ilex), cork (Quercus suber), oak (Quercus ilex) or chestnut (Castanea sativa).

[394] Cf. CLAM 153-4 l. 8.

[395] "Indeed, nearly all of the instructions on raising and breeding animals have a human counterpart, and while these implicit connections can be made throughout the book, they become suddenly explicit at the end of it when the last type of "herd" is considered, namely the shepherds themselves and their families" (Var. *R.* 2.10.1-11)" (Kronenberg 2009 114-115).

[396] Vide Kronenberg 2009 113; cf. Plato, *R.* 460a, 498c.

shepherd and the metaphor constructed from it are not the same, since the signs that compound the traditional symbol are derived from 'reading an image through common sense', instead of the complex, manipulated interpretation of compound symbols.

3.3. Conclusion: Farming and the people in the fields

In contrast to the effects of Inana's turmoil on the river and consequently, on farmers' lives (Inana B ll. 43-46; vide supra Chapter 3.1.2), Virgil's lines on the luck of a farmer living far away from the battlefield may be cited (Verg. *G*. 2.458-460). It can be said that Latin literature describes the signs of the farmer's image, while the Sumerian text is intuitive and only suggests them. However, this statement would only be valid for these specific texts, since each literary source, whether Sumerian or Roman, has its own individual language, which means that it has a particular way of using the semiotics based on the agricultural cosmos. The two scenarios presented in the mentioned texts, so distant in so many ways, share a similar basis for signs of meaning. One of the images shows the harmony that is lacking in the other, but both have a reference for harmony that is constructed from signs of meaning.

The literature written in the Sumerian language lacks a large enough corpus to allow for a more secure consideration of the symbolic construct of the farmer, whereas in Roman literature it has been the subject of all kinds of philosophical and aesthetic speculation which to a large extent deviate from this analysis of the traditional symbol. On the other hand, the Latin instructional texts are rich in terms of the moment when signs of meaning are attributed, since they describe the empirical activity. However, these texts lack metaphors based on symbolic constructions.

Nevertheless, the landscape is literally the basis of the symbol, since it frames and forges the image that inspires the symbolic creativity; and this landscape can be reconstructed. At the same time, this is what makes it universal, as a scene in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* shows, depicting the symbol of the shepherd, the bucolic episode of Argus falling asleep and his invitation to the shepherd Mercury to enjoy the shade with him (Ov. *Met*. 1.678-681):

(…) *at tu,*

quisquis es, hoc poteras mecum considere saxo'

Argus ait; 'neque enim pecori fecundior ullo

herba loco est, aptamque vides pastoribus umbram.

"You, there", Argo calls,

"whoever you are, you might as well sit down with me on this rock;

for there's no more fertile place in grass for the flock

and you see that there is shade good for shepherds".[397]

It contains a very simple and almost irrelevant component of this image that is transversal to any pastoral landscape: grass (*herba*). Moreover, examining Dumuzi's landscape in 'SF?' (l. 76) or in DumDr (ll.144-50), the same constitutive element can be found, apparently without any complex value. The Sumerian text describes a shepherd (Dumuzi) who is not leading his flock, but running away and hiding in the vegetation (u_2) – the same vegetation that is crucial for his pasturelands. (cf. SF? l. 76; *Summer and Winter* ll. 14-18; cf. Col. 7.3.23). The common element in both landscapes is, in fact, cattle fodder, i. e. sustenance for the herd (*herba*, u_2). The point I wish to make is that the visual frame is very similar and coincides in terms of its immediate and direct meaning. The basis for the image, namely the essential environment for the development of the activity, is the same and therefore the main signs that make up the symbol are also the same.

In another example, *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the moon* ll. 6-7 (Version A, from Nibru)',[398] it is possible to identify references to the same universal landscape in the sheep, the grass and also the ox and plough (vide Chap. 3.1).

In addition to the elements of the landscape common to farming and herding there is one metaphor constructed from a crystalized image. It is the image of an ox bearing a heavy yoke, straining too hard; it may be said that in such images transported to literature there is humanity in the animal and the metaphor is used to show the situation of a person who is complaining (cf. Ver. *G.* 3.515-524; Chap. 3.2.3.3). The suffering is shown through the beast crushed by its efforts, since it is the brute force responsible for the crops. Recalling Virgil's verses (*G.* 3.515-524), we find the suffering of the same beast, which performs the same functions as the oxen from southern Mesopotamia, exhausted by very similar empirical work. In essence, the meaning of the image is the same. The context is not the same, nor the hermeneutics of the texts and the global semantics through which the image is expressed, but the signs of meaning are the same because they belong to the same abstract image.

Although it is a fragmented text, the entire framework described in the letter belongs to the farming world. Even if it is impossible to determine exactly what the word 'gud' (ox) stands for in the text, it is still an agricultural element. The ox is related to the man through

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[397] Vide also Verg. *Ecl.* 1.79. The possible interpretation of the pastor's negligence in this passage is not being discussed: for this, vide Barchiesi 2006 412.
[398] comp.t.: Ali 1964; ETCSL c.3.3.02.

a crystalized image of the agricultural landscape; the landscape that generates meaning, a transversal meaning, does not depend on language, but on empirical experience within the natural world and can provide the basis for the historian's approach to the agricultural cosmos as a source for humanity's archaeology of thought.

Sumerian and Roman agricultural techniques were different. For example, it is not known whether the Sumerians used the fallow system in the same way as the traditional Roman peasant.[399] There is plenty of evidence of farming and herding in ancient Sicilia, confirmed in Cicero's *Against Verres* (Pritchard 1972), which refers to the functions of the *vilicus* [400] and *pastores* (cf. Cic. *Ver* 2.5.15.8-11). This knowledge is important, because it enables a direct association to be made between farming and herding, as outlined above.

Although it is possible to compare signs of meaning in the literary expression of the two cultures (vide A.1.2.), this is not the case with the actual techniques: the traditional Roman fallow system cannot be compared with an unknown Sumerian technique. However, the Sumerian agricultural landscape, as suggested in literature, seems to contemplate a combination of both activities and given the fact that large working animals need regular pasturelands, it is hard to believe that some fields would not have been used at certain times for cattle grazing rather than crops. In short, the evidence of practical agriculture in the landscape was similar in essence and aims to the images that generate the signs of meaning, despite the technical and contextual differences between farming in southern Mesopotamia during the Ur III period and in the Italic region in the I-II centuries AD. In this sense, the human and animal activities framed in the landscape would have produced the same signs, even if the factual geographical landscape was quite different. In fact, if we were to opt for anachronism and directly compare the tasks described in *Hoe and Plough* with the image of work in the fields in Columella (Col. 10.1.1.68-74, vide Chap. 4.2), we would find the same basic necessities and circumstances associated with working the land.

3.3.1 Farming instructions: an intersection point?

It can be said that there is only one common approach in all the instructions used as a source for this thesis: they all aim to transmit practical information and therefore improve the situation of the interlocutor who intends to work in agriculture. FI ll. 8-16 describe how

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[399] On the fallow system in southern Mesopotamia, vide Charles 1990 and LaPlaca, Powell 1990. On the Roman context, vide White 1970.
[400] On the functions of the *vilicus,* cf. Cic. *De Orat.* 1. 249 and Col. 1.6.7.

the farmer should prepare for this work and the practical details are, in fact, quite basic and could also serve as advice in modern times. In essence they could be addressed to anyone about to till and sow a field (vide Chap. 3.1): regardless of whether they were a slave or a servant[401] supervised by an 'ugula' ('um-mi-a' or 'i₃-dab₅')[402] or a *vilicus*, the actual image of the labour pictured in the frame would be the same. The social status of the person doing the work was not really an issue in terms of the construction of abstract meaning, whether in Sumerian or Latin. In the same way, it would have not made any difference whether the worker was a landowner or simply working for an overseer or landlord. The interpretation of the scene is based on the visualization and identification of potential signs of meaning, without cultural or contextual preconceptions. A symbol may be dependent on this, but signs of meaning based on empirical common sense are not.

It should be noted that farming and herding are crucial factors in the social subsistence of Sumerians and Romans. Therefore, the very notion of civilization may rest on agriculture and a knowledge of farming (vide 4.1.2);[403] which explain the differentiation between 'us' and the 'others' i.e. those who are ignorant of such matters (CA ll. 46-49), the barbarians who simply destroy the fields (cf. CLAM 152-174, ll. b+210-b+211; Verg. *Ecl.* 1.70-72) or even an exotic and distant world (Verg. *G.* 2.140-142):[404]

46. mar-tu kur-ra lu₂ še nu-zu

47. gud du₇ maš₂ du₇-da mu-un-na-da-an-ku₄-ku₄

48. me-luḫ-ḫaki lu₂ kur gig₂-ga-ke₄

46. "From the land of Martu, people ignorant of barley

47. brought suitable cattle and kids.

48. The Meluḫans, the people of the black land," (…)

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[401] On slavery in Ur III, vide Adams 2010. For some considerations on the Sumerian language in relation to the concepts of slave/servant, vide Englund 2009. Vide also Gelb 1976.

[402] On the functions of *Santana* ('ugula' or 'i₃-dab₅'), vide Greco 2015.

[403] Cf. the genesis myth which refers to the time when bread and agriculture were brought to the world (GEN ll.1-26; comp.t. ETCSL c.1.8.1.4); vide also the characterization of the murderers of Dumuzi in DumDr ll. 110-114 and the invaders of Agade who knew nothing about agriculture, in CA ll. 40-56; and *Lugalbanda and the Anzud bird* l. 304 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.8.2.2; Vanstiphout 2003).

[404] In *How grain came to Sumer* (ll. 1-12, comp.t. ETCSL c.1.7.6), it is noted that before the arrival of grain in Sumer people used to eat grass like sheep. In other words, they were not civilized, since they were like animals. Cf. ll. 13-32.

In other words, people from Martu are foreigners and one of the factors which differentiates them is their ignorance of agriculture. There are no similar references in the Roman instructional texts, but it is possible to find examples of barbarians destroying farmland in other texts in the Roman canon (cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 1.70-72).

The universal presence of farming in ancient thought is due to the intrinsic dependence on agriculture after it become the main source of subsistence. Agricultural production was fundamental in ancient Sumerian and Roman societies and people would use any opportunity to cultivate land in order to produce small crops or some surplus (cf. Cic. *Cato* 16.56; Plin. *Nat*. 19.51, 19.57ff., apud Thommen 2012).[405] Rural life was hard, hence any surplus production would have been welcomed.[406] Therefore, although there is not much evidence of small domestic gardens, if there was some land available and enough water,[407] the great majority of rustic people would certainly have cultivated a garden, regardless of the type of crops or fruit trees being planted or even the rural context. However, there is little textual evidence of domestic production in Sumerian gardens (see Greco 2015), although if there were opportunities for planting, there would certainly have been small gardens, as in Roman society (Plin*. Nat.* 19.1; 19.19-19.21). The difficulties and insecurity of agricultural work would have encouraged this and at same the time these circumstances would have reinforced the assumption that an ideal life would provide sufficient or surplus supplies with less work. This is a subject evident in both Sumerian and Latin literature (vide Chap. 4.3), although the representation and description of the *topus* takes different forms.[408]

In some way, the majority of the population would have been familiar with farming, which means that the agricultural world would have been used as a major source for abstract language. The fact that most of the population would have been, to some extent, farmers would have facilitated the understanding and crystallization of the signs of meaning based on the agricultural landscape that were identified in 3.1 and 3.2.

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[405] Cato mentions suburban gardens with fruit trees and also vines and olives (Cato *Agr*. 9, 10).
[406] Vide some examples of complementarity in Calvo 1999.
[407] On the Roman *hortus* and gardening, vide Thommen 2012 90-94.
[408] Cf. the abundance in the agricultural landscape of *Hoe and Plough* ll. 76-79 after the hard work has been done (vide Chap. 4.1) with the idea of a better farm that does not involve so much work but is still productive (Verg. *G*. 2.412-413).

3.3.2. The shepherd in the agricultural cosmos

As previously noted, the literary symbols of the shepherd and the farmer tend to be based on a selection of some of the signs that compound the traditional image; the symbolic character is composed after selecting signs according to the objectives of the text or myth to which the symbol belongs. However, the symbol is not exactly the traditional one, since only part of the original signs of meaning make up the abstract image.

The literary characters of shepherds or farmers are often used as metaphors to evoke a symbol that is both transversal and almost universal, but when used in literature its complete semantic value is highly dependent on context. All the images presented in this study are a constructed selection from the multiple semantic signs that emerge from reality. Therefore, they may function as complex symbols in literary speech, but will always retain their profound, spontaneous and unchangeable value because they recall a visual reality. If these activities are practised in the same way in a visual landscape, the potential signs of meaning which they generate will be seen and identified in the same way. It is the mechanism of linguistic expression that alters and creates different complex symbolic outcomes. Despite linguistic creativity, the values contained in signs of meaning are never ambiguous or variable since they correspond to unique, crystalized images.

In agricultural cultures shepherding is closely connected with farming as there is an interaction between the two activities, even though the techniques are different, as Varro notes (Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*4.7):

Alia, inquam, ratio ac scientia coloni, alia pastoris: coloni ea quae agri cultura factum ut nascerentur e terra, contra pastoris ea quae nata ex pecore.

"I say, the skill and knowledge of the farmer are one thing, and those of the herdsman are another: in the space of the husbandman are those things which are made to spring from the earth by farming, contrary to those that are born from the herd."

They do, however, belong to the same natural framework. It is their tasks that make both activities distinct, although they share the same landscape and are both fundamental to subsistence. Recalling the example of the *disputatio* between Dumuzi and Enkimdu, Inana is the soil (DI P ll. 22-31) and therefore the point of intersection for images constructed from a factual and empirical reality that generates traditional and transversal signs. These signs are shared and united by two activities that are crucial for the existence of complex societies.

Images of the earth, farmer and shepherd are compounded by the same basic signs regardless of the culture in which they are used.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the image of Virgil's Corycian gardener (Verg. *G.* 4.127-33), a character perfectly suited to an idealized image, regardless of the chronology of the given cultural context. The intended audience for such a description would always recognize this farmer as a good man (cf. UrN G ll. 17-19, Šu-Suen C ll.18-22; Cato *Agr. pr.*2-3). However, is this due to the power of literary description or is it a symbolic frame that transcends the literary *topoi* and influences our cultural thinking? In other words, is it because of Virgil's compelling description that we see this man as great, or because of our preconceptions of his attitude toward life and morality? The answer is not so much the result of philosophical inquiry, but a matter of intuition and, in this sense, it may be a question that our own cultural background has already answered for us. Signs of meaning based on agriculture are universal and can offer some clues to the thinking of the silent voices from the past.

IV. Wealth, prosperity and abstract language

4.1. The landscape of prosperity: abundance from the fields[409]

"Tú no verás del trigo la espiga sazonada

y de macizas pomas cargado el manzanar,

ni de la vid rugosa la uva aurirrosada

ha de exprimir su alegre licor en tu lagar."

Antonio Machado (1907), *Soledades*, *Galerias.*

No prehistoric symbol has only one meaning since, as already noted, a symbol tends to be a compound of signs of meaning based on manifestations of nature. As the selection of signs of meaning varies according to specific expressive objectives, the resulting symbols may have different semantic forms. However, the original source, the natural world, corresponds to an immutable and crystalized image that potentially bears the same signs of meaning. The agricultural cosmos is a natural matrix for the symbols of abundance, fertility and prosperity, which means that any element from the agricultural frame can be used as a sign of meaning when such concepts are being expressed. Moreover, these signs allow for a variety of combinations that generate many different semantic results. As Miller (2013) says, considering the concept of abundance in artistic expression, "the theme of abundance can be traced in visual expression from protoliterate times onward, as suggested by files of cultivated plants and domesticated animals in a variety of media".[410] Linguistic thought preserved images of abundance and then expressed them in various formats,[411] such as the Sumerian texts celebrating the courtship, love and marriage of Inana and Dumuzi. In fact, the DI corpus contains examples of a symbology that reflects the abstract idea of abundance and prosperity which could be recognised by any society involved in subsistence farming, regardless of context or historical period.

4.1.1. Fertility and production

A general image of natural life can be found in DI F, which can be seen as a hymn to fertility, on a metaphorical level. Although it is a very fragmented text, which means that it

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[409] Vide the landscapes of prosperity that appear throughout *Summer and Winter* (comp.t.: ETCSL c.5.3.3).
[410] On the plastic representation of abundance, vide Winter 2009 199-226; Winter 2006.
[411] For example, Miller 2013 proposes an interpretation of graphic symbols of fertility and abundance in the royal cemetery at Ur.

is quite open to interpretation, it is possible to identify what appears to be a speech by Inana addressed to Dumuzi anticipating their meeting at the Ekur (see Pons 2012). The description, in the third person, establishes the context for the encounter in terms of what may be identified as a kind of metaphorical ritual representing conception and fertility which culminates in a symbolic representation of sexual intercourse (Sefati 1998 171-176):

1. ga-ša-an[412]-ĝen gi-rin-e u₆ ga-e-da-du₁₁
2. g[a-ša]-[an]-[an]-[na]-ĝen gi-rin ḫal-ḫal-la i-bi₂-ĝu₁₀ de₃-[ma?-al?]
3. inim [mu]-[un]-[gar₃?]-ra-bi su₈-ba-bi
4. mu-ud-[na-ĝu₁₀] X [X] X [mi₂] [de₃]-[ma?]-ab-du₁₁
5. ga-ša-an-ĝen gi-rin-e da-nu₂
6. ga-ša-an-an-na-ĝen gi-rin-e kaš₄ da-mu-ni-du₁₁-du₁₁

1. "The queen will observe the flourishing vegetation in wonder.
2. [The queen of heaven], I will [cast] my eyes on the spread of flourishing vegetation.
3. Words, as those of a f[arm]er (and) of a shepherd,
4. may '[my]' bridegroom say to m[e *kindly*].
5. The queen will lie on the flourishing vegetation,
6. the queen of heaven, will hasten to the flourishing vegetation (…)"[413]

The meaning of 'gi-ri' is not completely clear: however, I have translated it as 'flourishing vegetation' since this fits the context (cf. Sefati 1998 174). The context itself is one of life growing, a desirable scenario for any farmer or shepherd (vide Chap. 3.1.2) and the place where Inana lies waiting for fertilization, as one more element of nature, as if she were the earth itself – as in fact, symbolically, she is.[414] The goddess then describes what seems to be a ritualistic metaphor that merges the image of watering a meš-tree[415] and its growth with what could be considered a metaphor for Dumuzi's erection.

9. […] X X X X a[416] da-an-su₃

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[412] Emensal for 'Nin'.

[413] In considering that the queen is speaking in the third person, I have followed Sefati's (1998) interpretation and reconstruction.

[414] Of course, the goddess symbology is not restricted to the productivity of the fields: "(…) 'sacred marriage' that makes an association of ancient goddesses with simple fertility figures or rites mischaracterizes their nature and that of early agrarian religions and societies. The authority of ancient goddesses like Ishtar was not restricted to fertility" (Guevara 2008 218).

[415] According to Foxvog 2011 59-98, the mes-tree may symbolize abundance and fruitfulness.

[416] Can also mean 'semen', cf. ePSD, 'a'.

10. [… a] [da]-[mul-mul] meš$_3$-ĝu$_{10}$ pa da-e$_3$

11. [e$_2$] [^{d}mu]-[ul]-lil$_2$-la$_2$-ke$_4$ a da-aĝ$_2$-su$_3$

12. [X X] X a da-mul-mul meš$_3$-ĝu$_{10}$ pa da-an-e$_3$

13. [X X] [e$_2$]-kur-ra a da-aĝ$_2$-su$_3$

14. [(X)] [lugal]-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{ĝiš}meš$_3$-gin$_7$ kisal-la bi$_2$-in-mu$_2$-mu$_2$

15. [e$_2$] [^{d}]$^[$mu$^]$-ul-lil$_2$-la$_2$-ke$_4$ a bi$_2$-in-su$_3$

16. [lug]al$^?$ ^{d}ama-ušumgal-an-na ^{ĝiš}meš$_3$-gin$_7$ kisal-la bi$_2$-in-mu$_2$-mu$_2$

9. "[…] … will sprinkle water,

10. [my?...] will radiate, my *mes*-tree I will make appear;

11. [in the house of E]nlil I will sprinkle water,

12. […..] I will make my *mes*-tree radiate I will make it appear;

13. in the [E]kur[417] I will sprinkle water.

14. My [king] will grow in the courtyard like a *mes*-tree,

15. [in the house of E]nlil I will sprinkle water

16. [The ki]ng Amaušumgalanna will grow in the courtyard like a *mes*-tree (…)!"

This text seems to present a literary metaphor for fertility, although extending the analysis too far may raise questions that are more related to literary hermeneutics and religion, which I intend to avoid in approaching abstract language. Moreover, the text is too fragmented, so it is not possible to build up an accurate semantic context. However, regardless of the hermeneutic interpretation, the sign of meaning for growth, a compound of the symbol for abundance, is present. Explaining how their presence and intercourse enhances the Ekur (DI F ll. 1-29), Inana pictures herself as symbol of conception and fertility by describing a landscape of growth. Dumuzi conveys life, since he carries the seed that will be deposited in Inana (the land) and will bear fruit, if the great god An desires:

29. […] a zid-da numun zid-da

30. […] X šeg$_{12}$ abzu-ta u$_3$-mu-un-da-ši-e$_3$

31. […] ^{ĝiš}meš$_3$-gin$_7$ pa da-an-e$_3$

32. [… ^{d}]ama-ušumgal-an-na an-ne$_2$ ḫe$_2$-a-u$_3$-tu

29. "[…] a proper offspring, a proper seed,[418]

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30. […] when he comes forth from the brickwork of the Abzu, (trans. Sefati 1998 173)

31. […], I will make him appear like a *mes*-tree

32. Amaušumgalanna, may An engender […]"[419]!

In the lines which follow (33-36), the text seems to continue the metaphor of the lovers' union in the natural landscape (Sefati 1998 173) by presenting the image of a watered landscape with green, growing trees as metaphor for sexual intercourse. An eye trained to recognise telluric feelings may concur with the perspective of the ancient Sumerian interlocutors, who would have found beauty in the idea of richness provided by the metaphorical union of the gods. Their union symbolizes the perfect harmony of nature which benevolently bestows fruits on humans[420] considering this to be the spontaneous interpretation of the interlocutor.

In this study, the literary representation of crystalized images is approached more as a matter of linguistic creativity than any kind of philosophical discourse which would reflect the natural world through theoretical speculation and literary language. Having said that, an inscription on a vase representing the words of Lugalzagesi, the last Old Sumerian king ('lugal') presents a landscape that was common in Sumerian literature[421] and compares people to grasses (u2-šim-ĝim). The visual language, imported from the natural cosmos, i. e. the idea of quantity and space occupied by people understood through a grassy landscape, facilitates the recognition of meaning. Obviously, this is only one interpretation, but the common sense used in such a reading would be the same as that of the Sumerian interlocutors.

In DI O the idea of prosperity, which takes the form of agricultural goods and potential productivity, is expressed by what appears to be wishful thinking. [422] Considering Inana to be the character who is speaking (cf. Sefati 1998 213), the goddess praises her lover by the

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[419] Sefati 1998 173-6 suggests that the unreadable part may include the word 'life'. I agree with this assumption, because the context suggests it, or at least something close to it; and the traditional meaning of u3-tu (tu(d)) reinforces the reconstruction: 'to give birth', 'to create' (cf. Foxvog 2014 61).

[420] Cf. *Summer and Winter* ll. 19-25.

[421] Lugal-zage-si E1.14.20.1, col. Iii: 22-31. kur u2-sal-la / ḫa-mu-da-ne2 / nam-lu2-ulu3 / u2-šim-ĝim / šu-dagal ḫa-mu-da5-du11 / ubur-an-na-ke4 / si ḫu-mu-da5-sa2 / kalam-e / ki-sa6-ga / igi ḫa-ma-da-du8. "May the foreign lands live in peace, may the population become widespread like herbs, may the breast of heaven function properly, may people see abundance in the country happiness!" (comp.t.: Frayne 2008 433-438). Vide Westenholz 2004.

[422] See Englund 1995 on production in the Ur III period and Sharlach 2004 on economic administration and taxation, vide Sharlach 2004.

banks of the river and the scene of abundance is expressed in terms of the richness offered by nature. There is no poverty, therefore its antithesis is envisaged:

15. <u>nu-ma-al</u> <u>niĝ$_2$-gig</u>-zu ḫe$_2$-a

16. [e$_2$-i$_3$]-ĝal$_2$-la lu$_2$-bi ḫe$_2$-me-en

17. $^⌈$nin$_9^?$ sag$_9⌉$-ga ban$_3$-da sag$_9$-ga

18. eš$_2$-$^⌈$gin$_7⌉$[(…)] e$_2$ niĝ$_2$-gur$_{11}$-$^⌈$ra$^?⌉$ sag$_9$-ga

19. nitaḫ lu$_2$ ḫe$_2$-$^⌈$me$⌉$-[en] $^⌈$lu$_2$ ḫe$_2$-me$⌉$-[en]

(…)

22. diĝir iri-ni ba-an-sag$_9$ ḫe$_2$-$^⌈$me$⌉$-[en]

23. dumu ama-ni ba-an-zil$_2$-zil$_2$-i $^⌈$ḫe$_2⌉$-[me-en]

24. zi-šag$_4$-ĝal$_2$ iri-za-ka ḫe$_2$-me-en

25. lu$_2$ saĝ-kal-la numun zid ḫe$_2$-[me-en]

26. niĝ$_2$-gur$_{11}$ tuku nam-tar-ra [… ḫe$_2$-me-en]

27. za-e lu$_2$ kug tuku-bi [ḫe$_2$-me-en]

28. za-e lu$_2$ še $^⌈$tuku$⌉$-[bi ḫe$_2$-me-en]

29. kug tuku kug-ta ḫul$_2$-la ḫe$_2$-[me-en]

30. še tuku še-ta $^⌈$ḫul$_2⌉$-[la] $^⌈$ḫe$_2⌉$-[me-en]

15. "'There is not', may it be an <u>abomination</u> to you.

16. [a house] 'where there is', may you be its 'man' (lord)

17 a beautiful lady, a beautiful child

18. $^⌈$like a$⌉$ rope $^⌉$[(…)] a beautiful storehouse (Sefati 1998 215)

(…)

21. May you be handsome, may you be raised!

22. May you be the one who pleases his city's god

23. may [you] $^⌈$be$⌉$ the one who is good to his mother

24. may you be the life-provider of your city

25. may [you] be a preeminent man, a good seed,

26. [may you be] one who owns property [……] fate

27. [may you be] the owner of the silver,

28. [may you be] the $^⌈$owner$⌉$ [of the] grain!

29. May [you] be the owner of silver, rejoicing with silver

30. ma[y you be] the owner of barley, $^⌈$rejoicing$⌉$ [with] barley."

Absence is 'taboo' (niĝ$_2$-gig) in the context of prosperity, so the expression 'nu-ma-al' ('may not be') has no reason to exist in an idyllic world. Moreover, the grain, together with the precious metals (kug), are valuable products that create stability and happiness, since they provide for the future; agricultural products signify wealth and wealth leads to happiness.[423] Following this argument, sadness can also be measured through what is not shown in the landscape, but should be there (CA):

164. ud$_5$ gen$_6$ ^{d}en-lil$_2$-la$_2$ amaš-ta ba-ra-ra-aš na-gada-bi bi$_2$-in-us$_2$-u$_2$-us$_2$

165. šilam tur$_3$-bi-ta ba-ra-ra-aš unud(UNU$_3$)-bi bi$_2$-in-us$_2$-u$_2$-us$_2$

(...)

170. iri^{ki} šag$_4$ edin bar daĝal nu-me-a mu$_2$-sar mu-un-de$_3$-ĝal$_2$

(...)

172. a-gar$_3$ gal-gal-e še nu-um-de$_6$

173. a-gar$_3$ sug$_4$-sug$_4$-ge ku$_6$ nu-um-de$_6$

174. pu$_2$-^{ĝiš}kiri$_6$ lal$_3$ ĝeštin nu-um-de$_6$

175. IM.UD sir$_2$-da la-ba-šeĝ$_3$ ^{ĝiš}maš-gurum la-ba-mu$_2$

164. (The Gutians) drove the firm goats of Enlil out of the folds and made their herdsmen follow them.

165. They drove the cows out of their stalls and make their herdsmen follow them.

(…)

170. They established gardens for themselves inside the cities, not (where they should) be on the wide plain outside.

(…)

172. The big meadows bear no grain,

173. the empty meadows have no fish,

174. the irrigated orchards produce no syrup or grapes (wine),

175. the dense clouds$^{(?)}$ did not bring rain, the mašgurum tree did not grow.[424]

The analogy between happiness and sadness is created because the signs of meaning needed to express harmony, and therefore happiness, are not present. In fact, they have been

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[423] Cf. u$_3$-tuku ša$_3$ an-hul$_2$ še-tuku ur$_5$ an-sa$_6$ / nig$_2$-ur$_2$-limmu$_2$ tuku-e u$_3$ nu-un-ši-ku-ku (SP 3.23, Alster 2007 80) "He who has silver is happy; he who has grain feels comfortable, but he who has livestock cannot sleep" (trans. Alster 2007).
[424] Cf. with the image in CA ll. 120-127 which shows that there is no grain.

subverted: the signs for 'crops', 'providing', 'cattle' and 'growth' are countered by barren fields and by the complete destruction of their produce.

The idea of landscapes of abundance is common in Sumerian literature; they can even be identified in fragmented texts such as UrN D, which shows life springing up along the banks of the canal provided by the king Ur-Namma. Meaning can be examined in UrN D because of the references to fish and reeds, denoting growth and prosperity (ll. 1-12).[425] The reason why these images are so common is simple: such landscapes were the basis of society's sustenance and therefore reflect the prosperity of the state.[426] Landscapes charged with signs of meaning also provide the semantic basis for the interpretation of literary images of destruction, such as the one quoted above.

Literary language tends to use the farming world as a reference point for representing abstract meaning, because it is easier to understand sensations spontaneously by analogy. The symbolic meaning of wealth based on abundance and prosperity can be constructed, expanded and used in many ways, but tends to include the abstract sign for quantity that can also be used, for example, as a compounding element in the image of the great ruler who, as a shepherd, multiplies his flock (Išme-Dagan S):[427]

4. dili-(X)-ni maḫ en mu dug$_3$ sa$_4$-a-ni kur šar$_2$-ra pad$_3$-[da]

5. e-[ne-da] [zi]-ĝal$_2$-la im-mi-in-[lu$^?$]-[a]

6. a$_2$-bad$_3$ uĝ$_3$ [dur$_2$-ru]-na-bi-še$_3$$^?$ saĝ gig$_2$ šu mu-na-[šum$_2$]-ma

7. <u>nesaĝ</u> <u>kur-ra-da</u> si ša-mu-na-ni-ib-sa$_2$-aš

(…) 4. who alone is great, the lord whose good name is invoked in numerous foreign lands, (trans. Frayne 1990)

5. because of him the [living creatures] multiply,

6. the settled people protected by him, the black-headed people who had been entrusted to him

7. send him the <u>first fruits</u> (offerings) of the <u>foreign lands</u>.

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[425] Abundance is often suggested by products that come from fishing and gathering but they are still derived from an agricultural framework from which prosperity can be inferred. Cf. *Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta* ll. 358-367 (comp.t. ETCSL c.1.6.2)

[426] In UrN D, the shepherd is more clearly presented as a metaphor for the political leader (ll. 11-28 Urim version), although he represents a traditional sign for the provider. Cf. UrN D ll. 6-10, Urim Version; Gudea E3/1.1.7.Cyl. A ll. 10-17.

[427] *Dedication Statue to Išme-Dagan,* Frayne 1990 36-38 (comp.t: ETCSL c.2.5.4.19). On the multiplication of the herds, vide also *Nanna-Suen's journey to Nibru* ll. 186-97, ll. 294-305 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.5.1); *Enki and the World Order* ll. 52-60 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.1.3); *A balbale to Ninurta* (Ninurta F) ll. 1-11 (comp.t. ETCSL 4.27.06); ELA ll. 596-599. On this *topus,* vide Ferrara 1995.

Išme-Dagan multiplies the animals and, implicitly, the gifts of the land. In addition to possessing all the characteristics of a great military leader and warrior, he also is a provider of prosperity[428] (vide Chap. 3.1.2).

The visual sign of quantity as a marker for value is common sense, since an individual who possessed hundreds of sheep instead of one would be a great owner and could therefore provide one hundred times more (cf. *Nanna-Suen's journey to Nibru* ll. 186-97, ll. 294-305). Wealth is guaranteed by quantity and quantity guarantees the future because it provides a surplus for the unknown times ahead.

4.1.2 The gifts of nature

When they appear as gifts that improve and facilitate life, the products of nature, suggest another aspect of agricultural wealth: provisions without the need to labour for them. DI A presents Dumuzi as someone 'who hoes not' (al nu-ak-am$_3$ guru$_7$ dub-dub-ba-am$_3$, DI A l.53, vide infra), but still has crops. Thus, the value of quantity depends on how hard it may be to obtain. In examples such us Dumuzi's offerings to Inana, the interlocutor can grasp the immediate meaning of the scene by understanding the value of the gifts (DI T):

2. kug ^{d}inana-ke$_4$ u$_2$ bur$_{12}$-bur$_{12}$-re bur$_{12}$-re […]

3. lu$_2$ zu$_2$-lum de$_5$-de$_5$[429]-ge mu-nim-mar[430] an-[…]$^?$

4. kug ^{d}inana-ra lu$_2$ zu$_2$-lum de$_5$-de$_5$-ge mu-nim-$^{[}$mar$^{]}$ […]$^?$

5. a ḫe$_2$-en-na-tum$_2$ a ḫe$_2$-en-na-tum$_2$ numun ziz$_2$ ge$_6$-ga

6. ^{d}inana-ra a-da du$_6$ ḫe$_2$-en-na-tum$_2$ numun ziz$_2$ babbar-ra

7. lu$_2$ na-de$_6$ lu$_2$ na-de$_6$ du$_6$ za pad$_3$-še$_3$ na-de$_6$

8. ki-sikil ^{d}inana lu$_2$ na-de$_6$ du$_6$ za pad$_3$-še$_3$ na-de$_6$

2. "Holy Inanna, he who tears up the grass, he who tears up […]

3. He who picks the dates, […]$^?$ the date palm.

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[428] Cf. with the abundance brought by Rim-Sim the 'sipad' (Rīm-Sîn H; Comp.t. ECTLS c. 2.6.9.8).

[429] 'Ri(g)', cf. Foxvog 2014 12.

[430] Emesal for ^{giš}nimbar, vide epsd 'mu-nim-mar'. cf. Sefati's 1998 commentary on lines iii-iv.

4. He who picks the dates for holy Inana, […] [the date palm].

5. Let him bring her water, let him bring her water and seeds of black emmer.

6. To Inana, let him bring the water with a heap of seeds of white emmer.

7. The man brings, the man brings, he brings a heap of jewels to choose from.

8. The man brings to the maiden Inana, he brings a heap of precious stones to choose from."

Pasturelands for the cattle, seeds and water for cultivation, dates and emmer, all these gifts correspond to an unquantifiable symbolic richness, and the key to understanding this is common sense. People would have known the traditional value of these gifts because they were part of their experience. Therefore, the signs of meaning used to construct the symbolic language are understood without the need for any profound hermeneutic analysis.

The first lines of this section of the text describe a kind of ceremonial dressing, preceding Inana's reunion with Dumuzi (ll. 11-24). Although it is unclear what these preparations imply, it can be assumed that the reference to fruits and seeds as a metaphor may suggest a scale or enumeration of value. There is an idea of conjoining goods which should complement each other as gifts. That is to say, when the date-gatherer brings Inana water, black emmer seeds, and a heap (du_6) of white emmer, together with a heap of precious stones from which Inana can select her jewels, he is providing her with food and giving her what appears to be aesthetic pleasure. This joy comes from the possession of goods that can be admired, although in some aspects the seeds and water are manifestations of future prosperity, since they imply wealth for someone now able to provide for herself. Essentially, the following possible symbolic readings can be identified:

1. the date (zu_2-lum), as a sweet fruit, can be understood as the perfect food gift for a lover, as it would, in fact, be understood today;

2. black emmer (numun ziz_2 gig_2-ga), and white emmer (numun ziz_2 babbar-ra), together with water ('a', cf. Chap. 3.1.1.), are prime provisions since they are the sustenance of the people and have the potential to generate other goods; in other words, they signify wealth;

3. the jewels complete the symbolic presentation of precious and rare gifts by adding a different material value, signifying a more superficial and immediately recognisable asset.

These symbols would be immediately recognised by any interlocutor familiar with such traditional imagery and with the semiotic tools of common sense. Nonetheless, it is

necessary to take a critical stance towards one's own reading of this text, since preconceptions may influence the analysis: it is possible to find something that is not there simply because one is trying to find it.The lines in the text describe Inana's preparation for meeting her bridegroom and contain references that could imply the use of cosmetics, whose exact meaning is not fully comprehensible. Thus, there is a possibility that metaphors might be identified when the text is simply describing common facts associated with an activity that cannot be properly contextualized and reconstructed. Supposing emmer and water and even dates were the ingredients for some kind of cosmetics? Dates are rich in oils suitable for ointments, a fine flour of emmer could easily be used as a base for some kind of powder and there are many potential applications for water and other fluids in the production and application of cosmetics. Therefore, the hypothesis that this may be a simple description of cosmetic products should not be ignored.

The focus of my interpretation is abstract language and its expression, which should be clarified by the context, even though this can also be misleading, as in the previous example. Regarding the relationship between Dumuzi and Inana, the tendency would be to consider that the union of two gods reflects the natural world and that the symbols of nature are expressed in the acts of the gods. Nevertheless, these acts are also mundane since, in addition to being converted into a metaphor, the gods have been personified and therefore some details of their lives may be entirely human and contemporary.

Before any allegory emerges, specific actions are crystalized as images which correspond to the agricultural cosmos. The composition begins by presenting 'he who tears up the grass' (l. 2), suggesting some kind of work in the fields and, in some aspects, Dumuzi is the one who creates and has the power to bring gifts to Inana, which are directly associated with the symbology of the gods. Even if the dates, emmer and water were chosen to denote objects intended for use in cosmetics, these elements would not lose their symbolic meaning in the text, and the cosmetics themselves could at least have been named precisely enough to identify their function.[431] However, this is not the case.

Lists of goods generated by or associated with the gods are quite common in Sumerian literature. The foodstuff and herds in the EnlSud list (cf. ll.103-123) show how great the potential happiness is for those who receive such offerings.[432] The plot that lead to the

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[431] On date palm cultivation, vide Charles 1987.
[432] For a contextualization of this text, vide Civil 1983. cf. CA ll. 46-56 and Rīm-Sîn G ll.1-10.

offerings will not be discussed here, although it is important to note that they were so abundant that they resulted in an pardon to the god Enlil for a previous insult (cf. ll. 1-95).[433]

Animals representing abundance and prosperity head the list of goods that the rejoicing god can provide. Firstly, he can offer productive animals[434] and foodstuff[435]. Other goods of a different nature are then mentioned (ll. 128-136), extending the image of abundance since they provide sustenance in a secondary manner, either by facilitating the purchase/exchange of products or because of their beauty and rarity.

In fact, the abstract image of farming supplies seems to have been so relevant to the collective social mind that in DumDr even a concept such as the idea of 'not human' or 'civilized' is explained through the symbolic value of agricultural products (vide Chap. 3.3.)

110. lugal-ra lu$_2$ mu-<ši>-re$_7$-eš-am$_3$ lu$_2$ ḫi-ḫi-a-me-eš

111. u$_2$ nu-zu-me-eš a nu-zu-me-eš

112. zid$_2$ dub-dub-ba nu-gu$_7$-me-eš

113. a bal-bal-a nu-na$_8$-na$_8$-me-eš

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[433] 96-98. niĝ$_2$-de$_2$ mu pad$_3$-da [de$_6$-de$_6$-da šu kar$_2$] ⌈im⌉-ma-ab-gi$_4$-gi$_4$ / 97. u$_3$-na-du$_{11}$ ušbar$_3$-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫe$_2$-⌈me-en niĝ$_2$ šag$_4$⌉-za ak-e-še / 98. kur gal ^{d}en-lil$_2$-ra u$_3$-[na-a-du$_{11}$ niĝ$_2$ šag$_4$]-za ak-e-še (…). "[By bringing the] marriage offerings and gifts [the insult] ⌈disappeared⌉. / 97. Tell him: "[You shall become] my son-in-law; do [the will of your heart!]" / [Tell] Enlil, the Great Mountain: 'do [the will of your heart!]'".

[434] 103. […] ba-dug$_3$ ^{d}en-lil$_2$ šag$_4$-ga-na ḫul$_2$-ḫul$_2$-e im-de$_6$ / 104. […] saĝ mu-ni-il$_2$ kušum$_4$ mu-un-tag-tag-ge / 105. [X X maš$_2$]-⌈anše⌉ <niĝ$_2$>-ur$_2$-limmu$_2$-e edin ni$_2$-ba lu-a / 106. […]-⌈zu⌉ ḫur-saĝ ĝal$_2$-la-ba šu im-ma-ni-tag / 109. gud niga a$_2$ gur-gur-ra ⌈gu$_3$⌉-bi bi$_2$-in-sig$_{10}$-sig$_{10}$ / 110. immal amar-bi am si ḫal-ḫa ⌈saman$_3$⌉ […] / 111. u$_8$ sila$_4$ ud$_5$ maš$_2$ zur-zur-re […] / 112. maš$_2$ gal sun$_4$ la$_2$ umbin sud$_2$-sud$_2$ sila$_4$? X […] / 113. udu nam-en-na-ba si ba-ni-in-sa$_2$ ^{d}en-[lil$_2$] [ereš$_2$^{ki}-še$_3$] 103. […] is feeling good, brought great happiness to Enlil's heart. / He raised his head ……, and animals came running. / quadrupeds, [… goats] and ⌈donkeys⌉, that graze together in the desert. / He took […] living in the mountains: (…) / 109. (…) and thick-horned fat bulls, placed together in ⌈noise⌉, / cows and their calves, wild bulls with wide-spread horns, […] tethering rope, / ewes and lambs, goats and kids, grazing […]. / large kids, with long beards, lambs? …. […]/ majestic sheep (worthy) of a lord, despatched by ⌈Enlil⌉ to [Ereš]. Cf. the list of animals as gifts in Gudea E3/1.1.7.StB, col. iii ll. 12-19+col. iv ll. 1-13 (Edzard 1997 48).

[435] 114. ga-ar$_3$ gal-gal ga-ar$_3$ gazi ga-ar$_3$ tur-[tur …] / 115. ga nunuz-te šeĝ$_6$-ĝa$_2$ ga i-ti-ir-⌈da⌉ […] / 116. lal$_3$ ḫad$_2$ lal$_3$ ḫab$_2$ ku$_7$-ku$_7$-da ḪI [X] X X X [(…)] / 117. [X X] X gur-gur gal-bi ⌈si ba⌉-ni-in-sa$_2$ ^{d}en-lil$_2$ ⌈ereš$_2$⌉[^{ki}-še$_3$] / 118. [X X] zu$_2$-lum ^{ĝiš}peš$_3$ ^{ĝiš}nu-ur$_2$-ma gal ^{ĝiš}X [(X)] / 119. ⌈ĝiš-ĝi$_6$⌉-par$_4$ ^{ĝiš}šennur ^{ĝiš}ḫa-lu-ub$_2$ ^{ĝiš}eš$_x$(LAM) ^{ĝiš}al-la-nu-um / 120. zu$_2$-lum dilmun-na gur-da dab$_5$-ba an zu$_2$-lum za-gin$_3$-na / 121. ^{ĝiš}nu-ur$_2$-ma gal pu$_2$-ta šu su-ub-ba ^{ĝiš}ĝeštin ga-ra-an gal nim / 122. ĝiš kur gi-rin-na ĝiš šag$_4$ ^{ki}kiri$_6$ ĝiš ḪI UD X […] en-te-en-e gu$_2$ peš-a / 123. gurun ^{ĝiš}kiri$_6$-a si ba-ni-in-sa$_2$ ^{d}⌈en⌉-[lil$_2$] ⌈ereš$_2$⌉^{ki}-še$_3$ / 124. ḫa-šum ḫa-ra-li kur ki ⌈su$_3$⌉-[ra$_2$] erim$_3$-ma niĝ$_2$ šag$_4$ […] / 125. ^{na4}du$_8$-ši-a kug-sig$_{17}$ kug-[babbar …] / 126. gu$_2$-un igi-nim-[ma (…)] / 127. gu$_2$-un dugud-da-bi si ⌈ba⌉-[ni-in-sa$_2$] ^{d}en-lil$_2$ ereš$_2$ ⌈ki⌉-[še$_3$] 114. Large cheeses, mustard-flavoured cheeses?, small cheeses […] / dairy milk, 'various kinds of milk'? […] / the sweetest of dry honey and bittersweet honey … […] / […] thick and large, despatched by [Enlil] to [Ereš]. (cf. l.113) / […] dates, figs, big pomegranates […] / [ĝipar fruits], plums (?), ḫalub nuts?, almonds, acorns, / Dilmun dates harvested in baskets, dark-coloured date clusters, / big pomegranates picked from orchards, big clusters of grapes (from) the upper (land), / blossom trees from foreign lands, trees from orchards, […] grown in winter, / fruits from orchards were despatched by [En][lil] to [Ereš] / Ores (?) from Ḫarali, a [faraway] land, in storehouses, things … […] / quartz (?), gold, silver […], / products from the Upper Land, [...], / heavy loads of them, [were despatched] by [En][lil] to [Ereš]. It must be pointed out that there is no certainty about the Sumerian terminology for this kind of produce; for the translation I have followed Civil's 1983 suggestions and commentaries and CAD and PSD.

114. kadra niĝ₂ dug₃-ga šu nu-gid₂-i-me-eš

110. Those who attack the king are a mixed group,

111. <u>they know not food</u>, <u>they know not drink</u>

112. they eat not <u>sifted flour</u>,

113. <u>they do not drink poured out water</u>,

114. they do not accept pleasant gifts.

In other words, they are savage and violent and not human, since they do not share Mesopotamian cultural practices, such as eating sifted flour (zid₂ dub-dub-ba) or other goods like water and crops ('u₂' + 'a') that are essential for life, as life seems to be understood.

4.1.3. Wealth, happiness and material society

Inana is often mentioned as a provider of prosperity, literally or metaphorically, and must therefore be considered in any discussion of happiness sustained by material prosperity in Sumerian literature (cf. DI O):[436]

12. e₂ niĝ₂-gur₁₁-ra niĝ₂ sa₂ di-de₃

13. iri^ki-bi dur₂ ki ĝar šum₂-mu-de₃

14. uĝ₃-bi u₂ nir-ĝal₂ gu₇-u₃-de₃

15. uĝ₃-bi a nir-ĝal₂ na₈-na₈-de₃

16.saĝ a tu₅-a kisal <u>hul₂</u>-le-de₃

17.ki ezem-ma uĝ₃ sig₇-ge-de₃

18.lu₂ zu-u₃-ne teš₂-bi gu₇-u₃-de₃

12. "(Inana) ensured that households would be served with provisions;

13. that residences would be established in the city;

14. that its people would eat exquisite food;

15. that its people would drink exquisite beverages;

16. that those ritually bathed would <u>rejoice</u> in the courtyards;

17. that people would abound in the places of festivals;

18. that people who knew each other would dine together; (…)"

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[436] CA; cf. *A dog for Nintinuga* ll.1-7; comp.t.: Ali 1964 144-48; ETCSL c.5.7.02.

Regarding the ritual and mythological aspects of the figure of Inana in Sumerian literature, it can be assumed that the goddess materializes as the earth, the life-bearing womb: when the soil cooperates, life springs up in a variety of ways and forms. However, it is quite difficult to argue that a Sumerian peasant, for example, would have been familiar with Inana's mythological or religious relationship with the natural world. For this reason, hermeneutic interpretations of the texts are avoided and instead the focus here is on the objective data described in literature. Hence, the signs of meaning associated with Inana would have been understood by any interlocutor if they were inspired by the agricultural cosmos.

With regard to CA, Inana's benevolence does not only materialise in the form of food and exotic animals (ll. 10-24) but also includes precious minerals (CA ll. 25-28), thus presenting a more material wealth.[437] Moreover, in addition to the quantity of material gifts, she also offers other kinds of abstract gifts,[438] such as special human qualities.[439] It seems that the goddess pleases the world with everything society needs, although full warehouses, food and beverages are the crucial and definitive elements required for the image of a good life and the potential happiness of society in general (CA ll.10-15) – later overturned by the fate of Agade. The text expands the agricultural context as a source of meaning, since it extends beyond a simple list of supplies. Inana gives qualities and goods that enable people to fare better in life, as their situation has been improved. Happiness therefore exists in the present and in the future, as there is an expectation of improvement and agricultural goods play a role in constructing a scenario of social harmony and prosperity.

In this sense, when considered as gifts, fields filled with grain (and springs) frequently represent a kind of 'quantity measure' for happiness (EnlSud):

156. ud-da-ta munus EDIN.BAR ḫe$_2$-em munus bar lu$_2$ e$_2$ ḫe$_2$-em

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[437] The quantity of minerals is expressed by analogy with grain measures, hence cereals are a standard for defining quantity.

[438] 25-28. ud-ba a-ga-de$_3$^{ki} e$_2$ ziz$_2$-a-ba kug-sig$_{17}$ mi-ni-in-si / e$_2$ ziz$_2$ babbar-ra-ba kug-babbar mi-ni-in-si / araḫ$_4$ še-ba urud nagga ^{na4}lagab za-gin$_3$-na sa$_2$ im-mi-in-dug$_4$-dug$_4$ / guru$_7$-bi bar-ta im ba-an-ur$_3$ (…) / 37-39. kar ^{ĝiš}ma$_2$ us$_2$-bi mud$_5$-me-ĝar-ra / kur-kur u$_2$-sal-la i-im-nu$_2$ / uĝ$_3$-bi ki sag$_9$-ga igi bi$_2$-ib-du$_8$. 25-28. She then filled Agade's stores of emmer wheat with gold, / (Inana) filled its stores of white emmer wheat with silver; / (Inana) delivered copper, tin, and stump of lapis lazuli to its storehouses of barley / and sealed its silos from outside. (…) / 37. Its quay, where the ships were, was rejoicing. / All the (riverine) meadow lands rested, / and their people experienced welfare.

[439] 29-33. um-ma-bi ad gi$_4$-gi$_4$ ba-an-šum$_2$ / ab-ba-bi ka-inim-ma ba-an-šum$_2$ / ki-sikil-bi KI.E.NE.DI (ešemen) ba-an-šum$_2$ / ĝuruš-bi a$_2$ ^{ĝiš}tukul-la ba-an-šum$_2$ / di$_4$-di$_4$-la$_2$-bi šag$_4$ ḫul$_2$-la ba-an-šum$_2$ (…). "She sated its old women by giving them (the gift of) counsel, / she sated its elder by giving him (the gift of) eloquence. / She sated its young woman by giving her (the gift of) playing, / she sated its young man by giving him (the gift of) martial 'art', / she sated its little (children) by giving happiness.

157. lu₂ dam sig₁₀-ga-ĝu₁₀ mu-un-u₃-tud kug ᵈnisaba-ke₄

158. ᵈezina₂ <u>ᵈezina₂</u> mu₂ zi ki-en-gi-ra ḫe₂-em [440]

159. ab-sin₂-na ki-sikil sag₉-ga-gin₇ ni₂ pa e₃ ak-za

160. ᵈiškur ku₃-ĝal₂ u₂-a-zu ḫe₂-em <u>a ki-ta</u> <u>mi-ri-in-de₂</u>

161. zag-mu-a gu saĝ gibil-gibil-za še saĝ gibil-gibil-za

162. ᵈen-lil₂ ᵈnin-lil₂-bi kurku₂-a ḫe₂-mu-[ni-tud]-tud-[de₃]-eš

(…)

164. buru₁₄ ezen gal ᵈen-lil₂-[la₂]-[X] saĝ an-še₃ mi-ni-[il₂]

165. nam-dub-sar-ra dub mul-la gun₃-a gi-dub-ba ĝiš-dub-dim₂

166. niĝ₂-šid šudum zi-zi-i ĝa₂-ĝa₂ eš₂ za-gin₃ X […][441]

156. "(Enlil speaks:) "From now on, a woman shall be EDIN.BAR, a foreign woman shall be the mistress of the household,

157. my spouse, who was born of holy Nisaba,

158. may Ezina be the <u>growing grain</u>, the life of Sumer.

159. When you come through the furrows, like a beautiful young girl,

160. may Iškur, the canal inspector, be your provider, making <u>water spring from the earth</u> for you.

161. <u>The rise</u> of the new year comes (with) your new flax and (with) your <u>new grain</u>;

162. may Enlil and Ninlil generate them (?) as desired.[442]

(…)

164<u>. The harvest crop raises high its head to the sky</u>, (during) the great festival of Enlil.

165. The scribal craft, the tablets decorated with writing, the stylus, the tablet board,

166. calculating and reckoning, adding and subtracting, the shining measuring rope, the […] (cf. trans. Civil 1983)**"**

Material and countable wealth is present here (cf. ll.166) and it comes from the natural and agricultural landscape composed of water and fertile fields. The earth is the great provider and hence a kind of aesthetic framework, expressed as the security that wealth can provide, is shown. However, although wealth is countable, happiness is an abstract concept

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[440] The second Ezina (Ašnan) is suggested by Civil 1983 as a term for grain, namely the divinity who materializes as grain.
[441] Cf. CLAM 195, ll. 51-52; UrN D ll. l.-12 (Nippur version).
[442] On the myth of Enlil and Nihil and the sexual connotation of this text, vide Leick 2003 42-47.

which is difficult to understand in the same way as it was perceived in the past, since the silent people, i. e. the Sumerian peasants, can no longer be heard. We have no information on how happiness was discussed in ancient times, or any kind of theoretical debate regarding a specific word that could be associated with happiness and must therefore rely on a kind of archaeology of thought which only semiotics can provide.

I would argue that happiness depended on a state of being that compared past, present and future possibilities. If a gift improved future prospects and these prospects indicated prosperity and security, a state of happiness would exist.[443]. Thus, prosperity would be quantifiable.

Future expectations

Improvement (in terms of past status)
• surplus food
• easier work
• property (productive goods such as cattle)
• precious goods
• exchangeable goods

Prosperity
• security
• guaranteed supply of goods
• property
• optimal relation between labour and productivity

Happiness
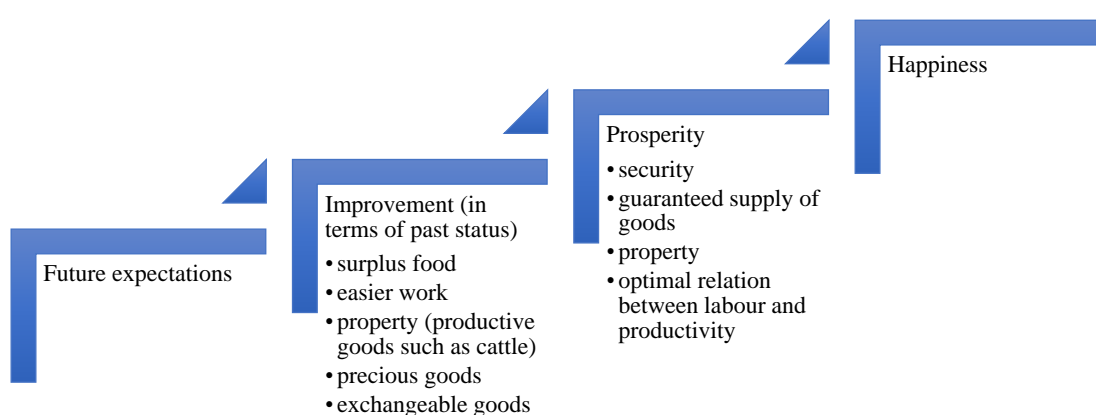
The relationship of the divine couple Dumuzi-Inana is itself a metaphor for natural growth and productivity. When the god Utu tells Inana who her promised groom is (DI A ll. 47-50), the goddess accepts Amaušumgalanna (Dumuzi) as her husband, stating that he is, in fact, her choice, since his qualities are her heart's desire, as they would be for any interlocutor:

51. i$_3$-ge$_4$-en mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-ĝa$_2$-kam

52. mu-lu ša$_3$-ab-gu$_{10}$ im-mi-in-du$_{11}$-ga-am$_3$ (cf. CBS 8085)

53. al nu-ak-am$_3$ guru$_7$ dub-dub-ba-am$_3$

54. še ga$_2$-nun-e sa$_2$ du$_{11}$-du$_{11}$-ga-am$_3$

55. mu-un-gar$_3$ še-ni guru$_7$ šar$_2$-ra-kam

56. sipa e-ze$_2$-n[i] siki su$_3$-su$_3$-ga-am$_3$ (cf. Sefati 1998 118-27)

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[443] Vide the example of the farmer that asks for water and cereal, which are granted, in *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 14-37 (comp.t.: ETCSL c.5.5.5).

"51. Really, he is the man of my own heart! He is the man of my own heart!

52. The man who speaks to my heart!

53. Who <u>hoes not</u>, (yet) there are <u>piles of stored grain</u>,

54. barley is sent <u>regularly</u> to the <u>storehouse</u>,

55. a farmer whose barley is in numerous piles, (cf. Sefati 1998 125)[444]

56. a <u>shepherd</u> whose <u>sheep</u> are full of wool." (cf. Sefati 1998 125)[445]

In this case, happiness certainly features in the scene. Yet, is Inana in love? Or is she being greedy? Again, a modern approach to the text may prove deceptive, since the real social, artistic, religious or mythical purpose of the text would have played an important role in the semantics: if it is a hymn, for example, the reference to agricultural produce may just be a representation of the supernatural attributes of the gods. However, if their union provides such goods, this would mean prosperity for men as well, as in the UrN G text (vide supra), and the factual symbolic meaning would be present, regardless of the context or literary purpose of the text (vide Chap. 3.1.1).

Inana appears to be experiencing love simply by recognising the gifts of the divine shepherd[446]. She is apparently demonstrating to mortals and not to her brother Utu, her interlocutor, why Dumuzi is such lovable husband: he brings happiness, the perfect basis for 'cultivating love'. This potential happiness is supposed to be the main value of Dumuzi for Inana in terms of their emotional and physical relationship, but to the interlocutor the value of Dumuzi is based on the prosperity he brings without the need to labour, since he does not hoe (al nu-ak-am₃, DI A ll. 53) but always has plenty of grain. Thus, the level of potential happiness Dumuzi can offer to Inana is shown through the level of happiness Dumuzi's gifts represent to humans. Although the ability to produce without working may be associated with the 'divine powers' of the gods or with the natural elements assigned to them, it is important to note that this text was created by a human who may have been thinking of his

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[444] For a commentary and study on references to grain heaps and mounds as a *topos* for prosperity, vide Ferrara 1995.

[445] Cf. the opposite image in CLAM 186-207, ll. 10-18 + ll. 33-38.

[446] Another example of Inana's love for the 'shepherd of the flocks' (DI V): 1. in-nin₉ šembi₂-zid lugal-ᶦla¹-[kam] 2. ᵈinana ᶦšembi₂-zid¹ ᵈdumu-zid-da X 3. ul gur₃-ru ḫi-li šu tag dug₄-ᶦga¹ 4. lu₂sipad-ra tur₃-ra an-ši-ᶦDU?¹ 5. ᵈdumu-zid-ra amaš-a an-ši-ᶦDU?¹ 6. lu₂sipad-da igi-bi kaskal im-da-an-[X] 7. ᶦki?¹-sikil?¹ ᵈinana ḫar-ra-an-na gaba mu-ᶦun¹-[ri] 8.[ᵈ]ᶦdumu¹-zid-de₃ ud-gin₇ ba-an-ta-[e₃]. 1. The young lady [is] the lordsᶦs¹ kohl, / 2. Inana, Dumuzid's kohl [X] / 3. full of happiness, beautifully adorned, / 4. she goes to the shepherd in the flocks, / 5. she goes to Dumuzid in the sheepfold. / 6. There on the road she [X] of? the shepherd, / 7. ᶦthe maiden?¹ Inana [meets] him on the way. / 8. Dumuzid [comes forth] like the daylight.

interlocutors as humans, not gods, and therefore used a recognisable image of prosperity to enable them to understand the feelings of the gods. In other words, the image of power and happiness conveyed to the human mind is derived from the ability to generate abundance and prosperity without the unpleasant concepts intrinsically connected with farming activities, such as effort and suffering. Even though the work done by farmers is admirable, it is still a heavy burden that people would have wished to be spared. The prosperity of the farmer comes from work, but happiness comes from enjoyment brought by prosperity spread throughout the land (DI A ll. 51-56). Therefore, the perfect life would correspond to prosperity without the suffering associated with the plough and hoe. In the end, no one wants to sacrifice their life for survival, since working too hard is not a good way to live. The image presented in the texts such as *Hoe and Plough* would therefore have had potentially greater value if all the produce was proportional, in a positive sense, to the amount of work required to obtain a good harvest. The prosperity of the farmer comes from work, but happiness comes from the joy which prosperity brings and thus the perfect life would correspond to prosperity without the hardship associated with the plough. As already noted, the abstract meaning of the image of the farmer can also be reconstructed from this: he would have been a labourer who worked with nature itself and suffered the vicissitudes caused by natural phenomena, thus surpassing his human limitations (vide Chap. 3.1.1).

Chapter 3.1 makes reference to an attempt at bribery and Gestinanna's high moral standards in refusing such magnificent gifts. As previously stated with regard to water ('a'), the refusal of a field of barley is evidence of Gestinanna's loyalty.[447] Fields and water constituted potential wealth, which tends to stand for safety and happiness. Despite this, Gestinanna could not be persuaded because of her loyalty, although the 'demons' managed to corrupt another individual (DumDr ll. 136-139),[448] who could not refuse the gifts as they meant security in terms of the wealth provided by a water source and fields of grain. This would have ensured no shortage of provisions, so happiness was almost guaranteed. Grain was a precious commodity and a great deal of social harmony would have depended on it: it

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[447] 131-135. id₂ a-ba mu-un-na-ba-e-ne šu ⌈nu⌉-[um]-ma-gid₂-de₃ / a-šag₄ še-ba mu-un-⌈na⌉-[ba]-e-ne šu [nu]-um-ma-⌈gid₂⌉-[de₃] / gal₅-la₂ tur-re gal₅-la₂ gu-la-[ra gu₃ mu]- ⌈un⌉-na-de₂-e / gal₅-la₂ kug-zu gal₅-la₂ til₃-la / gal₅-la₂ gal-⌈bi⌉ murub₄-bi til₃-la. "They allotted a river of water, but she accepted it not. / They allotted [her] a field of barley, but she accepted it not. / The little demon [spoke] [to] the big demon, / the wise demon, the present? Demon, / between them, was the big demon"

[448] DumDr ll. 142-143, id₂ a-ba mu-un-na-ba-e-ne šu am₃-ma-gid₂-de₃-«en» / a-šag₄ še-ba mu-un-na-ba-e-ne šu am₃-ma-gid₂-de₃. "They allotted a river of water, and he accepted it. / They allotted him a field of grain, and he accepted it."

is undeniable that the state and religious powers found a source of value in grain, [449] especially in such fragile societies that were so vulnerable to catastrophe. An abundance of goods invokes future prosperity, status and security and therefore asking for or receiving riches, which is common in Sumerian literature, is a sign that stands for welfare.[450]

Barley was probably the most common cereal cultivated in Mesopotamia during the third Ur dynasty (ca. 2112 – ca. 2004 B.C.), as far as we can tell. Other grains, such as wheat and emmer, were also cultivated but it seems that this was done on a smaller scale, although "of these grains, wheat was better able to withstand the high salt content of the soil found in some areas of Sumer." According to the archaeological remains and cuneiform accounts, such as the milling list for the different types of grains commented on by Jones and Snyder (1961 135), the records show "the processing of 556 kur of barley, 469 kur of flour (barley flour), 14 kur of wheat and 6 kur of emmer".[451] Regardless of production/productivity, cereals were destined for food, since they could be produced in quantity, easily stored and had many applications, such as financial transactions and standards of value – in fact, serving almost as a currency in ancient times.[452] Consequently, possessing a secure supply of grain would in some way signify a kind of wealth.[453] In other words, prosperity may be clearly expressed by the image of a field of grain.[454]

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[449] Regarding this, Foxvog 2011 59-98 noted a TN as e_2-še-e_3 ('Temple That Makes the Barley, Come Forth'), or ur-kara$_6$ ('Dog of the Grain Store'). It is debatable whether the names depended on the temple's function of storing/distributing grain or if there was, in fact, some kind of religious purpose for the grain supply.

[450] d+105- d+115. gi$_{16}$-sa ḫe$_2$-tuk-am$_3$ x x ḫe$_2$-[tuk-am$_3$] / Tur$_3$* ḫe$_2$-tuk-am$_3$ gu$_4$*-maḫ$_2$*-ḫi*-a* ḫe$_2$-ma-[al] / amaš ḫe$_2$-tuk-am$_3$ ab$_2$*- ḫi-a ḫe$_2$-ma-al (...)/ d+113. di$_4$-di$_4$-la$_2$ e$_2$-e X ḫe$_2$ di$^?$ ne$^?$ al-lu-ne / a-ša$_3$-ga ḫe$_2$-tuk-a gur$_7$* ḫe$_2$-dub*-be$_2$ / ^{giš}kiri$_6$ ḫe$_2$*-tuk*-a* gu$_2$*-un*-maḫ* be-gar-gar. (Comp.t.: CLAM 186-207, ll. d+104-120). May it have its property x x […]/ May it have the cattle pen. May there be many large oxen! (trans. Cohen 1988) / May it have the fold! May there be many cows! (trans. Cohen 1988) (…) / May the children X in the house … / May it have fields! May the piles (of grain) be piled high! / May it have orchards! May there be massive produce!" (trans. CLAM 195-201). Cf. *A praise poem of Šulgi* ll. 1-12 (Šulgi O, comp.t. Klein 1976, ETCSL c. 2.4.2.15).

[451] See Englund 2001 1-36 on grain accounting practices in Archaic Mesopotamia; Paulette 2015 10-13 on the state of the art on types of grain in ancient Mesopotamia; Kozlova 2006 on the payments on rations of grain in Ur III. Vide also Prentice 2010.

[452] Breckwoldt 1995/1996. Vide also Paulette 2015 8-13. Other goods were produced in quantity: vegetable oil, another important part of the Sumerian diet, was generally produced by an oil-bearing plant such as sesame; date palm was also a very valuable resource in southern Mesopotamia. Vide Jones and Snyder 1961. Vide also Postgate 1987a, Postgate 1987b, Renfrew 1987a, Renfrew 1987b, Willcox 1987.

[453] Paulette 2015 quite accurately says: "In Mesopotamia, grain was king, or, to put it more accurately, grain made kings. As we learn in a Sumerian text known as *The Debate between Sheep and Grain,* control over grain could be and often was transformed into control over people." Cf. *Sheep and Grain* ll. 190-191; comp.t. ETCSL 5.3.2. Vide also the allegory of a beautiful girl lifting her head from the field in *Sheep and* Grain ll. 43-53.

[454] "Irene Winter has drawn particular attention to the visual dimensions of this connection between grain and abundance in third-millennium Mesopotamia. Grain appears again and again as a key motif in what Winter calls the 'iconography of abundance' (Winter 2007 118). This set of recurring images – all pointing to notions

In her thesis, Paullete (2015) argues that the value of grain as a commodity implies more than a staple food and considers the dimensions of grain not only in literary expression, but also as an resource for constructing linguistic meaning. Therefore, given that this is discussed in detail in her dissertation, I will not expand on this theme here, but it is important to note that grain is a source for the 'crop' sign of meaning whose value can be associated with other signs of meaning, such as 'quantity'. Moreover it can be used to generate multiple, sometimes opposing, symbolic constructions, such as symbolic language that signifies disruption and scarcity (CA ll. 176-180).[455] I am making this point because grain is frequently used as unit of measurement to show devaluation in Sumerian literature (cf. CA ll.176-178). The use of the sign for grain (crop) can be literal but also metaphorical, as in CA, shown through the destruction of land and plundering of grain and other goods on a scale comparable to the volumes usually reserved for transportation (CA ll. 133-142). Regarding the CA images, the aim is to show a great rape and scarcity, and grain is a measurement for this.[456] It was the staple food of antiquity and essential to welfare. For example, in *The debate between Grain and Sheep*[457] wheat is considered the greatest asset, since before it was cultivated humanity lived in poverty and privation (*Ewe and Grain* ll. 1-36), which may reflect popular assumptions concerning wheat and thus its potential for constructing language for wealth.[458] In addition to its immediate value as an object that can be metaphorically converted into another object, whether a crop or a person, the seed carries signs of meaning, such as the piling up of large amounts (cf. *Lugalbanda in the mountain cave* l. 357, l. 367), the idea of reproduction and the growth of a prosperous population in a city (Išme-Dagan S ll. 11-14).

The metaphor composed from the language of abundance used to classify Inana is almost a *topos* in Dumuzi-Inana literature and I therefore consider these texts relevant references for the process of constructing language based on the farming cosmos.[459] Grain is frequented mentioned:

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of abundance, order, stability, and security – was a powerful rhetorical device that provided visual support for the claims being made by the emerging political and religious institutions" (Paullete 2015).

[455] Vide an example of grain as a quantifiable commercial value in a letter from Išbi-Erra to Ibbi-Sin (IšIbl 3.1.17, RCU 19) ll. 3-30. On the grain market and purchasing, vide also IšIbl (3.1.18, RCU 20) ll. 15-18.

[456] Vide the image of scarce grain, whose supply must be controlled in CLAM 221-250, ll. a+102-a+111a+110.

[457] comp.T. ETCSL c.5.3.2

[458] Cf. the potential metaphorical value of grain in CLAM 401-412 ll. 21-24.

[459] Regarding DI R, I have followed Sefati's 1998 241 interpretation of the source CBS 8534 rev. of DI corpus (DI R, version A) in which the motif of Dumuzi's death is described by the end of animal produce.

5. $^{[lu2]}$ki-sikil še-zar-maš-gin$_7$ gun$_3$-$^{[}$a$^{]}$ lugal-ra tum$_2$-ma

6. ^{d}inana še-zar-maš-gin$_7$ gun$_3$-a ^{d}dumu-zid-ra tum$_2$-ma

7. ^{lu2}ki-sikil še-zar gu$_2$-nida$^?$-a ḫi-li šu gi$_4$-a-ĝen

8. ^{d}inana še-zar gu$_2$-nida$^?$-a ḫi-li šu gi$_4$-a-ĝen

5. "the maiden, like a pile of colourful grain, is suitable for the king,

6. Inana, like a pile of colourful grain, is suitable for Dumuzi!

7. Maiden, you are a heap of hulled barley, coming to seduce.

8. Inana, you are a heap of two-row barley, coming in seduction."

Variety, for example, is a mark of a good life, mainly because it can imply abundance and pleasure. The primary meaning of colourful grain (še-zar-maš-gin$_7$ gun$_3$-a) appears to be variety and it is a sign obtained from the traditional image of grain. Essentially, the potential for the image of a 'pile of grain' to become a metaphor depends on the signs implied in the image (cf. ELA ll. 551-555). Quantity and accumulation are the most recurrent visual signs which form the basis of the metaphor (DI R ll. 5-7). It is only possible to create metaphors based on the agricultural cosmos because there are images in traditional thought that make it understandable (cf. DI A ll. 51-56). In DI A 51-56, for example, all aspects of wealth are evident, since there is plenty of grain, barley is expected (še ga$_2$-nun-e sa$_2$ du$_{11}$-du$_{11}$-ga-am$_3$) and the herds are productive.[460] Ultimately, this is the value of wealth based on agricultural goods.

However, the image in DI R does not refer to easy and abundant productivity, but instead uses the quality of what appears to be a metaphorical product to express something that is not material, as in DI B:

1. lu-bi-ĝu$_{10}$ lu-bi-ĝu$_{10}$ lu-bi-ĝu$_{10}$

2. la-bi-ĝu$_{10}$ la-bi-ĝu$_{10}$ lal$_3$ ama ugu-na-ĝu$_{10}$

3. ĝeštin duru$_5$-ĝu$_{10}$ lal$_3$ ku$_7$-ku$_7$-ĝu$_{10}$ ka lal$_3$ ama-na-ĝu$_{10}$

4. igi-za igi du$_8$-ru-na-bi ma-du$_{10}$ DU nin$_9$ ki aĝ$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$

5. ka-za gu$_3$ di-di-bi ma-du$_{10}$ ka lal$_3$ ama-na-ĝu$_{10}$

6. nundum-za ne su-ub-bi ma-du$_{10}$ ĝe nin$_9$ ki aĝ$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$

7. nin$_9$-ĝu$_{10}$ še-za kaš-bi in-du$_{10}$ ka lal$_3$ ama-na-ĝu$_{10}$

8. bappir-za gu$_2$-me-ze$_2$-bi in-du$_{10}$ ĝe nin$_9$ ki aĝ$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$

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[460] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylB col. xv ll. 1-4 (Edzard 1997 96).

9. e₂-a la-la-zu x x x x ka lal₃ ama-na-ĝu₁₀

1. "(oh) My darling, (oh) my darling, (oh) my darling,

2. (oh) My darling, (oh) my 'darling', my sweet of the mother who gave birth to her.

3. My fresh wine, my very sweet honey, my sweet mouth of her mother.

4. Your eyes, their gaze delights me, come my beloved lady! (cf. Sefati 1998)

5. Your mouth, its speech delights me, my sweet mouth of her mother.

6. Your lips, their kiss delights me, come my beloved lady!

7. My lady, your barley – the beer from it is pleasant, my sweet mouth of her mother.

8. Your malt, its liquor is pleasant, come my beloved lady![461].

9. In the house – your charms [x x x x], my sweet mouth of her mother (…)"

Inana's barley (še) and malt (bappir) are good, so quality of the beer (kaš) is also good. Possibly I am ignoring what seems to be a very obvious metaphor for sexuality that could figure in any modern pop song. However, my focus is the symbolic image that forms the basis of the adjectivisation or the metaphor or, in other words, the symbolic meaning of agricultural produce that implies prosperity, since these are important staple resources that bring contentment. In this text there is no direct evidence of the power of the god to produce without effort, only a comment on one of the qualities of the goddess: her barley is good. She gives pleasure not only through what one can be understood as her sensuality, but also the produce she recalls to the interlocutor of the text. Dumuzi understands the value of his wife by recognising a quality that would have been of unquestionable value to him. Naturally, there are sexual connotations and this expression of sensuality may have two dimensions as a metaphor:

1 - a combination 'of sensorial descriptions' of the relationship that could be symbolized by a kind of abstract 'sweetness' generated by psychological and physical emotions;

2 - a literal meaning for grain, because it is a good product to consume.

On the other hand, using modern interpretation it is possible to identify an allegory on fertility. A pseudo-conceptualized fertility forms the basis of a harmonious landscape and this productive context represents wealth (UrN D, Urim Version):

32.^{id2}keše₂-kug iri^{ki}-bi ku₆-ab te-li-bi mu-še-na

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[461] I have translated 'bappir' as 'malt' because the usual translation for this word, 'beer bread' or simply 'an ingredient in beer-making', does not seem to fit in this context (cf. ePSD 'Bappir', and CAD 2 94-96 *bappiru*).

33. ^{id2}pa₅-bi-luḫ a-ra₂-bi ku₆-ab te-li-bi mu-še-na ⁴⁶²

34. ḫe₂-ĝal₂-bi ku₆ mušen ma-ra-ab-de₆ e₂-kiš-nu-ĝal₂-še₃

35. gu₂-gu₂-bi ^{u2}munzer lu₂-a u₂-lal₃-e gu₇-e ⁴⁶³

36. a-gar₃ gal-bi še gu-nu mu₂-mu₂ ^{ĝiš}tir-gin₇ su-su-u₃-e

37. lugal an ub-[da 4]-bi še-ga ^den-lil₂-la₂

38. ⌈ur⌉-⌈d⌉namma ⌈sipad⌉ u₂-a ki-en-gi ki-uri-e ki aĝ₂ ^den-lil₂-la₂

32. "The city of the Keše-kug canal with fish, and the sky with birds.

33. The watercourse of the Pabi-luḫ canal is full of fish, and the sky with birds.

34. Its <u>prosperity</u> brings fish and birds for me to the E-kiš-nu-ĝal.

35. Its banks are abundant with 'licorice[?]', a honey-sweet plant to eat.

36. Its big meadows grow <u>barley</u> and <u>flax</u> abundantly like a vast forest.

37. King of the four quarters, favourite of Enlil,

38. ⌈shepherd Ur-Namma⌉, the <u>provisioner</u> of Sumer and Akkad, the one Enlil loves (…)"

This scene focuses on a form of prosperity that seems to be related to the canal[464] and materialises as fish and birds, the idea of life growing, and the joy of productive banks that provide fertile arable land (Tinney 1999 34; cf. DI C). The king is the great provider and is therefore shown as the bringer of abundance that ultimately takes the form of agricultural produce (cf. ELA ll. 619-625; Rīm-Sîn G ll. 11-21, vide Chap. 3.2).

4.1.4. Meaning through poverty and absence: the path to sadness

Lamentations for lost cities tend to represent the reverse of prosperity and harmony, and therefore happiness, by using images of poverty and future doom (LUr):

275. <u>mu-un-gur₁₁-ĝu₁₀</u> buru₄^{mušen}-dugud zig₃-ga-gin₇ dal-dal-bi ḫa-ba-ab-in-zig₃ mu-un-gur₁₁-ĝu₁₀ ga-am₃-dug₄

276. <u>mu-un-gur₁₁-ĝu₁₀</u> sig-ta di-ĝa₂ sig-še₃ ḫa-ba-ab-ir mu-un-gur₁₁-ĝu₁₀ ga-am₃-dug₄

275. My property, like a flock of crows flying, has flown away - I shall say, 'my property'!

276. My property was carried to the south by the southern (people) - I shall say 'my property'!

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⁴⁶² Cf. ll.20-22, UrN D, Yale version.
⁴⁶³ Cf. ll.28-29, UrN D, Yale version.
⁴⁶⁴ Vide Tinney 1999 35 for a commentary on the sexual metaphor of digging canals.

Property ensures a kind of stability, since it provides welfare and sustenance. As there are not the signs of meaning from which the semantic value of prosperity is constructed, the distortion of those which represent harmony signifies suffering.

38. ^{id2}idigna ^{id2}buranun-na gu$_2$ tab 2-a-ba u$_2$ ḫul mu$_2$-mu$_2$-de$_3$ (…)

42. gan$_2$-ne$_2$ zid-de$_3$ ^{ĝiš}al nu-ru-gu$_2$-de$_3$ numun ki nu-tag-de$_3$

43. e-el-lu šir$_3$ gud sub$_2$-sub$_2$-ba edin-na nu-di-de$_3$

44. ^{e2}tur$_3$-ra i$_3$ gara$_2$ nu-ak-de$_3$ šurum ki nu-tag-e-de$_3$ (LSUr)

38. "Bad weeds should grow on the two banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, (…)

42. the hoe should not plough the arable fields, the seed should not touch the soil;

43. the sound of the cowherds should not be heard in the open country,

44. butter and cheese should not be made in the cattle-pen, dung should not be spread on the land."

Here, the fields and pasturelands are empty: no one is working in the fields (gan$_2$-ne$_2$ zid-de$_3$ ^{ĝiš}al) or putting the cattle out to graze. Therefore, there is no future. The compounded meaning draws on the signs of meaning for a harmonious landscape or, in other words, distorts the crystalized image of how things should be. By observing the desolation in an agricultural landscape that should frame prosperity, the signs of meaning for happiness can be identified through their opposites (LSUr):

3. me ki-en-gi-ra šu bal ak-de$_3$

4. bal sag$_9$-ga e$_2$-ba gi$_4$-gi$_4$-de$_3$

5. uru$_2$ gul-gul-lu-de$_3$ e$_2$ gul-gul-lu-de$_3$

6. tur$_3$ gul-gul-lu-de$_3$ amaš tab-tab-be$_2$-de$_3$

7. gud-bi tur$_3$-bi-a nu-gub-bu-de$_3$

8. udu-bi amaš-bi-a nu-daĝal-e-de$_3$ (cf. LUr ll. 266-268)

9. id$_2$-bi a mun$_4$-na tum$_3$-u$_3$-de$_3$

10. gan$_2$-ne$_2$ zid-de$_3$ ^{u2}KI.KAL mu$_2$-mu$_2$-de$_3$

11. edin-e u$_2$-a-nir mu$_2$-mu$_2$-de$_3$

3. "To overturn the divine powers of Sumer,

4. to change the favourable reign in its household,

5. to destroy the city, to destroy the house,

222

6. to destroy the <u>cattle-pen</u>, to level the <u>sheepfold</u>;

7. so that the <u>bull should not stand</u> in the <u>pen</u>,

8. the sheep should not multiply in the sheepfold,

9. <u>watercourses</u> should carry <u>salty water</u>,

10. <u>weeds should grow</u> in the <u>good fields</u>,

11. <u>mourning plants</u> <u>should grow</u> in the <u>open country</u>."

Instead of a fertile scene, there is land in decay. The future is ruined, since the animals have been killed, the farms are overgrown with weeds and the water is brackish. All the goods that guarantee welfare are absent and instead there is a scene of desolation. As it is obvious that these goods are essential for subsistence, there is no need to engage in any hermeneutical analysis: essentially the scene establishes a state of famine and absence of happiness, by identifying things that should not have happened. There is a suggestion of generalised destruction and a compromised future existence defined through the language of the agricultural landscape (f. LSUr ll. 49-51).

Agricultural life has been suspended, so life itself is at stake (cf. LSUr ll. 85-91, ll. 123-132). As there is little surviving evidence of farms and the empirical practices of Sumerian farming, it is impossible to measure the full economic cost, but the cultural impact on the construction of language and thought can be identified. These texts present the rural world as the basis of human social existence, describing what should not have happened in terms of the welfare and happiness of the people. In other words, the argument of these lines is a rejection of the destruction of the fields and pastures that has taken away the possibility of happiness in these lands. When agricultural work is disrupted, society cannot be fed and therefore cannot exist.[465]

In short, there is no future, since nothing will grow. The opposite of not having good crops is known and therefore value is attributed to its semantic image (cf. Enlil A ll. 109-123). Essentially, when the entire visual landscape is destroyed, there is no life: the idea of total destruction is based on an unknown future that has no natural riches. Products from the land represent the prosperity of the people and this would have been clearly recognised in the traditional culture of peasants in ancient times who were used to dealing with the hardships associated with their dependence on nature. With regard to lamentations, sadness

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[465] Cf. CA ll. 170-175, ll. 245-255; vide Ferrara 1995.

is measurable through everything that is absent, ultimately, resulting in starvation (cf. LSUr ll. 303-317).[466] Society is crushed because the principles that sustain it, such as the farmer and the hoe (LUr ll. 271-274) or the herds (LUr ll. 1-26) no longer exist. In LUr, CA and LSUr, the famine caused by disruption to the land, with water, grain and cattle unavailable, reflects interrupted prosperity, meaning the collapse of society:[467] when the cattle are destroyed, for example, so is the economy (cf. LUr ll. 129-132, ll. 185-192, ll. 359-366). The idea conveyed by a perished lamb is the impossibility of reconstruction, since the entire subsistence economy has been razed to the ground with the destruction of the herd, reflected in the death of its offspring (ll. 65-66). In LUr the animals are the source for a similar metaphor.

The signs used the construction of symbols based on the farming cosmos are defined by contrasts. In that sense, and regarding the abstract language based on agricultural images, it could even be said that happiness is an illusion, a concept of something that should exist, but does not: imagining it involves imagining excess transposed to reality. A superior manifestation of the state of things or its harmonious maintenance always involves comparison with a certain potential reality or possibility. Although this interpretation depends greatly on context, examining the archaeology of thought entails looking at history of the silent people and how they lived and experienced their world. It was understood that in order to improve the present, prosperity had to be restored by recovering what has been lost (cf. LSUr ll. 464-469).[468] Instead of destruction, LSUr ll. 502-506 asks for a better future for the country, and this notion of improvement can only be expressed by the return of the rain, new reeds and grain.[469] The return to the landscape of the signs for crops and growth is a common sense idea of improvement and this is why they are used in semantic constructions.

Given that poverty and wealth were conditions that everyone could understand, within the agricultural framework people would have wanted to remain or become prosperous. This

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[466] Fleming 2003 says "The gods have abandoned their homes and left their people defenceless. Nanna and Ningal have decamped from Ur, and now they find themselves mourning the loss that they somehow had tolerated. After all, humans are the servants who work the fields of the gods and tend their herds and flocks, who provide the gods with their meals and tuck them in at night."

[467] Cf. the famine in Eridu (*The Eridu Lament*, 6th kirugu, ll. 15-17; ETCSL c. 2.2.6; Green 1978); cf. also the hunger and desolation shown in CA ll. 177-192 and in CLAM 401-412 ll. 34-38. Cf. also CLAM 186-207 ll. 13-17, which presents a scenario of destruction in which grain is used to express loss.

[468] Cf. the image of prosperity in Enlil A ll. 144-155.

[469] A prayer for better circumstances which uses the agricultural landscape as a framework is reproduced in CA ll. 222-236.

was the aim of life and if the community were to lose its expectations of abundance, it would also lose its foundations, since scarcity does not ensure a stable future but instead recalls a past when everything was better, and to which people would want to return:[470]

21. nin arḫuš-a-ĝu₁₀ e₂-bi ba-kal igi nu-mu-un-ši-bar-re

22. ĝiš ḫul gurun nu-il₂-la-gin₇ lu₂ na-ma-ši-ḫul₂-le

(…)

24. lugal-ĝu₁₀ en₃-ĝu₁₀ ḫe₂-tar-re ki-ur₃-ĝu₁₀-še₃ ḫe₂-em-mi-ib-gi₄-gi₄-in

21. "My compassionate lady of the precious house no longer notices me.

22. Like a sick tree that gives no fruit, no one is happy because of me.

(…)

24. May my king attend to me and may I return to my former status."

Without doubt material prosperity makes life easier and consequently increases the likelihood of achieving happiness. Ignoring modern standards of welfare and discussions on the 'coefficient of happiness'[471], it may be imagined that happiness follows a pattern of events and their reception by human individuals. For example, considering the situation presented in the UrN G, it may be said with some certainty that happiness is implied there:

7. ^{d}en-lil₂-le ^{d}ur'-^{d}namma-ra $^⌈$mu$^⌉$-[…]

8. a-eštub[472] ^{d}ezina₂ še gu-nu saĝ-e-eš ḫe₂-$^⌈$mu-rig₇$^⌉$

9. ^{d}ur-^{d}namma uĝ₃-e nam-ḫe₂-a gu₂ ḫu-mu-u₈-di-ni-ib-mar-re

10. ^{ĝiš}apin še dug₃-ga bi₂-ĝar-$^⌈$ra$^⌉$ gana₂ ĝar-zu dug₃-ga-am₃

11. ĝiš numun še dug₃ ^{ĝiš}apin gana₂ nam $^⌈$bi₂$^⌉$-dug₃-ge

12. ^{ĝiš}apin še dug₃-ge ki$^?$ kur$^?$ X (X) gana₂ nam $^⌈$bi₂$^⌉$-X X

13. lugal gud-de₃ gana₂ ĝar-am₃-ma gana₂ $^⌈$ĝar$^⌉$-zu dug₃-ga-am₃

14. ^{d}ur-^{d}namma gana₂ ĝar-am₃-ma $^⌈$gana₂$^⌉$ ĝar-zu dug₃-ga-am₃

15. gana₂ ĝar-ra-za gud-de₃ ba-sag₉ gana₂ ĝar-za dug₃-ga-am₃

7. "Enlil […] to Ur-Namma.

8. He $^⌈$granted$^⌉$ him early floods$^{(?)}$, wheat and colourful barley.

9. Ur-Namma, may the people prosper in abundance under your rule.

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[470] *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the moon*, Version A (from Nibru).

[471] Vide Esteban Ortiz-Ospina and Max Roser (2018) - "Happiness and Life Satisfaction". Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from: 'https://ourworldindata.org/happiness-and-life-satisfaction' [Online Resource].

[472] Foxvog 2014: 'carp flood,' early(?) flood (Civil 1997 52).

10. The <u>plough</u> will set <u>good barley</u> (for you), and your <u>cultivated fields</u> will be pleasing.

11. <u>Trees</u>, <u>seeds</u>, <u>good barley</u>, the <u>plough</u>, and the fields will be good.

12. The <u>plough</u> and <u>good barley</u> … … X (X) the <u>fields</u> …

13. King, <u>cultivate the fields with oxen</u>, and your [[]cultivated[]] <u>fields will be good</u>;

14. Ur-Namma <u>cultivates the fields</u> with them, and <u>your cultivated</u> [[]fields[]] will be <u>good</u>.

15. The <u>oxen</u> will make <u>cultivated fields good</u>; your <u>cultivated fields will be good</u>."[473]

There is no reference to any word meaning happiness, and the form in which such a debatable abstract concept would have emerged in Sumerian social consciousness is not known. The scenario represents wealth that is to come since, according to agricultural expectations, everything is running well: the fields are, or will be, productive, it seems that the work of the plough will bear fruit, and so there is abundance (<u>nam-ḫe₂-a</u>) and prosperity. This is a materialist perspective on happiness that cannot be associated specifically with the Sumerian people, but there is one important aspect that needs to be considered objectively: with abundance, there are no problems, such as starvation.

In short, in the farming cosmos, the actual value of material wealth is understood through the consequences of the absence of goods and supplies. The value of such commodities can be grasped by visualizing a situation in which there are no supplies from the fields and its unpleasant results for society (LUr):

251. urim₅^{ki}-ma lu₂ u₂-še₃ nu-ĝen lu₂ a-še₃ nu-ĝen

252. u₂-še₃ ĝen-bi u₂-ta ba-ĝen ḫur nu-um-mi-ib-gur-ru

253. a-še₃ ĝen-bi a-ta ba-ĝen ḫur nu-um-mi-ib-gur-ru

251. "In Ur o one went for food, no one went for water.

252. Those who went for food, who went away for food and never return.

253. Those who went for water, went away for water and never return."

Life is hard and dangerous when there is no food, so when a provider guarantees abundance, he is offering a future. In other words, there is an assurance that there will be no shortages: plenty of farming produce means wealth in a very basic and literal sense.[474] When goods are scarce there is great anxiety simply because life is not secure (vide Chap. 3.1.1).

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[473] Cf. Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylB col. xi ll. 15-26 (Edzard 1997 95).
[474] cf. *Enlil and Ninlil* ll. 143-150, comp.t. ETCLS 1.2.1 and UrN D.

Contrasts therefore help us to understand what the concept of prosperity implies, even when the subject in question is the disruption of prosperity. For example, as previously seen, UrN A (ll. 22-28, vide Chap. 2.1.5.) shows a wasteland - that should have been prosperous in contrast to the scenario in UrN D - destroyed by a flood that was not controlled, the abandonment of the land and the absence of the shepherd.

4.1.5. Life and beauty

4.1.5.1. Literary devices and interpretation

According to R. W. Hamilton (1967), a cylindrical seal in the Ashmolean Museum collection shows an authentic herding station which could be considered a representation of daily life in the southern Mesopotamian region. The scene appears to feature a contemporary economic activity, reflecting prosperity by depicting a large number of calves and small buildings – two of which may represent storehouses.[475] The image of the cow can be seen as a representation of prosperity and beauty, as the epithet in EnlSud may suggest, with the goddess being compared to a cow as a sign of greatness:

8. [X] X X ab_2 maḫ sig_7-ga-$^{[}gin_7^{]}$ u_6-e am_3-ma-gub

8. "[...] stood like a wonder, as a majestic casted cow."

Although this is an epithet that cannot be entirely understand and is difficult to relate to the abovementioned cylinder, it is possible to identify a connection between the themes of Sumerian literature and traditional symbolism. Literature has the potential to reinterpret traditional symbols, adapting them to precise expressive objectives. The same symbol may be used to convey two different meanings, one concrete and the other abstract, although it does not signify two different things. For example, the idea of an abundant crop may indicate wealth, but if contextualized and influenced by literature it may also suggest an abstract concept such as 'beauty'. However, 'abundance of crops' is always the same primordial object composed of invariable signs of meaning: 'crops' + 'quantity'.

The abstract idea of property that provides subsistence without major effort and suffering undoubtedly generates subconscious ideas of pleasure and security. In fact, it may be inferred that a scene portraying such a potential, idealized status may mean beauty per se (vide infra). As a physical object, this beauty is nothing more than a representation of traditional *topoi*,

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[475] Hamilton 1967, Ashmolean accession no. 1964.744.

an image of a concrete thing which, when contextualized by an interlocutor, would have a meaning based on the value of traditional signs provided by common sense. In the case of the seal and the epithet of the cow, a reading may be suggested that reflects a symbolic image of prosperity simply by recalling the framework in which the physical figure of the cow features, such as the pasturelands.

An imagined parallelism can be found in DI A between the abundance of barley (še) growing in the furrow (ab-sin$_2$-na) and flax (gu) growing in the garden beds (sar-ra), which is designed to portray beauty and the riches of garden produce. The flax would have been used to make the fine linen sheets for Inana's nuptial bed, so even as a plant growing in the garden, it is abstractly beautiful. The symbol of rest at harvest time must be that of prosperity and may anticipate good fortune for the grower and for Inana's marriage: [476]

2. ^{d}utu nin$_9$-ra mi$_2$ na-mu-e

2a. kug ^{d}inana-ra mi$_2$ zid na-[mu]-[e]

3. in-nin$_9$ gu sar-ra hi-li gur$_3$-ru

4. ^{d}inana gu sar-ra hi-li gur$_3$-ru

5. še ab-sin$_2$-na hi-li ma-az dirig-ga

6. nin$_9$ gada mah-e hi-li ba$^?$-e$^?$-TE-a

7. ^{d}inana <u>gada</u> <u>mah-e</u> hi-li ba$^?$-e$^?$-TE-a

8. <u>al</u> ga-mu-ra-ab-ak <u>SAR</u> ga-mu-ra-ab-sum$_2$

9. in-nin$_9$ gu sar-ra ga-mu-ra-tum$_2$

10. ^{d}inana gu sar-ra ga-mu-ra-tum$_2$ (DI A)

2. "Utu praises his sister;

2a. to holy Inana he speaks kindly[477]:

3. '(my) Mistress, the flax in the garden beds bears luxury

4. Inana, the flax in the garden beds bears luxury,

5. (like) the barley in the furrow, abundant with luxury and great joy;

6. young lady, a fine linen you demanded,

7. Inana, a fine linen you demanded-

8. I will <u>hoe</u> it for you and give the <u>plant</u> (of the flax) to you.

9. My sister, I will bring you the flax plant,

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[476] Tinney 2000 considers that UrN A is also concerned with sexuality and fertility, so it may be considered part of the DI literature.
[477] Line omitted in CBS 10465; cf. trans. Sefati 1998 126.

10. Inana, I will bring you the flax plant.'"

The image of barley (še) growing is easily recognised by any listener or reader familiar with the farming cosmos, but claiming it is a metaphor reflecting the linguistic thinking of a Sumerian speaker could be an extrapolation of a simple literary parallelism (Sefati 1998 64). Although the syntax and semantics of the Sumerian language are very controversial, the potential of an exact image is not. As a parallelism, the connection between the images intended to be created in the mind of the receptor must be swift and spontaneous and therefore they must already exist in the cognitive spectrum of the interlocutor. In other words, the 'sign of abundance and richness' must be grasped automatically in the mind of the person visualizing the scene: it is one thing to describe the picture, and another to already have the picture in mind and simply be reminded of it. However, I do not intend to claim that the literary expression in this text is simplistic and does not involve a great deal of creative skill. My argument concerns the simplicity of expressive communication, even if the object being transmitted is not so simple. It is the immediacy of the linguistic codes already acquired through contact with the rural world that enables such a complex literary expression to be constructed and makes it intelligible to any receptor, who would also be perfectly aware of the 'farming world'. From this passage, it is understood that Utu will bring the finest flax to Inana, since the flax comes from a great garden bed compared to a flourishing barley plantation.

The text *balbale to Inana for Šu-Suen* (About Šu-Suen C vide supra) presents another type of metaphor associated with crops, although its profound value and image is not easily recognisable to a modern reader. The women's hair is compared to 'watered lettuce' (ḫi-iz^{sar}-am$_3$):[478]

1. siki-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫi-iz^{sar}-am$_3$ a im-$^[$ma$^]$-[an-dug$_4$]
2. ḫi-iz gakkul$_3$(U!.DIM)^{sar}-am$_3$ a im-[ma-an-dug$_4$]
3. su-ḫu-uḫ$_2$-ḫu-ub$_4$-bi ba-tag-tag [X]
4. emeda(UM.ME)da-ĝu$_{10}$ maḫ mu-un-X-[X X]
5. siki-ĝu$_{10}$ a-a-lum im-mi-in-ak
6. suḫ tur-tur-bi mu-un-dub-dub

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[478] Cf. *Iam virides lacerate comas, iam scindite amictu,* (Col. 10.1.68-74), "now tear (earth's) green hair, separate the ropes".

7. ḫe2-em-du-ĝu10 si im-sa2-sa2-e

8. ḫe2-em-du siki-ĝu10 ḫi-iz^{sar} nisig sag9-sag9-ga-am3

1. "My hair is lettuce, [well…] watered.

2. It is *gakkul*-lettuce (the heart of lettuce), [well…] watered. [479]

3. Its tangled coils (?) have been tightened. (trans. Sefati 1998)

4. My nursemaid has [x x] high,

5. made my hair deer-(like).[480]

6. Has tightened its small hairgrips

7. brought order to my charms (cf. Sefati 1998 362);

8. my charms, my hair, the lettuce, is the fairest of the green things. (idem)"[481]

Metaphors based on vegetation are quite recurrent (Jaques 2006 24) and often have sexual connotations. Other examples of metaphors, albeit literally related to the signs of meaning for the physical object, can be identified in lines 32-35 of Šulgi D:

32.^{ĝiš}ildag2 ki-en-DU zag-ga du3-a-gin7 usu-a-me-en3

33.meš3 zid gurun7-na gun3-a-gin7 u6 di dug3-ga-me-en3

34.^{ĝiš}nimbar dilmun kug-gin7 ^{d}nin-e2-gal-ke4 mi2 zid dug4-ga-me-en3

35.^{ĝiš}erin duru5 ḫa-šu-ur2-re mu2-a-gin7 ĝissu dug3-ga-me-en3

32. "You are strong like an ildag tree planted by the side of a watercourse.

33. Like a good meš tree with colourful fruit, you are a wonder,

34. like a date palm of the sacred Dilmun you are cherished by Ninegala,

35. like a irrigated cedar growing between the cypresses, you have pleasant shade."[482]

The characteristics of the fruits, or rather of Šulgi, inspire feelings expressed by direct comparison to explain the attributes of Šulgi to the interlocutor and ensure they are understood spontaneously.

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[479] On the word gakkul in this context, vide Sefati 1998 276-277.

[480] On the word a-a-lum, vide Sefati's (1998 362) commentary.

[481] On the metaphor of the well-watered lettuce, vide DI E.

[482] Cf. the metaphor comparing 'the heaping of the heads of the cattle' to barley corns in *Lugalbanda in the mountain cave* l. 357, l.367 (comp.t. ETCSL 1.8.2.1; Vanstiphout 2003).

4.1.5.2. Sexuality, beauty and farm produce

The potential association of sex and lust with ritual fertility is ignored in this chapter, since I would argue that sensuality expressed in literature often surpasses the simplistic concept of sex as an 'act of procreation' and allegory of fertility and therefore is not so easy to understand in depth. For example, in the case of the DI I text, an abstract language constructed from the natural world can be identified in the linguistic ambiguities and semantic variations and, in the following example, in the cultivation of the natural world. Here, the verbal construction 'na-ur$_{11}$-ru' seems to be used in a metaphorical sense, since a verb with a more precise meaning for cutting precious stones would be expected. Instead, we have a verb related to seeding and husbandry:

23. inim bi$_2$-in-eš-a inim ḫi-li-eš-am$_3$

24. du$_{14}$ mu$_2$-mu$_2$-da-a ḫi-li šag$_4$-ga-na-ke$_4$

25. ^{na4}šuba-[ke$_4$] ^{na4}šuba-ke$_4$ ^{na4}šuba na-ur$_{11}$-ru

26. ^{d}ama-ušumgal-an-na ^{na4}šuba-ke$_4$ ^{na4}šuba na-ur$_{11}$-ru

27. ^{na4}šuba-na ^{na4}šuba tur-tur-bi nu-mu-ne$_2$-eš na-[ĝa$_2$]-[ĝa$_2$]

28. [^{na4}][šuba-na] ^{na4}šuba gal-gal-bi [guru$_7$]-še$_3$ na-du$_3^?$-[du$_3$] (….)

23. "The words they speak are words for luxury;

24. in a quarrel, the desire of his heart is growing!

25. He of the šuba-stones[483], he of the šuba-stones, will indeed sow the šuba-stones,

26. Amaušumgalanna, he of the šuba-stones, will indeed sow the šuba-stones,

27. his little šuba-stones, he places as seeds,

28. the big ones, he piles up ($^?$) like a heap of grain. (….)"

The verbal form (na-ur$_{11}$-ru) may have been used for two reasons:

1. a lack of technical vocabulary, which would consequently create a wider spectrum of meanings for the same linguistic sign (uru, CAD 4 285 *erēšu*);

2. a simple example of a refined literary metaphor which draws on the farming world to construct the concept of beauty.[484]

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[483] A precious stone, vide ePSD (šuba 'stone') and Rubio 2010.

[484] Sefati 1998 202-4 comments on this metaphor, extending it to the 'wedding motif'. Although I acknowledge its importance for understanding the complete text and the scene described, I have focused objectively on the processes of constructing symbolic images from farming, so the entire literary semantics of the text and its consequences for general agricultural concepts will not be considered with regard to ritual marriage.

This image can be considered a perfect example of a 'farming metaphor', since something beautiful is being created in the same way that crops are. The metaphorical scene, which has a parallel in the Hymn to Ninisina[485], may not be understood as a literary or poetic resource, as modern literary theory would consider it. It seems that a metaphor is being presented in DI I in its purest form as the result of a semantic value constructed from the signs of a crystalized image and used in order to create an analogy with another reality, namely the crafting of precious stones. At the same time, words related to seeds and crops clearly define the farming metaphor, together with the verbal form <u>na-ur$_{11}$-ru.</u> The text focuses on this image by showing Dumuzi sowing the šuba stones for Inana.[486] It may also contain the idea of multiplication, as if Dumuzi could generate as many precious stones as he would by sowing seeds. However, the idea that this is a metaphor is controversial, because it depends on speculating about context and language, not only signs of meaning.

The interpretation of the previous text which takes the farming world as its background comes from the analogy with other texts in the DI corpus which tend to draw on the farming world to construct meaning. Moreover, as previously stated, agricultural produce may also have the potential to express beauty because of its value in terms of welfare (DI R):

1. [^{lu2}ki-sikil kun-sig$_3$] $^{[}$mul$^{]}$-mul-la <u>sig$_7$</u> sag$_9$-ga-$^{[}$am$_3$$^{]}$

2. [^{d}]$^{[}$inana$^{]}$ kun-sig$_3$ mul-mul-la <u>sig$_7$</u> sag$_9$-ga-am$_3$

3. [^{lu2}ki-sikil] kun-sig$_3$ <u>darah</u> X $^{[}$lu$^{?]}$-lim X lu-lim-ma

4. [^{d}]$^{[}$inanna$^{]}$ kun-sig$_3$ <u>darah</u> X [lu]-lim X lu-lim-e

5. $^{[lu2]}$ki-sikil <u>še-zar-maš-gin$_7$</u> gun$_3$-$^{[}$a$^{]}$ lugal-ra tum$_2$-ma

6. ^{d}inanna <u>še-zar-maš-gin$_7$</u> gun$_3$-a ^{d}dumu-zid-ra tum$_2$-ma

7. ^{lu2}ki-sikil še-zar <u>gu$_2$-nida$^?$</u>-a ḫi-li šu gi$_4$-a-ĝen

8. ^{d}inana še-zar <u>gu$_2$-nida$^?$</u>-a ḫi-li šu gi$_4$-a-ĝen

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[485] Cf. Ninisina A (ll. 66-71) ud-ba unu$_2$ šuba nu-ĝal$_2$-la-am$_3$ / unu$_7$ šuba gu$_2$-a nu-ĝal$_2$-la-am$_3$ / ^{d}nin-isin$_2$^{si}-na-ke$_4$ inim-e bi$_2$-in-sig$_{10}$-ge/ <u>na-ur$_{11}$-ru</u> numun-e-eš na-ĝa$_2$-ĝa$_2$ / in-nin$_9$ nu-u$_8$-gig gal an-na-ke$_4$ / unu$_2$ šuba inim-e bi$_2$-ib-sig$_{10}$-ge. (comp.t: ETCSL c.4.22.1) "At that time, there was no jewellery of šuba stones;/ there was no jewellery of šuba stones around the neck/. Ninisina created it; / she indeed sows, placing them as seeds/ the Lady, the great mistress of An, / created the jewellery of šuba stones" (cf. Sefati 1998 202).

[486] DI I 33. ^{d}ama-ušumgal-an-na $^{[na4]}$šuba [ur$_{11}$]-ru a-ba-a <u>mu-na-ur$_{11}$-ru</u> / ^{na4}šuba-[na] $^{[na4}$šuba$^]$ tur-tur-bi ši-pa-aĝ$_2$-me de$_3$-a / ^{na4}šuba-na ^{na4}[šuba] gal-gal-bi gaba kug-me de$_3$-a / ^{d}ama-ušumgal-an-na nu-u$_8$-gig-ra inim mu-ni-ib-gi$_4$-gi$_4$ / nu-u$_8$-gig-ga-am$_3$ dam-ĝu$_{10}$ nu-u$_8$-gig-ga-am$_3$ e-ne-er <u>mu-na-ur$_{11}$-ru</u> / kug ^{d}inana-ke$_4$ nu-bar-ra e-ne-er <u>mu-na-ur$_{11}$-ru</u> / ^{na4}šuba-na-ke$_4$ ^{na4}šuba-na-ke$_4$ ^{na4}šuba <u>na-ur$_{11}$-ru</u> / ^{d}ama-ušumgal-an-na-ke$_4$ ^{na4}šuba-na-ke$_4$ ^{na4}šuba <u>na-ur$_{11}$-ru</u> (…) 46. kun- ĝar ^{d}inana-kam. "Amaušumgalanna, [sows] the šuba-stones, for whom is he sowing? / His little šuba-stones hang round our neck, / the large ones hang on our pure breast, / Amaušumgalanna answers the hierodule: / "she who is a hierodule, for my wife who is a hierodule, 'he' <u>sows</u> for her / holy Inana, the priestess – 'he' <u>sows</u> for her, / he of the šuba-stones, he of the šuba-stones will indeed sow the šuba-stones / Amaušumgalanna, her one of the šuba-stones, will indeed <u>sow</u> the šuba-stones."

9. nin-ĝen nin-ĝen X X X ḫi?-li? gur3-ru-ĝen

10.me-e ki-sikil-ĝen [nin-ĝen] [X ḫi]-li gur3-ru-ĝen

11.nin? a an-ne2 ru-a-ĝen? [X X ḫi]-li [gur3]-ru-ĝen

1. "[The Maiden, [glossy] mane], is a <u>verdant beauty</u>, (cf. Sefati 1998 242-3)

2. [Inana], glossy mane, is a <u>verdant</u> <u>beauty.</u>

3. Maiden, mane of the <u>mountain goat</u> […] [stag], […] stag,

4. [Inana], mane of the <u>mountain goat</u> […] [stag], […] stag.

5. The Maiden, multi-coloured as <u>grain heap</u>, is suitable for the Lord (Sefati 1998 243).

6. Inana, multi-coloured as <u>grain heap</u>, is suitable for Dumuzi.

7. Maiden, you are a heap of <u>hulled grain</u>? (gu2-nida) made luxurious,

8. Inana, you are a heap of <u>hulled grain</u>? (gu2-nida) made luxurious.

9. I am the queen, I am the queen, I am […] full of loveliness? (cf. Sefati 1998 126)

10. Indeed, I am the maiden, [I am the queen], I am […] full of loveliness.

11. I am the queen, the seed generated by An, [I am […] full of loveliness]."

A materialist perspective would lead us to think of beauty as a concept resulting from a display of wealth. The reason for this is the positive background associated with prosperity, since by producing abundant crops, one can provide for the future, so there is security and consequently happiness – which can be considered a beautiful image. In Sumerian literature the idea of sensory pleasure seems to be a factor in the conceptualization of abstract beauty (cf. DI B ll. 1-8).

This is only one interpretation, of course, from a modern perspective of what beauty might be. We suppose that beauty implies pleasure, but is this assumption anachronistic?

A green landscape, for example, may represent beauty because of its potential to provide subsistence. Essentially, an abundance of flourishing vegetation may serve as pasture for livestock and the more food there is, the more animals can graze. [487] This kind of landscape is presented in the DI W text, which can be assumed to be a monologue by Dumuzi addressed to Inana in order to obtain her benevolence, so that his sheep can be fed well.[488]

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[487] For a parallel with the sexual metaphor of ploughing, vide CBS 8540 Obv. I, ll.15-23; ROM 721 ll. 20-24 (Sjöberg 1977).

[488] 7. [X X] [ḫa]-za buru3 a-šag4-<ga> ĝal2-[la]-[ĝu10] / [u2-ĝu10] [ĝiš]dehi3-ĝu10 udu-ĝu10 ḫa-[ma]-[gu7-e] / [X X] X e2-a sig9-ga-[ĝu10] / [u2]-[ĝu10] [še] la2-a-ĝu10 udu-ĝu10 ḫa-ma-[gu7-e] / [zi] [kalam]-ma a-šag4-ga ĝal2-la-ĝu10 / u2-ĝu10 išin-na-<ĝu10> udu-ĝu10 ḫa-ma-gu7-e / [nu]-siki il2-il2-ĝu10 nu-mu-un-su da-ri-ĝu10 / <u>u2-ĝu10</u> u2šakir3-ra-ĝu10 udu-ĝu10 ḫa-ma-gu7-e / dub keše2-da a-šag4-ga ĝal2-la-ĝu10 / u2-ĝu10 ukuš2-ti-ki-il-ĝu10 udu-ĝu10 ḫa-ma-gu7-e / sumun2 kaš-a lal3 dab5-ba-ĝu10 / <u>u2-ĝu10</u> ĝien3-bar-ĝu10 udu-ĝu10 ḫa-ma-gu7-e / <u>amar gud</u>-da-bi-da

The text seems to provide a list of the elements that comprise a landscape of abundance; a rural landscape that provides for the people. My reading of these lines may seem Arcadian, but in terms of the primordial source of meaning, the idyllic idea must have had a prototype reference. It may not have been an exact one, nevertheless a construction sustained by a specific group of signs: plants (u_2), calves together with the bull (amar gud-de-bi-da), fields (a-ša(g)$_4$) and marsh reeds (^{gi}en$_3$-bar, signifying the presence of water canals) constitute a perfect scenario for a farmer, or at least someone aware of their dependence on the rural world.

Identifying beauty in what seems to be a prayer for abundance may seem quite anachronistic, since an analysis of this kind of aesthetics will always be underpinned by modern telluric feelings. Yet can we consider that the description of a variety of plants and sweet flavours is merely a list designed to display quantity? If that were so, wouldn't a simple list be sufficient, instead of an entire landscape? It could be argued that literary expression tends to improve the basic meaning of words and sentences by creating abstract analogies, but in this case the objects may be considered a confirmation of an exact meaning, rather than a complex metaphor.[489] If literary language is used to express abundance, given that literature is an aesthetic medium, the image of the landscape constructed from a list of flourishing plants is, in itself, a manifestation of the natural world's grace. The issue in this hypothesis would be proving how such an image would be recognised by any interlocutor. In terms of factual reality, it is impossible to determine how much it would have been

di-a-ĝu$_{10}$ / u$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{gi}ub-zal-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-ma-gu$_7$-e / ^{ĝiš}kiri$_6$ ^{ĝiš}ḫašḫur-a ul gur$_3$-ru-ĝu$_{10}$ / u$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ gi-zi-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-ma-gu$_7$-e / šim a-šag$_4$-ga $^{[}$lal$_3$$^{]?}$ ta-ḫab$_2$-ba-ĝu$_{10}$ / u$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ $^{u2[}$munzer$^{]}$-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-ma-gu$_7$-e / ^{kuš}ummud dag-si la$_2$ X X-ĝu$_{10}$ / u$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{u2}ḫarub-ba-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-$^{[}$ĝu$_{10}$$^{]}$ ḫa-ma-gu$_7$-e / u$_2$ ^{tug2}bar-$^{[}$dul$_5$$^{]}$-gin$_7$ barag$_2$-barag$_2$-ga-ĝu$_{10}$ / u$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{u2}sas($^{[}$KI$^{]}$.KAL)-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-ma-$^{[}$gu$_7$$^{]}$-[e] / ud tud-$^{[}da^{]}$-ta ki-en-gi ḫe$_2$-ĝal$_2$-<la-ĝu$_{10}$> / u$_2$-$^{[}$ĝu$_{10}$$^{]}$ teme^{sar}-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-ma-gu$_7$-e / $^{[}$siki gid$_2$$^{]}$-da ^{ĝiš}ga-rig$_2$ nu-zu-ĝu$_{10}$ / $^{[}$u$_2$$^{]}$-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{u2}numun$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-ma-gu$_7$-e / $^{[}$en$^{]}$-te-en nu-zu e$_2$-me-eš nu-zu-ĝu$_{10}$ / [u$_2$]-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{u2}ĜIŠNIMBAR.TUR-ĝu$_{10}$ udu-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫa-$^{[}$ma$^{]}$-gu$_7$-e. "may my [XX] which is penetrating in my field; / may my sheep eat [my plants], my thorn plant. / [XX] X, I placed in the house; / may my sheep eat [my] $^{[}$plant$^{]}$, the winnowed $^{[}$barley$^{]}$. / My [life] of the country, which is (growing) in the <u>field</u>; / may my sheep eat <u>my plant</u>, <my> grain-stalks. / My care of $^{[}$orphans$^{]}$, my support of widows; / may my sheep eat <u>my plants</u>, my šakir-plants. / My 'string of clay balls (?)' which is (growing) in the field; / may my sheep, my plants, my colocynth; / my beer mash refined with honey; / <u>may my sheep</u> eat <u>my plants</u>, <u>my marsh reeds</u>; / <u>my calf</u> going together with <u>its bull</u>, / <u>may my sheep</u> eat m<u>y plants</u>, <u>my reed shoots</u>; / my <u>flowering garden</u> of <u>apple trees</u>; / may my sheep (eat) my plants, my reeds; / my aromatic (plants) of the fields, saturated with $^{[}$syrup$^{]}$; / may my sheep (eat) my plants and my liquorice$^?$; / water skin hanging from saddle hook; / may my sheep eat my plants, my ḫarub pods, / my plants (are) extended like a $^{[}$mantle$^{]}$; / $^{[}$may$^{]}$ my sheep eat my plants, my turf; / the born day$^{(?)}$, Sumer of abundance; / $^{[}$may my sheep eat my$^{]}$ plants, my kali plant; / my $^{[}$long hair$^{]}$, that knows no comb; / may my sheep eat my $^{[}$plants$^{]}$, my rushes. / My (plants) know no $^{[}$winter$^{]}$, know no summer. / May my sheep eat my [plants], my date palm braids (…)

[489] Vide Civil's 1987 discussion on the lexicon as a source for abstract language in Sumerian literature.

recognised as a concrete life experience, although with regard to representing a common space shared by the community, I would argue that its meaning would be recognized and understood spontaneously.

4.1.6. Landscape: meaning and emotion

A landscape can suggest feelings as in the first lines of DumDr, which are framed by a chain of relations between signs of meaning and the preconceptions of the interlocutors:

1. šag$_4$-ga-ni er$_2$ im-si edin-še$_3$ ba-ra-e$_3$

2. ĝuruš šag$_4$-ga-ni er$_2$ im-si edin-še$_3$ ba-ra-e$_3$

3. ^{d}dumu-zid šag$_4$-ga-ni er$_2$ im-si edin-še$_3$ ba-ra-e$_3$

4. ĝidru[490] gu$_2$-na mu-un-di-la$_2$ i-lu mu-un-du-du (Alster 1972 52-53).

1. "His heart was filled with tears (and) he went out into the countryside.

2. The heart of the young man was filled with tears (and) he went out into the countryside.

3. Dumuzid's heart was filled with tears (and) he went out into the countryside.

4. He carried the staff on his shoulder and cried constantly."

In the beginning of this text, Dumuzi is going to the plains carrying a staff, which can be identified as a crook since he is a divine manifestation of the shepherd. The exact reason for Dumuzi's mood (šag$_4$-ga-ni er$_2$ im-si) is not known, as the text begins *in medias res*. Nevertheless, a sad Dumuzi is leaving his place (ba-ra-e$_3$) and walking to the countryside (edin-še$_3$), which can be understood as somewhere remote from any populated region.

The idea of the shepherd going to the open country (*edin*, cf. CAD 4 33) carrying a staff (ĝidru) or stick is not strange, since it is part of his daily work. However, in this passage the word 'edin' can be understood as an 'outside place', that is to say, somewhere far away from his original location. We may wonder about the exact significance of moving to another place when grieving. A landscape far from civilization and intelligent life can be interpreted as reflecting loneliness and abandonment, from which it may be inferred that this physically represents his own state of mind: emptiness or loneliness may mean sadness.[491]

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[490] {(1 ms. adds:) nam-sipad-da}.

[491] Alster 1972 28 considers that "We are not informed from where he is coming, but it is reasonable to assume that he is leaving his city Uruk in order to go to his sister in her sheepfold on the plain. The feeling of being alone without the protection offered by the city fills him with fear that he must die on the plain, with the result

It seems that the shepherd leaves the natural boundaries of his territory and goes to an isolated place, where only the fauna and flora can mourn his fate.[492] In ll.1-14 the countryside (edin) and the river, or any type of watercourse (id$_2$), create a framework for grief. The question again is why such a place is chosen, is it a complex, literary metaphor for an isolated mind? Or a scenario for the narrative which would have been familiar to the interlocutor? If we decide on the idea of a landscape as a literary scenario, the choice cannot be considered meaningless. It never is, since even if there is no metaphor or allegory, the choice of place depends on the general idea imagined by the interlocutor. The river and the natural world it touches embrace the grief of the god, so this choice can be understood as an extension of Dumuzi's common space and maybe a representation of his emotions, framing the one who is trying to avoid death in a landscape that is supposed to be the shepherd's territory and therefore his safe environment.[493]

Obviously, there is no actual visual manifestation of grief generated by fear and the space can only be connected with fear by association with previous actions in the text, due to imminent death and sadness. However, Dumuzi's attempt to escape creates tension in the space, which is reflected in nature, although it is the context of the narrative that gives sense to the interpretation, not the image per se.

The choice of this location as a place outside Dumuzi's natural habitat should contrast with his natural domain, given that he is moving to a strange place. However, linguistically speaking, it is physically identical to Dumuzi's normal sites (cf. chap. 3.1, SF[?] ll. 65-72):

Maybe the difference between both places – countryside or 'outside land' – simply lies in the distance from civilization: one is in the countryside, but still near the city; the other is in foreign lands. As we still do not completely understand the semantics and expressive

that his family will not be able to bury him properly by weeping at his grave and by bringing him offerings. He also imagines his mother calling in vain for the rations of breads which he is to provide."

[492] 5. i-lu ĝar-u$_3$ i-lu ĝar-u$_3$ <u>edin</u> i-lu ĝar-u$_3$ / edin i-lu ĝar-u$_3$ ambar inim ĝar-u$_3$ / al-lub id$_2$-da girid$_2$? i-lu ĝar-u$_3$ / bi$_2$-za-za id$_2$-da inim ĝar-u$_3$ ama-ĝu$_{10}$ inim ḫe$_2$-em-me / ama-ĝu$_{10}$ ^{d}dur$_7$-tur-ĝu$_{10}$ inim ḫe$_2$-em-me / ama-ĝu$_{10}$ niĝ$_2$ ia$_2$-am$_3$ inim ḫe$_2$-em-me / ama-ĝu$_{10}$ niĝ$_2$ u-am$_3$ inim ḫe$_2$-em-me / ud-da ud ug$_5$-ge-ĝu$_{10}$ nu-un-zu / edin ama ugu-ĝu$_{10}$ inim mu-e-de$_3$-zu-un. "Set up the cry, set up the cry! Oh countryside, set up a cry! / Oh countryside, set up a cry! O marshes, set up a lament! / Oh crabs of watercourses girid$_2$?, set up a cry! / O frogs of the watercourse set up a lament! My mother will call, / my mother, my Durtur, will call, / my mother will call for five things, / my mother will call for ten things, / if she does not know the day when I'm going to die, / oh countryside, make my mother, who bore me, know."

[493] 103. gu$_5$-li-ĝu$_{10}$ saĝ u$_2$-a ga-an-šub ki-ĝu$_{10}$ na-ab-pad$_3$-de$_3$ / saĝ u$_2$ di$_4$-di$_4$-la$_2$ ga-an-šub ki-ĝu$_{10}$ na-ab-pad$_3$-de$_3$ / saĝ u$_2$ gal-gal-la ga-an-šub ki-ĝu$_{10}$ na-ab-pad$_3$-de$_3$ / eg$_2$ a-ra-li ga-an-šub ki-ĝu$_{10}$ na-ab-pad$_3$-de$_3$. "My friend, I will put my head down in the <u>grass</u>! Do not reveal my place to them! / I will put my head down in the <u>short grass</u>! Do not reveal my place to them! / I will put my head down in the <u>high grass</u>! Do not reveal my place to them! / I will put my head down in the <u>levees</u> of <u>Arali</u>! Do not reveal my place to them!"

mechanisms of the Sumerian language, it is not possible to say with certainty how a sentence should be formed in order to make one place totally distinguishable from another. Undoubtedly the realities of the language, even the written form, would not have been so ambiguous to native speakers – it is simply that we lack knowledge of the cultural context. Nevertheless, I would argue that if the location in foreign lands distinctively different from Dumuzi's usual setting was so important in terms of clear comprehension of the lines, more information would have been supplied. Therefore, I understand the lines as a frame, whose value is supplied by Dumuzi's feelings, and do not entirely follow Alster's (1972 28) interpretation, since his approach to the text involves a context suggested by the narrated events, which cannot be defended on a lexical basis. Regarding Alster's interpretation, we may consider that Dumuzi went to a faraway place which may have been strange to him, but would he not have been expected to go to a familiar place mourn or even protect himself? Moreover, the word 'edin' is usually used to identify Dumuzi's place, as the *disputatio* between Dumuzi and Enkimdu suggests (SF$^?$).

As the DumDr example shows, attempting to identify feelings through the landscape is a highly speculative exercise, although there is a kind of beauty in DI F1 that seems to emerge from an idyllic description of a landscape, regardless of the fact that the text is poorly preserved. By framing what seems a typical love scene between Inana and Dumuzi, it suggests a space that contains elements of a garden and therefore a beautiful scenario for this beautiful moment (cf. Sefati 1998 320-3). The lexicon, metaphoric or literal, refers to an orchard ($^{\hat{g}i\check{s}}$kiri$_6$), dates (zu$_2$-lum), apple trees ($^{\hat{g}e\check{s}}$hašhur) and fig trees (^{mu}PEŠ$_3$): it is not possible to obtain a complete picture of the scenario, so it may be the case that the reference to fruits and trees are a sexual metaphor rather than an aesthetic construction based on natural symbols.[494] Nevertheless, this fragmented text can be read in two ways, as the signs of meaning for the objects represented there still exist in our own cultural matrix:

11. šeš-e $^{\hat{g}i\check{s}}$kiri$_6$-ni-a im-$^{[}$ma$^]$-[…]

(…)

15. zu$_2$-lum in-$^{[}$ze$_2$?-ze$_2$?$^]$ X-ĝa$_2$ bi$_2$-in-PA [X]

16. aĝ$_2$-e $^{\hat{g}i\check{s}}$hašhur-a ma-da-ab-be$_2$

17. ze$_2$-ba kal-la-ĝu$_{10}$ $^{[}$saĝ?$^]$-ĝa$_2$ ba-an-X X

18. aĝ$_2$-e ^{mu}PEŠ$_3$-a ma-da-ab-be$_2$

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[494] Considering the sexual metaphor by analogy with the literature associated with Dumuzi and Inana.

19. ze$_2$-ba kal-la-ĝu$_{10}$ $^{[}$NA? X X AB?$^{]}$ ĜA$_2$ (X)

20. aĝ$_2$-e ^{mu}KIM$_3$$^?$-e $^{[}$ma$^]$-[da-ab-be$_2$]

11. "The brother […] in his orchard. (…)

15. dates […]

16. the […] spoke to me among the apple trees.

17. My precious sweet […] my $^{[}$head$^{?]}$.

18. The $^?$ spoke to me among the fig trees.

19. My precious sweet […] my […]

20. The $^?$ [spoke to me] among the willow$^{(?)}$ trees."

A landscape does, in fact, contain semantics, when observed by human eyes. Each of its compounding elements is a sign that describes it and gives it an abstract meaning: the context of the interlocutor may distort this, but the sensations are there. In this sense, one may identify feelings in DumDr ll. 144-150, where the landscape is a visual description that reveals a *topos*, together with a manifestation of fear:

144a. [^{d}dumu-zid]-de$_3$ saĝ u$_2$-a ḫe$_2$-en-šub ki-ni ba-ra-zu

145. ^{d}dumu-zid-de$_3$ saĝ u$_2$-a mu-ni-in-kiĝ$_2$-kiĝ$_2$-ne nu-mu-un-pad$_3$-de$_3$

146. saĝ u$_2$ di$_4$-di$_4$-la$_2$ ḫe$_2$-en-šub ki-ni ba-ra-zu (…)

148. saĝ u$_2$ gal-gal-la ḫe$_2$-en-šub ki-ni ba-ra-zu

149. ^{d}dumu-zid-de$_3$ saĝ u$_2$ gal-gal-la mu-ni-in-kiĝ$_2$-kiĝ$_2$-ne [nu-mu-un]-pad$_3$-de3

150. eg$_2$ a-ra-li-ka ḫe$_2$-en-šub ki-ni ba-ra-zu (Alster 1972, DumDr ll.144-150)

144a. "[Dumuzi] hid his head in the vegetation, but I know not his place." (cf. l. 144)

145. They looked for Dumuzi's head in the vegetation, but found him not. (cf. l. 147)

146. "He hid his head in the short vegetation, but I know not his place." (…)

148. "He hid his head in the high grass, but I know not his place."

149. "They looked for Dumuzi's head in the high vegetation, but found him not."

150. "He emerged into the levees of Arali, but I know not his place."

Dumuzi is a shepherd and this landscape is his natural environment. There is no metaphor, just a description. The text simply represents a normal grassy landscape associated with the world of the shepherd. Nevertheless, something which is obvious can also be used as an image capable of generating abstract linguistic meaning, since the reference to the *topos* and its value do not vary. The landscape is that of the shepherd and it is where he seeks

protection. Thus, it is a landscape that can be a source for symbolism associated with other comparable scenes in Sumerian literature.

The landscape of the lamentation texts, as they are usually called, discussed in this thesis presents ugly scenes based on sensitive emotional perceptions. There is no clear concept of ugliness in these texts, although it may be implied by the idea of corruption, since they contain the inversion of a harmonious or pleasant site. UrN A ll. 22-30 depicts this kind of scenario: Utu (l. 14) did not appear in the sky, i. e. rain, and the day was full of sorrow. Thus, one of the signs that creates the symbology of beauty and visual pleasure is transformed into something unpleasant that brings the idea of chaos and future privation. Obviously, this is a modern and partial interpretation, but the signs of meaning are there (cf. CA ll. 272-280).

In CA, domesticated nature has been taken over by wilderness (CA ll. 264-271). Abandonment has transformed a prosperous landscape into a barren land (CA ll. 25-39 vs. ll. 149-175). From an agricultural perspective, such a place would be ugly, as it is not productive and nature is not under control (CA ll. 256-271). Therefore, there the expected value has been distorted:

- wild animals, instead of herds; (l. 56, ll. 267-268)

- grass growing in the fields, instead of crops; (ll. 263-266)

- no cattle eating the tall vegetation; (ll. 264-265)

Hence, objects that give meaning to a harmonious landscape have been perverted. This is also shown clearly in the *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the sun* (Version A), which describes the corruption of a kind of beauty, or good state that has turned bad.

14. ^{ĝiš}kiri$_6$ {a} {(1 ms. has instead:) $^{[šu^{?}]}$-ta} nu-dug$_4$-ga-gin$_7$ asil$_3$-la$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫab$_2$-ba ba-an-ug$_5$[495]

14. "Like a garden that has not been {watered} {(1 ms. has instead:) cared}, my joy has rotted."

This text mourns for a situation that is not pleasant. The character in the text uses an analogy with a neglected garden to show that he has lost his value, like a garden that has not been watered. There is one curious aspect: the inversion of beauty shows what beauty could be, by reversing a good state. It is the crystalized idea of a good garden that gives meaning and intensity to the scene described by inversion through signs of 'ugliness' – a process of

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[495] comp.t.: Ali 1964 92-98; ETCSLc.3.3.03; following the suggestion in ETCSLc.3.3.03 for translation.

converting positive values into negatives. Emotions are implied and suggested by landscapes and therefore suffering and ugliness can be expressed, as well as happiness and beauty. This leads me to believe that in texts such as DumDr the landscape gives meaning to the action, even when it cannot be interpreted accurately.

4.2. The field and the seed: scenes of prosperity in Latin instructional texts

4.2.1 Production and fertility: Mother Nature and the role of analogy

ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis

Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi;

nec fuit indignum superis bis <u>sanguine nostro</u>

Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos. (Verg. *G.* 1.489-492)

"Therefore, Philippi saw the clash between the equal weapons

of the Roman lines, for the second time,

 nor was it found shameful by the gods that once again <u>our blood</u>

would enrich the wide-spread Emathia and the fields of Haemus."

As previously seen in Chap. 4.1, fertility is a common theme in ancient literature, regardless of the cultural context. Whether the metaphorical object is a field, a woman's body or a productive mind, the notion of fertility can be expressed by an image of a physical or abstract fertile 'body': the meaning of an 'object' A is used as a visual source in order to classify a new object 'B', with 'A' serving as the permanent base that can generate interpretations or classifications of objects 'C', 'D', 'E' and so on. This is basically how the mechanics of signs of meaning operate when constructing abstract language.

With regarding to agriculture, it may be said that "Ancient accounts of metaphor emphasize its ornamental and persuasive functions (Arist. *Rhet.* 3.1405a; *Rhet. Her.* 4.34.45; Cic. *De Orat.* 3.155-68, *Orat.* 92; Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.4-18). On this view, the effects of figurative language are greatest when the figures strike the reader emphatically; metaphor is at its least effective (that is to say metaphorically dead) when its transfer of meaning from one thing to another is so familiar as to be unnoticed. (…) the metaphorical impact of words such as *agrestis* ('rustic'), *fructus* ('fruit', 'harvest'), and *cultus* ('cultivation') in rhetorical discourse seems negligible: should they be included in analyses of rhetorical representations of rusticity?" (Dominik 1997 58-73) I would argue they should, since they represent mechanisms used to construct language and meaning: it is spontaneous interpretation that makes them 'dead metaphors', yet this is what makes them more intelligible to ancient and modern interlocutors, as they are familiar with the signs of meaning used to create symbolic expression.

For example, metaphorically speaking, it can be considered that earth is like a woman's body and the implied metaphor is much more profound than the analogy of the women's

womb with the field (cf. Verg. *G.* 2.94-95; Col. 10.1.72-73). The idea of physically embracing a seed which will bring life would generate an understandable image that was a source for analogy and metaphor in terms of the entire process of sowing, growing and harvesting or sexual intercourse, childbearing and giving birth (Col. 2.1.2-3):

Tremeli (...) videlicet inlectus nimio favore priscorum de simili materia disserentium falso credidit, parentem omnium terram sicut muliebrem sexum aetate anili iam confectam progenerandis esse fetibus inhabilem.[496]

"…Tremelus (...) being obviously misled beyond measured deference to the ancestors, who deal with similar matters, wrongly believed that the Earth, the mother of all things, like womankind when tired with old age, is incapable of generating offspring."

Columella criticized those who, like their ancestors, believed this and therefore did not have the right approach to soil maintenance. The way in which the abstract idea of fertility leads to the metaphorical link between the earth and a woman's body can be inferred from his statement. In fact, it could also be used metaphorically to relate the traditional idea to the use of fallow system, as its aim is to rest the soil in order to improve production (vide infra).[497]

The fertility of the body is helpful in explaining natural phenomena, in the same way as the productivity of the earth can explain the fertility of the womb: one specific traditional image can help to explain another, which means that in terms of semantic construction, it does not matter whether the original source is based on observation of a field being cultivated or a woman's body, since the semantic value lies in the signs of meaning shared by both which, in turn, create the analogy. The semantic meaning of the fertility symbol does not depend on the way it is first applied to a specific context: regardless of context, it seems that the basic meaning is always the same and therefore it is possible to create a metaphor from a woman's body in relation to earth and the reverse. The reason for this lies in the signs of meaning that compound the frame. The symbolic reference to a woman as a field or vice versa are common *topoi* and seem to be natural and intuitive in linguistic thought. As

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[496] Cf. the metaphor of the sick tree in *Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a king radiant as the moon* (Version A, from Nibru) ll. 21-24, vide supra.

[497] Vide Cicero's comparison of his composition *Brutus* to the cultivation of a neglected field (Cic. *Brut.* 16) which, if left to rest, yields a more abundant harvest.

previously argued, this metaphor or assumption can be used simply to connect the human with the soil (Col. 2.1.3-4):

At e contrario seu sponte seu quolibet casu derelicta humus, cum est repetita cultu, magno faenore cessatorum colono respondet. non ergo est exiguarum frugum causa terrae vetustas (…)[498]

"On the contrary, whether abandoned deliberately or by causality, when the soil is repeatedly cultivated, it answers the farmer with great profit for its remissness. Consequently, the age of the earth is not the cause of low production (…)"

The characteristics of old age can also represent natural behaviour, since an old body is a tired, exhausted one that is therefore incapable of giving birth,[499] just as the land cannot sustain a succession of crops. The image does not aim to add a highly aesthetic dimension to the discourse; in fact, the author is just making the information clearer by using an analogy that any interlocutor would understand. Columella's commentary is based on a traditional comparison between women and 'mother earth' and therefore is not an exact metaphor. Nevertheless, it indicates that the symbol of fertility is so widespread in traditional culture that it may combine notions of fertility with different aspects of nature. Essentially, it is the idea of gestation that makes women and the earth comparable concepts, not only in natural science, but also in linguistic constructions based on traditional thought. In fact, Columella suggests that the idea of fertility present in human thought is observable in nature and crystalized through physical manifestations (Col. 3.8.1):

Igitur si rerum naturam, Publi Siluine, velut acrioribus mentis oculis intueri velimus, reperiamus parem legem fecunditatis eam dixisse virentibus atque hominibus ceterisque animalibus nec sic aliis nationibus regionibusue proprias tribuisse dotes, *ut aliis in totum similia munera denegaret*:

"In these circumstances, Publius Silvinus, just as we wish to observe nature through the sharper eyes of the mind, we shall find that she has established an equable law of fertility for all green things just as for human beings and other type of animals; and so she has not conceded specific attributes to some nations or regions or denied similar gifts altogether to others."

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[498]Cf. Col. 1.*pr.*1ff., where the poverty of the soils seems to be recognised as a consequence of overexploitation.
[499] Cf. Columella's criticism of these assumptions (Col. 2.1.2-3).

All living creatures are similar, so they can all be measured by the same basic, natural principals, since nature distributes its favours proportionally, aiming for a kind of equilibrium. Columella's perspective on the world confirms nature's potential to adapt or be adapted and its tendency towards 'balance', if properly exploited. Therefore, all environments have issues concerning certain kinds of subsistence farming, but also provide particular opportunities for others. Hence, all agricultural landscapes share similar signs of meaning, such as 'producing' and 'crops'. From the optimistic farmer's perspective, the laws of nature are there to favour growth (Verg. *G.* 1.60-66), which means that natural 'harmony', 'craft', 'labour' and 'prosperity' are closely related, regardless of the kind of metaphor that may express them.

Columella reflects this argument when he describes the process of acquiring knowledge by observation and common sense. In saying *ut aliis in totum similia munera denegaret,* he reveals the potential for a linguistic analogy with natural processes. Nature behaves like a mother because it is both the sustenance and, at same time, the driving force of rural life (Col. 3.9.4):

nihil enim dubium est, quin ipsa natura subolem matri similem esse voluerit, unde etiam pastor ille in Bucolicis ait: 'sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus haedos.'

"There is no doubt that nature herself desired offspring to resemble their mother. Hence, the shepherd in the *Bucolics* also asserts: 'Just as puppies are like dogs, so children like their mothers'."

In addition to the potential for analogy created by the signs of meaning identified in the natural landscape, there is a widespread notion, based on common sense, that nature is the basis for all essential things, including the capacity to produce goods from places apparently unfit for cultivation. In fact, nature can provide sustenance even from wasteland (Verg. *G.* 2.440-445):

ipsae Caucasio steriles in vertice silvae,

quas animosi Euri adsidue franguntque feruntque,

dant alios aliae fetus, dant utile lignum

navigiis pinus, domibus cedrumque cupressosque;

hinc radios trivere rotis, hinc tympana plaustris

agricolae (...)

244

"The very infertile forests on the Caucasian peak,

that the violent Eurus constantly strikes and batters,

each one gives us their products, gives useful timber,

 pine for ships, cedars and cypresses for houses;

from there farmers fashion spokes or wheels

for their wagons (…)"

Considering the metaphor of nature as the cradle of life, the image of fertility (cf. Verg. *G*. 1.60-66) is always composed of two essential elements: the mother and the seed, which is a symbol made up of the 'seed', 'soil', 'crop', and 'growth' signs of meaning. In the Latin instructional texts these signs can be identified in landscapes such as the one described by Columella (Col. 10.1.160-168)[500]:

Diffugiunt nulloque sono convertitur annus.

Flagitat ecce suos genetrix mitissima fetus,

Et quos enixa est partus, iam quaerit alendos

Privignasque rogat proles. date nunc sua matri

Pignora, tempus adest: viridi redimite parentem

Progenie, tu cinge comas, tu dissere crines.

Nunc apio viridi crispetur florida tellus,

Nunc capitis porri longo resoluta capillo

Laetetur mollemque sinum staphylinus inumbret.

"Lo! Gentlest mother, Earth demands her young

And longs to nurse the offspring she has borne

And her stepchildren. To the mother give

- the time is come - the pledges of her love;

with her green progeny the parent crown,

Bedeck her hair, in order set her locks;

Now let the flowery earth with parsley green

Be curly, let her joyfully behold

Herself dishevelled with the leeks' long hair

And let the carrot shade her tender breast." (trans. Forster 1968)

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[500] On this passage, vide Kronenberg 2009 95.

Columella provides an imagery that is already familiar to his interlocutors. The images suggest prosperity by describing the process of growth, in contrast to images of threats to agriculture or places unsuitable for cultivation, such as dry soils or swamps (Col. 10.1.11-15).[501] However, his main objective is to provide instruction on production and so his language, although literary, wavers between metaphor and the literal use of signs of meaning (Col. 10.1.140-149):

> *Haec ubi credidimus resolutae semina terrae,*
>
> *Adsiduo gravidam cultu curaque fovemus,*
>
> *Vt redeant nobis cumulato fenore messes.*
>
> *Et primum moneo largos inducere fontis,*
>
> *Ne sitis exurat concepto semine partum.*
>
> *At cum feta suos nexus adaperta resolvit,*
>
> *Florida cum soboles materno pullulat arvo,*
>
> *Primitiis plantae modicos tum praebeat imbres*
>
> *Sedulus inrorans holitor ferroque bicorni*
>
> *Pectat et angentem sulcis exterminet herbam.*
>
> "If we entrust these seeds to the loosened soil
>
> and tend the pregnant (earth) with care and culture,
>
> the harvest may repay with interest our toil.
>
> First I remind you to conduct streams abundantly,
>
> do not let thirst be generated among the fruitful seed.
>
> Then when the breeding earth burst her bonds
>
> and flowery offspring sprout from mother soil,
>
> then let moderate rain bedew the first plants
>
> and the diligent gardener comb with two-pronged fork,
>
> and destroy choking weeds in the furrows."

Columella's poetry provides instruction through an analogy between realities whose meanings do not need to be described, since the interlocutor already knows the meaning of such a landscape. This device is particularly recurrent in the poem, as Columella tends to

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[501] However, even dry soils can be worked and transformed (Col. 11.3.10-11).

use nature as the basis for constructing metaphor, switching between images of the fields and images of human body as land, recalling Inana´s manifestations (Col. 10.1.1.68-74):

Durior aeternusque vocat labor: heia age segnis

Pellite nunc somnos et curvi uomere dentis

Iam viridis lacerate comas, iam scindite amictus.

Tu gravibus rastris cunctantia perfode terga,

Tu penitus latis eradere viscera marris (...)

 "Harder and endless labour call: drive away

Lazy sleep now, and let the ploughshare's curved tooth

Tear earth's green hair, and rend the robe she wears

With heavy rakes cleave her unyielding back

Spare not with mattocks broad her innermost parts (…)" (trans. Forster 1968)

In addition to the metaphorical expression of the body as a visual source of meaning, farming can be extended to other aspects of material human reality, as the signs of meaning are very flexible when used to create metaphors. It is possible, for example, to find links in signs of meaning between man's labour as an abstract concept and the symbolic representation of the fields (Cato *Agr*. 1.6.1-3):

Scito idem agrum quod hominem, quamvis quaestuosus siet, si sumptuosus erit, relinqui non multum.

"Know that a farm is like a man – although it is productive, if there is extravagance, little is left."

Cato is literally saying that in terms of productivity, a farm is like a man. No matter how productive it is, if expenditure exceeds production or if it is extravagant, that is to say, superfluous, it is irrelevant to basic or priority needs.[502] Basically, as they are part of nature, human beings can be described by its rules and therefore compared to a farm through language based on common sense: the reverse can also occur using the mechanism of signs of meaning crystalized in popular thought to construct symbolic meaning.

As the textual samples presented in this chapter show, agricultural images are so evident in linguistic thought that allegorical or metaphorical meanings may be found in to be simple

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[502] On production in Roman farms in the Tiber Valley, vide Goodchild 2007 180-244.

sentences applied to a concrete context. A saying that is intended serve as an instruction for a farming procedure may potentially be extended by analogy to abstract thinking and human behaviour. Columella's comments on the care of olive trees, for example, include the following proverb (Col. 5.9.15.3-6):

nam veteris proverbii meminisse convenit: eum, qui aret olivetum, rogare fructum, qui stercoret, exorare, qui caedat, cogere.

"For it is convenient to remember the old proverb: 'he who ploughs the olive grove, asks for fruit; he who spreads dung, gains; he who prunes, collects."

By extrapolation, it may be assumed that this precise proverb can be applied to the search for knowledge, since in nurturing, supplying and perfecting it we are not only looking for, but forcing, knowledge to grow.

plough (*aret*)	learning process	work
spread dung (*stercoret*)	study	absorption of knowledge
lop (*caedat*)	critical thinking	understanding
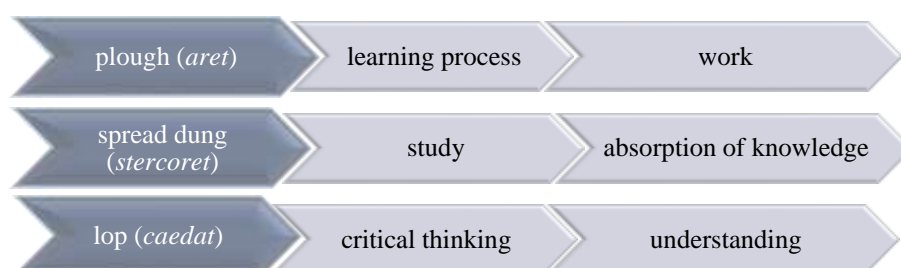
This is by no means Columella's objective but it is significant in terms of demonstrating how easy it is to convert one image of agricultural knowledge into another without losing its essence, i.e. the original image.

Another (creative) example involves using and transforming advice on the care of vine into a metaphor (Col. *arb.* 11.1.1-5):

Vineam quam putare tam bene pampinare utile est; nam et materiae, quae fructum habent, melius convalescunt et putatio sequentis anni expeditior, tum etiam vitis minus cicatricosa fit, quoniam quod viride et tenerum decerpitur, protinus convalescit. Super haec quo melius maturescat.

"It is just as useful to trim a vine well as to prune it, for the branches, which bear the fruit, grow better, and the next year's pruning is better done; also the vine has fewer scars, because if this is done when it is young and tender, it recovers immediately; moreover (the grapes) ripen much better."

Again, this description can be a source for an allegory or metaphor even though this is not the objective of the author. Using the mechanics of transforming traditional abstract

images into linguistic expression, it may be said that wisdom and the education of the young are like caring for a vine and that if young people are corrected and taught at the right moment, they will grow wiser and be able to produce great fruit, or be better citizens.[503] In fact Quintilian develops metaphors using a similar image, comparing education to vines.[504]

With this speculative exercise, I have aimed to demonstrate that any familiar situation or description of an image could be converted into a symbol, an abstract image of meaning or a metaphor (vide supra): it only requires tradition and cultural experience to develop over time. I have used a complex metaphor, but if I had simply stated that 'youth growing into adulthood' is comparable to a vine, it would doubtless have been possible for anyone familiar with how vines grow to understand spontaneously what was meant. For this reason, the Latin instructional texts can also provide signs of meaning, even when metaphorical language is not being used, because they identify a reality that would have inspired the Latin speaker. In this sense, it is possible to reconstruct a symbolic language that is not being used in its complete form, but expresses the signs of meaning available to rustic Latin speakers.

4.2.2. Crops: fruits of labour and the path to prosperity

A description of crops growing or the vivid colour of a mature fruit can generate the conceptual idea of beauty. Why is this so? Why is this kind of association so spontaneous? (vide Chap. 4.1.5). The image and its semantics are simply present in the natural and traditional framework, ready to be used. Whether they quantify or clarify a physical form, the metaphorical or allegorical conceptualization of crops is an asset in constructing linguistic meaning. Abstract images are common and useful in language. For example, when Varro refers to apiculture he uses the image of a bunch of grapes to identify the form, consistency and distribution of the bees at the entrance of the hive and thus conceptualize a behavioural sign for bees through an understandable analogy with a common fruit, which enables the bee keeper to recognise when the hive has too many bees or a new colony can be created (Var. *R.* 3.16.29-30):

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[503] Cf. Col. 11.2.79-80: Another example of potential metaphoric analogy can be found in Columella, in this case regarding perfect timing: *sed cum omnia in agricultura strenue facienda sint, tum maxime sementis. vetus est agricolarum proverbium, maturam sationem saepe decipere solere, seram, quin mala sit*. "While every agricultural task has to be performed vigorously, this is much more (true) regarding sowing. It is old a proverb among husbandmen (that) early sowing often deceives us, but late sowing never does it – it is always a calamity."

[504] Quint. *Inst*. 1.2.26, 1.3.13. Vide also other metaphors on the agricultural world by Quintilian, *Inst*. 2.9.3, 2.4.8, 2.19.2, 8.3.6-11.

Vnum, quod superioribus diebus, maxime vespertinis, multae ante foramen ut uvae aliae ex aliis pendent conglobatae (…).

"First, on preceding days, and especially in the evenings, a great number of them hang to one another in front of the entrance, gathered like a bunch of grapes."

The image is vivid and clear. Its more profound or metaphoric meaning is not so much a matter of spontaneous understanding, but the physical form is perceptible and the analogy is easy to grasp: everyone would have known what a bunch of grapes looked like.[505] This emphases the value of the image in terms of generating meaning through signs that are crystalized in popular thought. In this sense, abstract concepts such abundance can be constructed simply by presenting an image of growth or diversity. [506] For example, in the Latin instructional texts on farming (vide supra Col. 3.8.1), we can infer that it was known that different regions and environments produced specific crops, depending on the richness of the soil (Col. 3.8.4):

Sed ad genera frugum redeo. Mysiam Libyamque largis aiunt abundare frumentis, nec tamen Apulos Campanosque agros optimis defici segetibus, Tmolon et Corycon flore croceo, Iudaeam et Arabiam pretiosis odoribus inlustrem haberi (...)

"But I return to various kinds of crops. They affirm that great quantities of grain abound in Mysia and Lybia, although the fields of Apulia and Campania are forsaken by the rich crops; and that Tmolus and Corycus are famous for the saffron-flower, and Judea and Arabia for precious scents." [507]

This is empirical knowledge and apparently has little to do with traditional thought and abstract language. However, it states an obvious idea: richness in contrast with soils that are potentially poor. Farming is an aspect of the natural world, since it is constructed from nature itself. That is to say, poverty and richness, reflected in production, may be expressed through different aspects of the rural cosmos, such as the soil characteristics associated with a

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[505] On wine in relation to wealth, vide Purcell 1985.
[506] On types of crops in central Italy, vide Goodchild 2007 246-396.
[507] Zafrai 1994: 63-68 gives a paradigmatic example of the importance of cereals in macro and micro economic organization in Roman Palestine. Erdkamp 2005 258-330 notes how crucial grain was in the food supply for the general population and in maintaining a social system. Vide also Garnsey 1988 69-86, 182-197, 218-243 on supply and distribution in urban communities.

specific type of production.[508] In fact. this is an important element of symbolic construction based on visual landscapes, as previously argued with regard to the metaphor of fertility.

It has already been noted that the farmer lacks the comforts of the city, although he has a life that provides him with the kind of wealth that comes from living in harmony with nature (cf. Verg. *G.* 2.458-474). Virgil described the lives of the farmer and his family as simple but happy, due to fertility and abundance (cf. Verg. *G.* 2.523-531). He emphasises the labour that comes from the land and its resulting productivity, showing the farming world as the path to a kind of richness.[509] Of course, this is an idealization and there is materiality in the wealth that comes from the farm, but it still comes from nature and is a means to happiness. It provides sustenance and, as already noted, happiness can be directly associated with pleasure which is, in turn, associated with beauty (Chap. 4.1.5).

Another example of how the material nature of farm production is expressed can be found in Horace's letter to Quinctius (Hor. *Ep.* 1.16), in which he presents a Sabine farm as a source of prosperity due to its production. Horace is addressing a wealthy character of high social status, not a common Roman countryman (Dang 2010), which probably means that he is not implying food security, but instead the potential of a commercial asset. However, this is a matter of literary/cultural context. The reason why it can be considered a reference to agricultural production as a means of becoming wealthy lies in the combination of signs of meaning which may mean specific things in a given cultural context. Materiality as a social concept does not directly depend on its traditional meaning, but the signs of meaning that create the idea of richness are independent of context, despite the fact that they can help translate abstract social concepts, such as commercial income (Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.1-4):

> *Ne perconteris, fundus meus, optime Quincti,*
> *arvo pascat erum an bacis opulent et olivae,*
> *pomisne et pratis an amicta vitibus ulmo,*
> *scribetur tibiforma loquaciter et situs agri.*
>
> "My great Quinctius, before you even enquire about my farm,
> whether it feeds its owner with arable land, or enriches him with olives,
> or apples, or meadows, or elm-trees covered with vines,

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[508] On the geographical aspects of systems models for Roman agricultural production, vide Goodchild 2013.
[509] Cf. Ver. *G.* 2. 513-522; Catto 1981 287.

I will describe for you with eloquence the shape and location of my farm."[510]

The signs for 'crops', 'growth', 'variety', 'quantity' and 'production' provide the semantics for potential prosperity and richness. These concepts may come from surplus but although one may try farming in order to get rich,[511] this cannot be inferred from the value of the signs of meaning – intentions depend on cotext. I do not intend to discuss the context of this text, which has a particular literary interpretation (see Dang 2010). What is of interest to this discussion is the image presented and the language used for its construction, namely what can be expected from a farm: sustenance granted by 'growth', 'quantity' and 'variety'. When sustenance is amplified there is wealth and prosperity, symbols compounded by the image of the fertile crescent. As Thommen (2012 79) states: "Agriculture was not only the basis of livelihood, but also of wealth, which was primarily manifested in landholding (Plin. *Ep*. 3.19, 6.19)". The reason for this lies in the surplus and the security which it provides.

Quantity and variety are the signs of meaning that suggest abundance and consequently wealth, which can be used to help construct other abstract concepts. Beauty, for example, can be portrayed in literature through the representation of abundance and a variety of products, implying richness in the process (Col. 10.1.185-189):

Et mea, quam generant Tartesi litore Gades,

Candida vibrato discrimine, candida thyrso est.

Cypros item Paphio quam pingui nutrit in arvo,

Punicea depexa coma, sed lactea crure est.

Quot facies, totidem sunt tempora quamque serendi.

"Then there's my own, which on Tartessus' shore

Gades brings forth (pale is its curled leaf,

and white its stalk); and that which Cyprus rears

in Paphos' fertile field, with its purple locks

well-combed, but its stem full of milky juice." (trans. Forster 1968)

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[510] For a commentary on this passage and on the relevance of the social position of the farm 'owner', vide Dang 2010 and his commentary on the selective focus employed in the description of the farm with regard to the social status of the interlocutor.

[511] "Thus the Sabine farm is affiliated with the landscape of production. Having evoked topographical associations that would have meaningful resonances for his affluent contemporaries, Horace proceeds with his description" (Dang 2010; cf. Hor. *Ep*. 1.16.5-16; vide supra Chap 3.2.1.3).

Clearly, literary discourse plays a major role in the presentation of this image. However, it still provides information on traditional thought: a normal field, if cultivated, produces crops, and this would have had meaning for the community.

Returning to the discussion on materiality and commercial assets, it can be said that fertility reflects economic value, since it increases surplus production leading to profits that can be converted into other goods. In other words, surplus production was used to support other economic activities, favouring the idea of value expressed through the combined signs of meaning for variety and quantity. Varro may have had this potential in mind when he stated (Var. *R.* 1.16.2-3):

Multi enim habent, in praediis quibus frumentum aut vinum aliudve quid desit, inportandum; contra non pauci, quibus aliquid sit exportandum.

"Many have among their holdings some products which are lacking, such as grain or wine or similar, which must be imported, and on the other hand not a few have a surplus that must be exported."

Wealth is implied in a kind of economic exchange since there is surplus production, suggesting potential richness, and a range of products and services. This is evident in the four Latin instructional texts.[512]

Considering the concept of wealth based on farming and herding,[513] the excellent farm corresponds to the ideal combination of two main factors: potential production/profit and ease of labour. Hence, Columella summarises the characteristics of the farm in few words (Col. 1.2.3):

quod si voto fortuna subscribit, agrum habebimus salubri caelo, uberi glaeba, parte campestri, parte alia collibus vel ad orientem vel ad meridiem molliter devexis terrenisque aliis atque aliis silvestribus et asperis nec procul a mari vel navigabili flumine, quo deportari fructus et perquod merces invehi possint.

"And if fortune attends our prayer, we shall have a farm in a salubrious climate, with some areas consisting of cultivated land on a gentle eastern or southern slope and others of

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[512] Vide Var. *R.* 1.4.1 and Kronenberg 2009 95 (metaphor on this passage).
[513] In explaining the grazing system in agricultural history and its profitability, Columella says that *pecunia* (money) and *peculium* (property) come from the word *pecus* (cattle). See Col. 6.*pr.*4.1-5.1; Var. *R.* 2.1.11, with comments on the profits from grazing; Kronenberg 2009 95. Aldrete 2006 also comments on the value of cattle in referring to its loss due to floods (cf. Dio Cass. 39.61.1-2; SHA *M. Aur.* 8; Plin. *Ep.* 8.17).

rough woodland; not far from the sea or a navigable stream, by which its products may be transported and supplies brought in."

The perfect farm brings lifelong rewards to the owner, since it means a life of abundance and security without enduring the hardships of unprofitable hard work, the assurance that there will be food for 'tomorrow', and, in terms of the Roman aristocratic context, material wealth. The image of this kind of idyllic situation evokes beauty: not the beauty of a sensual human body or nature in all its splendour, but the beauty of a fulfilled life. In fact, the value of the farm lies not so much in the idea of property and wealth, but in the quality of life it can provide, in terms of the requirements for a normal happy life. This may have been the reason why Columella quoted Virgil's maxim (Col. 1.3.8)[514]:

laudato ingentia rura,

exiguum colito.

"Praise large farms,

cultivate small ones".

As previously mentioned, when labour exceeds what is strictly necessary, it is no longer beneficial but may become a major problem, as Columella emphasises (Col. 1.3.9).

(…) quippe acutissimam gentem Poenos dixisse convenit inbecilliorem agrum quam agricolam esse debere, quoniam, cum sit conluctandum cum eo, si fundus praevaleat, adlidi dominum. nec dubium, quin minus reddat laxus ager non recte cultus quam angustus eximie. (cf. Col. 1.2.3)

"(...) the Carthaginians, a very sharp people, had a saying that the farm should be less feeble than the farmer; for as he must wrestle with it, if the land prevails, the master is crushed. And there is no doubt that an extensive field that is not properly cultivated brings a lower return than a small one tilled with exceptional care."

The life of the farmer is hard in itself: it involves struggling against the natural elements and misfortunes (Verg. *G.* 1.311-50, vide chap. 3.2.1.3, 3.2.1.4). If the farm requires excessive hard labour and effort, instead of obtaining subsistence from it, the farmer will be

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[514] Cf. Verg. *G.* 2.412-413. On the concept of labour and the meanings of this word in Virgil's *Georgica,* vide Catto 204-58.

consumed by it, as the human body has its limits. Hence a source of abundance is only a symbol for happiness when the signs that contain the meaning for hardship do not form part of the image that provides the symbol or literary metaphor.

4.2.3. Nature and the portrayal of beauty

"'Landscape' is a term freighted with historical, cultural, and especially aesthetic meaning. As a conceptual orientation and way of seeing it emerges coincident with and helps to shape the history of aesthetics and representation, as well as being a form of evaluative negotiation" (Worman 2015). In terms of this study, landscape is also a source for meaning crystalized in human linguistic thought, since it has the potential to reveal meaning to its interlocutors.

Balance and harmony seem to be the main symbolic concepts used for defining the visual representation of 'beauty' as a characteristic of nature. The idea that everything has its place and nothing is missed out carries a meaning that surpasses the human capacity to investigate natural phenomena through the physical senses alone.[515]

Country life is part of the natural world. The actions of man may suggest that a farm is less natural, but this only pertains to certain technical aspects, since all the natural elements of farm that are controlled by humans are essential parts of the natural world. Therefore, the farmer depends on nature and can only achieve success by striving for the harmony and natural balance. The more closely the farm follows the laws of nature, the more productive it will be. This can perhaps be considered the reason why a good farm suggests the idea of beauty, since the peaceful life of a farm owner can be envisaged, with fields well ploughed, animals well fed, trees full of colourful fruit and the sun shining above the freshly watered crops. From such a hypothetical landscape one can infer contentment, because of the productive appearance of the farm[516]. The idea of felicity can be expressed through beauty, as well as the reverse; an image can be beautiful, because of its meaning and if its meaning suggests contentment to the interlocutor, the concept of happiness can be inferred without the need for complex hermeneutic speculation (vide Chap. 4.1.4).

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[515] Worman 2015 303 presents examples of descriptions of gardens as manifestations of beauty based on the *locus amoenus*. On the *locus amoenus,* vide Worman's commentary and examples of landscapes in Greco-Roman literature (cf. Plat. *Phdr*. 230b2; cf. Cic. *Ver*. 6.80; *Mur*. 13; *Fin*. 2.107; *Att*. 12.19.1; *Orat*. 2.290).

[516] See Dang 2010: "Horace's reply diverges from Quinctius' hypothetical question. Instead of supplying facts and figures, direct information about the material wealth and finances of the farm, Horace describes its location (*situs agri*) and its *forma*, a term with various denotations: form, appearance, beauty, design, image, likeness, a shape serving as a model, all of which apply to his poetic art." Vide Chap. 4.2.2.; Col. 3.21.3.

The image of harmonious growth justifies the repeated appeal to telluric ideas and the poetic approach to manifestations of nature in universal literature.[517] Moreover, with regard to the agricultural context, I would argue that such aesthetic concepts are based on signs of meaning originated in the landscape on which human society depends. Columella describes the inherent beauty of the agricultural cosmos perfectly in his commentary on the overwhelming feeling of contemplating a joyful farm (Col. 3.21.3):

Deinde, quod vel alienissimus rusticae vitae, si in agrum tempestive ueniat, summa cum voluptate naturae benignitatem miretur, cum <i>stinc[i] Bituricae fructibus opimis, hi<n>c paribus helvo<lae> respondent (...)

"Thereupon, if even a man greatly unversed in country life entered a field at the proper season, he would marvel with delight at the benevolence of nature, where the Beturic vines with rich fruit on one side match the *heluolae* fruits on the other side (...)."

The suggestion of a joy and identification of abstract beauty comes from recognising a harmonious and prosperous landscape, implied by the signs for 'crops', 'quantity' and 'variety' in a balanced landscape. It is hard to analyse why the landscape is appealing in terms of individual criteria, but in the collective mind, drawing on the agricultural cosmos, the landscape may be said to be beautiful because it displays good produce in abundance. In addition, Columella creates continuity for the image by introducing chronological movement - the time spent passing through a living farm - which emphasises the idea of an empirical reality that can bring prosperity. The author ends this description with a metaphor of the breasts of nature that feed humanity (Col. 3.21.3):

illinc arcelac<ae> visus, illinc spioniae baliscaeve convertant, quibus alma tellus annua vice velut <aet>erno quodam puerperio laeta mort<al>ibus distenta musto demit<tit> ubera

"Turning his eyes to one side (where) the *arcelae* and *spioniae* are or to the other (where there is) *baliscae*, where each year the fostering earth, as if delighting in never-ending parturition, extends to mortals her breasts filled with new wine."[518]

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[517] Cf. Virgil's portrait in *Eclogae* 1.
[518] Cf. Pausanias' metaphor on two springs, which he compares to a woman's breasts (9.34.4).

In other words, the suggested richness evokes 'beauty', for people are fed, year by year (*annua*), with the fruits of a productive farm and man is therefore pleased by the splendour of its image (Col. 3.21.4):[519]

Sed haec quamvis plurimum delectent, utilitas tamen vincit voluptatem. nam et pater familiae libentius ad spectaculum rei suae, quanto est ea luculentior, descendit (...)

"But though all these things delight greatly, materiality prevails over pleasure. For the family's chief contemplates more willingly his wealth as more splendorous it is."

Columella explains beauty through the riches of the landscape. The value of an agricultural landscape is made up of *topoi* that are present in the collective mind: contact with the farming cosmos generates meaning and this meaning is universal because it depends on common elements. A landscape that shows fruit or green grass growing implies the availability of supplies for people and cattle. Considering it as a complete framework, Columella reveals a concrete image of a landscape. The crystalized picture can convey an unchanging symbolic meaning made up of signs that represent each element in the frame, since the image implies the same things when presented without a specific context. The interlocutor always recognises the traditional symbol as having the same value, since it is interpreted on the basis of the empirical experience of the cultural community within the natural world. For this reason, any interlocutor would always spontaneously feel pleasure when presented with such an image.

Columella's poem '*cultus hortorum*' (Col. 10) is a good example of the symbolism of production combined with the abstract concept of beauty.[520] In some aspects he follows the instructive mechanisms of Virgil's *Georgica* by providing a literary language for farming knowledge. Moreover, the farming cosmos always forms the background – as in the 'plot' of the *Georgica*. The Virgilian text maintains a connection with the agricultural cosmos even when the poet is praising the untouched rural world or natural beauty, i.e. uncultivated fields (Ver. *G.* 2.437-439):

et iuvat undantem buxo spectare Cytorum

Naryciaeque picis lucos, iuvat arva videre

non rastris, hominum non ulli obnoxia curae.

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[519] For a discussion on concepts of pleasure associated with aesthetics, particularly in Greek literature, vide Destrée 2015.

[520] For iconography on farming and herding, vide Tucker 2002.

"Oh joy, to look on waves of boxwood in the Cytorus mountain

and on Narycum's pine woods, what joy to see (such) <u>landscape</u>

(untouched by) <u>toothed hoe</u>, not beholden to any kind of man's <u>care</u>!"[521]

Obviously, it is important to bear in mind that literary language plays an important role in expressing beauty, which means that the semantics of a landscape may be suggested more by literature than signs of meaning. For example, the following quotation expresses beauty through the landscape, but the language mixes signs of meaning from agricultural cosmos with symbolic language constructed in a mythological and literary style, directing the text to a very specific semantic construction (Col. 10.1.101-109)[522]:

> *Tum quae pallet humi, quae frondens purpurat auro,*
>
> *Ponatur viola et nimium rosa plena pudoris.*
>
> *Nunc medica panacem lacrima sucoque salubri*
>
> *Glaucea et profugos vinctura papavera somnos*
>
> *Spargite, quaeque viros acuunt armantque puellis,*
>
> *Iam Megaris veniant genitalia semina bulbi,*
>
> *Et quae Sicca legit Getulis obruta glebis,*
>
> *Et quae frugifero seritur vicina Priapo,*
>
> *Excitet ut Veneri tardos eruca maritos.*
>
> "Then let the violet be planted, which lies pale upon the ground
>
> or blooms with gold and purple blossoms crowned,
>
> likewise the rose too full of maiden blush.
>
> Next scatter all-heal with its saving tear,
>
> and celandines with their health-giving juice,
>
> and poppies which will bind elusive sleep;
>
> let hyacinths' fruitful seed from Megara come,
>
> which sharpen men's desires and fit them for the girls,
>
> and those which Sicca gathers, hidden deep
>
> beneath gaetulian clods and rocket, too,
>
> which, sown beside Priapus rich in fruits,

---

[521] Cf. the image of savage countryside in Verg. G. 2.485-86.
[522] Cf. the scenario in Col. 10.1.242-254.

may rouse up sluggish husbands to make love."[523] (trans. Forster 1968)

As previously stated, neither religion and ritual nor literary tradition and genre will be explored in this study, which means that statements such as those of Pliny referring to the sacred element in gardening (Plin. *Nat.* 19.1; 19.19-19.21) will not be discussed.[524] The subject here is the global framework represented in the text. With regard to the extract above, ignoring its literary and religious context, it may be affirmed that texts such as these contain some of the signs of meaning that comprise the semantics of a landscape, but only the wider textual context can suggest a traditional image of landscape, as only some of the signs of meaning can be identified (Col. 10.1.35-36, 38 – the crop sign, Col. 10.1.35-40 - production sign). The beauty lies in the language more than the signs of meaning that compose the frame.

Nevertheless, regardless of language and literature, there is something in nature that is charged with beauty, which cannot be explained without engaging in a debate on human nature itself and aesthetics.[525] Moreover, the image of natural beauty and abundance can definitely be related to prosperity (cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.63): there is no need to add any further explanation for such images, since any interlocutor would already be familiar with its meaning. In fact, the images explain themselves, as they are common *topoi* in the collective mind, given that empirical experience had transformed the reality of the image into crystalized abstract language used in a variety of expressive genres including literary texts that aimed to provide instruction on farming practices. In this sense, a Virgilian landscape can be read as a linguistic canvas based on the rural world (Verg. *G.* 4.118-126):

> *forsitan et pinguis hortos quae cura colendi*
> *ornaret canerem biferique rosaria Paesti,*
> *quoque modo potis gauderent intiba rivis*
> *et virides apio ripae, tortusque per herbam*
> *cresceret in ventrem cucumis; nec sera comantem*
> *narcissum aut flexi tacuissem vimen acanthi*
> *pallentisque hederas et amantis litora myrtos.*
> *namque sub Oebaliae memini me turribus arcis,*

---

[523] Vide Henderson's 2004 128 commentary on this passage.
[524] Vide Henderson 2004 67-68.
[525] For a discussion on the aesthetics of landscape in Greco-Roman literature, vide Worman 2015.

qua niger umectat flaventia culta Galaesus

"(…) perhaps I should also sing of how careful cultivation

adorns rich gardens and the rose beds of <u>twice-bearing Paestum.</u>

How endives rejoice to drink in the streams[526]

and the green banks with wild celery, and how cucumber winds its way

through grass and swells into a paunch; nor would I ignore

the late-blooming narcissus, nor the hair of acanthus,

nor the pale ivy, and the myrtle, lover of the shoreline.

And I also recall that under the arched Oebal towers,

where black river Galaesus wets the farmed fields (...)"

Virgil is not directly saying: 'here it is a landscape that means life is good and easy, for plants can grow twice' (vide Henderson 2004 125). He simply presents certain elements to enable any interlocutor to reconstruct a unique, individual image, using the same signs of meaning that circulate within a community that has similar experience of the natural world. As the image of the landscape already exists in the collective mind, Virgil merely evokes some of its elements to bring a picture more clearly described through the aesthetics of literature to the mind of the reader. If the reader can reconstruct the entire image, he knows such a landscape, and this would also apply to landscapes that include herding (Col. 7.3.23).

Clearly in Latin literature the aesthetics of expression and musicality of the language also create the sensation of beauty in a landscape. Stylistic resources and textual formalities influence the way language is interpreted, so that it is harder to identify traditional notions of beauty in texts composed from images of the natural world which use the aesthetics of language, such as the *Georgica* or Columella's poem (Col. 10.1.35-40).[527]

Returning to the life of the farmer, landscape also evokes beauty in terms of what it can provide without suffering or excessive effort: in other words, there is pleasure when hardships are avoided. For example, the following image contains everything a farmer would need: water, wood, fields. Would it not be considered beautiful by a peasant? (Verg. *G.* 2.485-86):

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[526] Vide Henderson 2004 125 n.2.

[527] For a commentary on this passage, vide Henderson 2004 127. Cf. Worman's 2015 291-293 commentaries on the Greek and Roman literary tradition of expressing aesthetics in the landscape in authors such as Pindar, Plato, Dionysius of Halicarnassus or Cicero.

rura mihi et rigui placeant in <u>vallibus</u> amnes,

<u>flumina</u> amem silvasque inglorius. o ubi campi (…)

Let fields and streams, bustling through the valleys, be pleasant to me;

let me love woods and rivers – I am inglorious. Oh, to the countryside along the Spercheus (…)[528]

Nature's beauty depends more on sensory interpretations than aesthetic criteria[529] and therefore the issue is how sensations are created. In Verg. *G.* 2.485 it may said that they arise from feelings such as the safety of having what is needed. As pointed out in previous chapters, there is a high level of idealization in the cultural perspectives on farming life and it is important to emphasise that this comes from the association between farming and the natural world. Nature is the paradigm of harmony, which means that the beauty that comes from farming world is closely connected with its natural framework, harmonious representation and the pleasures of experiencing and obtaining sustenance from it (Col. 8.11.1):

Pavonum educatio magis urbani patrisfamiliae quam tetrici rustici curam poscit. sed nec haec tamen aliena est agricolae, captantis undique voluptates adquirere, quibus solitudinem ruris eblandiatur.

"The breeding of peafowl demands the care of the urban householder and not that of the harsh rustic; yet it is not alien to the business of the farmer who aims to get pleasure from every source with which he mitigates the loneliness of rural life."

Columella refers to the delight inspired by the beauty of nature and the humbleness of the farmer who experiences it. According to Columella, it is this humbleness that enables the farmer to be more closely connected to nature, take pleasure from it and achieve better rewards by understanding its balance. The farmer experiences enjoyment through the landscape. The value of the landscape comes before literary aesthetics or stylistic resources, since telluric feelings were not invented by literature but created from the empirical reality

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[528] Pliny describes the landscape of the river Peneios by referring to the green environment and the fauna (Plin. *Nat.* 4.30-31). Vide also the aesthetics of the riverine landscapes presented by Strabo (1.3.8, 9.1.24, 13.4.7-8, 13.4.15, 15.1.16, 15.2.14, 15.3.6) and Pausanias 8.25.13. Vide Campbell 2012 72-73.
[529] Vide Turner 2017 109-130 on the psychology of aesthetics.

of living and depending on nature for agriculture.[530] The farmer is part of the framework and is therefore included in the landscape of beauty.

To sum up, beauty in the agricultural landscape is not an exact concept that can be termed *locus amoenus*, but an idea formed by combination of signs of meaning and symbols that are transversal and universal, since they are generated by the empirical experience of nature which is preserved in the collective mind, regardless of cultural preconceptions.

Gravitating signs and symbols of the abstract concept of beauty:

prosperity

contentment

quantity

symbol of beauty
=
signs of meaning and compounded symbols in the landscape

welfare

variety

growth

crops
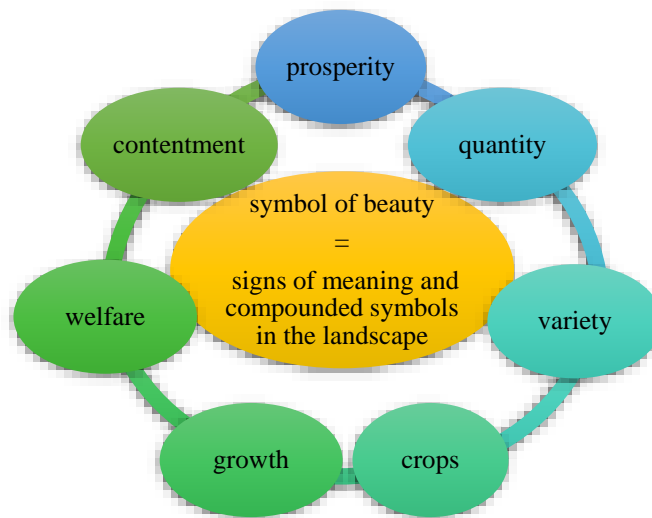
The idea of beauty is so deeply embedded in the linguistic spectrum that it can also be identified through signs which distort it, i. e. scenarios of disruption (Sen. *Oed.* 49-51):

> *denegat fructum Ceres*
> *adulta, et altis flava cum spicis tremat,*
> *arente culmo sterilis emoritur seges.*
> "Ceres refuses the mature fruit (grain):
> though the golden field trembles with tall spikes,
> the crop is sterile and dies on its dry stalk."[531]

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[530] On the *locum amoenus* of agricultural and pastoral life, especially in Cicero's work, vide Worman 2015.
[531] Vide Chap. 4.1.5.2; Schiesaro's commentary on this passage (2006 435).

This is an image of ugliness, regardless of the allegory Seneca presents.[532] The farming landscape is the base for the scene and is used in order to make the emotional impact more understandable.

The same text contains a contrasting scene. Without focussing on the plot, it is important to note how the landscape reacts to the behaviour of Seneca's character Oedipus. Nature can explain the state of things, as it is the basis of social harmony (Sen. *Oed.* 648-653):

> *funesto gradu*
>
> *solum relinquat: vere florifero virens*
>
> *reparabit herbas; spiritus puros dabit*
>
> *vitalis aura, veniet et silvis decor;*
>
> *Letum Luesque, Mors Labor Tabes Dolor,*
>
> *comitatus illo dignus, excedent simul.*

> "with his fatal steps
>
> let him abandon the land: it will recover the verdant
>
> vegetation bearing flowers; the vital gentle breeze will be pure to
>
> breathe, and beauty will appear in the forests.
>
> Ruin and Punishment, Death, Hardship, Decay and Pain,
>
> a worthy retinue, will depart with him."

Clearly this has more to do with the ideological setting permeated by Stoicism than with traditional thought.[533] Nevertheless, the expressive resources are the signs of meaning acquired by common sense.

In short, growth conveys the idea of natural prosperity and this encapsulates beauty, regardless of the expressive format. It can be easily identified in the signs of meaning throughout Latin literature, including the Latin instructional texts, specifically Virgil's *Georgica* and Columella's poetry.[534]

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[532] Cf. the image described in Augustine's metaphor of the destruction of the farmer's work (*C. D.* 22.22). Vide Shaw's commentary on this metaphor (2013 29-30).

[533] I have followed Schiesaro's interpretation of this passage (2006 434-435).

[534] Cf. Col. 10.1.242-254. I have not commented on all of Columella's poetry, despite its literary value for my argument, because the signs of meaning for its images are repeated. I therefore opted not to quote material on similar landscapes which has the same meaning.

4.3. A dialogue between quantities of happiness

"Pero

más que la maldición a las hienas sedientas, al estertor bestial

que aúlla desde el África sus patentes inmundas,

más que la cólera, más que el desprecio, más que el llanto,

madres atravesadas por la angustia y la muerte,

mirad el corazón del noble día que nace,

y sabed que vuestros muertos sonríen desde la tierra

levantando los puños sobre el trigo."

Pablo Neruda (1935-1945), *Canto a las madres de los milicianos muertos*

As discussed in the previous chapters, the farming world helps to create the language of meaning through metaphors constructed from the material aspects of agriculture and a linguistic spectrum based on previously acquired signs of meaning. The image of seeds, for example, can serve as a symbolic representation that provides the ground for metaphors. [535] A combination of signs of meaning can express the idea of 'scattered' or spread or express quantity: [sag-gi$_6$]-ga eden-na numun-e-eš mi-ni-in-ma-al : ma-[...])[536]: the semantic interpretation has to come from observation of the sowing of seeds, which is a universal practice, even if the exact same combinations of signs are not found in the Latin instructional texts as metaphorical constructions.

The ancient texts cannot be compared since their context is different in many ways, but it is possible to establish a dialogic exercise when they express similar ideas based on the same signs of meaning. Considering following poem by Columella (Col. 10.1.1-10):

Hortorum quoque te cultus, Silvine, docebo

Atque ea, quae quondam spatiis exclusus iniquis,

Cum caneret laetas segetes et munera Bacchi

Et te, magna Pales, nec non caelestia mella,

Vergilius nobis post se memoranda reliquit.

---

[535] Vide Chap. 4.1; cf. a+51. a i$_7$-bi-ta al-sig$_3$-ge-dam e-ne-em$_3$-^{d}Mu-ul-lil$_2$-la$_2$-še$_3$/ a+52. a-ša še-bi-ta al-sig$_3$-ge-dam e-ne-em$_3$-^{d}Mu-ul-lil$_2$-la$_2$-še. "At the word of Enlil, trampling down the water in its canal!/ (At) the word of Enlil, trampling down the grain in its field!" (CLAM 186-207, ll. a+51-a+52). Enlil brings prosperity with the word; that is to say, Enlil is prosperity because he acts on the source of prosperity.

[536] comp.t.: CLAM 106, l. b+256. "He has placed the black-headed people in the steppe like (scattered) seeds" (trans.CLAM 113).

Principio sedem numeroso praebeat horto

Pinguis ager putris glebae resolutaque terga

Qui gerit et fossus gracilis imitatur harenas.

Atque habilis natura soli, quae gramine laeto

Parturit et rutilas ebuli creat uvida bacas.

"I'll teach you also about the work of gardening, Silvinus,

and about those things spaced in narrow bounds,

when Virgil sang of joyful crops, Bacchus' gifts,

and you too, great Pales, and celestial honey,

reserved for our future memory.

First, a place for plural gardens, furnished

with a rich soil, loosened clods and sloping terraces;

and (where) dug earth is similar to sand.

The nature of the soil is manageable, which generates abundant grass

and when moistened produces bunches of red berries."

It would be possible to identify a similar image of meaning in the Sumerian texts and it is a commonplace to consider something sprouting from earth as a gift of nature or the gods. The main idea is abundance coming from the earth, creating what seems to be a prosperous framework, which is surely evident in examples such as the gifts of Dumuzi (DI T ll. 2-8) and the image in Columella's poem (Col. 10.1.242-254).

Sex is also a general force in the metaphors from the farming cosmos (DI F ll.1-32; Col. 10.1.1.194-214), regardless of cultural context. It can be a literary metaphor that has a direct association with reality (DI B ll. 1-9) or a complex allegorical construction (DI F ll. 29-32; Col. 10.1.194-214). Again, a dialogue can be established between Dumuzi and Inana's relationship and the riches that come from it and the scenario presented in Col. 10.1.1.194-214. In the latter, instead of the metaphorical universe suggested by the two gods, we find creatures of nature generating life (Col. 10.1.1.194-214):

Dum cupit et cupidae quaerit se iungere matri

Et mater facilis mollissima subiacet arvo,

Ingenera: nunc sunt genitalia tempora mundi,

Nunc amor ad coitus properat, nunc spiritus orbis

Bacchatur Veneri stimulisque cupidinis actus

Ipse suas adamat partus et fetibus implet.

(...)

Hinc maria, hinc montes, hinc totus denique mundus

Ver agit, hinc hominum pecudum volucrumque cupido,

Atque amor ignescit menti saevitque medullis,

Dum satiata Venus fecundos compleat artus

Et generet varias soboles semperque frequentet

Prole nova mundum, vacuo ne torpeat aevo.

"While the plant desires its mother earth's embrace, who longs for it,

and she most soft, beneath the yielding earth

lies waiting, grant her increase. Now's the time

when all the world is mating, now when love

to union hastes; the spirit of the world

in Venus' revels joins and, headlong urged

by Cupid's goads, itself its progeny

embraces and with teeming offspring fills.

(…)

Hence seas, hence hills, hence e'en the whole wide world

is celebrating spring; hence comes desire

to man and beast and bird, and flames of love

burn in the heart and in the marrow rage,

till Venus, satiated, impregnates

their fruitful members and a varied brood

brings for, and ever fills the world with new

offspring, lest it grow tired with childless age." (trans. Forster 1992)

An image of abundance and beauty is presented through a literary scene depicting mating set against a metaphoric background (cf. DI B ll. 1-9). Abundance and fertility can reflect economic value and the surplus production used to sustain other economic activities generates security and satisfaction - and the latter, when expressed through an image, can evoke beauty. Varro describes this potential (Var. *R.* 1.16.2-3; vide Chap. 4.2.2) and Dumuzi does the same when he promises wedding gifts (DI A ll. 1-9), as does Enlil with his offers to Sud (EnlSud ll. 103-136) as reparations (and also marriage gifts). The three texts, although

very different in essence, give meaning to an image that is compounded from symbols of richness and prosperity created from the signs of meaning 'variety, 'quantity', 'growth' and 'crops'. Surplus production offers the possibility of exchanging goods, thus facilitating not only wealth but also a range of products and services, in a kind of economic exchange that seems to be transversal.[537]

Economic processes and systems are not so irrelevant per se in terms of traditional cultural concepts, since they may indicate the social value of certain types of production, but I have been unable to find textual evidence of this in my research. However, the meaning of the signs used to construct language seems to imply this, since the most common crops and goods with the greatest economic potential, such as grain, are often referred to in a symbolic manner. When used in compound symbols, signs of meaning inspired by elements from the agricultural landscape with economic value have the same basic meaning.

I would argue that agriculture was the ultimate and most secure source of stability and wealth in antiquity. I agree with Erdkamp's (2001) statement that "due to the relatively small capacity of ancient agriculture to produce a surplus cultivation of food, crops always remained the predominant sector in the ancient economy" and the texts discussed in this thesis are based on this assumption. It is a universal assumption and Sumerian and Roman cultures do not constitute different sources in this respect. It can be identified in the disruption of the agricultural world, which leads to social chaos. The references do not appear in the same way in the two literary cultures, but they are present. Considering references to war, for example, and the Sumerian and Roman texts which use the agricultural world as a source for presenting contrasts through images, although they are expressed in different ways and geographical areas, the basic meaning of the effects of war on the abstract landscape are universally similar in terms of cultures dependent on farming.

For example, a superficial examination of Inana B (ll. 43-45) and the following lines by Virgil, would reveal no relationship at all (Verg. *G.* 2.458-460):

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,

agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis

fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.

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[537] I found no references in the Sumerian texts to harvesting or any kind of metaphor associated with this as a concept that reflects maturation and the end of a cycle, although it is very evident in Latin literature, especially as a metaphor for death in the literature of early Christianity. Vide the examples and debate presented by Shaw 2013 150-220.

"O farmers! If they knew how much luck they have,

being far removed from the quarrels of war,

where the earth just pours out sustenance."

No direct connection can be identified between the two texts, but it is possible to identify the 'human conflict/nature' relationship in both and its influence on human life. In these particular lines, the lucky farmers are praised for their peaceful life, far away from the troubles of war and maybe from Inana's river of blood (vide supra).[538]

The passage cannot be explored in isolation from its context either, since Virgil understood the destruction that war, or in his lifetime a civil war, could bring and how this could affect the land and its dependents. Therefore, the author certainly had a specific episode in mind, given that the historical events that provide the context for these lines are known. On the other hand, the war context for the Sumerian literary examples is not so clear and well-documented, despite the lamentations on the results of war. However, it is not necessary to look at the concrete event behind these examples, but rather to consider the bigger picture of the overall effect on the wider community. In both cases, it is not the cause that makes us understand the meaning of the result, it is the result itself that gives meaning to the cause. It is by knowing the effects of Inana's power that we realize how destructive she can be, since the crops may die and farmlands be destroyed, just as they would be in the event of a flood (vide Chap. 3.3). Essentially, the image gives meaning to the symbol. In the same way, the war that burns the fields and tramples the crops under the feet of the warriors is catastrophic because it has a destructive result. The image signifies death brought to the land and destruction in the fields, in both the Sumerian and Latin examples. I would emphasise that a field is a field, regardless of historical or cultural context: its loss is always the loss of a field and if the field is the major source of subsistence, the idea of loss is equally serious in each traditional way of thinking.

4.3.1 Products and value

As it is such an important commodity (vide Chap. 4.1), a shortage of grain signifies widespread famine. In the Sumerian lamentation texts, famine comes with the destruction of

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[538] Inana B ll. 43-45. Vide Chaps. 3.1. and 3.3.

the sources of prosperity.[539] The image of famine has a spontaneous understandable semantic meaning and may be recognised by the absence of the great producer, the farmer.[540] In this sense, cattle are also an asset and their value as a commodity is common-sense knowledge, as are the consequences of their destruction (LSUr ll.3-20). An argument in support of the universal value of cattle may be found in Varro's statement, which could clearly define the Sumerian perspective, in terms of property and loss (Var. *R.* 2.1.11):

(...) est scientia pecoris parandi ac pascendi, ut fructus quam possint maximi capiantur ex eo, a quibus ipsa pecunia nominata est. nam omnis pecuniae pecus fundamentum, (...)

"There is science in raising and feeding cattle, such that it is possible to obtain the greatest profit from them, from which money itself got its name: for herds are the foundation of all property (…)"

Therefore, even if destruction is not explicitly stated, the value of the cattle is understood because they can provide other goods in the long term and subsistence within the agricultural context (vide 2.3.1.1) through their byproducts, work in the fields and commercial value of the surplus they produce. Varro clearly expresses the idea of property related to cattle, since herds are already goods, whereas land must be worked. It is not possible to compare Sumerian and Roman perspectives on property but it is certain that cattle were a kind of guarantee and their loss or ownership represent for similar signs of meaning in both literatures.[541]

4.3.2. Discussing beauty through common sense: aesthetics before aesthetics

Interpreting Sumerian literature and identifying its symbols can unintentionally result in anachronism based on modern preconceptions of literature. Modern concepts of language, philosophy and literature are objectively derived from those rooted in Greco-Roman philosophy, language and literature. It could therefore be assumed that an image presented in a Sumerian text corresponds to the same metaphor found in Virgil*'s Georgica*, which may not correspond to a factual truth. However, if the source for the semantic construction is the same, the abstract idea and its linguistic representation would also reflect similar semantic

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[539] Vide *The Eridu Lament* ll. 15-17' (Kinguru 6, Green 1978), cf. LUr ll. 271-274.
[540] LUr 272. gana₂-ĝu₁₀ gana₂ ĝⁱˢal-e ri-a-gin₇ mul-gana₂ bil₂ ḫa-ba-mu₂. "My fields, like fields from which the hoe has been kept away, have grown dried weeds."
[541] Vide LUr, when the text becomes a direct prayer to Ningal and refers to the restoring of the cattle as a marker for the return to harmony (LUr ll. 378-382).

constructions: the signs of meaning are the same and it is the way in which they are combined and expressed that may change, depending on context. Obviously, semantic symbols are sometimes similar in Sumerian and Roman literature, but in terms of literary symbology this may just be a matter of coincidence, resulting from a specific combination of signs and context distorted by a modern perspective and a similarity with traditional symbolism in our own cultural context.[542] It is the original image, created from signs of meaning, that is common, not the literary symbol, even if my argument in both Chapters 4.1 and 4.2. is similar. Moreover, I must stress that it is similar because it is based on signs of meaning interpreted by common sense. As can be seen, even in the Latin instructional texts the way in which 'potential symbolic landscapes' are presented does not follow a comparable pattern so inevitably there would be no correspondence between Sumerian and Latin texts. However, in terms of abstract language, since the interlocutors who receive the agricultural images are sedentary humans with the same kind of basic needs, aims and worries, when the stimuli are the same or similar, the cognitive reactions also tend to be similar, even in such distant contexts as the Sumerian and Roman cultures.

Recalling an example of a telluric image generated by signs of a symbolic landscape, the objects presented in the DI O text seem to suggest another manifestation of Dumuzi and Inana's relationship (Sefati 1998 154-155):

4. gu_2 id_2 nun-na dib-ba-$\hat{g}u_{10}$-ne[543]

5. gu_2 ^{id2}buranun-na šu niĝin$_2$-na-$\hat{g}u_{10}$-ne

6. [za]-pa-a$\hat{g}_2$ u$_3$-mu-un-e gub-ba-$\hat{g}u_{10}$-ne

7. e-sir$_2$ gun$_3$-a dib-ba-$\hat{g}u_{10}$-ne

8. gi gam-ma [X] X X X [ḫe$_2$-me-en]

9. še ab-sin$_2$-[na] […] [sag$_9$]-ga ḫe$_2$-me-en

10. ^{d}ezina$_2$ […] sag$_9$-ge ḫe$_2$-me-en

11. šag$_4$-tur$_3$ ama [gan]-bi ḫe$_2$-me-en[!] (source: eš) (cf. Sefati 1998 11)[544]

4. "As I walk along the bank of the magnificent river,

5. as I roam along the bank of the Euphrates,

6. as I stand beside the lord's [545] [voice],

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[542] Vide the commentary on DI B ll. 1-9 in Chap. 4.1.3.
[543] For the transliteration of this verbal form, vide DI D ll. 1-2 (Sefati 1998 157).
[544] On the *syntagma* restoration, vide Sefati 1998 210-15.
[545] Umun, Emensal for 'lord', vide ePSD.

7. as I walk along the colourful street.

8. A bent reed [....][may you be],

9. may you be barley in the furrow, a [beau]tiful [.....],

10. Ezinu[546] may you be a beautiful [.....],

11. may you be the mother of the child-bearing womb (…)"

Although the text is fragmented, we can picture the landscape and the sensory meaning it may contain since for the interlocutor this image would be part of the linguistic matrix, just as it was for the Virgilian interlocutor. Modern Mediterranean cultures still view this place as positive in the collective mind. Is it due to a socially recognised natural beauty, is it an aesthetic concept or does such a scene represent a factual meaning that evokes beauty? I would argue that the traditional symbolic meaning predates any aesthetic concept, so the idea of beauty depended on the sensory recognition of specific signs of meaning and their effects when incorporated in an empirical life experience. The pleasure brought by a harmonious, productive vision of nature, whose fruits provide sustenance, may be the main reason for the aesthetic experience, as can also be seen in the following lines from Virgil which include a comment on the deceased Julius Caesar in a bucolic setting (*Ecl.* 9.46-50):

Daphni, quid antiquos signorum suspicis ortus?

ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum,

astrum quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo

duceret apricis in collibus uua colorem.

insere, Daphni, piros: carpent tua poma nepotes. [547]

"Daphnis, why do you look up at the risings of the ancient constellations?

Look, the star of Caesar, descendant of Dione, has come forth,

the star through which our fields might rejoice with crops and

through which the grapes might get colour on the sunny hills.

Daphnis, plant pear-trees! Your grand-children will gather the fruits".

Yet, can the landscapes in the DI corpus, for example, be compared with the Virgilian images? Can we really argue that there is an awareness of beauty in Sumerian literature? I

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[546] Akkadian, 'Ašnan' is the personification of grain, cf. Civil 1983.
[547] Vide Nauta's commentary on this passage (2006 324).

would argue that there is, at least in a particular form which cannot be completely identified by modern eyes. The metaphor for Ezinu directly links the telluric image to elements of farming (vide supra), so that a general idea of beauty may be inferred, since the lush garden frames the relationship between the two lovers. Even though it is not possible to completely separate this kind of literary expression from the mythical and ritual Sumerian context, the images in the language are not completely subservient to this: they also need the language of common sense in order to be conveyed effectively. Interpretations of certain texts as merely ritualistic devices with no literary basis or value, on the assumption that they were not produced to be read by anyone or to provide any kind of amusement, are a dangerous prejudice, since they disregard a great deal of cultural material.

With regard to abstract concepts such as 'richness', 'prosperity' and 'beauty', any natural component of the agricultural cosmos can definitely carry symbolic meaning in a cultural context, although this is hard to identify in simple lexical lists such as those produced for the Sumerian language or in Latin thesauri with anachronistic definitions. It is necessary to look for the context of these ancient abstract concepts by identifying the images that were visually available to the original interlocutors, in order to obtain information about their objective meaning. Naturally, defining what objective information is also constitutes an interpretation. If there is an image of abundance in a landscape, this remains my interpretation: knowing about landscape and lush fruits and how valuable they can be to me, I am the one who identifies abundance in a concrete literary image and states that there is a kind a beauty in this richness. However, since my preconceptions are based on signs of meaning, I would argue that my sensory interpretations are similar to those of the rustic Sumerians or Romans, as the signs of meaning discussed in Chapters 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate (vide A.1.1.3). However, can we realistically claim that this would have been the same for an interlocutor dependent on traditional Sumerian or Roman cultural standards? What would Sumerian or Roman people have considered beautiful? Firstly, what is factual beauty? Does its definition depends on cultural context? Ignoring the entire philosophical debate on aesthetics,[548] plastic beauty is a manifestation of visual pleasure. Thus, if something announces a kind of richness and a secure, peaceful life, there is beauty in its essence, since if it was transformed into a picture, it would be an enjoyable scene. In what essential way could this process have been different for Sumerian or Roman people? I believe it was

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[548] Vide Maes 2017.

similar, since this kind of reasoning is profoundly human and simply depends on experience of the natural world, empathy and common sense. Hence, considering these kinds of associations between abstract ideas and linguistic meaning, it can definitely be claimed that metaphor has a place in the farming landscape, namely the same type of metaphor used for phallic objects or, in other words, the same linguistic resource that transforms an object into an obvious abstract meaning (vide Chap. 5.1.1). It can definitely be stated that some texts contain manifestations of beauty or richness, probably because they are part of a cultural matrix which the Romans and supposedly the Sumerians both had . In the agricultural cosmos, beauty and ugliness come from an aesthetic conceptualisation of an abstract landscape based on common sense.

In conclusion, Verg. *G.* 2.433-436 could describe the shelter provided for Dumuzi (DumDr ll. 144-150), if we regard the shepherd's natural space as something universal due to the elements from which it is composed. Visual aspects such as grass are common in these landscapes, as they are essential to the work of the shepherd, providing food for the animals. Moreover, the symbolic individual who is the good shepherd or good king is the benevolent provider; he is the one who brings goods, prosperity, and stability via the same semiotic mechanisms that ensure that the flood may also represent wealth and happiness, since it will bring fertility and crops (vide 3.1.3, 3.2.3). Is this not a beautiful scenario? Does not abundance mean happiness? Abundance results in a good life and creates a feeling of security, since it prevents many threats: starvation, misery and death. In other words, ugly possibilities can be avoided in the future and so, from the perspective of the present, life seems beautiful (vide A.1.3).

As they are based on agricultural imagery, concepts expressed through symbolic language, such as richness, fertility, abundance and prosperity, are made up of signs of meaning acquired by observation of the natural world. These signs of meaning are simple semantic references based on an empirical visualization of the surrounding cosmos. Signs such as 'quantity', 'variety', 'work', 'growth', 'crops' and 'production' are the basis for these symbols and are spontaneously understood by any interlocutor familiar with the farming cosmos. In this sense, semiotics may be a very useful tool, not only for a better reading of literature written in a given language whose lexicon may be ambiguously decontextualized, but also for approaching the voices of the 'silent people' whose language would have been based on the same cosmos that provides meanings for the symbolic language of literature.

V. Conclusions: Sumerian metaphor and allegory and the language of the Roman instructional texts – conclusion of a parallel study

5.1. The language of literature and the history of humanity

When classical antiquity and the ancient Near East are considered representative of the 'ancient world', this implies an error that is not merely a detail, since it deviates from a global historical perception and distorts the very concept of identity and culture. The history of the ancient Mediterranean is not simply the sum of known events from the classical world and ancient Near East. Firstly, in the past there was no awareness of such a division or, at least, we have no knowledge of what the general population would have thought and felt about it. Secondly, West and East did not exist as homogeneous cultural entities shaped by linear historical events.[549] Isolating a society within a specific chronology is not the most accurate way to describe its culture, since a 'social reality' implies all the elements that compose it and its surroundings and also the powerful, but almost silent, interaction between social evolutionary processes and everyday life. The abstract language of the Sumerian and Roman silent voices is an example of this, since two cultures that apparently share no borders, ports, religion, linguistic roots or archaeology, shared a common perspective on the natural world – the same natural world that shaped their habits, social life and cognitive experience, as semiotics has proved.

Hence, I am convinced that world history is usually approached in a fragmentary way, ignoring the potential of human cultural crossover and constantly committing the error of considering different cultures as islands that are remote from each other. One of the factors that has helped to establish this distinction is language. The aim of this thesis has been to challenge this position on human history by using abstract language to approach similar transversal aspects of human cultures and thus try to identify a protoculture that would have been transversal and independent of the cultural markers normally interpreted as defining a matrix, such as linguistic families (e.g. the Indo-European or Semitic languages).

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[549] Vide Zettler 2003 for some perspectives on this matter.

Sapir stated that "human beings . . . are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society." [550] This is true with regard to modern interpretations, but false in terms of social reality. Language is not the only factor which defines culture. As the semiotic examples presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 show, flooding, abundance, famine, destruction and prosperity were symbolically described by two different linguistic cultures through the same signs of meaning originating from the agricultural world. Thus, it was possible to prove that human beings and their cultural manifestations are not defined by their language, but by their way of seeing the world. Literature is only a vehicle for transmitting such concepts, and the compounds of these concepts were identified in the form of signs of meaning (vide A.1.1, A.1.2, A.1.3).

Although Sapir's statement dates from the beginning of the twentieth century, it still is followed to some extent. One of the objectives of this thesis was to contradict such widespread preconceptions by creating dialogic exercises on the construction of meaning in Sumerian texts and Roman literature (Chaps. 2.3, 3.3, 4.3). Van de Mierroop (2016 218) also criticises those prejudices, stating: "Despite repeated debunking, so-called Whorfian linguistic determinism keeps resurfacing, probably because our classification of peoples and cultures in world history is still so much based on the languages they spoke and speak." Language cannot be an exclusive barrier, despite its powerful influence on culture. In the past, when most people were illiterate, language did not so much represent a 'unique culture', but just another element in constant interaction between micro cultural branches; in fact, taking the cultural context in Africa or certain countries in Mesoamerica as parallels, plurilingualism was almost the rule, contrary to the almost universal monolingualism that is common in 'Western societies'. (vide Singleton, Fishman, Aronin, Laoire eds. 2013) As I proceeded in the study of symbolic representations in Sumerian and Roman literatures I realized that there is, in fact, a kind of monolingualism in human culture that makes all languages intelligible and universally related in some way; an abstract language, which challenges perspectives on language as a factor that culturally defines an individual belonging to a specific social group. Regarding Sapir's commentary, I have argued that common prejudices on ancient cultures have adversely affected our evaluation of how ancient cultures can be defined.

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[550] Sapir 1929 209, apud Van De Mieroop 2016 218.

Whilst it is difficult to associate the voices of Sumer with any well-defined culture, Roman culture is generally understood to be well defined, mainly on the basis of archaeology and literature. However, it should be remembered that the available data is only a small and selective sample which tends to represent minority elites who were not representative of the culture they ruled, even though the instructional texts tended to be directed towards a wider section of Roman society (vide Chap. 3.2). Thus, on the one hand there is a culture for which there is very little data and, on the other hand, a culture with very selective and filtered data. In fact, considering the Sumerian and Roman cultures, it may be said that only the voices of the higher strata of society can be heard, and their opinions on the lower social levels. Nevertheless, as I have argued, literature uses the language of common sense in order make itself understood, which means the abstract language of the supposed elite also would have reflected the thoughts of the 'silent people'(vide 3.3).

The main aim of this thesis was to defend the existence of a transversal communication code for all cultural groups with experience of natural conditions and survival mechanisms (Chap. 0.2). I have argued that such codes can be identified in their simple form (signs of meaning) in linguistic cultures that were not related in any way, in order to prove that the method for creating meaning from the landscape is intrinsically human, not artificially imposed by a culture. It can be concluded, through dialogic exercises (chap. 2.3, 3.3, 4.3), that the principles of abstract language based on agricultural societies which were used and created by individuals are the same. The reason lies in the identical cosmos generated by similar social experiences, as can be seen in the similarities in the signs of meaning identified in such different texts as the Sumerian and Roman examples. The sharing of 'signs of meaning' has the potential to produce similar traditional symbols that could have been identified by Sumerian or Roman interlocutors, as the conclusions to Chapters 2, 3 and 4. aim to demonstrate by establishing a dialogue between images from these cultures (vide A.1.1, A.1.2, A.1.3).

Therefore, can literature provide valid data for studying the history of social thought? In terms of linguistic information on the Sumerian language, I would argue that it is not possible, due to the high level of artificiality and apparent disconnection from the spoken language. However, the 'abstract language' can be understood if the signs of meaning are identified. Hence, the images presented in literature can be a valuable resource for understanding traditional thought. Abstract language is composed of manifestations of reality as a construct of abstract images and therefore it does not matter whether they come

276

from a Sumerian or a Roman context (vide 3.1.1; cf. LUr with Tac. *Hist.* 1.86). These images are the basic building blocks for the development and crystallization of traditional thought and for the conceptualization of the surrounding natural world. Hence, when the abstract concept of abundance is discussed in Chapters 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, it is possible to see that the symbol of abundance can be expressed in different formats and contexts (see the table in A.1.3), although the signs of meaning that make up the symbol are invariably the same. This means that the experience within the landscape and the dependence on agricultural production is similar and we can therefore argue that the abstract language is used in the same way and for similar purposes.

5.2. The farmer as an institution

Apart from the honourable warrior, no man occupied a greater place in universal literature than the farmer, whether he was the main character in an apology or the subject of an instruction (see 1.2). Hesiod's *Erga* (*Works and Days*) not recalls only Virgil's *Georgica*, but also the Sumerian *Farmer's Instructions* (FI). In fact, they are all almanacs in their own way, despite representing three distinct moments in literary history in three different linguistic regions, apparently with no direct popular cultural links although they are all addressed to the same interlocutor: the farmer. As a science, cultural and social history is often presented as a narrative of local cultural intersections, with some elements of different societies working as links to a common matrix and other elements used as evidence of cultural individuality built on a kind of isolated microcosmos. For this reason, I am convinced that world history tends to adopt a fragmentary approach which ignores the potential of human cultural and transversal social thought and constantly falls into the error of considering different cultures as separate islands, as if their ultimate constitutive elements were not humans, but different 'cultural animals'. In a society highly dependent on and aware of farming, the farmer has a crucial role that is transversal to all societies that share the same circumstances. As we have seen, it is not human nature that generates the universal idea of the farmer, but the activities and results in the land that are ultimately the same in any culture that supports itself by harnessing the potential of nature (vide Chaps. 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3).

It was not possible to identify a clear mark of social identity in the general eulogy to agriculture in Sumerian culture, or at least not in the way that had been expected, as, for example, in the Roman propaganda texts. In economies that were so dependent on agricultural production and surplus, political propaganda encouraging husbandry and

277

herding would have been expected. However, what was discovered, especially in Roman culture, was a social apology for the values of the farmer, intrinsically linked to the cultural matrix. Roman legislation played a major role in promoting production and restricting excessive landowning. Nevertheless, I was expecting a clearer and more direct form of social intervention by governments used to mobilising powerful machinery to defend or try to change social ideas through propaganda. In fact, I am tempted to argue that this absence simply reflects the lack of any need to do so since, except for the highly urbanized areas that were not so common in antiquity, everyone that had the opportunity to farm would have done so (vide Chap. 3.3). Hence, the Roman propaganda was not directed to the general population, but to aristocrats, who had people to work for them to generate wealth.

Considering Sicily in the first century B.C., according to Pritchard (1972), if the population was approximately three quarters of a million, the number of farmers could not have been as low as 13,000 people. In fact, Cicero tells us that most citizens in Sicilia were farmers (Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.10-15) and that without agriculture, Sicily would have been insignificant (cf. Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.97.226). Regarding Sumerian culture, even in well documented periods such as Ur III, there is no similar evidence of individual small-scale farming. However, applying common sense, it would have been quite strange for Sumerians not to have taken the opportunity to cultivate the land if they had the chance to do so. The reason is simple: it was a secure way of getting food for those living a sedentary life, as opposed to earning a living as a collector. The amount of signs of meaning based on agriculture reflects this intrinsic and generalised connection with farming practices, whether on a large or a small scale (vide Chap. 4.3).

As I have argued throughout Chapter 3, signs of meaning from the farming world were universal in the ancient linguistic context. It may be said that Latin literature describes the value of the farmer, while Sumerian literature is intuitive and only suggests meaning. Obviously, Sumerian culture lacks a larger corpus that would allow for a more firmly grounded opinion. However, in some ways the abovementioned primary images can be identified more easily in Sumerian literature than in Roman literature because there is not so much artificiality in Sumerian linguistic/literary expression as in authors such as Virgil or Lucretius (vide Catto 1981) and simple symbols are far easier to identify reliably as they are interpreted by common sense, which means that the abstract landscape is more clearly identified through signs of meaning. From the beginning of this thesis, I have argued that the particularities of the two forms of literary expression are very different but that it has been

possible to establish a dialogue between the Sumerian and Roman silent voices since it was possible to break down their semantics and symbologies into signs of meaning.

5.3. The representation of landscape: a possible dialogue

Two dimensions may be identified in the construction of abstract landscapes: the 'cultural interpretation' and 'sensory knowledge'. Regarding the former, it is inevitable that my own background directed my interpretation of the landscapes of texts used as sources, even though my main argument defended common sense as a tool for collecting signs of meaning. Hence, I cannot blindly argue that the symbols identified can definitively be considered universal. However, the second dimension of the meaning of landscape provides ground for the argument defended in previous chapters and to a certain extent contradicts the argument that interpreting the landscape is totally culture dependent - if, of course, one considers human culture one general macro culture prior to interpreting context.

As so many *topoi* can be found in Roman literature it is hard to distinguish them from simple symbols which would have come from an abstract image. However, the basis for these *topoi* is, in fact, the simple original image - human interaction with nature - and it is therefore impossible to dissociate such literary references from traditional thinking, whether this involves the symbology of floods, wealth, leadership or labour. In the *Georgica* (2.458-460), the farmer's freedom from war may have come after a warlike past (cf. Verg. *G*. 1.489-492). Maybe his predecessors had seen the rivers of blood or death, like the water course (id$_2$) brought by the goddess Inana (Inana B ll. 43-46; vide Chap. 3.3). Blood is literally the water of life when considered part of the human body, but when it flows from the body, it can be a symbol of death. Whereas Inana's river conveys the idea of consummated death, or death by thirst (depending on the interpretation of the text), in Virgil's metaphor it represented past death, but also future life for the farmers who would subsequently occupy the land (Verg. *G*.1.489-492):

> *ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis*
>
> *Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi;*
>
> *nec fuit indignum superis bis* <u>sanguine nostro</u>
>
> *Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.*
>
> "Therefore, Philippi saw the clash between the equal weapons
>
> of the Roman lines, for the second time,
>
> it was not found shameful by the gods that once again <u>our blood</u>

would enrich the wide-spread Emathia and the fields of Haemus."

In these lines, blood brings life to the fields of Macedonia after it had witnessed death. Thus an image of destruction may, in fact, herald future prosperity. Inana B contains references to possible acts in foreign lands and how they may correspond to a result in the present through the compounded symbol constructed in the text. On the other hand, the author of the *Georgica* is marking a past in opposition to the present: the past is the destruction and, after chaos, only life can follow. The farmer represents a time of peace that also serves as a memory of the chaos of war; the same war that brought fertility to the present. In the Sumerian text (Inana B ll. 43-46), whether past or present, Inana's river of death destroys life, since there is no temporality in the semantics of abstract thought. The actions of the Roman army have the same effect on reality, and therefore on the semantic value of the image. Only when the conflicts end can nature reclaim its spoils and return to harmony (Verg. *G.* 1.493-497):

> *scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis*
> *agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro*
> *exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,*
> *aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis*
> *grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.*
> "(…) time naturally shall come that, in those fields,
> the farmer toiling the soil with a curved-plough
> will unearth corroded javelins and rusted swords
> or clank with a heavy hoe on empty helmets
> and wonder at the huge bones found in uncovered graves." (vide Ambühl 2016)

Working on the landscape revives memories of a battle that may have been fought in the fields. Virgil himself suggests an image of a land where things that were not supposed to grow are thriving. The vivid image of abundance is also a reminder of the dangers of destroying the fields: now the farmers are happy, but in the past there had been death and consequently sadness. Inana's river of death (or blood) (Inana B ll. 43-46) shows the potential negative consequences of the goddess's powers, explained through a very well-known and emotional interpretation of the destruction of the fields, whereas Virgil's example presents the actual result and the future outcome. Are the Inana B text and the *Georgica* in

any sense connectable? No, the texts are in no way connected, although in terms of abstract imagery, a dialogue can be established between the semantics of the images in both, since the processes for constructing meaning are similar. Therefore, what can be said about the differences in the construction of imagery in different cultures? How does this study contribute to Sumeriology or Roman cultural history?

Parallelisms between cultures help to standardise certain 'agricultural concepts' present in universal abstract language. Recognizing these kinds of concepts in different cultures provides us with the tools to compare related imagery, such as telluric feelings or the farmer as a moral stereotype. In this sense, although there is no clear demonstration of telluric feelings or what may be termed an artistic portrayal of a farming landscape in the Sumerian texts, I believe it would have existed, since the necessary abstract concepts existed, just as they did in Roman culture. Certain texts can therefore be approached in a more literary sense knowing that some concepts expressed in particular Sumerian texts are telluric and the language of expression is literary. This is because the listener or the reader has the tools to perceive such imagery. Therefore it cannot only be proposed that similar physical contexts create similar abstract thought, but also that there is literature in the Sumerian texts and they are worth reading as part of the universal literary canon, since they amount to more than lexical lists. As previously stated, they include stories, myths, music, abstract language, inquiry and rhetoric.[551]

The following lines may be considered a way of reinforcing the answer to the previous question and highlighting the objective of this thesis (Verg. *G.* 1.505-508):

> *quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem,*
>
> *tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro*
>
> *dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis,*
>
> *et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.*
>
> "Indeed, here justice and sin have changed places, so many wars around the world,
>
> so many shapes of evil, and no respect for the plough,
>
> fields roughed by bereft of farmers
>
> and the curved scythes are forged into hard swords."

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[551] On the existence of abstract expression in the Sumerian or Acadian language, Van Mieroop 2016 9 states: "All ancient Babylonian scholars were aware of the underlying principles and displayed remarkable skill and inventiveness in their application. These were not word games, but analyses that aimed to reveal truth. Babylonian scholars grasped reality through its written form. Their readings were thus exercises in epistemology."

Bearing in mind the scenario constructed here, how strange would such an image (Verg. *G.* 1.505-8) have sounded to a Sumerian farmer, or indeed to any farmer? Would he have been familiar with such a symbolic image, since he had experienced war and turmoil? The answer comes in the form of another question: did he suffer the same consequences? The Sumerian lamentations on the lost cities that have been discussed here provide an affirmative answer to this question.

Riverine landscapes are subject to similar phenomena and therefore construct similar kinds of meaning. Given the unstable and constantly changing natural processes that distribute water and sediment in an alluvial landscape, agricultural civilization is a powerful countervailing force in nature. Growing crops in fields, gardens and orchards, canal systems for irrigation, and storage and transport facilities are all means of subsistence and cumulative capital investment that are threatened by changes in water courses (Adams 1981 19) and have parallels in both cultures, although the techniques are quite different in many ways.

Many examples from the large corpus of Latin and Sumerian texts were presented here and I defend they are important data to promote and extend the debate on how our cultural assumptions are expressed in abstract thinking, regardless of linguistic context or literary conceptions. Sumerian culture, whatever the word assumes, and Roman culture cannot be compared in any sense. Therefore, in what way can we say that the Roman and Sumerian cultures are connected? Essentially they are not, except for one fact: they are human cultures which depended on farming and herding and on the benevolence of nature and this was the conceptual basis for the experiences of the Sumerians and Romans.

It is impossible to investigate everyday life, despite the achievements of archaeology, because there is not enough data and we cannot observe reality through fragments. Therefore, my aim has been to listen to the Mesopotamian and Italic people through the cracks in their literary resources and their symbolic language. I would argue it has at least been possible to hear some voices from the past by identifying the signs of meaning that make up the discourse of the Sumerians and Romans.

Appendix

A.1. Tables and diagrams

A.1.1. Signs of meaning from the riverine landscape in the literary sources

COMPOUNDED TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS FROM THE RIVERINE LANDSCAPE
Flood (sF), Water/Fluid (sW), Destruction (sD), Scarcess (sS), Prosperity (sP)

compounding Signs in Sumerian context:

absence (**sD**) (**sS**) (**sP**)
power (**sF**) (**sD**)
crops growing (**sS**) (**sP**)
fluidity (**sF**) (**sW**) (**sD**)
motion (**sF**) (**sW**)
staple drink (**sW**)
destruction **?** (**sF**) (**sD**)
inundation (sinking) (**sF**) (**sW**) (**sD**)
volume (**sF**) (**sD**)

compounding Signs in Roman context:

absence (**sD**) (**sS**) (**sP**)
power (**sF**) (**sD**)
crops growing (**sS**) (**sP**)
fluidity (**sF**) (**sW**) (**sD**)
motion (**sF**) (**sW**)
staple drink (**sW**)
destruction **?** (**sF**) (**sD**)
inundation (sinking) (**sF**) (**sW**) (**sD**)
volume (**sF**) (**sD**)

SUMERIAN CONTEXT		ROMAN CONTEXT	
SIGNS	**TEXTUAL REFERENCES**	**SIGNS**	**TEXTUAL REFERENCES**
PRODUCTION	*CT* 42 4 rev. iii 1-2; Išme-Dagan D ll. 24-26; DI D$_1$ ll. 60-63; CLAM 272-318, ll. c+153-4, CLAM 221-249, ll. c+279-c+280; Gudea E3 /1.1.7. CylB col. x ll. 16-23; LSUr ll. 498-502; Rīm-Sîn G ll. 31-33; Nanna L ll. 21-23; *Enlil and Ninlil* ll. 91-99	**PRODUCTION**	*Verg. G.* 2.203, 2.255, 4.125-126, 4. 369, 4.371-373; Col. 10.1.23-24, 10.1.1.136-139, 10.1.281-286, 11.3.8; Plin. *Nat.* 3.54, 3.49, 3.54-55, 5.118-119, 15.137; *Mela* 2.6.1-6; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.5-16; Sen. *Oed.* 41-43
ABSENCE	LUr ll. 144-146, 269-270; *Hymn to Enlil* ll. 115-23; LSUr ll. 49-51, ll. 127-130.	**ABSENCE**	Col. 11.3.9-10; *Sen. Oed.* 41-43
POWER	Inana B ll.9-12; CLAM 123-137, ll. 15-24; CLAM 271-288, ll. B+93-b+101; CLAM 319-332, 1-14, 28-98; LSUr l.73, ll. 76-78, ll. 405; Nungal A ll. 31-33; Cooper 1978 l.119; Išme-Dagan S l. 13; Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylA col. xv ll.24-26; CA ll.149-151	**POWER**	*Verg. Nat.* 3.54, 3.55, 3.118-19; 15.137; Liv. 4.49.2-3, 24.9.6, 35.21.5-6; *Hor. Carm.* 1.2; Sen. *Nat.* 3.27.9; Luc. 2.209-220; *SHA, vita Marci Antonini Philosophi Iuli Capitolini.* 8.4-5
CROPS GROWING	DumDr ll.131-132, ll. 138-143; DI D$_1$ ll. 60-63; LSUr ll. 498-502; *Blessings of Kesh*, *CT* 36 col. iii, II. 13, 15, 19, 21, 23; ETCSL c.1.1.3 ll. 259-60; ETCSL c.1.6.2 ll. 359-62	**CROPS GROWING**	*Verg. G.* 4.125-126, 4.371-373; Col. 10.1.1.136-139, 10.1.23-24, 11.3.9-10; Cato *Agr.* 1.6.3; Mela 2.6.1-6; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.5-16; Sen. *Oed.* 41-43
FLUIDITY	LSUr l.73, ll. 76-78, ll. 107-8, 216-217, ll. 293-294, ll. 389-391; Inana B ll.9-12; Išme-Dagan S ll. 13-15; CLAM 123-137, ll. 15-24; CLAM 120-151, ll. 15-25; CLAM 271-288, ll. B+93-b+101; CLAM.106, ll. b+253-254; CLAM 319-332, 1-14, 28-98; CA ll. 149-151; Nungal A ll. 31-33; Angim l.119; Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylA col. xv ll.24-26); Nanna L ll. 21-23	**FLUIDITY**	Verg. *G.* 4.371-373; Col. 10.1.23-24, 10.1.1.136-139, 11.3.8; Mela 2.6.1-6; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.5-16, *S.* 1.4.9-11; Liv. 24.9.6; Sen. *Nat.* 3.27.9, *Oed.* 41-43, *Phaed.* 498-500; Plin. *Nat.* 3.118-19; Catul. 64.357-60; Luc. 2.209-220, 7.114-16
MOTION	LSUr ll. 389-391, ll. 405; Išme-Dagan S ll. 13-15; CLAM 123-137, ll. 15-24; CLAM 106, ll. b+253-254; CLAM 271-288, ll. 34-35; CLAM 319-332, 1-14, 28-98	**MOTION**	Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.5-16; Liv. 24.9.6; Sen. *Nat.* 3.9; Plin. *Nat.* 3.118-19; Prop. 3.3.43-46; Luc. 2.209-220; *SHA, vita Marci Antonini Philosophi Iuli Capitolini.* 8.4-5

DRINK (IRRIGATION)	Angim l. 171; *hoe and plough* l. 157-158	DRINK (IRRIGATION)	Col. 1.5.2-3, 1.5.6, 10.1.1.143-144, 147-148, 10.1.23-24, 11.3.8, 11.3.9-10; Plin. *Nat.* 19.55; *Verg. G.* 4.125-126; Mela 2.6.1-6
DESTRUCTION [?]	Inana B ll.9-12; CLAM 106, ll. b+253-254; CLAM 120-151, ll. 15-25; p. 271-288, ll. 34-35; CLAM 319-341, ll. f+164; LSUr ll. ll. 107-8, ll. 127-130, 405; LUr ll. 49-51, ll. 98-99, ll. 144-146, l. 197, ll. 269-270; Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylA, col. viii ll. 26-27; *Hymn to Enlil* ll.115-23	DESTRUCTION[?]	Plin. *Nat.* 3.54; 3.55, 3.118-19; 15.137; Liv. 4.49.2-3, 24.9.6, 35.21.5-6; Hor. *Carm.* 1.2; *SHA, vita Marci Antonini Philosophi Iuli Capitolini.* 8.4-5; Sen. *Nat.* 3.28.7.5
INUNDATION (SINKING)	CLAM 120-151, ll. 15-25; CLAM 271-288, ll. 34-35; CLAM 319-341, ll. f+164; Cooper 1978, l.119; LSUr ll. 405; Išme-Dagan S l. 13; Gudea E3/1.1.7.CylA col. xv ll.24-26	INUNDATION	Liv. 24.9.6, 35.21.5-6
VOLUME/ QUANTITY	CLAM 106, ll. b+253-254; CLAM 195-199, ll.33-38; CLAM 271-288, ll. 34-35; CLAM 319-341, ll. f+164; DI D$_1$ ll. 60-63; Nungal A ll. 31-33	VOLUME/ QUANTITY	Hor. *S.* 1.4.9-11; Liv. 35.21.5-6; Sen. *Phaed.* 498-500; Luc. 2.209-220

A.1.2. Signs of meaning from the farmer's landscape

COMPOUNDED TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS FROM FARMER'S, SHEPHERD'S AND PLOUGHMAN'S LANDSCAPE
Moral (sM), Trustworthy (sT), Wisdom (sW), Great worker (sGW), Provider (sP), Harmony (sH)

compounding Signs in Sumerian context:
work (sT) (sM) (sT) (sW)(sH)
resistence (sM) (sGW)
producing (sT) (sM) (sW) (sH)
craft (sM) (sW) (sGW) (sH)
crops (sT) (sP) (sH)
physical strength (sGW)

compounding Signs in Roman context:
work (sM) (sT) (sW) (sP) (sGW) (sH)
resistence (sM) (sT) (sP)
producing (sM) (sT) (sW) (sP) (sH)
craft (sW) (sP) (sH)
crops (sT) (sP) (sH)
physical strength (sGW)

A.1.2.1. Signs of meaning from the image of the farmer

SUMERIAN CONTEXT		ROMAN CONTEXT	
SIGNS	**TEXTUAL REFERENCES**	**SIGNS**	**TEXTUAL REFERENCES**
WORK	UrN G L.17; Šu-Suen C ll. 18-22; *Enlil in the Ekur* ll.60-64; CU ll. 22-29; sHoe ll. 94-106; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 21-32, ll. 52-58, 67-90, ll.104-108, ll. 151-158, ll. 165-174; CLAM, 347-367, ll. 51-54; DI D₁ ll. 42-59; FI ll. 63-90; DI A ll. 51-56; Enlil A ll. 60-63; Išme-Dagan I ll. 82-87	**WORK**	Col. 1.*pr*.4.6-5.1, 1.*pr*.6-7, 1.*pr*.10.6-11.1, 1.*pr*.12.1-4, 12.46.1.6-7, 1.*pr*.13.4-14.1, 1.*pr*.15.2-5, 1.*pr*.17.9-11, 1.*pr*.18.4-6, 1.3.8, 1.3.9, 3.10.6-7, 5.4.2.5-6, 6.2.10, 11.1.3, 11.1.7, 11.1.8, 11.1.14-15, 11.1.26, 11.28, 11.30; Var. *R.* 2.pr.1.1-6, 2.*pr*.4.7, 2.*pr*.4-5, 2.*pr*.5.1-4, 2.1.1-6; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.5, 2.3.27.10-28.1; Cato *pr*.2-3, 1.6.1-3; Pliny, *Ep*. 1.20; Verg. *G*. 1.118-124, 1.160-168, 1.178-186, 1.219-224, 1.300-301, 2.35-38, 2.412-413, 2.458-460, 2.513-518, 4.127-33, 4.134-143; Verg. *Ecl*. 1.70-72
RESISTENCE	sHoe ll. 94-106; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 52-58, ll.104-108	**RESISTENCE**	Verg. *G*. 1.121-124, 1.178-186, 1.219-224, 4.127-33; Col. 1.3.9, 10.1.329-341, 11.1.8, 11.363-64
CROPS	UrN G L.18; Šu-Suen C ll. 18-22; *Enlil in the Ekur* ll.60-64; DI A ll. 47-53, 51-56; CU ll. 22-29; SF? ll. 10-19, ll. 24-25, ll.55-64; sHoe ll. 94-106; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 21-32, ll. 151-158; ll. 165-174; DI D₁ ll. 42-59; *Summer and Winter* ll. 61-88; Enlil A ll. 60-63; Išme-Dagan I ll. 82-87	**CROPS**	Verg. *G*. 1.121-124, 1.160-168, 1.178-186, 1.219-224, 1.300-301, 2.35-38, 2.371-5, 2.412-413, 2.458-460, 2.500-502, 2.513-518, 4.127-33, 4.134-143; Col. 1.*pr*.6-7, 1.*pr*.10.6-11.1, 1.*pr*.17.9-11; 1.7.6-7, 1.*pr*.6.5-7.1, 1.3.8, 1.3.9, 5.4.2.5-6, 11.1.8, 11.28, 11.30, 12.46.1.6-7; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.5, 2.3.27.10-28.1; Cato 1.6.1-3; Pliny *Ep*. 1.20; Var. *R*. 2.*pr*.4-5, 2.*pr*.5.1-4, 1.3; Verg. *Ecl*. 1.70-72
PROVIDING	UrN G L.19; Šu-Suen C ll. 18-22; Enlil in the Ekur ll.60-64; DI A ll. 47-53, ll. 51-56; CU ll. 22-29; SF? ll. 10-19, ll. 24-25, ll.55-64, 84-87; sHoe ll. 94-106; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 21-32, ll. 151-158; ll. 165-174; DI D₁ ll. 42-59; *Summer and Winter* ll. 61-88; Enlil A ll. 60-63; Išme-Dagan I ll. 82-87	**PROVIDING**	Col. 1.*pr*.6-7, Col. 1.*pr*.6.5-7.1, 5.4.2.5-6, 11.1.8, 11.28, 11.30; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.5; Verg. *G*. 1.160-168, 2.500-502, 4.127-33, Var. *R*. 2.*pr*.5.1-4, 1.3; Verg. *Ecl*. 1.70-72
CRAFT	sHoe ll. 94-106; FI l. 8, ll. 63-90; DI D₁ ll. 42-59; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 7-18, 52-58, ll. 67-90, ll.104-108, ll. 142-150, ll. 165-174; Enlil A ll. 60-63; Išme-Dagan I ll. 82-87	**CRAFT**	Col. 1.*pr*.4.6-5.1, 1.*pr*.10.6-11.1, 1.*pr*.12.1-4, 1.*pr*.15.2-5, 1.*pr*.17.9-11, 1.*pr*.18.4-6, 1.3.9, 3.10.6-7, 11.1.3, 11.1.4, 11.1.7, 11.1.8, 11.1.12, 11.1.26, 11.28, 11.30, 12.46.1.6-7; Verg. *G*. 1.118-121, 1.121-124, 1.160-168, 1.178-186, 219-224, 2.35-38, 2.458-460, 2.513-518, 4.127-33, 4.134-143; Cato

			pr.2-3, 1.6.1-3; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.5; Pliny, *Ep.* 1.20; Var. *R. 2.pr*.5.1-4, 2.1.1-6
PHYSICAL STRENGTH	sHoe ll. 94-106	**PHYSICAL STRENGTH**	Col. 1.3.9, 3.10.6-7, 11.1.3, 11.1.7, 11.1.8; Verg. *G.* 1.160-168, 1.178-186

A.1.2.2. Signs of meaning from symbiotic landscapes

SUMERIAN CONTEXT		ROMAN CONTEXT	
SIGNS	TEXTUAL REFERENCES	SIGNS	TEXTUAL REFERENCES
WORK	CLAM 347-367, ll. 51-54; *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 119-148; UrD ll. 6-12; Winter and Summer ll. 19-25; Hoe and plough ll. 20-23, ll.29-40; Išme-Dagan I ll. 82-87	**WORK**	Var. *R.* 2.*pr*.4.7, 2.*pr*.5, 5.4.2.5-6; Verg. *G.* 1.118-121, 2.513-518, 3.515-524; Col. 1.*pr*.15.2-5, Col. 1.*pr*.18.4-6, Col. *6.pr*.1-2.5, *6.pr*.7, 1.9.2, 6.1-2, 6.2.10, 6.23.3, 11.2.7-8; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.10-28.1
CROPS	*Winter and Summer* ll. 19-25; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 41-51; *Išme-Dagan I* ll. 82-87	**CROPS**	Col. 1.*pr*.15.2-5, Col. *6.pr*.1-2.5, *6.pr*.7, 5.4.2.5-6, 11.2.7-8; Var. *R.* 2.*Pre*.4.7, 2.*pr*.5; Verg. *G.* 1.118-121, 2.513-518; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.10-28.1
PROVIDING	*Ninurta's return to Nibru* ll.51-54; *Winter and Summer* ll. 19-25; 'hoe and plough' ll. 41-51; *Išme-Dagan I* ll. 82-87	**PROVIDING**	Verg. *G.* 1.118-121, 2.513-518, Col. 5.4.2.5-6; Cic. *Ver*. 2.3.27.10-28.1; Var. *R.* 2.pr.5
RESISTENCE	*Hoe and Plough* ll. 52-56	**RESISTENCE**	Verg. *G.* 1.118-121, 2.513-518, 3.515-524; Col. 10.1-329-330
LEADING	UrD ll.6-12; CLAM 176, ll. 7-12; *Hoe and Plough* ll.29-33, LUr ll.52-57, l. 259; CLAM 221-250 ll. c+290-c+296	**LEADING**	Var. *R.* 2.*pr*.4.7; Verg. *G.* 1.118-121, 2.513-518, 3.515-524, 4.127-133; Col. *1.pr*.13-14, *1.pr*.15.2-5, 1.*pr*.18.4-6, 1.9.2, 6.2.10, 6.23.3
PHYSICAL STRENGTH	LUr ll.52-57, l. 259, *Hoe and Plough* ll. 52-56	**PHYSICAL STRENGTH**	Col. 1.9.2, 6.2.10, 6.23.3, 11.1.8; Ver. *G.* 3.515-524
CRAFT	*The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 119-148; UrD ll.6-12; *Ninurta's return to Nibru* ll. 51-54; *Winter and Summer* ll. 19-25; *Hoe and Plough* ll. 20-23, ll. 29-40; Išme-Dagan I ll. 82-87	**CRAFT**	Verg. *G.* 2.513-518, 3.515-524; Var. *R.* 2.*pr*.4.7, 2.*Pre*.5; Col. *1.pr*.18.4-6, Col. *6.pr*.1-2.5, *6.pr*.7, 1.9.2, 5.4.2.5-6, 6.2.10, 11.1.8
SIGNS OF THE SHEPHERD		SIGNS OF THE SHEPHERD	
SUMERIAN REFERENCES		LATIN REFERENCES	
PROTECTION	LPS l. 7	**PROTECTION**	Col. 7.3.26, 11.1.18; Ver. *G.* 3.515-524

LEADING	UrN A l. 7, 79-83; UrN D ll. 11-18 (Urim version), Gudea E3/1.1.7.StB, col. ii ll.8-11, col. iii ll. 6-11; LPS l. 7; CLAM ll.4-10; CLAM 152-174 ll. b+210-b+211; CLAM 195-200 ll. B+77-79; CLAM 152-174 ll. 93-94; DI D$_1$. 47-49, CLAM 221-250 l. c+291; Išme-Dagan S l.28; UrD ll.6-12	LEADING	Col. 7.3.23, 7.3.26, 11.1.8; Ver. *G.* 3.515-524
PROVIDING	*Enlil in the Ekur*, ll.60-64; DI D$_1$ 47-49; Falkowitz 1980 224-5, 134, ll.16-17	PROVIDING	Col. *6.pr.*1-2.5, 7.3.23, 7.3.26; Var. *R.* 2.*pr.*4.7;
VIGILANCE	CLAM ll.6-8, p.153-4, CLAM 374-400, ll. a+25-a+36; CLAM 153-165, l.8; CLAM 106-7 ll. b+264-268; CLAM 323-324 ll.c+69-70; CLAM 186-207 ll. 25-33; CLAM 175-185 ll. 7-10; CLAM 152-174 ll. b+190, b+198	VIGILANCE	Col. 7.3.26, 11.1.18; Ver. *G.* 3.515-524

A.1.3. Signs of meaning from abundance and natural beauty

COMPOUNDED TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS FROM THE LANDSCAPE OF ABUNDANCE AND SCARCENESS
richness (sR), beauty (sB), prosperity (sPP), harmony (sH), hapiness (sHa),
proverty (sPPP), famine (sF), sadness (sS) uggly (sU)

compounding Signs in Sumerian context:

work (sB)(sH) (sHa) (sS) (sU)

growing (sR) (sB) sPP (sH) (sPPP)(sF)(sHa) (sS) (sU)

crops (sR) (sB) sPP (sH)(sF)(sHa) (sS) (sU) (sPPP)

providing (sR) (sB)(sH) (sF) (sPPP)

quantity (sR) (sB) (sPP)(sHa) (sS) (sU)

variety (sR)(sB) (sPP) (sHa) (sS) (sU)

compounding Signs in Roman context:

work (sB)(sH) (sHa) (sS) (sU)

growing (sR)(sB) (sPP) (sH) (sPPP)(sF)(sHa) (sS) (sU)

crops (sR)(sB) (sPP) (sH) (sPPP)(sF)(sHa) (sS) (sU)

providing (sR)(sB) (sH) (sPPP) (sF)

quantity (sR)(sB) (sPP) (sHa) (sS) (sU)

variety (sR)(sB) (sPP) (sHa) (sS) (sU)

SUMERIAN CONTEXT		ROMAN CONTEXT	
SIGNS	**TEXTUAL REFERENCES**	**SIGNS**	**TEXTUAL REFERENCES**
WORK	DI A ll. 51-56; Enlil A ll. 109-123; DI I 23-28; CA ll. 256-280; LUr ll. 271-274	**WORK**	Col. 1.2.3, 1.3.8, 1.3.9, 2.1.3-4, 10.1.1.100-109, 10.1.1.242-254; Verg. *G.* 2.412-413
GROWING	*Summer and Winter* ll.19-25; CA ll. 157-175; Išme-Dagan S ll. 4-7; DI T ll. 2-8; EnlSud ll.156-166; UrN D (Ur Version) ll.32-38; LUr ll. 3-11, ll. 38-44; LSUr ll.49-51, ll.85-91, ll. 123-132, ll. 271-274, ll. 303-317; Enlil A ll. 109-123; CA ll. 170-175, CA ll. 222-236, ll.245-255; *Enlil and Ninlil* ll. 143-150; DI A ll. 2-10; DI D ll. 4-11; DI F ll.1-16, 29-32; DI O ll. 15-30; DI W ll. 7-34; E1.14.20.1, col. iii ll.22-31; E3/1.1.7.CylB col. xv ll. 1-4; ELA ll. 551-555, ll. 596-599; *Enki and the World Order* ll. 52-60; Ninurta F ll. 1-11	**GROWING**	Verg. *G.* 1.489-492, 2.440-445, 4.118-126, Col. 1.2.3, 1.3.8, 2.1.2-4, 3.8.1, 3.8.4, 3.9.4, 10.1.1.2-15, 10.1.1.139-149, 10.1.1.185-189, 10.1.1.242-254; Var. *R.* 3.16.29-30; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.1-4, Sen. *Oed.* 648-653
CROPS	*Summer and Winter* ll.19-25; DI A ll. 51-56; DI D ll. 4-11; DI F ll. 29-32; DI O ll. 15-30; DI R ll. 5-8; DI T ll. 2-8; CA ll. 12-18, 25-28, ll. 37-39, ll. 46-56, ll. 157-175, ll. 222-236, ll.245-255; Išme-Dagan S ll. 4-7; EnlSud ll.103-123, ll.156-166; Rīm-Sîn G ll.1-10, 11-21; DumDr ll. 110-114; *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll. 14-37; DumDr ll. 136-139, ll. 142-143; *Sheep and Grain* ll. 190-191; UrN D (Ur Version) ll.32-38; LUr ll. 3-11, ll. 38-44, ll. 251-253, ll. 266-268, ll. 275-276; LSUr ll.49-51, ll.85-91, ll. 123-132, ll. 303-317; Enlil A ll. 109-123; *Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta* ll. 358-367; *Enlil and Ninlil* ll. 143-150; DI A ll. 2-10; DI B ll. 7-9; DI F1 ll. 11-20; CLAM 195-199, ll. a+51-a+52; E1.14.20.1, col. iii ll.22-31; ELA ll. 596-599, ll. 619-625; *Nanna-Suen's journey to Nibru* ll. 186-97, ll. 294-305; *Enki and the World Order* ll. 52-60; Ninurta F ll. 1-11; *Enemani Ilu Ilu - His Word Is a Wail, a Wail!* ll. 13-17; SP 3.23; E3/1.1.7.StB, col. iii 12-19+col. iv 1-13; E3/1.1.7.CylB col. xv ll. 1-4; *Ewe and Grain* ll. 1-36	**CROPS**	Col. 1.2.3, 1.3.8, 2.1.2-4, 3.8.1, 3.8.4, 3.21.3-4, 10.1.1.2-15, 10.1.1.100-109, 10.1.1.139-149, 10.1.1.185-189, 10.1.1.242-254; Var. *R.* 3.16.29-30; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.1-4; Var. *R.* 1.16.2-3; Ver. *G.* 2.485-86; Sen. *Oed.* 49-51, 648-653

PROVIDING	DI F ll.9-16; DI A ll. 51-56; DI O ll. 15-30; DI R ll. 1-11; DI W ll. 7-34; DI T ll. 2-8; *Summer and Winter* ll.19-25; CA ll. 12-18, ll. 25-28, ll. 37-39, ll. 157-175; EnlSud ll.103-123, ll.156-166; Rīm-Sîn G ll.1-10; *The song of the ploughing oxen: an ululumama to Ninurta* ll.14-37; DumDr ll. 136-139, ll. 142-143; UrN D (Ur Version) ll.32-38; LUr ll. 3-11, ll. 38-44, ll. 251-253, ll. 271-274; Enlil A ll. 109-123; *Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta* ll. 358-367; *Enlil and Ninlil* ll. 143-150; E1.14.20.1, col. Iii ll.22-31; E3/1.1.7.CylB col. xv ll. 1-4; *Nanna-Suen's journey to Nibru* ll. 186-97, ll. 294-305; *Enki and the World Order* ll. 52-60; Ninurta F ll. 1-11; *Ewe and Grain* ll. 1-36	PROVIDING	Verg. *G.* 1.489-492, 2.412-413, 2.440-445, 4.118-126; Col. 1.2.3, 1.3.8, 2.1.2-4, 3.8.1, 3.8.4, 3.9.4, 3.21.3-4, 10.1.1.100-109, 10.1.1.139-149, 10.1.1.242-254, 10.1.1.2-15; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.1-4; Var. *R.* 1.16.2-3; Sen. *Oed.* 49-51
QUANTITY	*Summer and Winter* ll.19-25; DI A ll. 2-10, ll. 51-56; DI R ll. 1-11; DI O ll. 15-30; DI T ll. 2-8; DI W ll. 7-34; CA ll. 25-28, ll. 37-39, ll. 46-56, ll. 157-175; Išme-Dagan S ll. 4-7; EnlSud ll.103-123, ll. 159-166; Rīm-Sîn G ll.1-10; *Sheep and Grain* ll. 190-191; UrN D (Ur Version) ll. 32-38; LSUr ll.85-91, ll. 123-132; Enlil A ll. 109-123; *Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta*, ll. 358-367; E1.14.20.1, col. Iii ll.22-31; ELA ll. 551-555, ll. 596-599; *Nanna-Suen's journey to Nibru* ll. 186-97, ll. 294-305; *Enki and the World Order* ll. 52-60; Ninurta F ll. 1-11; Gudea E3/1.1.7.StB, col. iii 12-19+col. iv 1-13	QUANTITY	Col. 1.2.3, 1.3.8, 3.8.4, 3.21.3-4, 10.1.1.185-189, 10.1.1.2-15; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.1-4; Var. *R.* 1.16.2-3
VARIETY	*Ninurta's exploits: a šir-sud (?) to Ninurta* ll. 358-367; DI R ll. 1-11; DI B ll. 7-9; DI W ll. 7-34; ELA ll. 596-599; Ninurta F ll. 1-11	VARIETY	HOR. *EP.* 1.16.1-4, Col. 1.2.3, 3.21.3, 10.1.1.185-189, 10.1.1.242-254, 10.1.1.2-15; Var. *R.* 1.16.2-3

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A.3. Index of ancient texts quoted and discussed

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