

SOAS Mule and Donkey Conference 2014

Island of Hydra, Greece
Friday 10 to Sunday 12 October 2014

An interdisciplinary conference on donkey, mule and hinny cultures worldwide.

VENUE: The New Town Hall [former OTE building], behind the clocktower at the harbourside.

PROGRAMME

[Arranged by day. Abstracts of the papers are found at the end of this document.]

FRIDAY MORNING:

Attendance at veterinary session of Greek Animal Welfare, with the Island's mules and donkeys.

SATURDAY – VENUE: New Town Hall

The history of the mule in Moroccan mountain tourism

Glen Cousquer [Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh] [[Abstract](#)]

The strange history of the Irish donkey

James Smyth [Queen's University, Belfast] [[Abstract](#)]

The use of donkeys and mules among the ancient North Arabian nomads in the light of the epigraphic evidence

Mohammad I. Ababneh [Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg] [[Abstract](#)]

The role of the donkey in the colonisation of Australia

Jill Bough [University of Newcastle, Australia] [[Abstract](#)]

EVENING SESSION:

VENUE – Melina Mercouri Hall at the harbourside

Open to the general public. This session will be in Greek and English.

6.30pm – Presentation of "Action Agenda" of Hydra's Muleteers

Presented by Argyris Kalamatianakis [Island of Hydra] and
Ed Emery [SOAS and Free University of Hydra]

[\[Poster\]](#) [\[Press statement\]](#)

7.30pm – The Caravans of the Himalayas [Film and talk]

Brigitte Blot [*L'âne voyageur*, France] [\[Abstract\]](#)

8.30pm – Film of the Donkeys and Mules of Santorini

SUNDAY 11 October 2014 – VENUE: New Town Hall

Invisible donkeys: the unsung role of the donkey in the Ancient Near East

Jill Goulder [University College London] [\[Abstract\]](#)

Owning a donkey on Hydra: When does life begin?

Corinna Seeds [Island of Hydra] [\[Abstract\]](#)

Veterinary work with mules and donkeys on Hydra

Elisa Geskou [Greek Animal Welfare] [\[Abstract\]](#)

The conquering Balkan mule, c.1700-1914

William Clarence-Smith [School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London] [\[Abstract\]](#)

Comparing the physiological and biochemical parameters of mules and hinnies to horses and donkeys

Amy McLean [North Carolina State University] [\[Abstract\]](#)

The use of mules in Eastern Turkey

Orhan Yilmaz *et al.* [Canakkale University] [\[Abstract\]](#)

The mule and donkey culture of the Island of Hydra: problems, prospects and possibilities
[Film and talk]

Ed Emery [School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London] [\[Abstract\]](#)

[This paper includes discussion of the Action Agenda prepared by the muleteers of Hydra]

Additional presentation *in absentia*:

An assessment of the welfare of working donkeys and mules using health and behaviour parameters in Punjab, Pakistan

ABSTRACTS

1. The use of donkeys and mules among the ancient north Arabian nomads in the light of the epigraphic evidence

Mohammad I. Ababneh [MLU Halle-Wittenberg]

ABSTRACT: The epigraphic material (i.e. inscriptions and drawings) of the ancient north Arabian Nomads, who existed almost between 200 B.C. and 300 A.D in northern Arabia, which is known as Safaitic inscriptions and drawings presents a clear image about their daily life (all its elements) and also is considered as a register of the environment that time. They were camel breeder nomads and they have donkeys and mules, this is clear through the appearance of the illustrations of these animals, it is shown in the drawings the dissimilar sizes of the donkeys, this means, there was more than one kind; the great-sized may be represent the mule. These animals have been mentioned in the inscriptions in different words as (*'r*, *'yr*), which mean equally “domestic or/and wild ass both female and male”, (*h.mr*) “ass or/and she-ass”, (*'tn*) “she-ass”, (*sh.ly*) “wild ass, mule” and (*bgl*) mule.

According to the nomad’s lifestyle and their objective of breeding donkeys, it seems to be that the donkeys and mules were used by herders as individual carrier; furthermore it has been used in plowing. This study aims to present an image about these animals through analyzing and comparing the evidence with other Semitic languages.

CV: Mohammad I. Ababneh 2004 PhD in Semitic Studies, Free University of Berlin- Germany, 1995 MA in Semitic Epigraphy, Yarmouk University – Jordan, 1990 BFA Fine Arts, Yarmouk University. The research field is Semitic inscriptions especially language, culture and history of northern Arabia in pre-Islamic times based on epigraphic materials as well as nomadic studies. He is working as researcher at MLU- Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

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2. The Caravans of the Himalayas [Film and talk]

Brigitte Blot [L’âne voyageur, France]

ABSTRACT: Brigitte Blot is an “indefatigable traveller”. As well as travelling throughout France with her own donkey, doing educational work, she has also filmed donkey caravans in the Himalayas. She will show a film about her travels in Nepal, directed by Patrick Kersalé.

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3. The role of the donkey in the colonisation of Australia

Jill Bough [University of Newcastle, Australia]

ABSTRACT: The contributions of donkeys to colonial societies have all too often been sidelined

or overlooked in official records and the history books. This is particularly the case in Australia where it is difficult to find records of donkeys in colonial times, and where their descendants are now persecuted as 'vermin' by government authorities. Although the role that other draught animals played in the opening up and economy of the colony has been recorded, that of the donkey has not been systematically researched before. This presentation gives an overview of my research into the history and use of donkeys in Australia based on my PhD : Value to vermin, the donkey in Australia. Although the first three donkeys arrived in New South Wales in 1793, they came into wider use with the opening up of Central and Western Australia in the 1860s as Europeans went in search of minerals and land. Great teams of donkeys were extensively employed until the late 1930s and beyond for freight haulage in semi-arid areas where horse and bullock teams perished.

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4. The conquering Balkan mule, c.1700-1914

William G. Clarence-Smith [SOAS, University of London]

ABSTRACT: In a very influential article, Traian Stoianovich ('The conquering Balkan Orthodox merchant,' *The Journal of Economic History*, 20, 2, 1960, pp. 234-313) illuminated the history of muleteers turned merchants, who were mainly Greek Orthodox Arumani (Vlachs) by religion and ethnicity. They set up a commercial empire that spanned the Balkans and beyond in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the reader searches in vain through the article for much about the mules themselves. As so often in historical writings in English, 'muleteers' turn out to have employed a variety of animals, and not just mules. Mules were very significant in the southern Balkans, but pack-horses became increasingly important to the north. An attempt is made here to explain this difference, and to explore the concealed history of how these animals were bred and marketed.

CV: William Gervase Clarence-Smith obtained his PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he is currently Professor of the Economic History of Asia and Africa. He edits the *Journal of Global History* (Cambridge University Press). He is researching and publishing on domestic animals in the 'Global South'. He also works on commodities, manufacturing, labour, and sexuality, with a special emphasis on Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

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5. The Pack Mule of the High Atlas Historical perspectives on their roles and worth

Glen Cousquer [Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh]

ABSTRACT:

Mountain tourism has emerged as a significant source of income for mountain communities across the High Atlas of Morocco. Today, almost every family living in the shadow of the Toubkal (4167m) owns a mule and it is the mule that allows the muleteer to seek work carrying luggage, trekking equipment and tourists.

The emergence of this sector can be traced back to the explorations of a number of travellers and

alpinists during the first half of the 20th Century. The number of visitors entering the Toubkal National Park remained small, however, until the incursion of a track in the 1950s. The local people at the time were subsistence farmers. Over the last three generations, the valley has seen artisanal mines open and close and agriculture switch to concentrate on apple, cherry and other high-value crops. As the local population and tourism demand have grown, tourism, construction and other industries – reliant on the mule – have emerged. Muleteering is thus a largely new activity.

This paper charts the changing role of the mule within these communities over a 95 year period and comments on how this, in turn, impacts on the mule's worth and welfare.

CV: Glen Cousquer is a veterinary surgeon and International Mountain Leader. He currently holds a research position in the Institute of Geography, at the University of Edinburgh. His research work focuses on professional practice, professionalism and animal welfare within the mountain tourism industry. He recently authored the new entry on 'Mountain Tourism' for the *Encyclopaedia of Tourism* (Routledge World Reference) as well as a range of other papers in various tourism journals. He has been working in Morocco since 2008. In his previous life, he worked as a wildlife vet before undertaking Masters Degrees in Outdoor Education and Educational Research.

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6. The mule and donkey culture of the Island of Hydra: problems, prospects and possibilities

Ed Emery [SOAS, University of London]

ABSTRACT: By a long-standing decision of the residents and municipality of Hydra, the principal transportation of goods by land is done by mules and donkeys, some owned by professional muleteers and some owned by private individuals. Exception is made for municipal lorries engaged in construction work, and garbage trucks for the (excessive) quantities of waste generated on the island. For some years I have been documenting the much under-valued work of the muleteers (*agogiates*), both photographing and filming. This year has seen the production of an Action Agenda for the muleteers, addressing the many problems that they face in pursuing their traditional livelihood. My paper presents that document, and outlines some of those problems, as well as possible avenues for solutions.

CV: Ed Emery is organiser of the Free University of Hydra, an informal conference-based university dealing with matters of cultural, political and social concern throughout the Mediterranean region. The conferences are held in the Island of Hydra. Proposals for collaborations and proposals for future research projects are welcomed. At the School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS, London] he also organises the biennial "Camel Conference @ SOAS", and the triennial conference on "War Horses of the World".

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7. Veterinary work with mules and donkeys on Hydra

Elisa Geskou [Greek Animal Welfare]

ABSTRACT: Awaited

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8. Invisible donkeys: the unsung role of the donkey in the Ancient Near East

Jill Goulder [University College London]

ABSTRACT: The working donkey is difficult to detect in Mesopotamian and southern Levant prehistory through faunal analysis, and a Western mindset about working animals has allowed a model involving ploughing oxen to prevail. This paper, based on work in progress for my PhD thesis, outlines the near-invisibility of the working donkey in Ancient Near Eastern prehistory, and the lack of archaeological focus generally on the practicalities of the early systematic use of working animals, such as the need for year-round utilisation to offset the investment. A new approach is proposed, using analogies with modern African and other studies to help detect systematic usage of donkeys in the Ancient Near East, for ploughing and for the key work of local transportation, through tracing social and economic changes in the cultures of the time.

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9. "Comparing the physiological and biochemical parameters of mules and hinnies to horses and donkeys"

Amy McLean [North Carolina State University]

ABSTRACT: Mules and hinnies are hybrid offspring from donkeys (*Equus asinus*) and horses (*Equus caballus*). Little scientific information is known regarding mules and even less is known about hinnies the reciprocal cross. There have only been a few studies that have attempted to define commonalities and differences of these hybrids especially in terms of comparing and contrasting them to their sires and dams (donkeys and horses). This presentation will take a closer look at hinnies and mules from around the world and how they are used today as well as comparing both physiological and biochemical parameters of these unique creatures while addressing many of the fallacies and myths commonly associated with such equids with special attention being paid to hinnies. Recent studies conducted by the author and colleagues on comparing physiological, hematological, and biochemical parameters of both hinnies and mules from several countries will be shared in this review. In addition, interviews from both hinny and mule owners and breeders from Mexico, Columbia, US, Spain and Portugal will also be included for a more comprehensive understanding of behavior and training and how hinnies and mules are used today.

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10. The strange history of the Irish donkey

James Smyth [Queen's University, Belfast]

ABSTRACT: Introduction – The economic importance of the donkey – The donkey as political metaphor: Home Rule – Humanity Dick and the donkey trial – The donkey in literature, art and music – The donkey as stereotype – The donkey as metaphor.

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11. An assessment of welfare of working donkeys and mules using health and behaviour parameters in Punjab, Pakistan

Muhammad Tariq [1], Asif Hameed [2] and Parvez Akhtar [3]

ABSTRACT: Despite their valuable contributions, mules and donkeys are the most neglected animal, accorded low social status, frequently subjected to overloading, beating, injuries and compelled for long working hours. It is regrettable that these animals are not well cared for, thus reducing their draught capabilities. A protocol was used to assess the welfare of working mules and donkeys using direct observation of health and behavior parameters. In this study, 1200 Mules and donkeys used for transportation, draught and ridden work in different areas of Punjab were assessed. Overall, 53 % animals were found severely depressed, while 32.7 % showed no response when approached. Eyes and mucous membrane abnormalities were present in 64.3 % and 9.7 % Mules and Donkeys. Lip lesions, missing of teeth and presences of molar or sharp edges were present in 45.3, 11.33 and 92.33 %, respectively. Only 4.3 % Mules and Donkeys were found in good body condition, while majority (77.66 %) were in moderate body condition (77.66 %). Lesions on head and ear, neck, breast, wither, girth, shoulder, ribs and belly, spine, tail and tail base, hind quarters, hind legs, knee joints and fore legs were present in order of 11, 9.7, 32, 39, 43.3, 19.0, 23.7, 11.0, 23.0, 17.0, 9.7, 23.0 and 31.0 % respectively. Knee lesions, hock lesions, swelling of tendons and joints and deformed limbs were prevalent in 72.0, 55.0, 91.3 and 8.7 % animals, respectively. Bases on these results welfare needs priority which is not only for their well-being but will also improve the economic status of the owner.

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12. The use of mules in Eastern Turkey

Orhan Yılmaz^{1*}, Füsün Coşkun², Yakup Erdal Ertürk³, Mehmet Ertuğrul⁴

ABSTRACT: Historically mules have been used widely in Turkey. After mechanization started in middle of 1900's, number of mule population decreased year by year. Engine vehicles such as tractors substitute not only mules but also camels, donkey and horses in rural areas. The mules are raised in provinces of Sırnak, Mardin, Hakkari and Van in the southeast and east of Turkey. All the mules are illegally imported from Iraq. Provinces of Sırnak and Mardin are next to Iraq border, and Van is next to Iran border. The province of Hakkari has border to both Iraq and Iran. In these provinces mules are only raised places which are close to country border. In these provinces mules are only used for border trading between two countries.

Mules carried some food stuff such as sugar from Turkey to those countries and they brought fuel-oil from Iran and some items such as cigarette from Iraq. Mules are escorted by owners in Iraq border, but mules are released in Iran land which is near to Turkish border and they arrive to Turkish land on their own. These clever animals definitely know the track and find their way in night time. Turkish borders are guarded by army soldiers and in Turkey there are not a special border guards. Because of European Union membership process, Turkish Government will provide special border guards in several years. In these border provinces geographical conditions are too harsh and therefore there is limited arable land and animal husbandry. Local people have low education and income. Hence some of them prefer border trading between two countries.

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Conference chair: Professor William Gervase Clarence-Smith [SOAS]

Conference organiser: Ed Emery [SOAS]

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The conference organisers would like to thank the Mayor and Municipality of Hydra for their support in providing facilities for this conference.
