

Archaeologies of Forced Migration: Approaches, Case Studies, and Prospects

Cotsen Advanced Seminar, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA

October 24–26, 2024

Organized by Aaron A. Burke (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures) and Li Min (Anthropology/East Asian Languages and Cultures)

Co-sponsored by the Dean of the Humanities, the Global Antiquity Initiative, the Kershaw Chair of Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Studies, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and the Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library

PROGRAM

Thursday, October 24

1600–1700 Tour of Cotsen Institute and North Campus (Optional)

Meet at Cotsen Institute, Fowler Building, A-Level

1730–1900 Plenary Address

Lenart Auditorium, Fowler Building

Welcome (Aaron Burke and Li Min)

Hanging on to the Past: Materializing the Remembrance of Forced Migrations

Charles R. Cobb (Florida Museum of Natural History)

The concept of forced migrations implies something eventful, which they often are. A satisfactory contextualization of the causes and consequences of such displacements, however, requires something akin to a multivariate, chaîne opératoire approach. Is it possible to distinguish ultimate causes (e.g., climate change) from proximate ones (e.g., conflict)? How was the timing and organization of departure an outcome of causal factors and intended points of arrival? What was the scale of migration in terms of number of people, distance traveled, and time in transit? How were new arrivals received by host communities? In this presentation I explore extended histories of forced migration via the archaeological and historical records of Indigenous societies in the American Southeast, ca. AD 1000–1840. I focus in particular on the liminality of movement, the accommodations to co-existence necessitated by abrupt migrations, and the ways in which dislocated peoples and refugees cling to tradition and history. Some of the frameworks by which these issues have been addressed in the Southeast and elsewhere—diaspora, memory-work, citationality, coalescence, hybridity—hold promise for comparative research on forced relocations in different times and places.

1930

Dinner for Participants

Plateia Restaurant, Luskin Center

Friday, October 25
Main Conference Room, Young Research Library

The Mediterranean and Ancient Near East (Aaron Burke, UCLA)

0830 Opening Remarks (Aaron Burke)

0845 Jan Driessen (Classics, UC Louvain). *Where are the Refugees of the Mediterranean Bronze Age Collapse?*

The alleged Crisis Years in the Eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age covered a relatively long period running from around 1250 to 1180 BCE (more or less concurrent with pharaohs of the 19th and 20th dynasties such as Ramses II, Merneptah and Ramses III). During this period, most of the active palatial centers and many of the settlements in the wider Aegean were violently destroyed or permanently abandoned. The causes and modalities of these events have been the subject of incessant debate for more than a century. Whatever the most likely explanation, it cannot be ignored that these events had a significant impact on local and regional demography. Since few human remains can be identified as having perished in these devastations, we can only assume that people left their homelands and became mobile. Nowadays, four types of forced displacement are considered: slavery, refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and asylum seekers. This paper discusses which of these forms can be recognized in the archaeological record of the Eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age. Slavery – the ownership of a person as property, especially in regard to their labor – and especially the use of another human as domestic or productive chattel is not easy to identify, although the investment in major construction enterprises or the large-scale exploitation of mineral resources may indirectly hint at their existence. Rather than refugees, we prefer to look for externally displaced people (EDP) versus internally displaced ones (IDP), i.e. those forced to cross national borders versus those who relocate within their own hinterland. The main difference between these two categories is that the latter group retains some hope to return to their original settlement in the near or distant future, while the first group aims to build a new life elsewhere. IDPs can be identified by a change in settlement plans (e.g. coastal versus inland), the use of unusual residential locations (e.g. caves) and, in general, cyclical fluctuations in site sizes and site numbers. EDPs, on the other hand, can be identified by the absence of such local patterns and the presence of massive intrusions of foreign material culture within another cultural area. The last category – asylum seekers – imply the peaceful incorporation of non-local population individuals or smaller groups. These can be identified by the more discrete presence of foreign material culture. In this paper, we address these different types of displacement, and suggest specific site locations that could have received displaced population groups, both locally and more broadly.

0945 David Brown (Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, UCLA). *Refugees and Displacement in Early Iron Age Israel (ca. 1200–1000 BCE)*

While scholarly attention largely focuses on refugee creation and reconstitution efforts in the modern world, investigations into the dynamics of forced migration processes—primarily as outgrowths of violence—remain severely underdeveloped for the ancient world. This paper examines the southern Levant during the consequential transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (ca. 1200–1000 BCE) as a case study to explore refugees who fled

conditions of violence as outgrowths of systems collapse, foreign invasions, and historical climate change that upended Late Bronze Age sociopolitical structures and economic trade networks. This formative period transformed the landscape for displaced communities, which evolved into well-known societies including ancient Israel, Judah, and Philistia. By revisiting the legacy data of southern Levantine sites with a new emphasis on variables indicative of forced migration, the material signatures of displacement are magnified in a myriad of ways including as reedified domestic spaces, repurposed public architecture, strategies to overcome food insecurity, and evolving new social relationships, among others. Embedded within the larger phenomena of voluntary and involuntary movements that occurred in punctuated and disparate episodes, these signatures elucidate how refugees negotiated with their environments to sustain themselves and how through their lived experiences they reconstituted new identities. In addition, this approach challenges current assumptions and scrutinizes present theories that convolute the social and ethnic dynamics of this contentious period. The outcome is to present a comprehensive framework of the Early Iron Age sociopolitical landscape that is inclusive of invisible groups, which evade the historical record—such as refugees—yet which impacted the social, political, and economic trajectories of that age.

10 minute Break

- 1045 Aaron A. Burke (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA). *Iron Age Refugees in Jerusalem and Judah during the Seventh Century BCE: Isolating Proxy Evidence for Refugees in Archaeological Contexts*

Fifty years ago, following excavations in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's old city, Magen Broshi suggested that the unprecedented rate of growth of the city during the late eighth century BCE resulted from the arrival of refugees fleeing the conquest of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian ruler Sargon II in 720. While the proposal has had many adherents and has generated much discussion, particularly concerning its implications for the political and religious history of the Judean state, the case study remains largely undertheorized, addressed only in a piecemeal fashion, mostly aloof from the theoretical and methodological considerations for identifying refugees in archaeological contexts. For this reason, it has also seen considerable pushback. Yet, close comparison of the archaeological evidence against the material risks faced by modern refugee communities, as articulated in Michael Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Resettlement model, illustrates how problem-centered analyses might be connected with specific evidence in the archaeological record. This paper provides a comprehensive reevaluation of the evidence for the identification of Jerusalem's expansion as the product of wartime refugee resettlement. These data are thereafter framed by Cernea's model, which was constructed from numerous case studies of the displacement and resettlement of groups in the late twentieth century, largely as a result of development projects. The value of the model remains its framing of existing data and its ability to predict broad categories of loss associated with displacement that are accessible through archaeological research.

1145

Lunch

UCLA Faculty Center

1300

Eli Itkin (Archaeology, Tel Aviv University). *The Archaeology of Displaced Peoples: The Aftermath of Assyrian Conquests in the Southern Levant*

The Neo-Assyrian conquests of the southern Levant marked the beginning of a refugee crisis in the region. These repeated military campaigns, combined with imperial deportation policies, led to the widespread destruction of numerous sites and the displacement of local populations. The main aim of this paper is to examine the processes and impacts of forced migration on local peoples in the southern Levant during the Iron IIB–C. This will be done through an analysis of historical sources and archaeological data, using anthropological models for the study of refugees. A significant focus will be placed on outlining the differences between deportees, refugees, and post-destruction squatters, which reflect aspects of internal displacement and resettlement by uprooted communities. While all three groups exhibit various features of forced displacement, each had its own distinct experience, which in turn influenced settlement patterns, social organization, and interactions with existing populations. Deportees, relocated by the Neo-Assyrian authorities, show an almost complete dependency on the colonial powers on the one hand, but also faced varying levels of support on the other. In contrast, refugees fleeing Assyrian aggression had to resettle without structured support, leading to high levels of self-reliance and the development of different survival strategies. Post-destruction squatters (or IDPs), whose experience is closer to that of refugees, occupied the ruins of destroyed settlements, adapted to precarious living conditions and often created unique settlement patterns. The differences among these groups will be examined archaeologically on a regional basis, with case studies including the foothills of western Samaria, the western Negev, and the southern Coastal Plain. This will be done in an attempt to illustrate the interplay between imperial ambitions and local responses, thus offering insights into the resilience, ingenuity and adaptability of displaced communities in antiquity.

1400

Ido Koch (Archaeology, Tel Aviv University). *Forging a New Home: Deportation and Resettlement in the Assyrian Southern Levant*

Mass deportations were a pivotal tool of Assyrian imperial power, enabling both the suppression of resistance and the development of the empire's heartland, colonial centers, and frontiers. Archaeological investigations in the southern Levant offer a unique opportunity to examine the multifaceted consequences of these policies. The region experienced widespread destruction under Assyrian rule, with numerous cities, towns, and villages razed and their populations killed or deported. Simultaneously, the empire initiated targeted rebuilding efforts, constructing colonial hubs and supporting rural settlements. This presentation will explore the archaeological evidence for these transformative processes, focusing on the settlement patterns and material remains of those who arrived to fill the newly created landscape. By examining the daily lives and social interactions of these diverse groups, we can gain a deeper understanding of how the Assyrians reshaped the region and the lived experiences of those who inhabited it.

10 minute break

1500 Tina Greenfield (Anthropology, U. of Manitoba). *There and Back Again: Neo Assyrian Forced and Voluntary Migration on the Hoof*

Most models of Near Eastern empires are derived from historical disciplines that rely primarily upon texts to determine the structural relationship between imperial cities and their associated provincial settlements. The Neo-Assyrian Empire is arguably the earliest empire of the ancient world. As part of their expansionist ideology, the Neo-Assyrians impacted the kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the first half of the first millennium BCE. The conquest details related specifically to the fall of Israel in 722 BCE are known from both textual and archaeological data. A wealth of cuneiform tablets and iconographic images depict the deportation of the Israelites to the east into the northern Mesopotamia imperial heartland (modern-day Iraqi Kurdistan). Added to this narrative is the forced movement of these frontier populations to fill the imperial heartland as laborers to maintain agricultural productivity; however, what about the other way around? Contemporary textual documentation notes that the Neo-Assyrians also infilled the southern Levantine cities. The question, then, is how to determine the presence of deportees or infill settlements. Who lives in these settlements, and can we determine distinct populations via zooarchaeological and osteological analyses? An innovative approach to studying forced migrations is to use data from human and animal teeth remains from archaeological sites deemed to have been the locations of displaced groups (either voluntarily or forced). Data from two case studies located in the southern Levant and Iraqi Kurdistan are examined to understand the potential to map the journeys of the displaced persons to and from these regions during the Neo-Assyrian period. Moving beyond the baseline of traditional osteological analyses to include data from stable isotope analyses and dietary proteomics helps to contribute information to understand further mobility, identity and in general, migrations in the ancient Near East.

1600 Andrew Danielson (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Harvard University). *Archaeological Models and Refugee Movements During the Bar Kokhba Revolt in Second Century CE Palestine*

Recent events have highlighted the potential scale, intensity, and impact of refugee migrations, a subject and populace that is woefully understudied in antiquity. Even in historical contexts where textual sources explicitly or implicitly describe refugees, they are rarely a primary subject of inquiry. Adapting a model for identifying risks associated with resettled refugees in the modern world reveals its potential for identifying archaeological correlates to such phenomena. In this paper, this adapted model is presented in relation to the Bar Kokhba Revolt in Palestine during the early second century CE, a well-known historical and archaeological context. The use of this model with archaeological signatures in better-known contexts will test its efficacy and assess its potential application to other temporal contexts and geographic regions.

1700 General Discussion (Burke)

1830 **Dinner for Participants** **Plateia Restaurant, Luskin Center**

Saturday, October 26
Main Conference Room, Young Research Library

Asia, Africa, and the Americas (Li Min, UCLA)

- 1030 Zichan Wang (Archaeology, UCLA). *Integrated Approaches to Forced Migration in the Longshan-Erlitou Transformation in China (2300–1600 BCE)*

The Longshan period (2300–1800 BCE) marks the final stage of the Neolithic Age in China. During this period, the 4.2 ka climate event impacted most of Eurasia. The following four centuries were first characterized by a wave of sedentarization and settlement development across the middle and lower Yellow River region, followed by the abandonment of villages and cities in what is known as the Longshan Collapse. In the subsequent Erlitou period (1800–1600 BCE), despite the rise of the Erlitou state in the Luoyang Basin, south of the Yellow River, most of the affected areas remained sparsely populated. Such socio-political and demographic changes occurred in different areas at varying times and places. These changes were especially drastic in the Linfen Basin and at the Taosi site, one of the largest demographic and ritual centers in Longshan China. To understand the causes and consequences of the collapse of Taosi, previous studies have discussed the impact of climate change, conflicts with the northern polity of Shimao, and internal revolts at Taosi. What has been neglected is that all these climatic and social events could and would generate either climate or political refugees. This paper proposes an integrated approach to trace evidence of population displacement through the combination of settlement, ceramic, and bioarchaeological methods during the Longshan-Erlitou Transformation. The synthetic results suggest that starting in the Middle Taosi phase, immigrants, potentially from the northern Loess Plateau, began to flood into the Linfen Basin and the neighboring Yuncheng Basin. By the end of this phase, around 2000 BCE, the Taosi polity collapsed. As a result of the Taosi chaos, people moved and gathered into the nearby Fangcheng settlement within the Linfen Basin as well as Zhoujiazhuang in the Yuncheng Basin. Eventually, in the 19th century BCE, these sites were all abandoned, and the population dispersed without a dominant direction.

- 1130 Andrew MacIver (Tang Center for the Study of Early China, Columbia University). *On Shifting Ground: The Displacement and Lifeways of the Shang People in Early Western Zhou Society*

At the height of its prosperity, the Late Shang state (ca. 1250–1046 BCE) existed as one of the preeminent powers of the ancient world. The sprawling Shang capital at Anyang rivaled other contemporaneous centers in the world both in population and urban development. With the fall of the Late Shang state following a series of conquests by the Zhou and their coalition of highland allies, the Shang people at Anyang and affiliated settlements dispersed widely throughout the Western Zhou (ca. 1046–771 BCE) world. Displaced to new locales with their own complex histories, the Shang people were confronted with the reality of navigating new worlds while simultaneously dealing with the fall of their own. While archaeologists have long recognized the material evidence for the Shang people in Western Zhou spaces, there remains much unknown regarding the complex social processes involved in the displacement and migration of the Shang. This talk explores the everyday lifeways of the Shang people in the aftermath of the Zhou conquests and the varied influences the Shang people held in

Western Zhou society. Towards this end, I examine the ordinary spaces and mortuary contexts of the diverse Shang groups residing in the Western Zhou ancestral and political heartland in the Guanzhong Basin and the adjacent Jing River Valley. I also investigate the Shang groups that continued to reside in the former Shang homeland, a region that was an early target of Zhou state expansion. Through their attempts to adapt and persevere in a time of social transformation, the Shang people significantly impacted the emerging Western Zhou order.

1230 LUNCH BREAK

1330 Li Min (Anthropology, UCLA). *From Guanzhong to Luoyang: The Fall of Western Zhou and the Archaeology of Zhou Refugees*

The fall of the Western Zhou state in 771 BCE marked a profound shift in early China's political landscape. Factional conflict led to highland invaders killing the Zhou king and plundering the royal cities in the Guanzhong Basin. The Xinian manuscript recounts a decade-long civil war, where two Zhou kings, backed by different political alliances, fought for the throne. With support from two powerful regional states, King Ping emerged victorious and resettled in the Luoyang Basin, where the Zhou royal lineage ruled nominally until annexed by the Qin state in 256 BCE. Guanzhong became a depopulated wasteland after the crisis and was only redeveloped by the Qin state, which expanded into this political vacuum and absorbed the Zhou refugees remaining in the basin. While the destruction of urban structures and elite residences in Guanzhong provides ample archaeological evidence for the 771 BCE invasion, the lives of Zhou refugees during this period of turmoil have not been studied archaeologically. Scholars have used inscriptions from dozens of abandoned bronze hoards to reconstruct Western Zhou history but have not linked these to their displaced owners, who had to cope with the loss of their emplaced and embodied social memories. This paper explores archaeological indicators for the life of Zhou refugees, including urban abandonment and destruction, circulation of Zhou ritual bronzes as war treasures, regional demographic decline, resilience of Zhou ceramic styles in refugee settlements, efforts to reclaim the past through the reproduction of lost bronzes, and settlement reconfigurations. These processes coincided with the emergence of new literary works on urban ruins, lamenting the lost Zhou cities in the Guanzhong Basin.

1430 Wolfgang Alders (Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU). *“Zanzibar resembles a city with a hostile army encamped in its neighborhood”: Coastal Raiding and the Archaeology of Refuge on the Swahili Coast*

On Unguja Island in Zanzibar, Tanzania, farmers in the eastern region abandoned a coastal shell-mound site and retreated inland into rocky, steep terrain and thick brush around 1500 CE. A viewshed analysis and historical accounts of 19th-century coastal slave raiding help contextualize this shift. Oral interviews with modern farmers also shed light on 14 other small archaeological sites recorded in rocky, inland landscapes, which are interpreted as traces of seasonal mobile camps related to shifting agricultural practices and the use and cultivation of wild baobab trees (*Adansonia digitata*). At the same time, small communities on the western side of the island started building monumental tombs in rural, inland areas for the first time, signifying a reorientation away from coastal maritime exchange and toward

agricultural lifeways, a kinship-based land tenure system, and the demarcation of ritually significant places. Alternating between permanence and mobility, rural Swahili people incrementally produced landscapes that allowed them to selectively pursue both autonomous and integrative activities with respect to multiple outside forces during the early colonial era. This case study informs a broader discussion of refuge-making by small-scale communities operating within the interstices of urban centers, states, and globe-spanning empires, considering anarchist, indigenous, and bottom-up political economy approaches to this topic in archaeology.

10 minute break

1530 Kelly Nguyen (Classics, UCLA). *“Preemptive Archaeology”: Building the Vietnamese Refugee Material Culture Initiative*

Identifying refugees in the material record is notoriously difficult--this has not only become a truism, but also a thorn in the archaeologist's side. At the same time though, it should be a gadfly for those engaged in contemporary archaeology, prodding us to think about how to engage with forced displacement in recent history before they become lost to history, and how to do so with care. With this provocation in mind, this talk discusses the making of the Vietnamese Refugee Material Culture Initiative (VRMCI), a new community-engaged project based at UCLA in collaboration with the Vietnamese Heritage Museum (VHM) in Westminster, CA. VRMCI practices a form of “preemptive archaeology” by working with the Vietnamese refugee community globally to identify and preserve artifacts related to their forced displacement before the generation guarding them has passed on. The project puts archaeology into dialogue with Critical Refugee Studies, which asserts the agency of refugees as knowledge producers rather than as objects of rescue and investigation. It also leverages digital archaeology tools not only to preserve the artifacts and democratize their access, but also to better showcase the lifecycle of the different objects alongside that of refugeehood. Ultimately, the talk asserts the importance of refugee agency in the making, preserving, and teaching of refugee material culture.

1630 Steven Wernke (Anthropology, Vanderbilt University). *Migrants in Their Own Lands: Archaeological Microhistory and the Vicissitudes of Compulsory Colonial Resettlement in the Andes*

In the 1570s CE, the indigenous peoples of the Andes were subjected to one of the largest forced resettlement projects ever undertaken by a colonial power—the Reducción General de Indios, or General Resettlement of Indians. During the Reducción, over a million native Andeans were compelled to abandon their old homes and build new ones in compact gridded towns (called *reducciones*—reduction towns) as a means of Spanish colonial extraction, conversion, and social control. While the scale and pace of the Reducción was colossal and swift, its implementation was irreducibly local and part of a longer historical experience of forced migration and resettlement through Inka and Spanish rule. In this talk, I trace out the experience of resettlement through an archaeological microhistory of successive local migration, following the movements of the constituent communities of a particular reducción in the Colca Valley of southern Peru. Its pastoralist members abandoned the reducción in the 19th century, scattering to the heights above, while its agriculturalist families fled it to

establish a new town in the agricultural zone below. Despite the seeming failure of the *reducción*, I argue that its forms and institutions became sites for the enunciation of indigenous Andean community and a measure of self-determination that remain salient to the present.

1730–1800 Closing Remarks (Li Min)

1830 Dinner for Participants