

"What perspectives and methodologies can we engage with to develop a new environmental and multi-species history of the Mediterranean?"

Becoming Feral: a model for multi-species and environmental histories of the Mediterranean

Agriculture and animal husbandry – the trifecta of wine, wheat, and wool – are defining marks of the Mediterranean basin and the resulting order of human and non-human animal relations a fundamental pillar for many philosophers and theologians. To recover alternative multi-species histories, emerging theoretical concepts of ferality and its relationship to domestication offers a valuable point of entry. Some scholars emphasize that ferality represents an intersubjective state of being, one that is performed, coproduced, and relational. Others have used the term to point to the powerful and counter-intentional agency of material things, despite human efforts to intervene and control them. My book examined a specific case study – Iberian practices of horse breeding and feral horses in the Americas – to illustrate the limits of domestication in diverse colonial environments. In a broader sense, recognizing the potential for the feral within the bounds of Mediterranean animal husbandry practices queries notions of control in multispecies relations and offers a means to analyze the lively assemblages shaping environmental, cultural, and political landscapes.