



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

22nd Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference

*“All things that the black earth
feeds”: Animals and Humans*

Hosted by the Department of Ancient Mediterranean
and Near Eastern Studies

Programme



May 7th, 2022

The University of British Columbia
x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) Territory

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The conference organizers would like to acknowledge that this event is taking place on the unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people. These traditional territories and their resources were stolen from the x^wməθk^wəyəm nation for use by settlers. The ongoing settler colonialism perpetuated by the university continues to negatively impact members of the x^wməθk^wəyəm nation, and Indigenous peoples who go to school and work on this campus in a multitude of ways. Some examples of the harm experienced by Indigenous peoples on campus are erasure, tokenization, or overt racism. As we discuss the relationship between humans and animals, we invite everyone to consider how their own positionality has shaped their understanding of this topic.

Many of the ideas expressed in this land acknowledgement draw upon Justin Weibe and K. Ho's excellent series from 2014 on settler colonialism at UBC (<https://thetalon.ca/an-introductionto-settler-colonialism-at-ubc-part-one/>).

If you are interested in learning more about the practice of land acknowledgements, native-land.ca has compiled a number of resources on the subject.

SCHEDULE

8:30 – 9:00 AM (PDT) Questions/Registration

9:00 – 9:20 AM Opening Remarks

9:20 – 10:45 AM Panel 1: Animal Welfare

- *Selena Ross (Rutgers University)*: Practical Compassion: Animal Welfare in the Roman Agronomists
- *Anna Folland (Uppsala University)*: Does Animal Welfare Have a Place in Sustainable Development?
- *Tashi Treadway (Johns Hopkins University)*: Paging Dr. Chiron: An Analysis of Human-Horse Relations through Veterinary Medicine
- Q&A

10:45 – 10:55 AM Coffee Break

10:55 – 11:50 AM Panel 2: Greek Art

- *Cassius Di Maria (McMaster University)*: Representation of the Horse in the Greek Geometric Period
- *Joseph Bringman (University of Washington)*: Contrasting Heroics on the Fiercest Beasts Vase: The βίη-μῆτις Binary Expressed in Clay
- Q&A

11:50 AM – 12 PM Break

12 – 1:10 PM Keynote Address: *Dr. Daniel Ogden (University of Exeter)*: The Ancient (and Medieval) Werewolf

1:10 – 2:10 PM Lunch Break

2:10 – 4 PM Panel 3: Philosophy and Theology

- *Faith McFadden (University of South California):* Wolf-walking in Plato's *Republic*
- *Zihang Chen (Columbia University):* Animalibus homo excellit: an anthropocentric reading of Boethius
- *Aidan Cyr (Dalhousie University):* Christ as the Passover Lamb in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Book of Exodus
- *Lilach Somberg (University of British Columbia):* Bearer of Secrets: Hoopoe Folklore in Rabbinic Texts
- Q&A

4 – 5:25 PM Panel 4: Literary Tradition

- *Julia DaSilva (University of British Columbia):* Compost Dough for Companion Species
- *Aurélie Bezacier (University of Toronto):* Inter-species Dynamics in 19th-Century South African "Trophy-Books"
- *Katy O'Malley (University of British Columbia):* Divine Creatures: Leonardo da Vinci's Codex on the Flight of Birds
- Q&A

5:25 – 5:40 PM Closing Remarks

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Professor Daniel Ogden

Professor of Ancient History

Research Associate, Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies

Honorary Research Fellow, UNISA

University of Exeter

“The Ancient (and Medieval) Werewolf”



Daniel Ogden is Professor of Ancient History in the University of Exeter. He has previously taught in Hobart and William Smith Colleges, New York, Oxford University, and Swansea University (in Wales). He has research interests in: the Hellenistic dynasties; Greek religion and magic; and traditional narratives in antiquity. His recent books include *The Legend of Seleucus* (CUP, 2017); *The Werewolf in the Ancient World* (OUP, 2021); *The Dragon in the West* (OUP, 2021); *The Strix-Witch* (CUP, 2021); and, as editor, *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (OUP, 2021). Next to appear is (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander the Great* (CUP).

ABSTRACTS

Aurélie Bezacier (University of Toronto): Inter-species Dynamics in 19th-Century South African "Trophy Books"

During this presentation, I will apply critical methodologies to examine how the 19th century hunting book defined the terms of a relationship between humans and animals built at the intersection of gender, race and species dynamics. The end of the 19th century was considered a “golden age” of safari hunting in Africa. Today, African biodiversity suffers from the consequences of the hunting practices of European hunters who travelled for the purpose of killing as many animals as possible. Early hunting narratives had a major influence on the reifying and idealising of the relationship of Africans with other species as well as in attracting further hunters. Some of them, like William Harris Cornwallis, became much admired as “great white hunters”. Cornwallis was a captain in the British army stationed in Bombay. His account of the 5-month safari trip he undertook in 1836 titled *The Wild Sports* is the first English book exclusively dedicated to hunting in South Africa. In the historiography, Harris is referred to as the first “Great White Hunter”. He was celebrated for his contribution to the European knowledge of African species and his numerous “catches” were used in natural History museums.

Much like a “naturalised” trophy, the book puts the time on hold and turns a subject into a collectible object that re-enacts the supposed triumph of the “great white hunter”. This analysis of a copy of the 5th edition of *The Wild Sports* (1852) conserved at the Fisher Rare Book Library at University of Toronto, which includes 26 chromolithographs based on Cornwallis’s sketches, will critically engage with the ambivalent lines of continuity traced between liking, seeing, visualising, sketching, capturing, killing, preserving, and consuming in the European relationship with other animals from Southern Africa.

Please click on this link to view a digitalised copy of the 5th edition of *The Wild Sports* (1852):

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924028683971/page/n468/mode/thumb>

❖ **Joseph Bringman (University of Washington): Contrasting Heroics on the Fiercest Beasts Vase: The βίη μῆτις Binary Expressed in Clay**

Many Greek vases that depict heroes engaged in battle also feature attacking animals, such as lions versus boars, as visual similes of heroic combat (Markoe 1989). There is a fifth century BCE pyxis (Beazley Archive 6382) whose lid depicts a boar being attacked from the front by a lion and from the rear by a leopard; I am calling this the Fiercest Beasts Vase after the Homeric collocation of those three animals (Il. 17.20-23). Considering that animal depictions could often serve as visual similes, I argue that the animal figures on this vase are to be interpreted as analogous to fighting heroes and that these three specific animals are an especially appropriate choice to convey heroic undertones. I interpret the scene synoptically as depicting two separate attack scenes and argue that the position in which the attacking felines are portrayed vis-à-vis their prey are to be interpreted as representing two distinct strains of Greek heroics: βίη (raw strength) and μῆτις (stratagem). The lion, attacking from the front, represents heroes who are notable for their raw strength (e.g., Achilles) and for forthrightly defeating their enemies by their raw strength just as lions overcome their prey. The leopard, attacking from the rear as befits a creature believed to ensnare its prey through deception (Aristotle Hist. an. 612a), represents heroes who succeed through deceit and stratagem (e.g., Odysseus). The binary opposition between strength and stratagem, particularly over the question of which was the superior means of being a hero, is a recurrent theme in Greek culture, including in an epic tradition that contrasted the heroic worth of Achilles and Odysseus in these very terms (Nagy 1999). And in this paper I argue that the Fiercest Beasts Vase expresses this contrast in heroics through how it portrays its lion, leopard, and boar.

❖ **Zihang Chen (Columbia University): Animalibus homo excellit: an anthropocentric reading of Boethius**

Animals are crucial to the 6th century church father Boethius in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, and he uses three ways to create and destroy the boundaries between animals and humans. First, animals are creatures of vice in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, (Houwen 2010) and in this the human body has greatest similarity to the animal body (De Cons IV, III, 15-18). Second, they are possessors of powerful sense perceptions which the human physiognomy fails to perform

(Cons, III, VIII, 7). Third, they demonstrate that the rational freedom of will, the *libertas arbitrii*, exclusive to humans, is similar to the judgmental faculty of animal perceptions, but one functions rationally, the other physically (Cons, V, 2). The last two can be identified with the Greek anthropocentric topos that man is unique (Newmyer, 2017).

These make Boethius questionable to the scholarly debate whether he is more Platonic than Christian (Marenbon 2003, 2014 Glei et. al 2010, Troncarelli 2014, Barron 2014, Donato 2013, Fischer 2010). A product of Late Antiquity, he obtains an elite education in the classics and Greek philosophy: his concept of the Divine as One is reminiscent of Neo-Platonism (Apul. De Dog. Pl, I, 5-7, Enn, 1.6), and his understanding of reason as the exclusive human *sensus* is Aristotelian, especially in Pol. I, 2. Nevertheless, by proposing to look jointly the animal and divine relations to humans, I argue for his Christian identity, that Boethius' humanity, the *condicio humana*, is the same as Augustinian original sin, albeit differently structured (Civ, XIII, 16), an exclusively human status struggling always in *Denkmöglichkeit* (possibility to conceive) and *Denknotwendigkeit* (obligation to conceive) to understand the Divine, yet never in completeness, (Jürgasch 2014), and always subject to the *Grenzziehung* (demarcation) and *Grenzüberschreitung* (border crossing) with animals (Friedrich, 2009).

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❖ ***Aidan Cyr (Dalhousie University): Christ as the Passover Lamb in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Book of Exodus***

Cyril of Alexandria (376–444 A.D.) was an Archbishop of Alexandria who figured most prominently during the Nestorian controversy (c. 428–431), a time in Church history whose primary focus was defining the person of Christ. As much as Cyril is known for his involvement in these debates, he was prior to this a prolific biblical commentator, with commentaries on the Old and New Testaments spanning a period of approximately sixteen years prior to 428. Of interest, however, are his 'elegant comments' (*glaphyra*) on the Pentateuch, especially those on the Passover Feast in the Book of Exodus.

Cyril frequently connects the Incarnation to the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. He also connects

the blessings of this redemption to the blessings of the Eucharist, since for him the bread and the wine are the true body and blood of Christ physically and spiritually present and received. In an interesting exegetical maneuver in his *Commentary on Exodus*, Cyril interprets the Passover lamb allegorically, connecting it to the New Testament Eucharist. There is nothing novel in the Christian interpretive tradition about seeing Christ as the Passover lamb foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but linking the very feast of that lamb to the New Testament Eucharist is noteworthy.

Cyril sees symbolism even in the text's description of the animal's parts, adding significance to the head, legs, feet, raw meat, and even the entrails. I shall endeavour to explain the reasons for why Cyril attributes such meaning to these specific parts of the animal in reference to Christ, and what this means for the sanctity of the sacrificial lamb as a *type* of Christ as Cyril understands it, to the end that "the entire knowledge of the mystery pertaining to Christ is to be received into the minds of believers," by such a sacrificial lamb.

❖ ***Julia DaSilva (University of British Columbia): Compost Dough for Companion Species***

This project considers the question of the relationship between literary representations of animals and human relations with "actual" animals, suggesting that an entry point through works of fantasy provides uniquely generative opportunities for holding the tension between the necessity of making meaning as humans and the simultaneous necessity of responsibility towards the extra-human other, of openness to a world containing genuinely other-than-human agencies. I take as a focal point animal characters three works of children's fantasy: the amphibious Marsh-wiggle in C. S. Lewis' *Silver Chair*, Matulli the black bear in Naomi Mitchison's *Travel Light*, and Mimsy the shrew in Brian Jacques' *Triss*—characters whose situation in worlds other than the one containing the actual animals its readers might encounter

leaves them, on the surface, standing in tenuous relations with "actual" animals. I enter these worlds through scenes that engage, in some way, the world of consumption, and use the device of a sourdough bread recipe for a feast constituted and attended by these three characters to explore how this very explicit distancing from the actual makes these texts uniquely productive for considering interspecies relations.

Every day, in preparation for this feast, the companion reader discards half of their sourdough starter, feeds it, and takes a little to use. For every limitation to be found in the engagement with

animality found in these texts, a sourdough method asks: what contradicts that limitation? What flows over? Just as it might be easy—and ultimately impossible—to resolve the tension of human-animal meaning-making by assuming it to be a genuine binary, it might perhaps be too easy to draw a binary between texts about or attempting to engage with actual animals and texts that simply use animals. The weaving of rising dough into the texts considered serves as an attempt to cultivate this sense of wonder necessary to interspecies openness while maintaining threads of critique: drawing on Donna Haraway’s conception of companion species that sits with the phrase at the root of “companion”—“with bread, at table” (11)—an invitation to stay with the trouble of *cum panis*: to pause and sit with an impossible sharing of bread.

❖ ***Cassius Di Maria (McMaster University): Representation of the Horse in the Greek Geometric Period***

At the beginning of the 12th century BCE, the Bronze Age Collapse was the impetus for the period of Ancient Greek History known as the Dark Ages. Among other regressions in Greek society, representational art all but vanished, and pottery painting became exclusively geometric. The horse was the first figure that we know to have reappeared on pottery in the Greek world, and moving forward through Greek art, it remained one of the most popular figures in all media. In representational art across the Greek world, the only figure to appear more commonly is the human. Examining some of the earliest examples of post-Bronze Age Collapse horses, which are concentrated in the Late Geometric Period, we will see that the horse played an important role in Greek society, and that the importance of this role is evident in the art that depicts it. As the Geometric period progresses, we see an increase in the diversity of ways in which horses are depicted, and these depictions correlate with the use horses had in Greek society at the time. We can observe their depictions evolving from the basic standing horse to the horse drawn chariot to, more rarely, the horse and rider. We know that during this time, the art of horseback riding was not yet a significant aspect of Greek warfare —however, the horse-drawn chariot held a place of pride in the roughly contemporaneous Homeric Epics. In this way, we stand to observe the place of the horse in Greek society towards the end of the Geometric Period through the prominence it was given in their art. Tracking the fascination with horses across this period, we can see that it is an animal which held deep cultural meaning for the Greeks, and their art evolved to reflect that.

❖ ***Anna Folland (Uppsala University): Does Animal Welfare Have a Place in Sustainable Development?***

An important criticism of the standard theoretical framework of sustainability is that it is blind to, or insufficiently sensitive to, animal welfare. On the standard framework, sustainability is constituted by a social, an environmental and an economic pillar. The issue is that the regard for animal welfare does not seem to fit into any of those three dimensions. Since the social and economic dimensions are about promoting justice and continued economic growth of human societies, the environmental dimension seems to be the most natural candidate. However, Kate Rawles (2006) argues, the focus of environmental protection is with eco-systems, habitats and ecological collectives.[1] This means, Rawles claims, that even the environmental dimension is incapable of sufficiently protecting the welfare of individual animals and, as a result, the three-pillar understanding of sustainability “has systematically neglected animal welfare” (p. 208). Rawles suggests that we abandon the standard three-pillar view and accept animal welfare as a fourth dimension of sustainability. In this paper, I argue against that proposal in favor of an alternative strategy. I show that concern for animal welfare fits into the social dimension of the three-pillar conception of sustainability. My argument is that we should, for independent reasons, accept that wellbeing (prudential value) is a social value, which social sustainability is concerned with. As there are no good reasons to limit social sustainability to concern the wellbeing of individual humans only, I argue, the wellbeing of individual non-human animals is a constitutive part of social sustainability. I conclude by indicating why this strategy is simpler, better able to satisfy important conditions of adequacy for a theory of sustainability, and less controversial than sustainability scholars have assumed.

[1] Rawles, K. (2006). Sustainable Development and Animal Welfare: The Neglected Dimension. In *Animals, Ethics and Trade*. Routledge.

❖ ***Faith McFadden (University of South California): Wolf-walking in Plato's Republic***

The wolf, by and large in the literature of ancient Greece, maintains negatives valences: he is Homer’s savage, raw-eating pack, Aeschylus’ hungry Aegisthus among the Atreid lions,

Archilochus' double-crossing Lycambes, Aesop's incorrigible sheep-thief; and above all these, to Plato the wolf is a tyrant.

After Socrates' gadfly in the *Apology*, this is perhaps one of the best-known Platonic interactions with the animal: in *Republic* 8, Plato metaphorically likens the tyrant the wolf, drawing on an Acadian myth of a man turning into a wolf after tasting human blood.[1]

Plato's connection between the tyrant and wolf is often analyzed in terms of appetite (Arruzza 2019), which draws on the rich history of literary depictions of the wolf as *ōmofagos* (ὠμοφάγος, raw-eating) and *hōmofagos* (self-eating). Despite the pack's suggestions of equality, this facet of lupine hunger renders the wolf as antithetical to the polis (Detienne & Svenbro 1989). Because of his appetite, the wolf is conceptualized as symbolic of failed democracy—which Plato re-engenders in the *Republic*.

But the wolf is not only a creature known for its appetite, but also (as Archilochus, Pindar, and Aristotle reveal) as one who walks a crooked path; the Greek conceptualize the wolf as symbolic of the oath-breaker, the switch between a friend and an enemy.

I suggest that both of these motifs are operative in Plato's conceptualization of the wolf: the tyrant is wolf not only because of his (*h*)*ōmofagos* appetite, but because the betrayal of a position of trust: the man whom the *demos* "sets before all others" (*Rep.*8.565e10) and is their "defender" (*Rep.*8.565d5), is the same one who metaphorically feasts on the *demos*. If we broaden our understanding of Plato's symbolic concept of the wolf, then the lupine imagery found in *Republic* 3 becomes cohesive through the entirety of the dialogue.

[1] Isn't it the same, then, with a popular leader? Once he really takes over a docile mob, he does not restrain himself from shedding a fellow-citizen's blood. But by leveling the usual false charges and bringing people into court, he commits murder...and after that, isn't such a man inevitable fated either to be killed by his enemies or to be a tyrant, transformed from a man into a wolf? [*Rep.*8.565e-566a; trans. Reeves]

❖ ***Katy O'Malley (University of British Columbia): Divine Creatures: Leonardo da Vinci's Codex on the Flight of Birds***

Through an analysis of Leonardo da Vinci's flying machines, bird drawings, and passages of his notebooks positioned in relation to the early modern debate on the existence of the animal

soul, I argue that da Vinci (1452 – 1519) took on a staggeringly modern view of the human-animal divide that complicates the ‘natural order’ of man over the ‘brutes’ popular in Renaissance thought. I look at the proliferation of not only bird images and flying machines but da Vinci’s descriptions of animal behaviors that give animals the capacity for reason, emotion, and moral and compassionate decision-making, elevating animals to the realm of the human and even the divine, or as Arielle Saiber puts it, “placing all life on a level field, all things as micro-reflections of a macro-whole.”¹ In order to support this argument, I focus on the symbolism of wings in da Vinci’s writings, which refer to flight as “a gift from heaven”² and consistently reference the ancient Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus, the ultimate tale of man’s descent, moral failings, and lack of reason. Da Vinci’s belief in the perfection in nature, evidenced through his imitation of bird wings to give humans flight, is coupled with a deep questioning of the construct of human in relation to nature as well as an encouraging view that progress, equivalent in da Vinci’s eyes to flight, is achieved only in kinship and partnership between man and animal: that shared embodiment gives humans wings.

[1] Arielle Saiber, “How Leonardo Da Vinci’s Love for Animals Influenced His Work,” Artsy, July 1, 2019, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-leonardo-da-vinci-animal-lover>.

[2] Leonardo da Vinci, “The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci - Complete,” Gutenberg, April 3, 2021, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5000/pg5000-images.html#id05147>.

❖ ***Selena Ross (Rutgers University): Practical Compassion: Animal Welfare in the Roman Agronomists***

The relationships between animals and people in the ancient Roman world were as varied as they are in our modern society: from cruelty for entertainment to devotion toward a beloved pet. Livestock – by which I primarily mean cattle, sheep, goats, and swine – occupied a position somewhere in between these extremes. For the people engaged in animal husbandry, livestock were tools, daily companions, and ultimately food. We see these complex relationships reflected in a range of literary sources, from epic poetry to prose treatises on agriculture. Through a close analysis of these latter sources, I argue that, while the majority of Romans did not view the humane treatment of animals as a moral imperative, animal welfare was a key consideration throughout

the practice of animal husbandry.

The three Roman agronomists whose work survives – Cato the Elder, Varro, and Columella – all discuss animal husbandry. While there are countless differences between their works, they are united in their pronounced goal of educating other Roman property owners on how best to manage and utilize all their agricultural resources, from land to labor. They make it clear that the way to secure the best results from a living being – whether human or animal – is to treat them well, thereby ensuring their health and cooperation. Compassion is not granted for its own sake to livestock any more than it is to the often-enslaved people raising the animals; sentience and even intelligence are relevant only insofar as they provide an avenue for manipulation. Nonetheless, the animals did undoubtedly benefit from welfare measures, even though this was not the most explicit goal. A better understanding of the diverse motives and outcomes concerning animal welfare not only enables us to better understand the practices of animal husbandry but also the lives of the people and animals engaged in it.

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❖ ***Lilach Somberg (University of British Columbia): Bearer of Secrets: Hoopoe Folklore in Rabbinic Texts***

The hoopoe is a migratory bird native to the eastern Mediterranean, and it appears in art and literature of the region from earliest times. It makes an appearance in rabbinic literature, in which it is associated with King Solomon. In this paper, I will present two stories of the hoopoe's encounters with King Solomon, one from the Babylonian Talmud and one from the second Targum to Esther. In these texts, as in other ancient folklore, the hoopoe holds secrets; what we see in these two stories is the isolation on the one hand of the hoopoe's secret powers in the Talmudic narrative, and on the other its secret knowledge in the Targumic narrative. The former proves disastrous for the hoopoe, whereas the latter enables the hoopoe to be partially humanized. This resonates with current insights into human relationships with nature, which can be destructive when focused on extracting power, but may engender kinship when focused on knowledge.

❖ ***Tashi Treadway (Johns Hopkins University): Paging Dr. Chiron: An Analysis of Human-Horse Relations through Veterinary Medicine***

Horse-human relations are corporeally intertwined. Human society developed alongside and thanks to domesticated horses. One area that showcases this codependence is veterinary medicine. The English word “veterinary” ultimately derives from the Latin word *veho* meaning to carry or bear. Veterinary medicine has been carried out by humans to care for animals who bear their bodies for human use. The horse and human carried each other throughout history and developed the human and natural world in various ways, such as the horse’s survival from extinction[1].

To explore this co-dependence of human and equine bodies, we will examine Chiron, the half-man, half-horse of Greek myth. Chiron was the founder of medicine for both humans and animals. According to Greek fragment T71 Suda χ 267[2], Chiron wrote about veterinary medicine, *Ἱππιατρικόν* which is a combination of *hippos* and *iatros*. Various ancient Greek and Roman sources show that caring for each other’s bodies has changed the way humans and horses live concerning the wild. Horses were tamed by humans and then used by humans for traveling further into the wild to claim. Chiron stands at the intersection of wildness and non-wildness due to his

dual nature and his profession as a doctor. Medicine engages with the wildness of a body bringing it under control. This paper demonstrates that human-horse relations and the shared wildness are mediated through veterinary medicine.

My research stems from literature such as Carolyn Willekes's analysis of the ancient horse. Klaus-Dietrich Fischer and James Yeates provide surveys of ancient veterinary medicine sources, while Warren Dawson and Justina Gregory provide specific histories of Chiron.

[1] Carolyn Willekes, *The Horse in the Ancient World: From Bucephalus to the Hippodrome* (London, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016): 1.

[2] Hesiod, *Theogony. Works and Days. Testimonia*, edited and translated by Glenn W. Most, Loeb Classical Library 57 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007): 206; IV p. 803.3 Adler.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference is a volunteer-organized event. We would like to thank our voluntary chairs and the members of the 2021/22 Organization Committee:

- ❖ Lilly Hickox (Co-chair, Treasurer)
- ❖ Setenay Mufti (Co-chair, Logistics Coordinator)
- ❖ Kate Minniti (Co-chair, Webmaster)

The Committee also wishes to thank Katherine Huemoeller, our faculty supervisor; the Department of Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies; and the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for their generous and ongoing support of this conference.

*****Title Page image credits: man with out-stretched arms standing between two chariots; masses of chevrons in the field as filling decoration. Late Helladic or Mycenaean amphoroid krater, Furumark type FS 54 (ca. 1375-1300 BCE). British Museum 1898,1020.10. © The Trustees of the British Museum***