



HAYVANÂT NEWSLETTER

Hayvanât - Animal History Network

THINKING AND WRITING THE PAST BEYOND THE HUMAN

Launch of the Animal History Special Issue of Toplumsal Tarih Akademi

The Animal History special issue of **Toplumsal Tarih Akademi**, organized around the theme *Thinking and Writing the Past Beyond the Human*, was launched at a public event held at the History Foundation (Tarih Vakfı) in Istanbul on 3 June 2026.

Opening the event, guest editor **Deniz Dölek Sever** highlighted the central questions of animal history and emphasized that nonhuman animals should be understood not merely as passive subjects of history but as actors that have shaped historical processes. She noted that this perspective offers new ways of thinking about the past and challenges conventional human-centered narratives.

Editors **Cihangir Gündoğdu** and **İbrahim Can Usta** followed with brief remarks, thanking the institutions and individuals who contributed to the publication of the issue. They emphasized that despite coming from different disciplines and institutions, the contributors shared a common commitment to bringing nonhuman animals into historical analysis. The launch continued with short presentations by the authors and a lively question-and-answer session with the audience.

The special issue opens with an introductory essay by Cihangir Gündoğdu, Deniz Dölek Sever, and İbrahim Can Usta. It includes four research articles, five document analyses, and four book reviews.

In the research articles section, **Suraiya Faroqhi** examines the dependence of early modern Ottoman society on nonhuman animal labor and resources, exploring the military, economic, and social roles of horses, camels, and oxen. **Cansu Asarkaya** shifts the focus of animal history from land to water, examining the historical invisibility of aquatic worlds and discussing fish in relation to labor, violence, and exploitation.

Deniz İnce analyzes the “Merino Cause” of the early Republican period, investigating animal breeding policies and the transformation of animal bodies within broader projects of modernization. **Onur İnal** examines zootechnics as a key component of nation-building, state-led development, and economic nationalism, offering a new perspective on human-animal relations in the early Turkish Republic.

The document analysis section brings together diverse sources and approaches. **Canan Çakırlar** explores animal labor and welfare through zooarchaeological evidence from Çatalhöyük and Gordion. **Faisal Husain** reinterprets sixteenth-century Ottoman cadastral surveys (tahrir registers) from an animal history perspective, highlighting both their possibilities and limitations. **H. Seda Şenvarıcı** examines a 1918 law regulating animal slaughter and analyzes Ottoman policies of governing animal populations through the lens of biopolitics.



Büşra Arabacı investigates the changing meanings of scorpions in Ottoman archival records, tracing their transformation from symbols of danger to ingredients in medicinal remedies. **Orçun Nalezen**, drawing on a seventeenth-century imperial decree, examines sponges as historical actors and explores the relationships between marine life, local communities, and the Ottoman state.

The issue also includes four book reviews covering recent scholarship in animal history and environmental history. **İrfan Kokdaş** reviews Anatolian Livestock Trade in the Late Ottoman Empire by Yonca Köksal Özyaşar and Can Nacar; **Semih Çelik** discusses Samuel Dolbee’s *Locusts of Power*; **Özkan Akpınar** reviews Zozan Pehlivan’s *The Political Ecology of Violence*; and **İnci Bilgin Tekin** examines Dilek Bulut Sarıkaya’s *The Human-Animal Relationship in Pre-Modern Turkish Literature*.

Bringing together studies from the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, the Animal History special issue highlights the historical experiences of nonhuman animals while showcasing the growing body of scholarship on animal history, environmental history, and human-animal relations in Turkish academia.



hayvanat@bilgi.edu.tr



hayvanat.bilgi.org.tr



Emniyettepe, Kazım
Karabekir Caddesi, No 2/13,
Eyüpsultan, İstanbul

ANIMALS ON THE MOVE AUTHORS SPOKE AT A PANEL HELD AT THE RESEARCH CENTER FOR ANATOLIAN CIVILIZATIONS...

Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) hosted a panel titled *Tracing Animals in the Ottoman World: From Farm to Market, From Table to Waste* on 20 May 2026. The panel brought together the authors of *Animals on the Move: Tracing Livestock in the Ottoman Empire from Farm to Table to Waste*, edited by Can Nacar and Yonca Köksal Özayaşar and published by Koç University Press. At the event, attended by Can Nacar, Yonca Köksal, Fatma Melek Arıkan, Yener Koç, İrfan Kokdaş, Anıl Aşkın and Onat Ozan Ata, the roles of sheep, cattle and other farm animals in production, trade, urbanization and state policies across the Ottoman geography were discussed.

The panel considered animals not merely as economic resources but as historical actors that influenced the formation of the modern state, capitalist expansion, environmental crises and processes of urban transformation. Discussions ranging from pastures in Anatolia and the Balkans to Istanbul's regulations on milk, meat and waste revealed the extent to which human and animal lives were intertwined in the Ottoman world.

Read the rest of the article on the Hayvanât website.

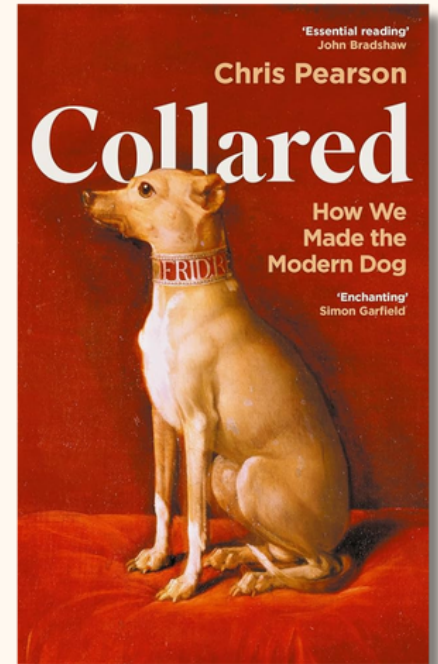


A view from the *Animals on the Move* panel held at ANAMED. The book's authors shared their assessments on animal mobility, labour, space and human-animal relations.

Book Review

Chris Pearson's *Collared: How We Made the Modern Dog* explores the historical transformation of the relationship between humans and dogs in the contexts of modernization, urbanization, class, race, gender, colonialism, public health and war. In his global narrative extending from prehistory to the present, Pearson considers dogs not merely as passive beings shaped by humans, but as historical actors who contributed to the formation of modern societies.

The book examines a broad range of subjects, from dogs' roles in hunting, protection and labour processes to pedigree breeding, from policies toward street dogs to the fight against rabies, and from pet culture to their military uses. In this way, it explains the making of the "modern dog" together with changes in human-dog relations.



Chris Pearson, *Collared: How We Made the Modern Dog* (London: Profile Books, 2024), 262 pp.

Cihangir Gündoğdu's book review evaluates *Collared's* contributions to animal history and human-animal studies, highlighting the book's global approach, method and effort to make dogs' historical agency visible.

The full review is available on the Hayvanât website.



CENTAURES

Rede internacional
de Estudos das
Culturas Equestres

CENTAURES International Network for the Study of Equestrian Cultures

The **CENTAURES** - International Network for the Study of Equestrian Cultures, which aims to examine the historical, social, and cultural dimensions of relations between humans and horses and other equids, was established in 2026. Bringing together researchers from different countries and disciplines, the network seeks to investigate how relations between humans and equids have been shaped in different historical periods and sociocultural contexts.

The establishment of **CENTAURES** is based on long-running research projects, scholarly events, publication initiatives, and international collaborations among researchers from Brazil and other countries. One important outcome of these activities was the book *Rédeas, cabrestos e centauros: culturas equestres e conexões plurais entre humanos e cavalos na América Latina*, edited by Miriam Adelman and Ester Liberato Pereira and published in 2025.

Bringing together researchers from history, anthropology, sociology, physical education, literary studies and related fields, the network addresses equestrian cultures in their historical, social, political, economic and environmental dimensions. Its research areas include popular equestrian cultures, sport, cultural heritage, memory, rural life, Indigenous and traditional communities, gender, race, human-horse relations and current transformations in agricultural production.

CENTAURES regards equestrian cultures not merely as practices created by humans, but as a living cultural heritage shaped by mutual interaction among humans, animals, spaces, institutions and material conditions. The network's approach draws on "multispecies" and "more-than-human" perspectives that carry social and historical relations beyond the human. In this direction, it aims to make visible the central role of human-horse relations in the historical formation of Brazilian and South American societies in particular.

Founded by Ester Liberato Pereira (UNIMONTES), Miriam Adelman (UFPR), Caterina Rea (UNILAB) and Arandú Maia (UFSC), CENTAURES aims to create an international and interdisciplinary field of study that supports collaborative research, academic exchange and the training of new researchers. The network's website is under development. Researchers, students and everyone interested in the subject are invited to follow its activities and participate in new academic collaborations.



Contact: centaures.network@gmail.com

FROM THE HAYVANÂT ARCHIVE: THE MEMORY OF THE MERINO SHEEP



These metal tokens, bearing a figure of a merino ram together with the inscription **"S.B. Merinos Factory Employees and Workers' Cooperative"** on one side and the words "Internal Credit Token" on the other, are striking objects from the factory's world of production and everyday life that have survived to the present. The fact that they are dated 1951 and have different denominations of 25, 250 and 500 kuruş suggests that they were not ordinary souvenir tokens, but internal credit instruments used for purchases and settlements within the cooperative. The placement of the ram's head on the tokens' common face makes the merino sheep visible not only as an animal supplying the factory's raw material, but also as a symbol of the institution's economic and social identity.

Merino sheep breeding was one of the important components of the early Republic's policies to develop the domestic textile industry, reduce foreign dependence and strengthen the national economy. As **Deniz Ince** has shown, the "Merino Cause" was not only an economic initiative aimed at producing fine wool; it also involved making sheep bodies more "productive" through crossbreeding, selective breeding, artificial insemination and veterinary supervision. **Onur İnal**'s study shows that zootechnical policies were intertwined with economic nationalism, statism and nation-building, and that control over animals' bodies and reproductive capacities was tied to the ideal of creating a modern and productive "new animal." The 1951 date on the tokens also suggests that this regime of production and management established in the early Republican period continued into later years.



Bursa Merino Factory

These metal credit tokens also constitute a small archive opening onto the intertwined history of animal labour and human labour. The wool grown on the bodies of merino sheep was transformed into yarn and cloth through the knowledge, skill and physical labour of factory workers. The inscription "employees' and workers' cooperative" shows that workers' lives were organized around the factory not only in the sphere of production, but also in the processes through which consumption and daily needs were met. Internal credit tokens were among the material instruments of this economic and social order that bound workers to the institution.



The figure of the ram at the centre of the object also opens the way for not limiting the boundaries of labour history to humans. Merino sheep were incorporated into the production process not only through their wool, but through their bodies, reproductive capacities and entire lives. For this reason, the tokens make it possible to think of animals not only as the source of raw material, but as the nonhuman labourers of industrial production, and even, from the perspective of an expanded class history, as nonhuman components of the working class. Thus, a shared but unequal labour regime becomes visible, extending from the productive bodies of anima

Sources: Deniz İnce, “‘Hammaddeyi Sırtında Yetiştirenler’: Merinos Koyunları ve Erken Cumhuriyet Rejiminin ‘Merinos Davası,’” *Toplumsal Tarih Akademisi*, sayı 8 (2026), 41–58; Onur İnal, “Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi’nde Zootečni ve İdeoloji,” *Toplumsal Tarih Akademisi*, sayı 8 (2026), 59–87.