

Pacific Circle Newsletter

4,5 (5 November 2023)

Book Reviews

Ryan Tucker Jones and Angela Wanhalla, eds. *Across Species and Cultures: Whales, Humans, and Pacific Worlds*. Asia Pacific Flows Series. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2022. vii + 327 pp. \$68.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8248-8898-5.

Reviewed by Jack Bouchard (Rutgers University - New Brunswick)
Published on H-Environment (November 2023)
Commissioned by Daniella McCahey

Although marine life and environments typically receive far less attention than their terrestrial counterparts, one glaring exception has emerged: historians have been mad for whales. A new collected volume, *Across Species and Cultures: Whales, Humans, and Pacific Worlds*, has arrived at an opportune time, as the history of whaling has matured in the past decade to become one of the most vibrant subfields in environmental history. One can see on each page that these are scholars who have collectively pushed the field forward and who have carefully coordinated their efforts through the conference that initiated this volume. This book represents something of a capstone to the current movement, laying out evidence for the painstakingly researched conclusion that "whales are everywhere in the Pacific and everywhere in Pacific history" (p. 1).

Across Species and Cultures brings together thirteen essays on whale-human interactions in the modern Pacific basin. At its core is the idea that "the Pacific has helped spawn both long Indigenous traditions of relating to whales and novel Western ideas about the creatures" (p. 162). It is, as the editors suggest, "the first attempt to seriously examine whales' place in the history of the Pacific Ocean" (p. 2). As one author notes, "The importance of whales to both [Indigenous and Western societies] lends a coherence to large

swaths of Pacific history and conceals some contradictions" (p. 162). The scholarship represented here is concerned with both sides of this problem. As a result, the title, *Across Species and Cultures*, is apt: this is a book concerned with surveying multiple perspectives and human-animal encounters to better understand the broad but heterogeneous history of whaling. The essays are largely concerned with nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories and seek a balance of settler and Indigenous stories. The focus on the Pacific reflects both the historical importance of whaling in that ocean and the preponderance of scholarship on the modern Pacific experience. But the ambition is broader: in the last line of the book, Joshua Reid suggests that "by taking a broader and more inclusive view, these new histories of whaling in the Pacific illustrate the potential for what some scholars might have once written off as a specialized and antiquated corner of historiography. New methodologies, theoretical approaches, and analytical perspectives instead point to many of the rich possibilities that Pacific whaling histories have to offer" (p. 281). The result is not just a better understanding of industrial whaling over the past two centuries but also a new appreciation of the distinct histories of what some scholars have referred to as "whale people," communities whose worldviews, economies, and societies are bound up in their relation to whales.

Importantly, this is not a work solely for specialists. *Across Species and Cultures* would serve as an accessible text for those unfamiliar with Pacific whaling history. Though the individual essays are quite specific in focus, they are all very clear in their methods and connection to the wider themes in the field. It will further appeal to those interested in global Indigenous histories and histories of capitalism. The essays may also prove to be useful for teaching: short, deftly argued, and clearly written, they could be used for mid-level undergraduates and above.

The volume is prefaced by a very short introduction by the two editors, Ryan Tucker Jones and Angela Wanhalla. Mostly willing to let the essays speak for themselves, they lay out the goals of the collection. The closing essay has been written by the inimitable Joshua Reid, who puts the essays in their proper historiographical place. His reflections on the value of the volume and the re-centering of Indigenous peoples in the history of whaling is a brief, valuable meditation on the state of maritime Indigenous

history as a whole. The thirteen essays in between are grouped into four thematic sections, each of which combines studies from several different time periods. As one moves through the chapters, the sudden shift from one perspective to another--from Māori women to American sailors, from coastal Japan to the depths of the Bering Sea--seems jarring at first, but each builds on the other until patterns and through lines become clear.

Part 1, "South Pacific," offers four essays on whaling across the vast southern Pacific Ocean. Kate Stevens and Angela Wanhalla explore the role of women in Māori whaling traditions, concluding that "Kai Tahu women connected families, communities, and economies, and in the shore whaling world of southern New Zealand they laid the foundation for wealth accumulation, increased status, and authority at both collective and personal levels" (p. 25). Lissa Wadewitz offers one of the best concise explorations of labor and perceptions toward nonhuman life in the American whaling fleet. Adopting a comparative perspective, Nancy Shoemaker delves into the uses and circulations of whale teeth in Fijian and American societies. Finally, Susan A. Lebo uses newspapers to reconstruct the overlooked history of shore whaling in nineteenth-century Hawai'i.

Part 2, "Japan," is the most focused section, forming a kind of complete case study. Jakobina Arch's excellent essay study of whaling and empire redefines the spatial boundaries of Japanese whaling and by extension Japanese political-economic ambitions in the nineteenth century. Noell Wilson then zooms in to recover the history of drift whaling in northern Japan, what he calls the "Okhotsk Arc." Finally, Akamine Jun gives a focused, subtle exploration of the relation between Japanese coastal whaling, foodways, and beaked whale hunting.

Moving beyond specific islands, part 3, "North Pacific," offers three loosely linked essays that delve into fundamental problems. Bathsheba Demuth offers a thoughtful essay on the contrasts between Inuit and American approaches to thinking about whales, exploring many of the themes found in her writing on Berengia. Ryan Tucker Jones gives a powerful piece on attempts by Greenpeace to protest Soviet whaling in the 1970s-80s and what this says about environmentalist-Indigenous relations and perceptions. Jason Colby follows on this theme by exploring the history of Gigi, the first captive gray whale, which sparked a new tourist industry in Mexico.

Finally, in part 4, "Indigenous Modernities," three essays focus on different Indigenous cultures and sites. Adam Paterson and Christopher Wilson reconstruct Ngarrindjeri whaling practices in southern Australia and show how they interacted with industrial whaling. Jonathan Clapperton and the team from the Squaxin Island Tribe's Ancestor's Voice group try to rethink the framing of whaling cultures in the Puget Sound area. In the last essay, Billie Lythberg and Wayne Ngata return us to Aotearoa for an ambitious exploration of whaling cultures and whale-thinking using Māori *whakapapa* (genealogies) relationships.

As with any collected volume, there are issues with unevenness and scope. Certain sites get much more attention than others--Japan especially, and Aotearoa and Berengia to an extent. It is exciting to see Aboriginal Australians represented alongside more well-known sites like Puget Sound and Hawai'i, but the reader may want more on Antarctica or South America. Some essays are quite far-ranging: Wadewitz's exploration of American whaling crews covers most of the nineteenth century and the Pacific Ocean. By contrast, Wilson and Akamine focus on small parts of the Japanese archipelago. Some essays are movingly written stories, others somewhat drier social science studies. Most importantly, the essays are uneven with how much they explicitly interact with the volume as a whole or try to draw larger conclusions. Jones makes an appeal to the core themes of the book in his study of environmentalism, but few others follow suit.

A key question all the essays confront is: who participates in whaling? The volume strives to show how many communities and kinds of individuals sought, killed, and thought about whales. Patterson and Wilson, for instance, take the well-known history of industrial whaling at Encounter Bay and invert the perspective from settler to Indigenous to show the Ngarrindjeri experience. Even Wadewitz's essay on American whalers is most interested in reconstructing the composition of ship crews and experience at sea. Above all, this volume centers Indigenous experiences in the Pacific history of whales, with the opening essay on women and whaling in Aotearoa setting the tone. Though many essays explore *either* a settler *or* an Indigenous history of whaling, some of the more effective are those that juxtapose the two. Shoemaker's essay on sperm whale teeth contrasts South Pacific Islander and American uses and values of

teeth. Demuth shows the clash between Indigenous Arctic perceptions of whales and those of American whalers, a set of contrasts that returns in Jones's essay on Greenpeace's intellectual clashes with Indigenous communities in the 1980s.

Although both the introduction and the concluding essay emphasize the importance of perspective and subject in this volume, there are several other themes that run through the essays. Both in the book's structure and in the individual essays, the spatial dimensions of Pacific whaling receive much attention, and in many ways this volume is an important contribution to how historians understand the human and nonhuman geographies of the Pacific World. Arch's excellent essay on Japan, for instance, explicitly explores the spatial dimensions on the whaling industry and by extension the nascent Japanese Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. Her thoughtful analysis of the relation between extraction, empire, and space takes us from the Japanese archipelago to new colonial outposts in the North Pacific, to the coasts of Antarctica. The volume is also interested in the transspecies histories of whaling, and in this it is partly successful. These are, as the editors admit, "slippery subjects" (p. 3). The focus on human whalers and their labor does not always allow us to see the complexity of human-whale interactions. Still, across the volume we see more than humans killing whales. Colby's essay on gray whales takes a very different perspective, showing how first scientists and then the American public at large thought about individual whales and then an entire species. The final essay on Māori thought gives us a roadmap for future work on thinking with animals.

In the end, the great triumph of *Across Species and Cultures* is that all the authors have managed to take a subject that already has such a rich literature and have each found something truly novel and exciting to contribute. The essays are often passionate and eye-opening. In a field marked by mass slaughter and extinction, the authors find as much to celebrate as to mourn. The volume is a fitting and welcome contribution to a field that has done so much to further our understanding of human-animal and marine histories.

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New and Forthcoming Articles

Siyu Fu and Kristian H. Nielsen, “The humanist challenge to China’s dominant policies for popularizing science and technology (PST),” *Science as Culture*, 32:4 (December 2023), 486-504

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/09505431.2023.2211760>

In the early 2000s, a group of Chinese scholars who often refer to themselves as scientific humanists (科学文化人, or 科学人文主义者) launched a critique of dominant approaches to science popularization known as ‘kepu’ or science popularization (科普). Their scientific humanism connects traditional Chinese ideas about scientism and humanism to Western philosophy and STS, in particular the sociology of scientific knowledge. Challenging science popularization policies, the scientific humanists in 2001 launched the so-called Critical School of Science Communication (CSSC), which combines scientific humanism with STS approaches to science communication, namely critical public understanding of science and public engagement with science. The CSSC criticized the Popularization of Science and Technology (PST) policy adopted by China’s government and main scientific institutions to promote her technoscientific and technocratic visions. The CSSC is in favor of science communication, rather than science popularization, aimed at reconciling science with the humanities, stimulating genuine dialogue between science and the public, and ultimately increasing civic empowerment. CSSC proponents have engaged in a series of public interventions where they challenged dominant views on the social role of technoscience and PST. China’s explicit emphasis on, even legislative commitment to PST provided a unique context to which the CSSC responded by appropriating scientific humanism, itself an assemblage of Chinese ideas and STS theory, and STS-related concepts about science communication.

Larry Au, “Ethical choreography in China’s Human Gene Editing controversy,”

Science as Culture, 32:4 (December 2023), 535-557

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/09505431.2023.2218401>

Sanchita Kumar, Steven R. Manchester, Walter S. Judd, and Mahasin Ali Khan,

“Earliest Fossil Record of Burseraceae from the Deccan Intertrappean Beds of Central India and Its Biogeographic Implications,” *International Journal of Plant Sciences* (2023)

Premise of research. Burseraceae is represented by a large number of fossils from the Cenozoic sedimentary succession and has a disjunct distribution today in the southern part of North America, Africa, Europe, and Asia. However, the family has a poor fossil record in deep time, making hypotheses concerning its origin and dispersal difficult to evaluate. Here, we report the occurrence of reproductive organs (fruit and flower) attributable to modern Burseraceae from the probable latest Maastrichtian (Late Cretaceous) to earliest Danian (early Paleocene) sediments of the Mandla Lobe of the Deccan Intertrappean beds of Madhya Pradesh, Central India.

Methodology. X-ray micro-computed tomography was used to observe three-dimensional structures. The reconstruction software takes the 2D projection images acquired by the X-ray detector and generates a 3D image represented by gray values distributed in a volumetric space. The present fruit and flower fossils are identified through morphological comparison with another fossil and extant Burseraceae.

Pivotal results. The fossil pyrene corresponds in morphology with that of Burseraceae (particularly some genera of Protieae and Bursereae), while the fossil flower, with the pentamerous organization of sepals and petals and ovary and 10 stamens arranged in two whorls around a prominent intrastaminal nectary disk, is particularly similar to *Protium*. The fossil fruit is here described as a new species of the fossil genus *Bursericarpum* Reid et Chandler as *Bursericarpum indicum* Kumar, Manchester et Khan sp. nov. and the fossil flower as *Debursera indica* Kumar, Manchester, Judd et Khan sp. nov.

Conclusions. The present discoveries represent the oldest reliable fossil records of Burseraceae supporting its Gondwanan origin. These fossils also provide important information for tracing possible migration pathways of Burseraceae from India to Europe after the docking of the Indian subcontinent with Eurasia during the early Eocene (55±10 Ma), supporting an “out-of-India” dispersal hypothesis. Based on earlier and present records we suggest that the family might have reached Europe from India and then colonized North America (during the Eocene) in areas where it is now regionally extinct.

Mengdi Chu, Yingdong Hao and Mian Huang, “Two new species of Chromadorida (Nematoda) from the intertidal zone of the Yellow Sea, China,” *Journal of Natural History* 57:25-28 (2023), 1364-1376

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222933.2023.2241187>

Two new species of free-living marine nematodes were discovered off the coast of the Yellow Sea, China, and they are described here as *Actinonema diplobulba* sp. nov. and *Nannolaimoides brevicaudatus* sp. nov. *Actinonema diplobulba* sp. nov. is characterised by amphideal fovea transverse oval-shaped, pharynx with double posterior bulbs, single spicule slender, arcuate with cephalated proximal end, gubernaculum spinous, and extra hammer-shaped lateral pieces (telamon) present. This species is distinguished from its congeners in having double pharyngeal bulbs and both spicule and telamon. *Nannolaimoides brevicaudatus* sp. nov. is characterised by a slender body with irregular lateral differentiation, multispiral amphideal fovea with five turns and close to anterior end, spicules arcuate with bent proximal end and tapered distal end, gubernaculum expanded distally and tapered proximally, a precloacal papilla and 14 button-shaped precloacal supplements almost equally arranged, and a conico-cylindrical tail 4.3–4.9 times as long as cloacal body diameter. This species differs from its congeners by having a precloacal papilla and 14 button-shaped precloacal supplements, and a comparatively short conico-cylindrical tail.

<http://www.zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:D74795FE-168E-4F7F-A78C-08EF5B9783A9>

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Conferences and Meetings

[DHST] 27th ICHST 2025

The organizing committee invites you to submit a Symposia to be considered for presentation at the conference in Ōtepoti Dunedin, 29 June - 5 July 2025.

We invite Symposia submissions on any topic in the history of science, technology and medicine, but we especially encourage proposals that address aspects of the conference theme, across all periods, and from a variety of methodological and historiographical approaches.

Symposia proposal submissions will close on Monday 1 April 2024.

The theme of the 27th ICHST is “*Peoples, Places, Exchanges, and Circulation*.”

For more information and to download your symposia proposal template, please visit the *conference website*.

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KEY DATES

Call for submission of symposia proposals Now open
Deadline for submission of symposia proposals 1 April 2024
Call for stand-alone papers opens 1 April 2024
Registration opens 11 July 2024
Deadline for submission of stand-alone paper proposals From 1 October 2024
Deadline for submission of paper abstracts within symposia From 1 November 2024
Early bird registration closes 3 April 2025
Program released online From 1 May 2025
Final date for registration 1 May 2025
Congress opens 29 June 2025

[https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.ichst2025.org_!!PvDODwIR4mBZyAb0!UbPYrA8K1FsndPvV1SSaG-8gWAHPi90eMNDhtuoZtFCy0L04q-2QIbHmu186RMLCI5hjkqsQIkBDZCMHL2U\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.ichst2025.org_!!PvDODwIR4mBZyAb0!UbPYrA8K1FsndPvV1SSaG-8gWAHPi90eMNDhtuoZtFCy0L04q-2QIbHmu186RMLCI5hjkqsQIkBDZCMHL2U$) <[https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://www.ichst2025.org/_!!PvDODwIR4mBZyAb0!UbPYrA8K1FsndPvV1SSaG-8gWAHPi90eMNDhtuoZtFCy0L04q-2QIbHmu186RMLCI5hjkqsQIkBD-OUuXcY\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://www.ichst2025.org/_!!PvDODwIR4mBZyAb0!UbPYrA8K1FsndPvV1SSaG-8gWAHPi90eMNDhtuoZtFCy0L04q-2QIbHmu186RMLCI5hjkqsQIkBD-OUuXcY$) >

**Beyond the Ocean's Depths:
Revisiting the *Challenger* Expedition (1872-1876)
7 November 2023
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London**

This event is in part sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology Studies at University College London.

With the environmental threat of global warming, rising seas and biodiversity loss, knowledge of the ocean is more important than ever. The *Challenger* Expedition, named after the British Royal Navy vessel HMS *Challenger* which circumnavigated the globe from 1872 to 1876 with the aim to explore the deep sea, has been celebrated as a foundational moment in the history of modern oceanography.

Data and specimens obtained from the expedition are actively studied by scientists today and provide a historical benchmark for climate change and species distribution. Meanwhile, historians are increasingly calling for the voyage's imperial context to be recognised and are bringing attention to people and places that have previously been given little attention in the expedition's historiography. How do we tell more inclusive and holistic histories of *Challenger*, while engaging with its scientific importance today? Looking forwards, what can we learn from the past while considering the future of ocean science?

On 7 November 2023, 'Beyond the Ocean's Depths' shall provide a welcoming interdisciplinary forum for historians, scientists, coastal and island communities, and museum curators to share ideas and their work. The day will bring together a variety of perspectives, knowledges, specialisms and resources.

Conference themes include:

- The use of *Challenger* materials in modern scientific research
- *Challenger*-related materials in museum collections
- Public engagement and education
- Colonial legacies
- Untold histories
- Local knowledges and expertise
- Links between oceanography past, present and future

This one-day conference will be held in person at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and online. It will consist of four panels, each consisting of three 15-minute papers and a Q&A, and a guided visit to the Caird Library to view *Challenger* archives, photographs and ship plans. We will also have a keynote talk and time to view relevant gallery spaces.

The workshop will be wheelchair accessible with lift access, and the lecture theatre is fitted with a hearing loop. It will also be possible to give presentations remotely, and we anticipate that overseas submissions will be delivered online (unless rail travel to the UK is available). This is to support the Museum's ambitions to be carbon emissions conscious. The workshop language is English.

If you have any queries, please contact the organisers at research@rmg.co.uk.

Conference webpage:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/challenger-conference>

First International Conference of the Histories of *Upcoming* Anthropologies: Doing Histories, Imagining Futures

The History of Anthropology Network (HOAN) of the European Association for Social Anthropology is happy to announce a call for papers for the First International Conference of the Histories of Anthropologies, Doing Histories, Imagining Futures, to be hosted by the University of Pisa, Italy.

The event will be held on-line between 4-7 December 2023 and it is collaboratively organised by key stakeholders in our field to discuss methodological, theoretical, pedagogical, and ethical aspects of the histories of anthropologies.

Please browse the Conference Website and Panels to discover more!

<https://hoaic.cfs.unipi.it/>

<https://hoaic.cfs.unipi.it/panels/>

This is an exciting opportunity for everyone working in the field of history of anthropology to gather and learn from each other and set new directions for the field. You are warmly invited to join us and submit a paper proposal.

The panels are:

Panel 1: Doing Histories of Anthropologies. Theories, Methodologies, Practices

Panel 2: Disciplinary Histories and Archives in Anthropology, Folklore, and Oral History: Actors, Formats, and Mediality in Knowledge Production

Panel 3: Historicizing Anachronistic Motives

Panel 4: History's Lessons: Uses of the History of Anthropology

Panel 5: Pushed out, excluded and forgotten? Recovering anthropologists, ethnologists, and folklorists for the history of our discipline

Panel 6: Approaching the Present through Anthropology's Past

Panel 7: Regional Anthropologies, Colonial and Postcolonial Histories

Panel 8: Missing Others. Eluded Encounters and Hidden Contributions within the History of
Anthropology