

**COMPASS Annual Symposium**

**Knowledge in Motion: Human–Non-Human Relationships**

**11-12 May 2023**

**Thursday, 11 May. Venue: Wadstömska Villan, Norrköping**

- **9.45–10.15 – Registration and coffee**
- **10.15–10.30 – Welcome address**
- **10.30–12.00 - Panel 1, Animal Histories and Zooarchaeology**

Chair: Mattis Karlsson, Linköping University

Panel commentator: Therese Asplund, Linköping University

Sarah Newman (invited symposium commentator), The University of Chicago, ‘Animal Archaeology: Style, Ruins, and Ritual’

Alice Choyke, Central European University, ‘Making Animals: Choices in the use of non-human animal hard osseous materials in prehistory’

- **12.00–13.30 – Lunch break**
- **13.30–15.00 – Panel 2, Living with Animals**

Chair: Isabelle Strömstedt, Linköping University

Panel commentator: Jesse Peterson, Linköping University

Harriet Evans-Tang, Durham University, ‘Medieval Icelandic sagas as vehicles for knowledge exchange’

Shweta Rani, The University of Delhi, ‘The Urban and the Pathological: What mosquitoes tell us about the city’

- **15.00–15.45 – Coffee break**
- **15.45–16.45 – Roundtable, *Researching Human – Non-Human Relationships: Methodologies and Challenges***
- **18.00–20.00 – Conference Dinner, Brasserie Tullhuset, Norrköping**

**Friday, 12 May. Venue: Tvärnättet, Kopparhammaren 7, Norrköping**

- **9.45 – 10.15–Coffee**
- **10.15 – 12.00 – Norrköping Rock Carvings Walk**
- **12.00–13.00 – Lunch Break**
- **13.00 – 15.00 – Panel 3, Learning about Animals: Whales and Horses**

Chair: Olga Zabalueva, Linköping University

Panel commentator: Sofia Gustafsson, Linköping University

Vicki Szabo, Western Carolina University, 'Cache-as-cache can: stranded and stored whales in premodern Iceland'

Erica Steiner, The University of Sydney, "'*cymed wynsum stenc of his innopé*': An examination of *The Whale* and other odoriferous sea-monsters'

Pia Cuneo, The University of Arizona, 'Horses in Motion, Knowledge in Motion: Art, Science, and the Equine Body in Hans Baldung's 1534 Woodcut 'Series' Horses in a Forest'

- **15.00 – 15.15 – Closing Comments**



**Panel 1, Animal Histories and Zooarchaeology. Thursday, 11 May: 10.30–12.00.**

**Sarah Newman (commentator) ‘Animal Archaeology: Style, Ruins, and Ritual’**

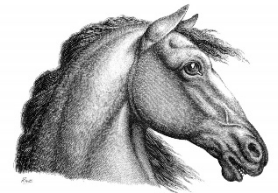
Many people would agree that individual animals (our pets, for example) have biographies that are in some ways analogous to our own. But what about time scales between that of a single creature’s lifespan and the very long terms that are the domain of evolutionary biology? Do non-human animals have history? Some scholars of the past have explicitly and adamantly stated that such a thing is impossible. They argue that humans can acknowledge and investigate the instrumental importance of non-human animals to human history, but only through the ways that our own species has recorded and represented them, at best recognizing animals’ relationships with humans and their impacts on human societies. It was not so long ago, however, that Western scholars made similar arguments about *humans* in other times and places—claiming that humanity’s deep past and even the histories of contemporary non-literate peoples were unknowable without the written word. In this paper, I argue that the domain of what can be historicized can and should be expanded, even while maintaining familiar frameworks and research methods to investigate it. Specifically, I use the notions of “style”, “ruins”, and “ritual” employed by archaeologists to reconstruct the prehistoric human past and apply them to the material traces of animal lives to investigate unwritten nonhuman histories.

*Sarah Newman is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. She is an anthropological archaeologist, with a geographical and temporal specialization in ancient Mesoamerica, particularly the ancient Maya. Her scholarship combines archaeological, zooarchaeological, and art historical methods and evidence to explore anthropological issues, focusing on multiple forms of human interactions with ancient environments. Her current research projects include investigations of the changing cultural and historical constructions of the concept of waste, cross-cultural explorations of natural historical knowledge and its taxonomies, multi-scalar and multi-temporal processes of anthropogenic landscape modifications, and the long-term relationships between humans and other animals. She is the author of *Unmaking Waste: New Histories of Old Things* (forthcoming with University of Chicago Press, April 2023).*

**Alice Choyke, ‘Making Animals: Choices in the use of non-human animal hard osseous materials in prehistory’**

Prehistoric communities in Europe and Anatolia depended on a variety of animal products in their everyday lives. Choices concerning how to use the bodies of non-human animals were woven and entangled in the culturally learned attitudes humans held toward both the domestic and wild animals in their lives. While some choices of what species and skeletal element chosen for manufacturing had more to do with practicalities of availability and what worked best for making a particular kind of tool or ornament other choices seem to have been influenced by local (and unknowable) ideas about the meaning and power of a particular species.

The first most obvious examples are animal amulets made from the body parts of animals but meant to exemplify the whole animal in all its power and used to protect or share in the non-human animal agency as in hunting magic ritual. Such amulets or various ritual deposits first appear in the European paleolithic and continue to be used even today – even if the explicit story behind them has been lost or inalterably transformed. Other special patterning in raw material preference such as the use of antler in the European Bronze Age show that the power of the male stag was extended into the mundane world of everyday life through a range of everyday implements which also show



up in specialized forms. The importance of this species clearly extends through the hunting prohibitions of the Roman and medieval world right down to trophy hunting today.

At the same time, even practical choices of species and body part may comprise an expression of social solidarity and community. Bone elements from a variety of animal species can be used to produce a variety of tools and ornaments. Within individual village communities, evident repetitive patterns in choice of raw material from non-human animals to make the most mundane of objects also served to create social solidarity or demonstrate deep shifts in local place identities.

*Alice Choyke first started to explore the connections between humans and non-human animals in her 1983 dissertation on Bronze Age faunal materials from Hungary. Since then, she has worked extensively on both prehistoric to historic worked bone archaeological materials from Hungary to the Caucasus and Anatolia.*

*She ran a faunal laboratory at the Aquincum Roman Museum from 1987 to 2007. During that time, she organized two exhibitions, one explicitly dealing with the multifarious ways non-human animals and humans interacted with each other during the Roman period. She began teaching at the Central European University in the Medieval Studies Department, then located in Budapest, in 1998. She concentrated on subjects like animal-human interactions and material culture theory applied to medieval materials. During that time she founded the Medieval Animal Data-network which produced several edited volumes, a blog (<https://mad.hypotheses.org>) on the Hypotheses blog space and organized numerous conference sessions on the same topic at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds in England. She officially retired from university teaching in July 2022 but will continue as a Visiting Professor for one more year at Central European University, now re-located in Vienna in Austria.*

*She founded the worked bone research group (WBRG) within the umbrella organization of the International Council of Archaeozoology (ICAZ). She has published numerous articles and edited several volumes concerned with various aspects of the complex interactions in different prehistoric and historic periods between animals and the humans that surround them.*

**Panel 2, Living with Animals. Thursday, 11 May: 13.30–15.00.**

### **Harriet Evans-Tang, 'Medieval Icelandic sagas as vehicles for knowledge exchange'**

The sagas of medieval Iceland, compiled into manuscripts in the thirteenth–sixteenth centuries, are narratives primarily concerned with communities and individuals in Viking-age Iceland. They are texts that both have their roots in earlier orally-transmitted stories, and that are adapted and embellished to be valuable products to the societies in which they are consumed. Both Viking-age and medieval societies in Iceland were multispecies communities, and these sagas might also have acted as knowledge exchange narratives, teaching generations of Icelanders about the importance of positive relationships with domestic animals, especially cattle and horses, and different practices of care. Early Icelandic laws show an intense interest in animal-human interaction and recognise the careful attention that needed to be paid to these domestic animals – but it is also the case that distaste, or lack of ability seems to be recognised as leading some animals to have been neglected or harmed.

This paper will draw on the survey work conducted for the COHABITing with Vikings project to review stories from the Sagas of Icelanders in which the narrative seems to centre the animal experience and provide advice around how to practice good animal care. It argues that at the core of these episodes are stories of animal-human interactions that recognise the importance of



working with animal agency, prioritising animal knowledge, and benefitting from mutual interspecies learning, especially around animal suffering.

*Harriet Evans Tang completed her PhD in Medieval Studies at the University of York in 2017, and is currently a postdoctoral research associate at Durham University, working on the project: Cohabiting with Vikings: Social Space in Multispecies Communities. She works on animal-human interactions and relationships in medieval literature, law, society, and material culture and her book Animal-Human Relationships in Medieval Iceland: From Farm-Settlement to Sagas is now available.*

### **Shweta Rani, 'The Urban and the Pathological: What mosquitoes tell us about the city'**

My work trails the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the vector of dengue, to trace the intersection of civic, social, ecological, and political in the everyday life of Delhi. Since 1996 the Indian capital city has been facing almost a yearly outbreak of dengue, a mosquito-borne viral infection. The public health authorities work in the relative absence of concrete data. Hence, the official gaze largely focuses on the areas considered inherently 'dirty'- areas at the margin of the city populated by working-class migrants, and Muslims, living in the unauthorized colonies. The residents of such areas however have to deal with the absence of basic urban infrastructure on one hand while also being under the stringent administrative glare for pest control.

Both the inhabitants of these areas as well as their administrators express the ungovernable stubbornness of such regions using the expression '*khula* area'. *Khula* (literally open) signifies the openness of these areas to the flow of materials, bodies, and consequently infections across interstate borders. Urban dwellers narrate their vulnerability through this expression while administrators and frontline workers use it in exasperation, highlighting their frustration with the area and its inhabitant. The paper will present the semiotics of the *khula* area to explore the way a city is imagined, inhabited, and governed. My work attempts to understand the city through the prism of the pathological and all things that fall within its shadow.

*Shweta Rani is Doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. Her PhD explores the relationship between city and epidemics through ethnographic focus on the dengue—a mosquito-borne epidemic in Delhi. Her academic interest lies in human-non human relationships, medical anthropology, urban studies, and science and technology studies.*

*She has worked as Hindi editor at Sabapedia.org- on online, open repository for Indian culture and heritage. She has also written for variety of platforms such as collaborative blogs, radio, and vernacular newspapers. Her recent academic writings have appeared in the journals such as Economic and Political Weekly and Contributions to Indian Sociology.*

### **Panel 3, Learning about Animals: Whales and Horses. Friday, 12 May: 13.00–15.00.**

#### **Vicki Szabo, 'Cache-as-cache can: stranded and stored whales in premodern Iceland'**

Medieval and early modern Icelanders relied upon whales. They washed ashore every year through natural causes, by a fisherman's lucky shot, or even being driven ashore. Every year along the northern coast, cetaceans both large and small drifted or were driven upon rocky shoals and sandy beaches, often in inconvenient places and at inconvenient times, but landowners, fishermen, tenant farmers and more would make time to ensure those rich resources were retrieved. In good years, lots of whales were butchered, products were divided, cached, and even sold, while bad years resulted in competition, legal battles, and physical conflict over this valued resource. Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, the whales that drifted ashore, though, may have differed in species composition. Rorquals, Icelanders' favored species, were still present, but many smaller



species had disappeared. This paper considers the evidence for and mechanics of whale strandings in Iceland during the Little Ice Age. Historical evidence from northern Iceland reveals well-managed and precise strategies for division of whale products. Sagas depict worst case scenarios when division goes awry, when troll-women intercede, and when whales become scarce. However, molecular data tells a new story, revealing a demographic transformation of species present in Icelandic waters and a species contraction by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. How did medieval and early modern Icelanders account for and adapt to such a transition? This short study of cetacean resources reconsiders the accessibility of cetaceans, a one-time staple that possibly became a mere supplement during the climate shifts of the early modern era.

*Dr. Vicki Szabo, author of *Monstrous Fishes and the Mead Dark Sea* (Brill 2008), is an associate professor of ancient, medieval, and environmental history at Western Carolina University. Her current research focuses on interdisciplinary reconstruction of medieval Norse exploitation of cetaceans through archaeology, history and ancient DNA analysis, funded by the Arctic Social Sciences Program at the National Science Foundation. She has also received funding from the Fulbright Foundation, the Society of Antiquaries of London, the AAAS, and the American Philosophical Society. Szabo is currently working on a monograph focusing on medieval and early modern wildlife.*

### **Erica Steiner, “*cymeð wynsum stenc of his innoþe*”: An examination of *The Whale* and other odoriferous sea-monsters’**

An important part of the description of the eponymous whale in this poem from the *Exeter Book* is that it emits a startlingly sweet odour by means of which it entices its unknowing prey to their doom. This is then expanded upon by the poet into an allegory about those who are drawn into temptation by something which appears to be pleasant, but is in fact a screen for the machinations of the Devil. However, this is not how an actual whale would have behaved in the real world, using scent as a hunting technique. It could be argued that neither the poet nor his audience had any experience or knowledge of living whales, otherwise how such a description have been believed? However, *The Whale* is not unique within medieval literature, as there are a number of other sea-monsters who similarly were thought to lure their prey by means of emitting a pleasant odour. This paper will examine a number of these cognate medieval and early modern sources – from the Leviathan to the Kraken, Jasconius to the Hafgufa, and other lesser known traditions from across Northern Europe.

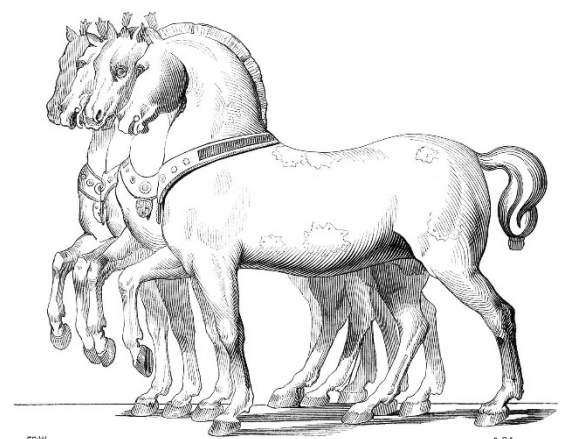
*Erica is a MPhil candidate in Celtic Studies at the University of Sydney and her research explores the history and historiography of ancient and medieval Insular tattooing. Her previous degrees include a BA (Hons) in Medieval Studies and a BSc in Marine Geophysics. Her other research interests broadly incorporate the early medieval history of northern and central Europe, the emerging field of geomorphology, and medievalism more broadly.*

A ‘series’ of three woodcuts produced in 1534 by Hans Baldung, a contemporary and friend of Albrecht Dürer, has simultaneously entranced and frustrated generations of art historians: entranced, because of the images’ astoundingly unique subject matter; and frustrated, because of their stubborn resistance to satisfactory interpretation. Each sheet, carefully signed and dated by the Strasbourg artist, depicts a herd of horses in a forest. The animals’ bodies are attentively observed and delineated as they engage in various activities, including a stallion unsuccessfully attempting to mate with a recalcitrant mare. The art historical interpretation of these images follows two main trajectories: as a critique of sexuality, a powerful force of nature that brings humans down to the level of beasts; and as a commentary on the relationship between art and nature.

**Pia Cuneo, 'Horses in Motion, Knowledge in Motion: Art, Science, and the Equine Body in Hans Baldung's 1534 Woodcut 'Series' Horses in a Forest'**

Well-situated within contemporaneous discourses on human sexuality and on art, these interpretations are surely correct, but, I argue, leave other vital aspects of the images unaddressed. My paper proposes to add an additional strand of interpretation heretofore overlooked, namely the influence of 'scientific' inquiry and illustration on Baldung's prints. As part of a university-educated family; with clients and friends belonging to social, political, and cultural elites; working in one of the major centers in Southwest Germany both for publishing and for humanism: Baldung was perfectly placed to be familiar with projects involving the collection and cataloging of specimens from the natural world. The artist's observant renditions of the horses' bodies seen from different angles and engaged in various activities is, I argue, akin to how plants, animals, and even human bodies were situated on the pages of natural history and anatomical works. Recognizing how Baldung appropriated a scientific gaze in the artful construction of his horses, a gaze his viewers would have discerned and appreciated, is simultaneously to recognize how diverse systems of knowledge can be mobilized in order to shape information about horses and humans, and to enrich and pleurably complicate visual imagery and its subsequent interpretation.

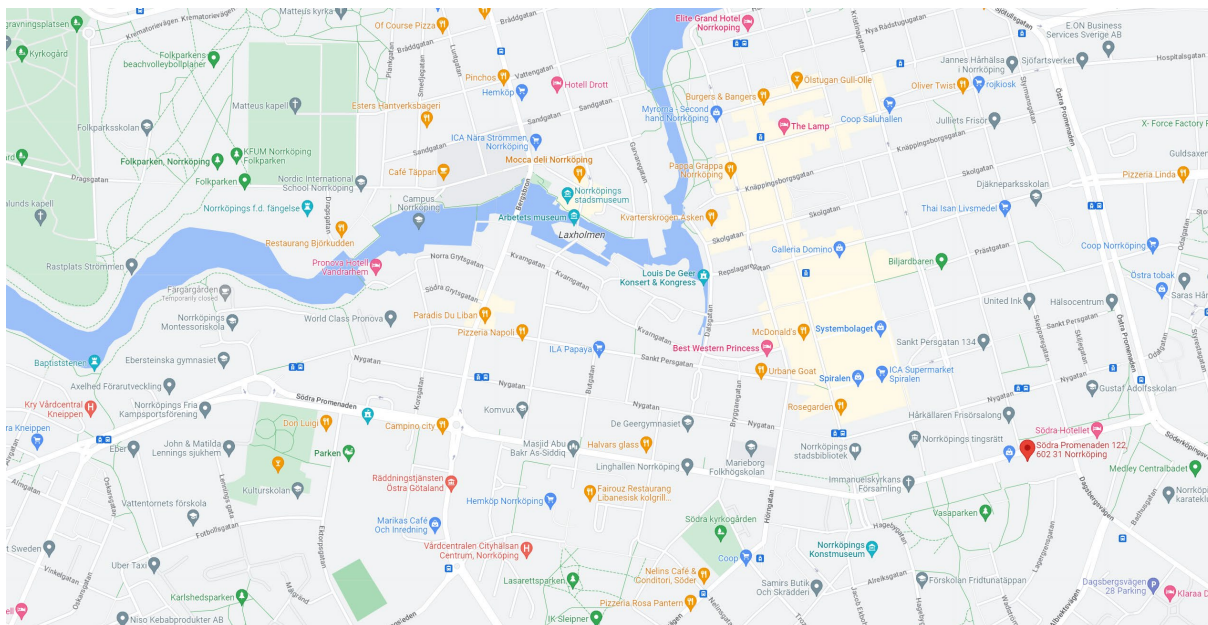
*Pia F. Cuneo is Professor Emerita of Art History at the University of Arizona where she taught classes in Renaissance art (Italian and Northern) for 31 years. She continues to publish on the nexus of art and hippology in early modern Germany and is currently writing a book on the equine imagery of Hans Baldung (d. 1545).*



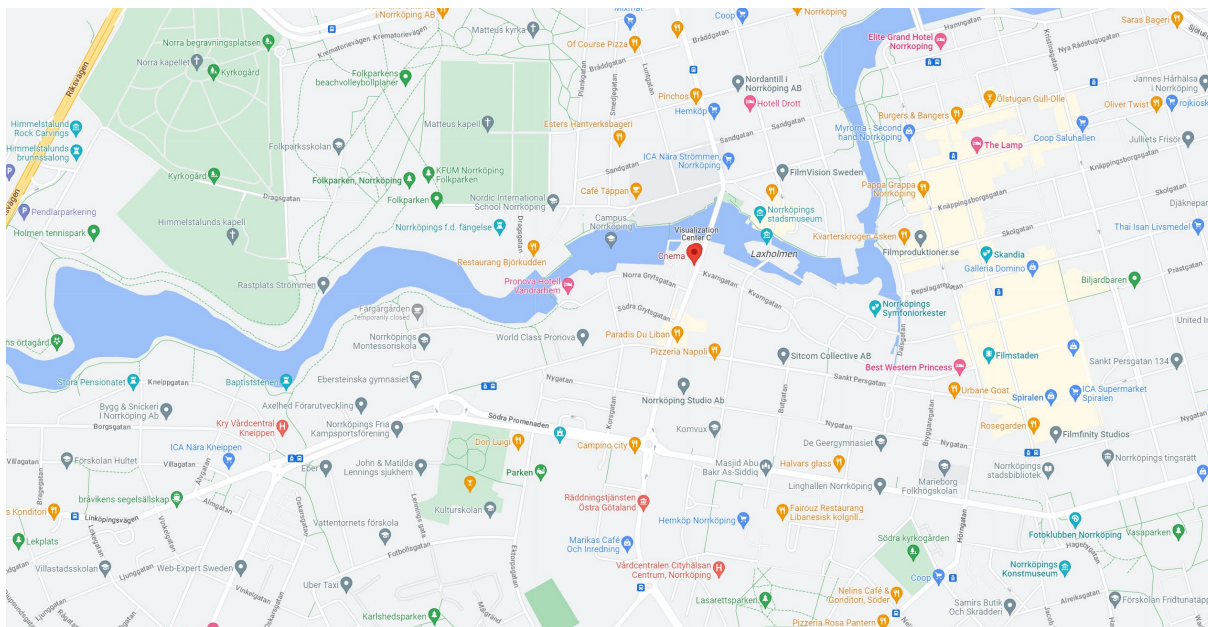


## Venues:

**Wadstömska Villan.** Address: 122 Södra Promenaden, 602 31 Norrköping. (Symposium Day 1)

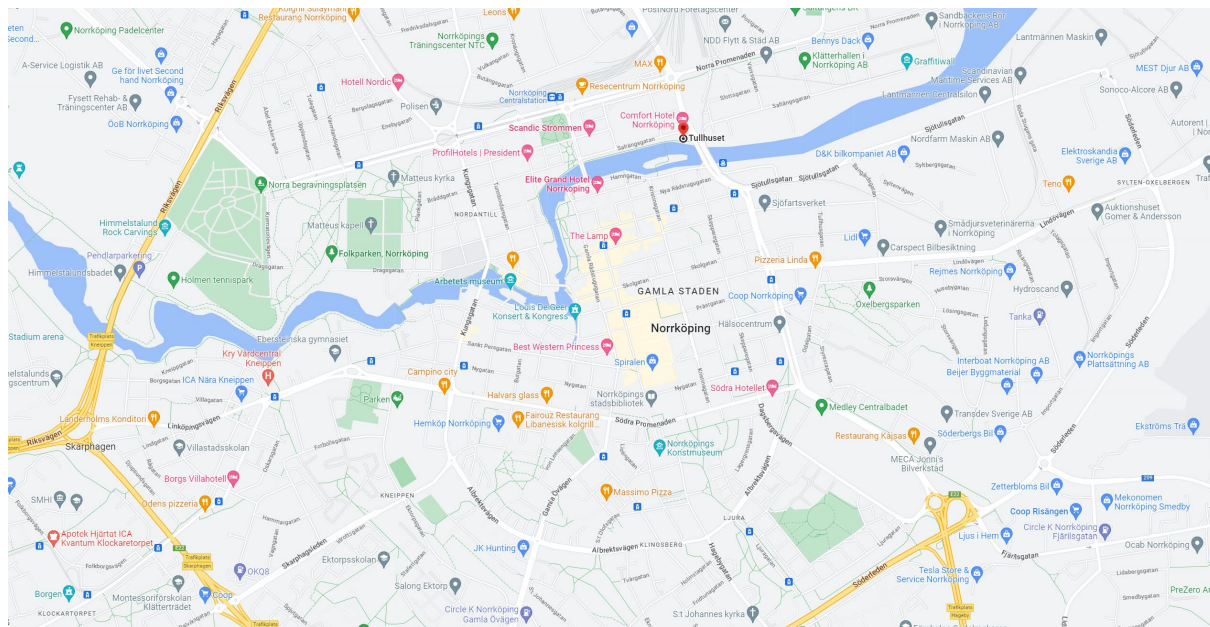


**Tvärsnittet.** Address: Kopparrhamaren 7, 601 74, Norrköping. (Symposium Day 2) Entrance next to Cinema.





**Brasserie Tullhuset.** Address: 30 Saltängsgatan, 602 22 Norrköping. (Symposium dinner on Day 1)



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