

Mesopotamian god Dumuzi (Tammûz) appears in the roles of shepherd, king, lover of a goddess and a „dying god“. The first two aspects show Dumuzi embodying popular Mesopotamian metaphor, presenting the king as his people's shepherd. The thesis, regarding sources of the turn of 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE, inquires, what could Dumuzi's character express about the Mesopotamian ideal of king. It centers on Dumuzi presenting the relation of shepherd-king to the meaningful landscape, mostly the city and the surrounding wild steppe.

The text is inspired by structuralism in its basic approach, presenting human mind as arranging the world in meaningful structures, especially in the opposition of city and steppe. It examines images of shepherd and king in Dumuzi's scheme, the relation of these to landscape outside Dumuzi's context and the parallels in these concepts. The king appears mostly as keeper of the safe city, the shepherd then as a mediator of city and steppe. Dumuzi dies usually as a shepherd through contact with steppe's dangers. The royal concept appears implicitly in the doom of the dying Dumuzi's sheepfold, apparently symbolizing the city, dependent on king's activity. The thesis infers that Dumuzi's story expresses the risks of contact with chaos, e.g. as the strange space, necessarily undergone by king for his land. Given that these appear mostly in relation to Dumuzi's shepherd more than kingly aspect and that royal ideology even avoids the moment of Dumuzi's death, the thesis proposes the possibility of king's shepherd aspect carrying the danger symbolically on its shoulders.