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Session ID	53
Session Title	Animals and humans: power, knowledge and agency
Start Time	Mon Dec 16 13:30:00
Room	728

Human – animal relationships have often been viewed in terms of domination and exploitation, whilst more recently there has been an emphasis on commensality, intimacy and trust. Power and knowledge flow around such relationships, directed by the agency of both human and animal participants. In addition, knowledge of animals may shape human – human interactions, being used to empower or to marginalise animal specialists. Within mainstream archaeology, the significance of animals is largely confined to economy and domestication, and the power, knowledge and agency that revolve within and around animal-human interactions are essentially ignored.

This session will encourage discussion and debate on the dynamics of human-animal relationships, exploring ways in which animals themselves, together with those who interact with them have shaped human history. Animals have not ceased to be an important means for constructing human relationships; rather, human relationships have become so complex that it is frequently forgotten that animals, their agency and their exploitation may lie unrecognised at the very base of these constructs. Knowledge and power are clearly interwoven through these relationships. Themes to be explored may include (but are not limited to) theory and theoretical approaches to animals in human societies, animal-based cosmologies, cross-disciplinary perspectives and animal-related technologies.

13:30	Joanna Lawrence, University of Cambridge	Introduction	
13:35	Jill Goulder, University College London	Donkeys - the secret agents	<p>Too commonly we equate past human-animal interaction with hunting and herding, deleting from our pre-memories the significant exploitation of animals as workers for essential pack and traction from at least the 4th millennium BC.</p> <p>Adoption of animals for living use constituted a new paradigm in human-animal relations, with a focus on individuals and the means of obtaining their cooperation. But in archaeological models oxen are commonly treated as an abstraction, with little reference to the major new occupations and activities emerging to serve their daily needs. Donkeys are often ignored altogether (a particular contributor to their invisibility is their scarcity in food-middens). Yet widespread evidence from studies in modern developing regions demonstrates their invaluable multipurpose capabilities at field, village and city level, for transport and ploughing. A particular development from donkey-use is the empowerment of women: in modern Africa there are often (male) prejudices in favour of cattle as ownership and usage is prestige-related, but women have considerably more cultural access to lowly donkeys.</p> <p>My re-examination of the role and impact of working-animal adoption in antiquity – focusing on 4th-3rd millennium BC Mesopotamia but with broader relevance – is driven by a novel interdisciplinary process of ethological analogy with major regions of modern use of working donkeys and cattle. New models for exploitation of secondary products in antiquity must now include a reassessment of the vital supporting role of the 'other' – the non-humans added to the work-force who supported social and economic transformation at the highest and lowest levels.</p>

13:55 Neil Erskine, University of Glasgow	Farm, Field, and Fauna. Socialisation in the agricultural hinterlands of the 3rd Millennium Jazira	<p>In recent years, the importance of an elite hybrid equid species to the people of 3rd millennium Northern Mesopotamia has seen considerable attention. Both archaeological and textual studies have stressed the symbolic power of this species, the BAR.AN, and delineated its ancestral associations and its uses in cultic, military, and agricultural contexts. Less attention, however, has been devoted to the socialising power that was granted to the BAR.AN by its ideological and symbolic prominence.</p> <p>By considering the experiences of the agricultural workers around Tel Brak (ancient Nagar), this paper will reconstruct how their work in a communal ancestral landscape using these ideologically-charged animals relentlessly reinforced that land's meaningfulness. It will also show that as the state authorities sought to re-centre ancestor-focussed traditions on their own specific familial lines to cement their power, that interaction with these animals, alongside new cultic preoccupations with royal lines of descent, helped ease the transition between two forms of ancestor veneration.</p>
14:15 Lonneke Delpout, Leiden University	The expression of human-horse relationships in ancient Egypt	<p>The introduction of the horse in ancient Egypt had a great impact on society. Horses have always been animals associated with nobility, and it was no different in ancient Egypt. They were never deified in ancient Egypt, but they did enjoy a certain elevated status. The high regard in which horses were held is visible in different contexts, from two-dimensional depictions in both royal and private context, to literature, royal decrees, material culture, international correspondence and even in a horse burial located in the forecourt of an Egyptian noble's tomb. Within its context, the horse can function as a status marker, being the distinguishing factor between 'pharaoh' and 'the other' or elevating a private person from its peers, but the animal is more than that. The contexts in which the horses appear, mostly highlight the animal rather than the human; emphasising the importance of the animal within the scene. The horse is in this case the factor that elevates those associated with them. This paper aims to discuss how the horse is used as a status marker, as well as showing how the human-animal relationships were displayed in ancient Egypt also beyond the animal as simply that.</p>
14:35 Claire Ratican, University of Cambridge	Animal and HumanBodies in Producing Viking Age Persons	<p>A growing body of work has emerged over the last few decades that attempts to rebalance the anthropocentric focus of research in the social sciences by exploring non-human agency and the alternative ontological structures that give rise to the unfamiliar and challenging phenomena we are presented with in archaeological contexts.</p> <p>The ground-breaking work of Lotte Hedeager (1999; 2004; 2005; 2010; 2011) has demonstrated the fundamental importance of animals within Late Iron Age cosmologies, made manifest by the immense corpus of animal-centric metalwork that attests to the ontological fluidity between human and animal bodies. These motifs present animal and human bodies in parts and as wholes, at times distinct and at other times combined to compose one animal-human figure. These hybridised animal-human bodies are a clear indication that our modern assumptions regarding the categorical divide between human/animal and culture/nature has little relevance to the structuring principles of Old Norse society. In fact, it suggests that Old Norse 'persons' were culturally defined in the image of both humans and animals. This observation opens up new ground for an exploration of personhood in the Viking Age and begs the question— how was personhood constituted through the relationships between humans and animals in death?</p> <p>It is from this position that I explore whether animals and humans were considered as equal entities in burial contexts as part of my wider research agenda; to reconcile the possibility of animal personhood with existing multiple burial theory. If, indeed, their similar treatment in death signifies a shared ontological status, then our understanding of the multiple burial rite, which currently disregards the presence of 'other' (read animal) actors, must be reframed. A multiple burial theory inclusive of non-human persons may allow for a wider exploration of the constitution of relational personhood in Viking Age burials, and add interpretive depth to an underdeveloped multiple burial theory that needs to move beyond static interpretations of categorical identities.</p>
14:55 BREAK	BREAK	BREAK

15:25	Erica Priestley, Independent researcher	Waste Not - A Re-examination of Neanderthal Hunting Strategies and their Relationships with Animals	<p>Research increasingly supports the notion that humans and Neanderthals are more alike than originally believed. Features such as ideology and ritual, previously lauded as the defining hallmarks of humanity, are more likely shared, derived traits. Shipman (2010) proposed an additional hallmark, the animal connection, where the intensified interaction with fauna has influenced the evolution of Homo.</p> <p>Zooarchaeology should therefore offer insight into Neanderthal ideologies, as hunting is rarely just a means to an end (Overton and Hamilkas 2013). However research continues to interpret evidence in terms of subsistence, perpetuating the Occidental bias that animals are passive players in an anthropogenic world. This has been criticised by Overton and Hamilakis (2013), who argue that other ontologies, not just Cartesian dualism, must be engaged in order to understand past reflexive relationships.</p> <p>This author will argue that ethnography can be partnered with zooarchaeology in order to achieve this goal. The taphonomic and zooarchaeological evidence from a selection of Middle Palaeolithic open-air sites will first be presented. The hunting modi operandi at these sites have been presented solely in economic terms and, at a few, appear to have been superficially wasteful. This evidence will then be compared to the Khanty and the Yukaghir, who are two animistic societies who believe that human-animal boundaries are blurred and certain animals have personhood. In the latter society, the act of hunting itself encourages soul regeneration, thereby satisfying cosmological requirements. These analogies are thus useful for offering fresh insight into previously uncharted territory of Neanderthal ideology.</p>
15:45	Erin Crowley, University of Minnesota	Commensal Feasts with Commensal Beasts	<p>Archaeological remains from late Iron Age and Early Medieval Irish sites (dated to ~1-1000 AD) demonstrate a strong relationship between humans and household commensal animals. Not only do we have direct evidence for dogs and cats via their skeletal remains, but we also have significant indirect evidence of their presence from gnaw marks on remains from cattle, pig, sheep, and goats. Dogs, in particular, provided assistance in the protection of the settlement and control of livestock, playing a key role in the economic and social maintenance of the community. Early Medieval texts and law tracts highlight the role of dogs as a marker of power in human-human relationships, with special status given to individuals who owned guard dogs, or árchú (Kelly 1998). In return, we know that dogs had access to valuable food scraps, such as long bones. Using the evidence that we have available, what can we extrapolate about the role and status of commensal animals at settlement sites and, more broadly, in late Iron Age and Early Medieval society? This paper explores the roles of dogs in these spaces, their agency, and their resultant status in human-animal relationships.</p>
16:05	Ranjan Datta, University of Regina	How to Practice Post-humanism in archaeology? Experiences with North American and South Asian Indigenous Communities	<p>This paper explores how to practice post-humanism in everyday life. This idea has increasingly come under scrutiny by post-humanism theorists, who are addressing fundamental ontological and epistemological questions with regards to defining an essential 'human,' as well as the elastic boundary work between the human and nonhuman subject. Post-humanistic idea begins by arguing that post-humanism is essential for counting today's environmental problems and environmental science education. The paper then considers three goals: developing post-humanism ontology, exploring methodology, and investigating whether environmental science education and practices can help students, teachers, and community in learning, teaching, and practicing processes. I demonstrate the complementary contributions from two Indigenous communities' field studies that can be made when a researcher moves beyond an exclusive focus on western fascinations and consider participants as co-researchers. This paper concludes with a discussion of implications in this field.</p>
16:25	Andrew Reid, UCL	Livestock, agency and the human career	<p>In introductory undergraduate lectures archaeology typically celebrates the domestication of livestock as an early achievement of the human career and congratulates itself on having been able to reconstruct the major characteristics of the process, based largely on the analysis of animal bone remains. This construction of knowledge within archaeology tallies with more general assumptions about power and the diminished role and significance of livestock within human societies in the recent human past. By developing alternative approaches, focusing on the role of living animals and the spaces they occupy within and around humans, it can be shown that livestock continue to exercise agency in shaping broader human society, creating complex relationships between humans and dominating human relationships with their environment. Livestock can hence be seen to have had a considerable, active role in recent aspects of the human career such as urbanism and colonisation. More importantly this demonstrates that theoretically Archaeology has blinded itself to the continuing significance of domesticated animals. All Holocene archaeologists, not just animal bone specialists, need to develop a different and distinct approach to the past, one that enables consideration of the active roles of livestock.</p>

16:45 Joanna Lawrence, University of Cambridge; Discussion
Andrew Reid, UCL; Claire Ratican, University of
Cambridge; Laerke Recht, University of
Cambridge

17:00 END

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