

Chapter 2

The Government of Dogs *Archaeological (zo)ontologies*

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Although it seems impossible, and not necessarily helpful, to completely disregard the positivist frameworks that have long been the primary organizers of archaeological knowledge production, it has become increasingly apparent that reality can be productively framed in innumerable alternative ways¹. In other words, we might somewhat disregard the processualists, or at least take their reality to be one ontological frame among many. This isn't to suggest that scientific archaeology is equal to any other approach to the past, since it is vastly better materialized than most—in universities, professional associations like the one that kindly organized the meeting at which this paper was presented, academic publishers, museums, governments, CRM firms, popular media—and circulates in the minds and practices of archaeologists, their associates, and their followers. Rather, it is merely to suggest that it isn't correct in its self-regard as the sole arbiter of knowledge of the past, the *arbiter archaeologiae*. Other accounts of reality are not only possible but inevitable. Indeed, without years—eventually decades—of ongoing struggle to master the disciplinary codes that operate in archaeology, we wouldn't quite share in them, and should consider ourselves fallen, abandoned to one of the multitudinous, vulgar, civilian ontologies.

But what of a relational ontology? Isn't it an unavoidable paradox that a democratic theorization of ontological multiplicity is founded on a singular theoretical dictate? Doesn't the ontologist merely snatch the crown of *arbiter archaeologiae* from the scientist, leaving the sovereign institutional edifice largely intact? Perhaps. Although “ontology as a question seems to poke holes in the very idea that common denominators exist” (Alberti et al. 2011:901), this is its common denominator, the foundational premise it brings to each purported instance of ontological difference. It would seem to exclude, or at least scold, alterities that reject alterity, that is, that dismiss the

possibility of other valid and autonomous construals of reality and the value of open-minded inquiry into ontological heterogeneity. This might not be a problem, except that *most* understandings of reality are premised on this very thing. Although the current pope seems reasonably tolerant he holds the line at the son of God! We are left with the *arbitrariness* of *archaeologiae* to untangle the mess. And of course any theoretical discussion of ontological difference is immediately confronted with the challenge of representing this universe of alterity in the same stale scholarly frame. All our evocations of cultural difference are shoehorned into the usual academic boxes—lectures, papers, reports, articles, books—arguably crushing the kernel of real difference in the process.

But these are logical inconsistencies, and not necessarily practical dilemmas. As Alberti et al. suggest, archaeological ontology represents “an open-ended question, an invitation to think difference” (ibid), which certainly seems more fruitful than dismissing it in deference to some paramount molecular currency as the Darwinians do. Relational ontology affords general admission to an exciting interpretive field, allowing us to think through the connections among entities of every description, and the networks large and small that are founded on these connections or that these very networks force to erupt (Alberti and Marshall 2009; Baires and Baltus 2017; Hill 2013; Watts 2013). We can analytically embrace this vast array of cultural networks without necessarily dispensing with our formal explanatory structures—social system, economy, ideology, and so forth—as long as we are prepared to allow for the situated, contingent character of these discursive memes when we choose to employ them. Here I want to employ a relational idiom to think through the relatively gaping ontological divide between humans and a non-human animal that has been an intimate participant in human lifeworlds for millennia: the domestic dog. This ultimately aims to move past an archaeontology narrowly focused on cultural difference, on the ways, for example, that non-humans are variously imagined and engaged within different cultural settings (although it starts here), and hints at the enormous challenge of apprehending and discursively representing even more dramatic ontological divides (like those between, for example, humans and trees [Jones and Cloke 2002] or mushrooms [Tsing 2012]). At the same time, this case retains a comforting familiarity; although dogs and humans don’t speak the same language, we do, after all, understand dogs to acquire human vocabularies (Kaminski et al. 2004), and compelling cases have already been made for the quasi-legibility of canine ontologies (e.g., Haraway 2003). This parallels the rethinking of non-human animal lives, and their relations with humans, in animal geography (Hill, this volume).

The notion that non-humans be treated not only as full(er) participants in human lifeworlds but as agential entities in their own right has been circulating

in archaeology for some time. Archaeologists indebted to Latour’s (1993, 2005) account of actor-network theory (Whitridge 2004) drew attention to the actorial qualities of all the participants, human and non-human alike, in the densely ramified networks that constitute reality, and this metaphor, itself indebted to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1984) “rhizomes,” has been helpfully reiterated in various ways by others (e.g., Ingold’s [2008] “meshworks,” Hodder’s [2011] “entanglement”). By virtue of the inherently relational quality of the world, archaeologists can begin to unfold these networks virtually anywhere, assembling an interpretation of the past that starts from their specialized knowledge of site plans or potsherds or phytoliths. Perhaps because humans are animals themselves, and because they make such thoroughly carnivorous use of other animals for food, materials, labor, and amusement, the extension of the ontological framework to non-human animals seems particularly unproblematic. The Inuit-bowhead whale relationship, for example, has been exceptionally complex and important in certain parts of the North American Arctic over the past 1,500 years, but the bowhead was just one meaningful and economically valuable creature among many. Unfolding the networks that connected humans and ringed seal, caribou, walrus, polar bear, beluga, muskox, and so on would also be rewarding, not to mention the other categories of agentive beings of which we know less but which have clearly been important to Inuit in the past, such as various deities, *tornigait* (spirits-creatures), soul-like components of former humans, and the *Tuniit*, perhaps pre-Inuit Dorset groups who had occupied the Eastern Arctic for millennia when Inuit arrived (Rasmussen 1931; Nuttall 1992; Taylor 1997; Friesen 2000). But whereas we know the latter sorts of entities only from occasional Inuit traditions and reports, non-human animals left relatively unambiguous material traces, and can still be widely observed on their own and in interactions with people and so, potentially, represented in a variety of ways, including by themselves. It is the dog—*qimmiq*—that is considered more fully here. In the following I first explore the connections between Inuit and dogs, arguing not only that dogs consumed an extraordinary amount of attention and effort, but that they were fundamental co-inhabitants of the precontact² Inuit lifeworld: not merely prey or ecological backdrop, but dedicated collaborators in human projects. I then attempt to recenter the analysis on dogs’ own experience of their lives, and suggest this provides a direction in which an arctic archaeozoontology might proceed.

DOGS IN THE INUIT LIFEWORLD

Unlike all the other non-human animals that inhabited or passed through the Inuit lifeworld dogs were deliberately installed as co-residents in Inuit

living spaces, accompanying Inuit at every moment during their millennium long *landnám*—colonial appropriation—of the North American Arctic. While individual non-human animals would sometimes have had prolonged relationships with humans—such as a thoughtful polar bear that adjusted its ursine wanderings to avoid the creatures that had killed its sibling, or a raven that knew precisely where and when to find scavengable scraps—no other species (besides, perhaps, our trillionfold microbial fellow travelers) was actorially aligned with humans to anywhere near the same extent (Whittidge 2013). The archaeological advantage in this is that we have an extensive material record bearing on dogs, their lives with Inuit, and human accommodations to them, and so together with ethnographic evidence we can begin to unfold the exceptionally dense dog-human networks of the past. This not only teaches us a great deal about precontact Inuit economy, sociality, and belief, and Inuit relations with non-human creatures, but also about dogs in their relations with humans, and to a certain extent with other creatures. The full implications of the dog's own situation within its larger lifeworld—its locally emergent canine ontologies, its *Weltanschauung*—are somewhat harder to imagine, but a relational ontology productively moves us in this direction.

Dogs appear to have accompanied the pre-Inuit colonists of the Eastern Arctic 4,500 years ago (Møhl 1986; Morey and Aaris-Sørensen 2002), and to have continued to be at least sporadic members of the Dorset (and affiliated) communities that the Inuit finally supplanted around 800 BP (Arnold 1979; Brown et al. 2013). However, dog remains, and dog-gnawed faunal remains (Brown et al. 2013), do not occur in all large pre-Inuit faunal assemblages, raising the possibility that some groups did not keep them. The lack of more consistent evidence for dogs in the Dorset record is surprising, because virtually all other indigenous New World groups relied on dogs as hunting companions and guardians (Fiedel 2005), and in some places as pack animals, food (Callahan 1997; Haller et al. 2006), wool (Schulking 1994), and traction (Callahan 1997; Oetelaar and Meyer 2006). Dorset groups even possessed a small, shod sled not unlike the Inuit *qamutiik* (pl. *qamutiit*), but there is no hint that it was ever hitched to dogs (Wells and Renouf 2014). A further complicating factor in the assessment of Dorset and other pre-Inuit dog use is the treatment of human corpses at death. The pre-Inuit record is distinguished by a marked absence of human remains, or indeed virtually any suggestion of their terrestrial deposition, such as recognizable mortuary cairns or pits. The entire 3,500-year period of pre-Inuit occupation of the Eastern Arctic is represented by a few dozen (Stuart [2011] tabulates about 33) individuals, mostly from a handful of contexts on Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula, at the far southeastern periphery of the Dorset world. This clear instance of a deliberate and long-running mortuary "self-erasure" raises the possibility that the remains of dogs, a socially ambiguous co-inhabitant of at least some

pre-Inuit communities, may have been similarly deposited in a conspicuously obscure fashion (presumably disposal in the ocean and/or on sea ice). Dogs were occasionally given human-like mortuary treatment at an important Ipiutak (roughly contemporaneous with Middle to Late Dorset) cemetery in northern Alaska (Hill, this volume). The status of dogs within the pre-Inuit lifeworld contrasts interestingly with the case of Inuit dogs, and warrants concerted investigation.

Dogs are consistently well-attested in Inuit faunal assemblages, both by dog remains (Morrison 1984; Park 1987) and dog-ravaged faunal remains (Brown et al. 2013), and were occasionally depicted in incised tool decorations (Maxwell 1983:83–84; Morrison 1991:58) and figurines (Holtved 1944: Plate 38:34). The sorts of extramural snow block dog shelters that often appear in historical photographs of snow house communities, and that are advised for pregnant females (Inukpuk 2009), have not been reported. Although snow house occupations themselves are archaeologically rare (Saville [1984] is an exception), dog shelters may well have occurred at the much more widely investigated sod house sites, and plausibly produced a recognizable archaeological footprint. Inukpuk (2009:46) describes the use of moss and saxifrage as insulated flooring, and a spatial concentration of coprolites, comminuted bone, and dog-gnawed bone might be expected. Dogs were also outfitted with items of clothing under certain conditions, namely booties to protect their paws from sharp ice, and a leather teat warmer for nursing mothers (ibid). Fragments of human clothing are not unusual finds in permafrost deposits, so such garments could conceivably be encountered.

By far the most widely reported category of evidence for dogs consists of elements of *qamutiit* and associated harnessing gear. Small sleds, likely hand-drawn like the Dorset versions, occur throughout Old Bering Sea and Punuk times (mid first to early second millennium AD) in the northeast Asian Arctic (Rudenko 1961), with hints of large, presumably dog-drawn, sleds only appearing in Birnirk times (late first to early second millennium AD) in northern Alaska (Ford 1959:152–156; Anderson 1992). However, sophisticated dog traction gear like that which was widespread in the Canadian Arctic from at least AD 1200 (Yorga 1979 and Arnold 1986 report some of the earliest and westernmost evidence) does not appear in northern Alaska until the sixteenth century (Giddings 1952; Hall 1978), and in western Alaska (Nunivak Island) until the early eighteenth century (Legge 2010), suggesting that the full Inuit dog traction complex arose in the western Canadian Arctic (the Mackenzie Delta-Amundsen Gulf region) on the eve of the major Inuit ("Thule"; see Whittidge 2016a for an unpacking of this term) expansion eastwards. The location and timing of this breakthrough in winter transportation could be taken to imply that dog traction was a key facilitator of the Inuit colonization of the Eastern Arctic.

Together with the kayak and umiak (sophisticated closed-deck and open-hull skin boats, respectively), which variously transported individuals, sea mammal hunting crews, and households with their gear, the dog-drawn *qamutiik* was a cornerstone of Inuit mobility well into the second half of the twentieth century (Atagutsiak 1991a, b; Cain 2000; Inukpuk 2000; Inukpuk 2009; Qumaq 2000; Weetaluktuk 2000). Each dog on a team wore a rugged leather harness with a trailing toggle. The toggle was passed through a loop in a leather cord, or trace, which was in turn attached to a thong at the front of the *qamutiik* by way of a highly distinctive trace buckle (*uqsiq*) with two asymmetric eyeholes. Several dogs were similarly hitched to the *qamutiik* in an irregular fan arrangement (in the Eastern Arctic; other setups were utilized historically in the Western Arctic, typically with a different style of sled; Hall 1978), the number depending on the owner's ability to maintain a well-fed team or, for the occasion, borrow dogs from another hunter (Rasmussen 1931). The most skilled and cooperative dog pulled in the lead, with the others strategically staggered behind. *Qamutiit* varied in size, but were typically intended as heavy-duty cargo sleds that could easily carry a hunter, his gear, and his catch or, more heavily loaded, much of a family's winter gear and stores (Savelle and Dyke 2014; Whittidge 2016b). For historical Central Arctic groups that occupied a series of snow house camps on transient sea ice over the course of a winter this was a critical function, but even for more sedentary precontact groups occupying terrestrial sod house winter villages the dog-drawn *qamutiik* was crucial for hunters' winter travel (to judge from the abundance of sled and harness paraphernalia in precontact Inuit assemblages). Dogs also sometimes dragged small toboggan-like sleds made of stitched baleen or furs, and in summer they hauled gear overland in panniers that hung at their sides. Roles could also be reversed. Dogs with paws injured by candling sea ice in spring rode on the *qamutiik* pulled by their conspecifics (Inukpuk 2000:36), and puppies would have ridden on the *qamutiik* or been carried by people during winter camp moves.

The *qamutiik* pulled by a dog team represents a characteristic variety of human-animal actor network in the Inuit world, encapsulated by the Inuktitut word *qimuksiit*, which refers to "the collective action of dogs and humans when they are pulling the sledge all together" (Laugrand and Oosten 2002:90). The collective nature of this relationship is fundamental, given especially that people often helped pull and push the sled. A lone hunter with a light load typically alternated between riding on the *qamutiik* and running alongside it, but a heavier load demanded cooperative labor. An early twentieth-century photograph of two Copper Inuit men and a woman wearing harnesses and pulling a heavily loaded *qamutiik* alongside three similarly harnessed dogs (Figure 2.1) illustrates the mutual coordination involved in what sometimes appears as a wholly symmetrical relationship. *Qimuksiit* relied on an intimate

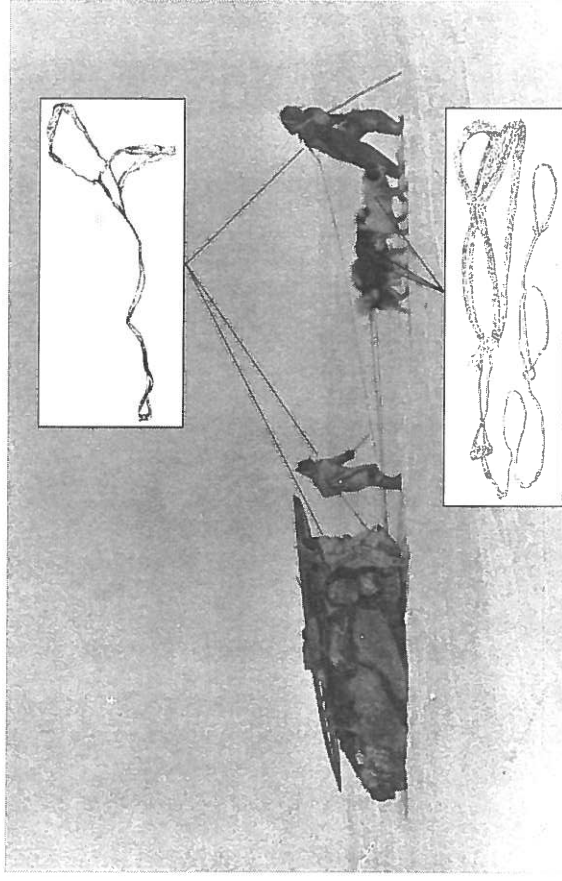


Figure 2.1 Two Copper Inuit men and a woman in harnesses pulling a heavily loaded *qamutiik* alongside three dogs, early 1900s. CMH 20288, taken by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Source: "Coronation Gulf, Hudson's Bay, Eskimos travelling with dogs and sled with kayak on top," with overlays from Jenness (1946: Figures 178 and 179).

alignment of Inuit and dog roles that was guaranteed by intensive dog training from birth, strategic feeding practices, an array of disciplinary tools and practices (such as use of a whip), and a sophisticated set of devices for articulating human and dog actions—*qamutiik*, traces, toggles, and harnesses. It also depended on the mutual coordination of the members of the dog team, under the direction of lead and second lead dogs (Cain 2000). Although humans imparted the behavioral outlines and supplied the technological constituents of the actorial setup, dog co-action was an essential ingredient. It was negotiated throughout a dog's lifetime as s/he cycled between a variety of ranked positions in *qamutiik* teams, and interacted with other dogs outside of human work in feeding, breeding, play, and combative contexts.

Dogs also have a variety of distinct sensory and motor skills that Inuit strategically employed for purposes other than transportation. They have senses of smell and hearing that are far superior to humans' (Mikli 2015), allowing them to locate game—a ringed seal's snow-covered breathing hole, the pheromonal scent trail of a caribou, a fox in a distant trap—or food caches when humans cannot. They can detect spoilage in food long before humans can, are attentive to subtle meteorological shifts, and have a superior sense of spatial reckoning, even in blizzard conditions that utterly disorient humans

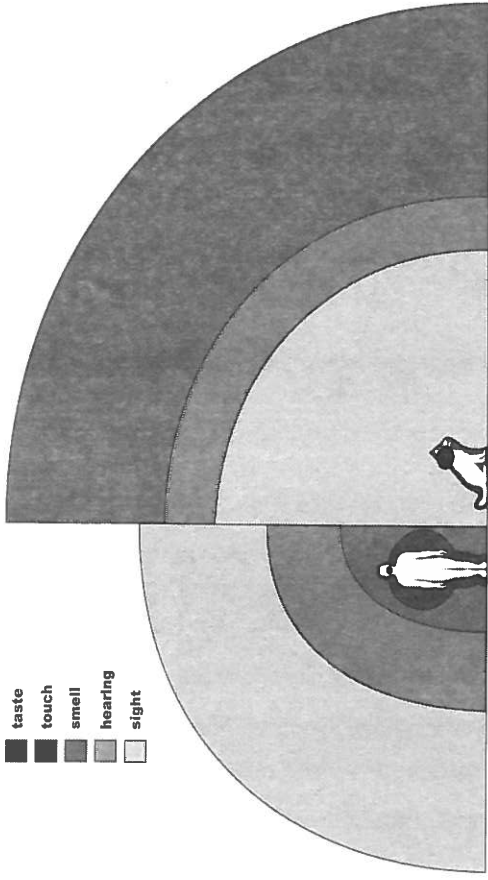


Figure 2.2 The complementary sensory abilities of people and dogs.

(Inukpuk 2009:65). The latter is often cited as a key advantage of dog traction over the snowmobiles that have supplanted them (Hall 1978). By cultivating a close communicative bond with their dogs, including training dogs to deliberately impart their knowledge through conventional behavioral codes (different styles of barking, running, jumping, nuzzling, eye contact), Inuit were able to extract some of this uniquely canine understanding and so dramatically enlarge their own visual, olfactory, gustatory, auditory, and haptic experience of the world (Figure 2.2). The Inuit sensorium was also enlarged by human sensory experiences of dogs themselves. The appearance of dogs, their howls and growls, the feel of their fur (sometimes used as parka trim), their smell, and the smell and sight of their waste, were everyday human experiences. Even the taste of their flesh was occasionally known; dogs are widely reported to have been a human survival food, and in some areas they were consumed even more often (Park 1987; Inukpuk 2009:70). Dogs' four-legged speed, carnivore's dentition, and cooperative attack practices meant they could pursue and dispatch a variety of species, force muskoxen into their defensive ring, and in groups even bring the much larger (up to 700 kg, as opposed to 25–40 kg for dogs) and more lethal polar bear to bay. Armed humans together with dog scouts, attackers, and haulers harvested many marine species and every sort of terrestrial prey in the arctic biome.

Inuit, in effect, knew and navigated their lifeworld in part through the mediation of their domestic animals. This demanded that they had also trained *themselves* to read the subtle (for a human) signs of their dogs' knowledge and perceptions of the world. Each had to agree upon a mutually comprehensible

set of verbal and behavioral signals; the efficacy of the dog's and human's articulation in an actor network reflected the strength of this communicative bridge. Managing a radically distinct being as a sled-puller and game-scenter drew on a complex set of human skills that Inuit learned through instruction, observation, and experience, the latter fostered by close physical interaction with dogs throughout the lives of each. The lifelong socialization of humans to the dog-human network is nicely reflected in the toy *qamutiit* and miniature dog figurines (including the ethnographically attested use of seal phalanges as proxies for the latter) that were common varieties of children's toy (Park 1998), and in games that mimicked sled driving (Rasmussen 1931:246).

Although the relationship between Inuit and dogs was intimate and complex, and could take on many emotional valences, dogs were unequivocally the subordinate partners, as Qumaq explains quite unambiguously: "Our dogs had to obey, even if they did not want to. We gave the commands and they obeyed and no wonder, since we let them live and provided for them. It was as though we were the government of our dogs" (Qumaq 2000: 48). Technically sophisticated devices were designed for the sole purpose of constraining their movements, harnessing their labor, and influencing their behavior, including a whip up to 10 m long to control animals in harness from a distance (Turner 2001 [1894]:244–245) and which, Turner reported, "characterizes the man who makes it" (ibid:244). Although they were not always harnessed or otherwise tethered, their movements were tightly circumscribed and the vast majority of their diet (West and France 2015) was provided through deliberate, and sometimes manipulative, human feeding (i.e., withholding food to uncooperative dogs). The teeth of dogs that persistently gnawed on human equipment were sometimes removed or filed down (Losey et al. 2014:13), craniofacial trauma from human discipline is common on dog remains from Inuit and pre-Inuit sites (Park 1987; Morey and Aaris-Sørensen 2002; Losey et al. 2014) and dogs exhibit vertebral deformations and osteophytosis due to enforced draft labor (Arnold 1979, 1986:72–73). Dogs that utterly failed to comply with human programs of action, were undersized, or were otherwise felt to be a drain on human resources, were liable to be summarily killed. One outcome of these stringent management practices was that trained dogs had real exchange value, and the possession of a large, suitably disciplined team was considered to be a significant personal accomplishment (Atagutsiaq 1991b:64).

Not surprisingly, dogs also had a symbolic value (Laugrand and Oosten 2002), though the extent of their cosmological prominence is somewhat jarring in light of their markedly subordinate social status. In some Inuit belief systems a dog was the husband of the girl who later became the mother and protector of all marine mammals essential to Inuit life, and her offspring from union with a dog are the ancestors of all non-Inuit people (Rasmussen

1931). Inuit also imaginatively projected themselves into non-human animal discourse, recounting myths and stories in which animals were the principal characters, and employing words (especially in animal-centered songs) that were understood to be the terms of self- and mutual reference employed by non-human animals themselves (Cavanagh 1973:6). The contrast between their clear utility and meaningfulness on the one hand, and the harsh discipline and instrumental means employed to manage them on the other, gives dogs an intriguingly ambivalent status in traditional Inuit culture, befitting their place intermediate between humans and other animals.

THE LIFEWORLD OF INUIT DOGS

Dogs' own experience of their lives with Inuit in the past is obviously even harder to gauge archaeologically. Gilchrist (2012:3) has drawn attention to Lock's (1998) concept of "local biologies": locally distinctive understandings, constructions, and embodied realizations of biological experience. This simple phrase names (indeed, calls into being!) an entire research domain focused on the persistent variability of these things at different times and places, and between different categories of actors within the same group. People consume different foods and medicines, engage in different sorts of work and therapeutic practice, and interact with different sorts of health practitioners, and these sets of practices vary over time under a host of social and economic influences, including cross-cultural introductions of borrowed and invented medical technologies, principals, and regimes. Deliberately applying the concept to non-human animals seems almost meaningless, since the modern evolutionary understanding is premised precisely on the long-term operation of selection among such local biological variants. It acquires a somewhat different sense though in its application to a domesticate like the dog, since such critical local biological controls as foodways, work, disease, demography, and exposure to predation and intra-species competition are partly or largely mediated by humans. The biological context of dogs' lives was really a co-biology with their human managers (and, to an important extent, vice versa). Despite this human framing of their biologies and sociologies, dogs had extensive capacities to act with respect to humans, things, other non-human animals, and especially other dogs, and some of these would have produced a material trace that we can observe archaeologically.

One useful starting point for recentring our narratives of dogs' lives would be through the zooarchaeological construction of osteobiographies. Social bioarchaeologists (Agarwal and Glencross 2011) assemble models of both typical (Robb 2002) and individual (Hawkey 1998) human life histories from various categories of osteological, genetic, isotopic and archaeological

evidence, aiming at a fine-grained biosocial characterization of the life course for individuals or significant categories of individuals (based on gender, class, ethnicity, etc.) at particular times and places. Losey et al. (2011) usefully apply this framework to dog and wolf remains from early Neolithic cemeteries in southern Siberia, characterizing the life history and wider genetic affinities of canids interred in predominantly human cemeteries through osteological evidence of developmental, workloads, and trauma; osteometric and genetic markers of biological affinity with other canid populations; and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ dietary signatures. Such evidence can also be adduced for past Inuit dogs, and there has been separate attention to isotopic and trace element markers of diet (West and France 2015), osteoarthritis and other age- and work-induced pathologies (Arnold 1979), musculoskeletal trauma (Park 1987), and dental wear and ablation (Losey et al. 2014). Besides reading the remains of dogs themselves, we can attend to other traces of their past activity. For example, dog coprolites are frequently encountered in excavations of permafrost deposits, as well as their deteriorated residues in the form of clumps of comminuted and acid-etched bone. These provide important dietary details and a largely unrealized potential (beyond attention to human-induced pathologies) to elucidate dog health and disease (e.g., parasitic zoonoses; Jenkins et al. [2011]; Goyette et al. 2014). The challenge then, deferred here, is to bioarchaeologically assemble these sorts of data into meaningful syntheses of the life histories of Inuit dogs, which seems eminently feasible given the growing bodies of contextual zooarchaeological, ethnohistoric, ethnographic and, increasingly, contemporary biological and ethnological evidence of dogs' lives in the north.

Together with the archaeological appurtenances of dog handling (especially elements of the *qamutiik* complex), this evidence speaks to the feeding, working, and disciplining of dogs, and the long-term management of their life and population histories according to human projects. This suite of practices—all commonly entailed by the notion of breeding animals—effectively constituted dogs as a "nonhuman subaltern" (Johnston 2008:635). But the animals so "bred" were nevertheless autonomously intelligent and capable and led socially and cognitively rich lives within what amounted to a highly disciplinary space. Accounts of dog handling and breeding—*qimutsitiliurniq*—stress the consciousness and agency of dogs, and, given that dog projects frequently disregarded, subverted or flagrantly opposed human ones, recommend various means for thwarting or redirecting these proclivities (Inukpuk 2009). Dogs are especially cited for gnawing their tethers and traces (Whitridge 2016b), uprooting stakes, and consuming products reserved for humans. Dog ravaging of faunal refuse is archaeologically extremely common, probably accounting in large part for the near absence of important fish taxa from some assemblages (Whitridge 2001), and suggests

that dogs constituted a real threat to human food stores. Given that precontact Inuit material culture was largely composed of animal products (bone, antler, ivory, hide, sinew, baleen, feathers), and Inuit were substantially reliant on animals for food and fuel, dogs were realistically regarded as potential consumers of most of the Inuit-manufactured world.

The existence of an intricate regime for regulating dogs' bodies also reflects the latent violence of a medium-size carnivore that by necessity occupied the same living spaces as humans. Although Inuit regularly confronted more dangerous species—notably polar bear and walrus—it would be reasonable to assume that dogs were a more common cause of human injury and mortality in the past than other animal attacks, as at present, due to the vastly greater exposure of humans to dogs than to any other large animal; this is a consequence of a shared lifeworld. The reverse was clearly true as well, given the methodical management of dog population structure. However, a dog's physiological capacity and behavioral predilection for violence are best adjusted to interactions with other dogs, as are a human's for interpersonal violence, and so the behavioral cues for aggression—growling, teeth baring, raised hackles, body posture—are phrased in a canine idiom most comprehensible to conspecifics. Greenlandic Inuit dogs suffer more bite wounds, on average, than arctic and subarctic wolves, apparently from other dogs (Losey et al. 2014:13). This suggests that the social lives of Inuit dogs may have been more violent even than those of their genetically similar wild relatives (recent taxonomies classify dogs as *Canis lupus familiaris*, i.e., as a subspecies of wolf; Morey 2006; Duleba et al. 2015), which is perhaps unsurprising given dogs' closer living quarters, lack of autonomy, and exposure to high levels of human violence. Dogs were also vulnerable to violence by wolves, whose bodies and behaviors were equally well-suited to inter-canine aggression, and whose greater size, mobility, and habits of cooperative hunting would have given them marked advantages in any conflict.

Wolf-dog hybrids occur without human intervention at present (Verardi et al. 2006) and presumably did so in the past as well, implying also a sexual and reproductive dimension to the interactions between these populations. Introgression of both dog and wolf DNA in coyotes (*Canis latrans*) further indicates that these species occasionally inter-mix (Adams et al. 2003; Monzon et al. 2014). The genetic evidence suggests that male wolves have interbred with female dogs, and male wolves and dogs with female coyotes. Coyotes are presently found in some, mostly interior, parts of Inupiat and Yupik territory in Alaska, but appear to have expanded into the region in the twentieth century and so were likely not part of the precontact canid social world, which was nevertheless complex. The barriers between what have often been regarded as reproductively isolated species were in fact somewhat permeable (an ambiguity also implied by the existence of a “wild” canid like the dingo

descended from dogs). While not as reproductively fraught, relations among dogs, wolves, and other canid competitors were presumably also complicated. Inuit dogs overlapped the ranges of arctic (*Vulpes lagopus*) and red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), and would have been part of the “olfactory webs” (Banks et al. 2016) that mediated inter-species relations at a temporal remove through scent marking. Humans were effective participants in these webs as well, targeting foxes (with baited stone deadfall traps) and wolves (with sharpened baleen springs inserted in bait) along their habitual travel routes. The red fox is even suggested to have been quasi-domesticated by the Alutiiq of Kodiak Island (a southern Yupik group), who reportedly rarely used dogs for hunting or transportation (West and France 2015:522–523).

CONCLUSION

This has been a tentative first step in thinking about the ontological divide between a diverse group of humans and a diverse group of non-human animals that shared their living spaces. A relational archaeontology provides a springboard into these other worlds, though the level of generality employed here doesn't quite do the problem justice. The ethnographic and ethnohistoric records suggest substantial inter-group variability in the local character of dog-person interactions, and the archaeological record suggests even more. However, a significant transformation of this relationship occurred in the western Canadian Arctic on the cusp of the precontact Inuit colonization of the east with the emergence of a substantially new sledding technology. Large sleds and an elaborate dog harnessing setup promoted the value of dogs and helped enable a massive territorial expansion of Inuit groups into the Eastern Arctic. The dog-drawn *qamutiik* was not only an aid to long distance travel over snow-covered ice and land, but would have altered the winter economic round, allowing (but also demanding, to feed the dogs) a new intensity of utilization of the newly settled areas. This represented a significant new iteration in the evolving history of northern people's relations with dogs. While canid relationships had been fundamentally remade in the Late Pleistocene with the crystallization of a wolfish creature that lived and worked alongside humans, and the emergence of human communities that were partly configured by dog labor, *qimuksiit* inserted a complex technological assembly into the mix. Within this new social arrangement, “without dogs you weren't much of a man” (Weetaluktuk 2000:39).

It is difficult to talk of dogs enjoying a benefit from this turn of events, but their numbers seem to have increased; they are sporadic in pre-Inuit assemblages and common in Inuit ones. This dynamic history is still playing out. An early historic economic focus on fur trapping enhanced the

value of dog-mediated winter mobility, whereas a bureaucratic decision to drastically reduce dog numbers in the second half of the twentieth century (Tester 2010) helped accomplish a final transition to motorized transport in the Canadian north. These sorts of human-dog predicaments extend well beyond the Inuit case, since dogs have been part of all human societies for perhaps 15,000 years. Canids may only have become “dogs” in their relationship with humans, but the case could be made that hominins are only “humans” in their relationship with dogs and latterly the other domesticates that have proliferated during the Holocene. This attempt to rethink Inuit-dog relations is only a half-step away from a blindly anthropocentric ontology. An internalist ontohistory of the dog might be written that traced a thicker historical narrative of dogs’ changing lives. And then we could start in to the other animals.

NOTES

1. This work would not have been possible without the insightful published explanations of Inuit-dog relations by Inuit dog handlers (Atagutsiaq 1991a, b; Cain 2000; Inukpuk 2009; Inukpuk 2000; Qumaq 2000; Weetalukuk 2000), and shared at Clyde River (Kannigittugaapik) by Inuitiq Iqaqialu and others in 1991. I would also like to thank Melissa Baltus Zych and Sarah Baires for organizing the conference session on which this volume was based, and for their dedication in bringing it to fruition. I greatly enjoyed listening to and talking with all of the session participants and am grateful for the incentive to work through these ideas. This paper is dedicated to the dog, graciously supplied by Tony Manik, who tunneled into our cook tent and ravaged our food at Hazard Inlet in 1992, and was sent home on the next supply flight, and to the wolves who howled at us from the cliff top and defecated at the door of the same cook tent later that season, after our crew interrupted their caribou hunt. They, along with the thousands of other canids I have encountered over the years, have shown me fascinating things about non-human ontologies that I am still trying to understand.

2. I use “precontact” here in preference to “prehistoric,” to temper the colonialist chauvinism that holds history to have begun in the Americas with the arrival of Europeans and disregards long-running oral, written, and material indigenous histories. I recognize, however, that “precontact” continues to problematically frame indigenous history with respect to contact with Europeans.

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Relational Engagements of the Indigenous Americas

Alterity, Ontology, and
Shifting Paradigms

Edited by
Melissa R. Baltus and Sarah E. Baires

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Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Includes bibliographic references and index.
ISBN 9781498555357 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 9781498555364 (electronic)

∞™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America