☐ Archaeologies of Forced and Undocumented Migration[*]

guest edited by Yannis Hamilakis

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☐ Archaeologies of Forced and Undocumented Migration

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"Chips!" ordered the boy on the other side of the metal fence, pushing a two-euro coin through one of the holes. He looked about nine or ten. He may have thought I was working for one of the mobile canteens parked nearby, little family enterprises that have mushroomed here recently. But I doubt it. After all, he had clearly seen me getting out of a car with two friends a few minutes before, when he was playing football with two dozen other kids on a sloping cement surface not fit for any sport. It's more likely that this boy, locked up in the Moria migrant detention center in Lesvos, was teaching me a lesson in dignity: "I am not begging for anything. You are outside, I am inside; I am asking you to cross a road and buy me a packet of chips."

Undocumented Migration: From Humanitarianism and Criminalization to Social Movement

The above opening field notes were scripted in April 2016 (Hamilakis 2016), during my first visit to Lesvos, the Greek border island with a long history of forced migration and displacement (cf. Hirschon 2007). Border crossers had been a constant presence on

* Editor's note: We received more responses to this Forum topic than we have been able to include in the print issue of the journal, and have published a number of additional, online-only articles on the journal's website at www.equinoxpub.com/JCA

the island for many years now, but it was during the summer and autumn of 2015 that the island found itself at the epicentre of global attention, a world stage for the border-crossing spectacle (Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris 2016; Papataxiarchis 2016a, 2016b; cf. Andersson 2014): more than 500,000 people crossed from Turkey, migrants and war refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, as well as many other Asian and African countries, to an island with 85,000 permanent inhabitants. At the same time, celebrity after celebrity paraded on this stage, enacting the rituals of global humanitarianism (cf. Fassin 2012). Along with them, and often backstage, many anonymous people from the island and from many different parts of the world – some of them working with NGOs, others not – laboured endlessly, day and night, to provide support and express solidarity. In April 2016, the Pope concluded his visit to the island by taking a dozen migrants with him to Rome, a chosen few who were fast-tracked to the Promised Land.

The year 2015 may have been the year that this mass border-crossing spectacle acquired global visibility and attention, yet we tend to forget that in the modern era undocumented migration has been around since formal travel documents and migration control procedures were introduced, roughly after the First World War. Much of that earlier migration, however, happened across borders in Asia and Africa, and was thus, save for a few exceptions, out of sight for most western eyes and away from western media. In recent years, certain border regions have acquired prominence and visibility in the west: particular examples here are the Mexico–USA border and the extended borderlands between the European Union (EU) and African and Asian countries that range from the Canary Islands to the Greek–Turkish border.

The recent war in Syria and the subsequent mass out-migration has not only heightened public attention on the matter; it has also again brought to the surface the distinction between refugees, meaning those who flee war and persecution and are thus forced to migrate in order to find a safe haven, and migrants, who are assumed to have left voluntarily for economic reasons. The former category was enshrined in international law in the post-war years: the rights of the refugee were safeguarded through a series of protocols following the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, and guaranteed by then newly founded bodies such as the International Refugee Organization (1947), and eventually the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (1950). However, given the historical contingencies of today – when warfare as a continuous, often low-intensity affair is widespread, when economic necessity and deprivation are closely entangled with military interventions and displacement due to invasion and colonization, and when we are faced with the immediate prospect of mass migrations due to climate change – it is debatable whether the distinction between refugee and migrant is still valid and appropriate. Also, it has been shown (e.g. Scalettaris 2007) that it is not helpful for research (and I would add, activism and advocacy) to use analytical categories (such as that of the refugee) that were devised as a part of policy and regulation procedures. In the contemporary moment, the distinction between migrant and refugee serves primarily as a device which promotes racist and xenophobic agendas: the refugee is deemed in need of protection, whereas the undocumented migrant, a mostly propertyless, willing transgressor, becomes automatically and *de facto* a criminal (Neocleous and Kastrinou 2016, 7). As such s/he is seen as someone who is justly subjected to detention, punish-

ment, and eventual deportation. Solidarity movements, however, have often used the label of the refugee instrumentally, but successfully, to denote migrants in general, and thus to attract support.

This is not the only problematic term in the contemporary discussion on migration. For example, while in this article and in this thematic issue as a whole we employ the rubric of "forced migration" for convenience, as it resonates with many public discourses, it will be clear in the discussion which follows that the term does not accurately portray contemporary migration. It has been shown time and again that human mobility across and within national boundaries is motivated by both voluntary and involuntary factors, external pressures as well as human will and initiative. Necessity and conscious action are intertwined, and the agency and initiative of the migrant are paramount. The term "undocumented" has been adopted by solidarity movements and researchers for use instead of the problematic and inevitably xenophobic terms "illegal" or "irregular", although the word also emanates from the optic and procedural logic of the state: it refers to those people whose mobility has not been registered by state apparatuses, although that mobility is often being documented through other processes, such as ethnographic research and activism, for example. Moreover, once undocumented border crossers are subjected to state migration procedures they are fast transformed from undocumented to over-documented, especially in preparation for detention and deportation; hence migrants' ambivalence towards documents, as discussed below.

In public discourses, the current phenomenon has been called a "migration crisis", although some would prefer to call it a "reception crisis" (Christopoulos 2016) on the part of the rich countries of the global North. This critique highlights that the number of migrants who attempt to enter the EU, the USA, or other developed countries such as Australia is at present relatively small (or in some cases even tiny) compared to the numbers that much smaller and poorer countries, in the Middle East for example (Lebanon, Jordan), have had to accommodate for many years.

The two dominant tropes that seem to have shaped the responses of this migration/reception crisis are that of victimization-humanitarianism on the one hand, and of criminalization-securitization and militarization on the other. The former points to the real tragedies of forced exile, especially in situations of warfare, and the persecution of the migrant, as well as the many fatalities in the undocumented border-crossing attempts, whether in the Sonoran Desert, the Sahara, or the Mediterranean. But in attempting to raise public awareness and mobilize humanitarian assistance, the advocates of this trope often portray migrants primarily as helpless individuals deprived of agency. Such terms of suffering – which have been co-opted by states and other authority structures (Vaughan-Williams 2015) – "invoke trauma rather than recognizing violence", and inevitably "mobilize compassion rather than justice" (Fassin 2012, 8; cf. Rozakou 2012).

The latter trope, advocated primarily by state apparatuses as well as conservative media, organizations and groups, see the vast majority of migrants as criminals who not only violate the sovereignty of the state and its boundaries but who also threaten the financial and social stability of the West by "stealing" jobs, exploiting public services, spreading diseases, and polluting the national body. The racism of this argument is self-evident. What is less evident is its groundless financial logic, which obscures the

FIGURE 1.   Through the metal fence at the Moria detention camp, Lesvos, Greece (photograph by author, April 2016).

reality that in most cases and in the long run the country that receives migrants benefits demographically, financially, and culturally to an enormous extent, for example by reducing old-age dependency (United Nations 2016).

"Photo, photo!" another boy insisted when he saw my mobile phone. Several more gathered around him and posed, smiling and making the victory sign. I hadn't planned to take photos of people, and I hesitated. But this was different. These children were asking to enter into what the artist and cultural theorist Ariella Azoulay has called "the civil contract of photography" (Azoulay 2008): they were offering themselves up as a photographic subject, while my side of the contract was to disseminate the photo to the outside world. They wished to become visible, to be seen, but to be seen smiling, assertive, courageous. They were claiming their agency, understanding only too well the globalizing power of images. (Figure 1)

The political philosopher Giorgio Agamben in his 1995 article "We Refugees" elaborates on a discussion which was begun by Hannah Arendt in her 1943 essay of the same title (Arendt 1994 [1943]) about Jewish exiles from Nazi Germany. Agamben's thought, however, is haunted by modern migrants to the EU and to the west in general. Both Arendt

and Agamben attempt to rescue migrants and refugees from the state of victimhood, and emphasize instead their positive and even revolutionary role, as figures who throw into disarray the status quo of the nation-state. Migrants embody, they argue, a new kind of citizen, who demands above all to be accepted as a distinctive human being, rather than as a member of a national body or as someone who exists because s/he is inscribed by birth and descent into a national community. These perspectives accord with comments by Edward Said (talking, however, primarily about intellectuals) on the exilic condition as a privileged state of autonomy, as a space of freedom, despite the pain and angst that comes with exile (Said 1996).

These insights seem to find support in recent empirical, ethnographic and other research. Undocumented migration is a specific strand of the global migration phenomenon, counting 244 million in 2015, and up by c. 30% since 2000 (United Nations 2016). Further, a recent wave of important ethnographies (e.g. Khosravi 2010; Andersson 2014) as well as other writings on the matter have demonstrated that global undocumented migration today must be seen as a social movement, rather than as a phenomenon of crisis. Of course, as a social movement it has distinctive characteristics and differs from the conventional social movements of the past, but it is still a movement that makes colonialism present, that brings the global South centre stage. It is also a movement that enacts the conscious decision of millions of primarily poor people, mostly from the global South, to take their future into their hands – or better, onto their feet. These are people who assert their right to flee, to reject the global allocation of roles determined by the world elites, to refuse simply to become cheap and dispensable labour in the sweatshops of developing countries in order to supply cheap commodities for the global North. In a world which constantly proclaims, through its media and its elites, its globalized nature, these people want to take such proclamations seriously, to experience the "time-space compression" (Harvey 1989), to enact global connectivity. Hence their efforts to keep trying, to attempt to cross increasingly reinforced and militarized borders, until they succeed. In this process, they accumulate enormous border crossing knowledge which is shared *en route*, creating global migratory commons (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013).

Migrants may hold placards saying "we are human", asking us thus to stare at our ontological mirrors, but it is animal metaphors that are very often used to describe the status of the migrant: from *pollos* (chicken) for Mexican border crossers, to *gosfand* (sheep) for Iranians (Khosravi 2010, 27). This animalization can be taken to designate the border crossers as "sacrificial creatures for the border ritual" (Khosravi 2010, 27). They also produce a distinctive zoo-political discourse whereby border crossers from the global South entering the "First World" are deliberately designated as closer to animality and are thus detained in zoo-like facilities for further inspection and recording; after all, it was an Austrian Minister who, in 2012, declared that the Greek–Turkish border "is open like a barn door" (Vaughan-Williams 2015, 4). But what about cases where migrants themselves choose to temporarily adopt the persona of the non-human animal, testing the boundaries of the human and of humanly tolerable hardship, in order to achieve their goal? Cases where migrants hide in dog kennels to avoid detection in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, on the Africa–EU border (Andersson 2014, 169), or in which they crawl into the smallest possible spaces under cars and lorries, where one would have thought

that only small animals could fit, in their attempts to cross national borders? And is it not that state of being *en el camino*, *en route* for months, years, for the rest of their lives, a process of continuous becoming (cf. Deleuze 2004), of continuous identity negotiation (cf. Agier 2002), of endless transformation? Of willingly enacting the becoming-animal or the becoming-other human, beyond conventional definitions?

There is always a danger of projecting our own political fantasies onto other people or romanticizing the migrant experience: the almost daily fatalities in the Mediterranean or the Sonoran Desert must operate as our reality check. Migrants may potentially consti-tute a powerful political force that can threaten the edifice of nationalism in the transit or destination countries but they do not necessarily leave behind conservative, essentialist, and primordialist views themselves, as the history of nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrates (cf. Anderson 1991, 1994; Hamilakis 2007). Migrant and refugee camps can foment both radical, emancipatory, and revolutionary as well as conservative and reactionary movements.

Also, while Agamben (1998) and others, especially through the concept of migrants as "bare lives", seem to emphasize citizen rights (Papastergiadis 2006), that category may not be relevant for many migrants today, as some invent their own versions of being as they go along. In that sense, while the protection that national citizenship can offer is, under certain conditions, desirable, this malleable state of "bare life" can be at times preferable, a situation that can allow a flexible and on-going process of becoming. In addition, it is clear that undocumented migration today is a highly diverse phenomenon. The families fleeing war in Syria may have very different aspirations and dreams from the men from sub-Saharan Africa who regularly charge at the metal fences in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco (Andersson 2014, 156). Yet despite these warnings and reservations, it is beyond doubt that undocumented migrants today exer-cise social and political agency, an agency that harbours great transformative potential for themselves and for others, for the places they migrate through and to as well as the places that they leave behind. As such, rather than charity or humanitarian aid, it is understanding, support, and critical solidarity that we should offer.

It is also abundantly clear that the production of legality and illegality associated with migration is a major global business, a network of apparatuses and processes that do not so much aim at keeping migrants out but rather at regulating their movement, at managing the timing and the duration of crossing, and at determining the conditions of their entry and stay in the host countries (cf. Papadopoulos *et al.* 2008). The neo-liberal economic incentives for keeping millions of people (11 million in the USA alone) undocumented and in limbo are obvious. Less explored, however, are the financial gains in expanding and exporting the border, in outsourcing the regulation of migrant move-ment. Examples here include the 2006–2008 agreements between Spain (and the EU) and a number of West African countries which were tasked with stopping people from embarking on a border crossing (Andersson 2014), and the 2016 agreement between EU and Turkey, in which the latter was asked to block the movement of Syrian and other refugees and migrants into the EU. Equally unexplored is the financial edifice that sustains the growing number of major NGOs in the humanitarian sector, or the media

industries that thrive on the spectacularization of migration, on the creation of global stages of border crossing (Andersson 2014, 137–173). And finally, and more pertinently in the context of this special issue, there is the booming academic and contemporary art "industry" on migration which, with several exceptions, appears to act both opportunistically and exploitatively in commodifying border-crossing stories and images, and even fatalities and tragedies. Andersson (2014, online appendix) notes that in addition to the biopolitics of migration there is also a bio-economics of border crossing. To take his argument further, is there also perhaps a danger of producing an academic "disaster capitalism" (Klein 2007) centred on migration? A cottage industry that gains academic capital by focusing mostly on the "crisis" aspects and on the tragedies of border crossing, disregarding its agentic and transformative power, seemingly of less sensational value?

I went back to Lesvos in late July 2016, and again in January 2017. The situation on the island had changed drastically since April. Local people were complaining that, despite all the publicity and the many celebrities that had paraded on the island, tourism was significantly down, and it is migration that they blamed. Solidarity camps, especially the visible ones close to the city, had been dismantled by the authorities, which insisted that the "management" of the "refugee issue" should be left to the state, the municipal authorities, and the recognized and approved NGOs. But it was clear that not everything was under their control. The dismantled solidarity camps were re-emerging elsewhere, following every eviction. Several migrants were clearly refusing to be part of official structures, and were living clandestinely in squats, abandoned buildings, even in archaeological monuments and sites. Outside the Moria detention centre, the long lines of parked cars spoke of the inflated humanitarian/illegality industry; at the same time, the traces of burning and the holes in the metal fence, despite the façade of high security and militarization, spoke of the regular migrant revolts, some of which had been started by the detained children. On the 19th of September 2016, a major migrant uprising broke out in Moria, following attempts to stage an organized protest. That day, a 21-year-old Ethiopian woman from the Oromo tribe who was detained there – let's call her Adanach – happened to be away from the camp, as she was ill and at hospital. When she returned, she discovered that all her things, including her papers, had been burnt. But there was something else she was more upset about, as reported at the time:

> My shoes burned in Moria. Before my shoes burned, I used to run. You know, I used to run when I was in school. I was number one in my school […] Training shoes are very expensive in my country. My family used to buy them for me so I keep them with me always. Even when I left everything behind, I kept the running shoes with me. Then, that day I got sick, I went to hospital from Moria so I didn't wear the sport shoes. I left them in Moria and Moria burned. I cried about my shoes. I told my friend who had stayed in Moria that day: "Why didn't you save my shoes? (quoted by Infomile 2016)

According to news reports, the uprising that lead to the fire started when someone shouted "Freedom!"

Why an Archaeology of Contemporary, Undocumented Migration?

One way or another, undocumented migration is a key matter of concern for socie-ties today. And while the topic is at the centre of attention and study in a wide range of scholarly fields, the materiality of the phenomenon and its sensorial and mnemonic dimensions are barely understood and analysed. Anthropological archaeologists and other material culture specialists, including specialists on museum and commemorative practices, can contribute immensely to a new understanding of the phenomenon. Forced and undocumented migration is primarily a material and sensorial experience (cf. Dudley 2011; Andersson 2014, 153–154). It is about mobility, movement through space; it is a kinaesthetic experience through various landscapes and seascapes. Archaeologists have been studying landscapes and seascapes for many years and have analysed how interaction with human and anthropogenic space shapes human experience. In the study of migration, they have often shown how landscape can become a crucial material agent in the process of border crossing. De León (2015), for example, has shown how, as part of the "The Prevention through Deterrence" policy on the Mexico–USA border, migrants were pushed away from the city entry points and towards the unforgiving desert, thus resulting in a very high mortality rate. The desert was drafted as key ally in that policy, and the deaths were naturalized. But what makes De León's contribution both insightful and gripping, and highly affective, is his archaeological sensibility, his sensorial attention to the textures of the border-crossing experience and its entanglement with the landscape. Such mobilization of the landscape in the service of border control and migrant move-ment regulation is not, of course, unique to the Mexico–USA border. The EU authorities and its constituent nation-states have followed a similar policy, especially with regard to their southern (African) and southeastern (Asian) borders; the fencing off and milita-rization of the land crossings and narrow sea passages along the Spanish–Moroccan and Greek–Turkish borders has forced migrants to take the long and dangerous central Mediterranean route, resulting in many thousands of people drowning. The year 2016 has been the deadliest year in migrant fatalities in the Mediterranean, while border crossings have been down by roughly two thirds, compared to 2015.[1]

The archaeology of undocumented migration thus involves understanding the experi-ential encounter of moving bodies through diverse landscapes, and the accumulation of bodily knowledge through that movement. It also entails an analysis of the atmospheric and material components implicated in the process: space, natural and anthropogenic features; the weather; the appropriate clothing and gear for the journey; vehicles and boats; routes and paths, landmarks, and orientation signs; even the shrines and apo-tropaic traces left on the way (Soto 2016). It is also an archaeology which attempts to understand how these new engagements with spaces and landscapes relate to the long-term human interaction with these features, how perennial paths and routes are shared, and how and whether new knowledges rely on the existing reservoir of human movement through space. Understanding the materiality and sensoriality of mobility is thus central in what some authors have called the "viapolitical" conception of migration

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1. Deaths are tracked by the International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project (http://missingmigrants.iom.int/).

(Walters 2015), or what I would like to call the sensorial economy of global flows.

During this movement, and in the migrants' border-crossing attempts, it is the lack of specific pieces of paper – of the appropriate passports and visas – in association with the materialized, enforced, and securitized border that results in an alien status: migrants are the *undocumented*, the *sans papiers* or the *sin papeles,* defined thus negatively by the lack of such documentation. It is a material object – a document, a piece of paper – which stands between the migrant and the country of destination (Cabot 2012). But beyond any single material object, it is the heterogeneous assemblage of material and immaterial entities which coheres to enact legality and illegality, and the performance and spectacle of border crossing (Deleuze 2004; Hamilakis and Jones 2017): border crossers are produced by the institutionalization, materialization, and enforcement of the border, which co-functions with the presence or absence of documents, human social actors such as guards, and a legal and an institutional apparatus. This is the sensorial assemblage of border crossing and migration (Hamilakis 2017).

Bodily and sensorial traits are also paramount in the construction of hierarchies of acceptability: primarily skin colour and complexion, but also foreign-sounding speech or alien attire. Odour and olfactory experience have long been a sensorial trope of distancing, othering, and racialising (Hamilakis 2013), and migrants are no exception. Taste and the multi-sensorial experience of eating work both negatively as separation and alienation as well as positively as affirmative biopolitics (Esposito 2008), as the production of positive home memories (Sutton 2001) and the creation of sensorial and affective, familiar worlds and atmospheres on the part of the migrants (Dudley 2011; Hamilakis 2013; see also below). In the Lesvos camps I visited, migrants would often reject the ready-made food provided by catering companies and find ways to cook their own food, using whatever fuel they could find in and around the camp.

The materiality of undocumented migration can also be encountered in the remnants that are left behind in the border-crossing attempts: material artefacts such as boats and dinghies, life vests, and discarded rucksacks, which are today scattered all over in regions such as the Mediterranean or the Arizona desert. In some cases, these artefacts become the subject of art projects or commemorative and museum exhibitions, and in others the raw materials for inventive initiatives, as they are transformed into functional biographical objects, carrying with them the affective memory of the migration experience (Figure 2). Various makeshift camps *en route* leave often inconspicuous but highly significant traces, enabling a typology of transitory migration sites (De León 2015), and a detailed and almost forensic recording of their texture and materiality. Some of these camps, as we saw especially in Europe recently, can become substantial and highly organized structures despite their makeshift character, as has been happening in the so-called "Jungle", in Calais, or Idomeni, in northern Greece. Finally, there are the morbid material remnants of interrupted lives, be they shoes and clothing of those who did not make the crossing, unidentified bodies in the desert, or the anonymous and austere graves on a border island. These are burials that are often conducted without due process, be it in terms of funerary rites and religious customs, or in terms of documentation that can enable future identification of interred individuals, in the case of anonymous graves (Kovras and Robins 2016).

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FIGURE 2.   Life vests discarded by border crossers (top) and subsequently transformed into bags (bottom) by migrants at the PIKPA solidarity camp, Lesvos, Greece (photograph by author, April 2016).

Even from the point of view of states and other apparatuses, however, it is the materialization of legality/illegality and of prevention that has become most prominent. Borders have recently acquired a more visible and tactile presence than ever before (cf. McGuire 2013): walls and fences are being erected along borderlines, and patrols are in operation on land and at sea, perhaps a futile material response to the sense of losing national sovereignty (Brown 2010). At the same time, the border effect has become more invisible and defuse and can be encountered everywhere, and not just in borderlands themselves. These walls and borders are not there to protect against external enemies and military invasions, but seemingly to keep undocumented migrants out, to make the crossing more dangerous, and to perform the spectacle of securitization. Biometric controls have been introduced, detention centres – such as the one in Moria, Lesvos, discussed above – have been constructed, especially along borderlines, whereas recently many other "reception" facilities have sprung up in various countries, particularly those that are designated unofficially as buffer zones, such Greece and Turkey for the European Union. Islands seem to be particularly important in this process, leading some authors to speak of an "enforcement archipelago" (Mountz 2011), and alluding perhaps to their long history in the public imagination as places of detention, exile, but also sanitization. A closer look at the micro-scale, however, will show that such facilities are highly diverse, from the standard, UN-patterned ones to the impromptu temporary shelters constructed by migrants: in Lesvos, for example, in addition to the highly militarized detention centre at Moria, there is the relatively open centre of Kara Tepe which is run by the municipality and is destined primarily for families, and the PIKPA solidarity structure which is run collectively by migrants and members of a small solidarity group and receives vulnerable people. Other camps include, for example, the various squats organised by "No Border Kitchen", an anarchist solidarity initiative, constantly under attack by the authorities, and the completely informal and temporary migrant shelters amongst ancient and medieval ruins. How does the materiality and spatial grid of all these structures shape migrant experience?

The archaeology of undocumented migration is not only about border crossing, though. The homes and material worlds that are left behind; the empty rooms and houses that are often kept as shrines, memorials to the departed, or even cenotaphs (cf. De León 2015, 276; Bachmeier, this issue; Pistrick, this issue); the houses and things that are left behind but are now occupied and used by others (Navaro-Yasin 2009); the material worlds and landscapes produced through the remittances migrants have sent back (e.g. Dalakoglou 2010; Lopez 2015; Byrne 2016): all can form worthwhile topics for further reflection and study. Also, how does migrant materiality transform the countries traversed, and the cities and countries of permanent or transitory relocation? How do undocumented migrants maintain a sensorial and affective connection with a homeland, and how do their own things and objects, the ones they have brought with them and the ones they have produced in their new home, shape their mnemonic world? Finally, do archaeology and material heritage discourses and practices in these transit and destination countries relate in any way to the migrant experience, and if so, in what way? How do museums react to the contemporary undocumented migration? Can the colonialist and nationalist heritage of modernist archaeology be countered by foregrounding migrant experience and mobility, past and present?

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In studying the sensorial assemblage of migration, the voices of the migrants themselves – oral ethnographic encounters, histories, and narratives – are crucial, but undocumented migration cannot always be expressed in words. It can, however, be evoked in things, in sensorial and affective experiences and gestures, in non-linguistic utterances. This may be due to linguistic barriers, or to the intensity or the traumatic nature of the experience, which may not lend itself to the production of stories, narratives, or oral testimonies. In other cases, migrants may be reluctant to narrate their experiences because they are wary of their misuse and because they would rather stay under the radar, to be able to continue their transformative journey. Or they may resist what they see as the instrumentalization and the symbolic or literal commodification of their narrated lives by various social actors, including academics. Finally, they may be wary and tired of the constant demand to go over past events and circumstances for the benefit of various audiences, when they would rather express themselves in non-verbal ways, through art for example, or talk about their future plans and aspirations. In all these cases, it is things – material traces and artefacts, materiality and sensoriality – that are the primary means of understanding the phenomenon.

Migration thus is not just a matter of moving bodies but of a complex and heterogeneous, sensorial/material, multi-temporal assemblage. In understanding such an assemblage, an archaeological sensibility is paramount. And yet, there are still very few attempts by archaeologists and material culture specialists (e.g. Basu and Coleman 2008; Dalakoglou 2010) to engage with the phenomenon in a politically and ethically sensitive matter. The few exceptions include the pioneering and highly important Undocumented Migration Project on the Mexico–USA border (De León 2015), a couple of other studies in the same context (McGuire 2013; Soto 2016), the work of Dudley (2011) in refugee camps along the Tai-Burma border, or, for an earlier, historical example, the Archaeology Network of the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project (Voss 2015). The forum that follows this introduction thus hopes to explore the diverse intellectual, methodological, ethical, and political frameworks for an archaeology of forced and undocumented migration in the present, through both reflective, ideas pieces and case studies. We invited short contributions from archaeologists, anthropologists, other specialists, artists, and activists, including items by migrants themselves, in different media, posing the following questions:

- How can we record, explore, and understand the materiality of the experience of forced and undocumented migration today, in its diverse forms?
- How can we communicate such work to scholars and to various publics?
- What kind of theoretical and methodological stances can we deploy, avoiding the instrumentalization of the phenomenon for purely academic purposes, and the aestheticization of an often painful and tragic experience?

The contributions cover a very wide geographical range, from Mexico and the USA to Finland, the Middle East, India–Pakistan and Australia. Several deal with the contemporary situation as it is unfolding, especially in Europe's southern borders and on the Mexico–USA border, while others ask us to reflect on the historical dimensions of migration, and the lessons we can learn from major displacement episodes, such as

that following the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 or the war in Palestine in 1948. Finally, several contributions reflect on the museum and heritage presentation of the contemporary migrant experience, and critique the reluctance of heritage bodies and museums to engage with the political dimensions of the phenomenon and to connect it with earlier, celebrated and commemorated migration episodes.

Who Needs Such an Archaeology, What is its Nature, and How Can It be Conducted?

Archaeology of undocumented migration for whom? Who needs such an archaeology? One of the crucial roles of the archaeology of contemporary migration is to valorize the material remnants of mobility and border-crossing experience, especially when such remnants are seen as "trash" – another seemingly "environmentally sensitive" way to express xenophobic attitudes. In doing so, we complicate the notion of "trash", a highly situated, border concept itself: we decentre and undermine the divide between human and thing (Squire 2014), and we valorize migrants and border crossers as producers of valued materiality, worthy of attention, collection, and study. But it is worth reflecting for a moment on the fact that while archaeology valorizes such material traces, out of which it produces an "archaeological record" and an archive, such valorization is not necessarily shared by the migrants themselves. Indeed, as some contributions that follow show (see in particular Tyrikos-Ergas), migrants may want to forget the remnants of the border-crossing experience in particular; they would rather prefer not to recall and certainly not memorialize traces such as life vests, or fragments of inflatable boats. More pertinently, our desire for documentation – a desire, it must be said, which we share with border authorities and states – seems to be at odds with the desires, aspirations, and practices of some migrants, such as those from West and North Africa attempting to cross into the EU through Spain and Italy. Many of them would rather burn any travelling documents to avoid identification with a specific country, thus lessening the risk of deportation to that country. The name "*haragas*" referred initially to those who burn their documents, but it is now an appellation which has come to denote metaphorically all those who would wish to "burn" their past lives and reinvent themselves in and through their journey (Andersson 2014; Alexander 2016). Some migrants, according to several media reports (e.g. *BBC News* 2004; Allen 2009), have even burnt their fingertips to evade biometric identification. To give another example, migrants on the Mexico–USA border take every effort to cover their tracks in order to avoid detection and arrest (for example, by wearing shoes with carpeted soles – De León 2015, 160–161), the tracks on the ground that a conventional archaeology would value in recording paths and itineraries. An archaeology that prioritizes preservation and documentation in the abstract is not an archaeology that would seem to work for the benefit of migrants, in these cases at least. In fact, it could potentially work against them: where do the surveillance of states and border agencies meet the surveying and documentation principles and practices of modernist archaeology?

It becomes evident that an archaeology of undocumented migration which begins from a position of active (but still critical) solidarity towards the border crossers and

migrants cannot adopt the objectifying principles and the panopticism of modernist archaeology. It cannot import wholesale its documentation and recording apparatus. In other words, what is needed is a transformed, politically aware archaeology, and one which avoids the risk of becoming the heritage branch of the border control agencies and of the security apparatus.

The archaeologies of undocumented migration are currently in the making, and their constitution will be a collective endeavour. It is my suggestion, however, that they can operate at multiple levels:

(1) *Sensorial-material*: Studying up and studying down, directing sensorial attention to the securitization of human mobility and the militarization of border controls and thus turning the cameras towards the surveillance apparatus, and directing sensorial attention to the material remnants of the border crossing and migrant experience, including the vastly proliferating digital traces. We can thus foreground aspects of such experience that normally go unnoticed by scholars, by media, and by the border spectacle with its reliance primarily on vision: the textures, the smells, and the sounds, especially of the rarely exposed backstage situations (cf. Andersson 2014, 153–154).

(2) *Epistemic*: Understanding contemporary migrant experience through the study of natural and anthropogenic materiality, and helping us rethink archaeological categories and concepts through this experience. This is an *archaeology of care* which valorizes and activates small and seemingly insignificant material things, as well as the more imposing material edifices. It is *archaeology as witnessing*, which objectifies neither the migrants nor the migrant material traces but foregrounds both as subjects and agents in the world.

(3) *Affective*: Foregrounding the material traces and things that will enable us to be touched, to be affectively moved and empowered by the desire of migrants to become authors of their own destiny and by some of the associated tragic side-effects of such a drive for liberation.

(4) *Archival*: Producing a counter-archive, a partial and situated record of contemporary undocumented migration, and preserving and curating some of its remnants as material and affective agents of an important social process; and exploring the entanglement of materiality with temporality as well as the entanglement of the temporality of contemporary migration with other temporalities, such as that of long-term human mobility, of the never-ending era of colonialism, and of other episodes of forced migration in the recent past. Some of the key questions here should be: How do the material memories of previous forced migration episodes shape contemporary reactions? What is the temporality of the border crossing, of the migrant and refugee camp? How is migrant time, primarily a time of waiting, enacted and performed? How does it differ from other conceptions of time?

Ship-wrecked boats, shoes, and rucksacks left in the desert or in beaches, small personal items, can attract public attention and generate concern and support. But they can also often invite a twenty-first-century ruin lust, and can become the subjects of a photographic "refugee porn" phenomenon. A reflexive archaeology of undocumented migration should resist such urges, and at the same time reflect on and debate the public fascination with such images. Nevertheless, such archaeology encounters a transitory and unstable materiality, one that is being transformed rapidly, inviting thus some sort of

recording, of counter-counting. While the encounter with the border crossing experience gives the impression of material abundance, these material traces disappear very fast, either because they are cleared off beaches, deserts, and other landscapes, since they are seen as "environmental pollution", or because they are transformed and recycled into other objects, including art installation projects. At the same time, the migratory landscapes are replete with traces of *accelerated ruination*: makeshift structures such as temporary camps are built, used, and abandoned over the space of a few months or even weeks (Figure 3).

The archaeology of contemporary undocumented migration is also faced with the phenomenon of what can be called *compressed materiality*. The most characteristic example of this is the mobile phone, perhaps more valuable to the migrant than any other object. This is a hyper-object (Morton 2013) that compresses time and space, and merges communication, sociability, entertainment, storage, and archival functions (including the storage of digital photos of loved ones and of favourite places and home locales), emotion, and affect. This is a key tool in the migrants' urge to establish connection, a multi-temporal object that harbours so many promises for the future. In recent years, one of the most pertinent and telling sights of the border crossing experience has been the image of temporary posts established in detention and solidary centres and equipped with multi-plug devices, used to charge dozens of migrant phones simultaneously.

FIGURE 3.   Accelerated ruination: tent platforms at the "Better Days for Moria" solidarity camp, outside the detention centre of Moria, Lesvos (photograph by author, April 2016).

An archaeology of contemporary undocumented migration should be a reflexive, multi-sited and multi-temporal archaeological ethnography (cf. Hamilakis 2011) which produces a shared space of encounters, a multi-temporal contact zone. It centres around materiality and temporality and fetishizes neither the thing and the object, nor the oral account and the personal narrative. Both are deemed important, as are the other sites and arenas. Ideally, it should be a collaborative effort not only among scholars from different disciplines and social and cultural backgrounds but also between researchers and migrants of diverse backgrounds. This is an improvised research and activist endeavour that is constantly under suspension, ready to abandon any research practices that may harm the migrants, and give up archaeological work when a more pressing activist and solidarity task is required. It is archaeology-cum-activism for both the migrants themselves – who will have their own take on the materiality of migration – and for the people of the transit and destination countries, themselves potentially migrants or affected directly by the migration experience.

Finally, archaeologists and critical heritage specialists should encourage museums to accession remnants of contemporary migration, something that most of them seem to be reluctant to do. But there is an inherent danger of museifying the border-crossing and migrant experience, and an archaeology of contemporary migration is particularly susceptible to it. This is a danger of arresting and fixing the social life of a material relic of that experience. But such objects, like the migrants themselves, were meant to circulate and move, and as we saw, they get recycled and transformed into various biographical artefacts. There is also a danger of divorcing these material traces from the migrants themselves and from the other material and immaterial components of the migration assemblage; of entrapping them into the confines of an institutional framework and logic, such as a conventional museum; and of fixing them into a specific temporal moment. This temporal fixation is inevitably a futile attempt, as material, involuntary, biographical and social memories of other migrations will be sensorially triggered and evoked (cf. Byrne, this issue). Attempts to counter such museification are, of course, already under way, and one recent proposal which addresses specifically Mediterranean migration speaks of a *liquid museum* (or *museaum*): a museum-ship which will be sailing from port to port in the Mediterranean, collecting as well as dispersing objects, stories, and narratives (Baravalle and Biscottini 2014), and incorporating the material memories of the sea. The world of museums needs to engage with contemporary undocumented migration, and to use this opportunity to imagine alternative museum horizons, including open, temporary anti-museums, or mobile, transitory or, as just mentioned, liquid museums.

Endnote

The archaeologies of forced and undocumented migration are long overdue. In the current climate of increasing xenophobia in the West, they are also politically and ethically essential. They are not just about migrants: they concern everyone, as the migration phenomenon reshapes the contemporary world overall. They merge research and activism and can become an essential component of the transdisciplinary and transcultural study of the phenomenon. At the same time, both archaeology and the museum world should welcome the challenge (to their foundational logic, their epistemologies, their

politics) that an archaeology of contemporary undocumented migration can foment, the rethinking of key concepts and ideas it can engender, and the political work that it can facilitate.
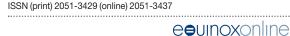
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☐ The 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan: Migration, Material Landscapes, and the Making of Nations

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> The world of political possibilities in India seems to be simplifying into the frightening choice before most of the modern world's political communities: to try to craft imperfect democratic rules by which increasingly mixed groups of people can carry on together an unheroic everyday existence, or the illusion of a permanent and homogeneous, unmixed, single nation, a single collective self without any trace of a defiling otherness.
>
> (Sudipta Kaviraj, 1994: 129)

The 1947 Partition: Mass Displacement and Emergent Nationhood

Archaeologists of forced migration need to consider along with their considerations of the hardships of migration the ideas that drive displacement, statelessness, and migrant exclusion. The nation-state concept, through which a sense of cultural boundedness and timelessness legitimizes territorial sovereignty (Anderson 1983; McGuire 1992; Meskell 1998; Hamilakis 2007), is one such idea, and it is important to consider how it is sustained within different contexts and how it works to affix essentialist understandings of national belonging to different places. Hamilakis sees antiquities as playing a major role within this process, in the making of "national imagination" into "experiential truths" (Hamilakis 2007, 292–293). The 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan offers an interesting case study through which to consider, not only the role of antiquities, but also that of peoples' movement through historic landscapes in establishing such "experiential