

Coalition for **Archaeological Synthesis**  
On Behalf of the Society for American Archaeology and  
the European Association of Archaeologists

**Request for Information:  
Participation in Synthetic Study of Human Migration  
as Understood from a Long-Term Perspective**

The [Coalition for Archaeological Synthesis](#) (CfAS) is requesting information from scholars and researchers in archaeology and allied disciplines interested in designing and possibly participating in one or more collaborative synthetic projects on human migration. The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) are jointly sponsoring this effort in order to develop long-term, comparative and synthetic understandings of the factors stimulating human migration, the conditions and processes implicated in the success of the incorporation of immigrant groups at their destination, and how these new understandings might inform contemporary public policy.

The projects will be designed by a diverse group of about 15 researchers who have demonstrated experience relevant to migration studies and who have and are willing to share data or expertise pertinent to the topic. Participants are sought from relevant disciplines including, but not limited to: archaeology, anthropology, demography, ecology, agronomy, hydrology, paleoenvironmental sciences, informatics, socio-ecological modeling, geography, history, political science, and urban planning. The outcome of the design phase will be one or more proposals to be submitted to funding agencies. *This Request for Information (RFI) is for the purpose of identifying participants in a 3 or 4 day workshop to design the synthetic projects; implementing the projects is contingent on securing additional funding.*

**Background**

In 2015, the SAA and EAA jointly sponsored a thematic conference in Curaçao on slavery, colonialism, and trade. Because of the success of the conference, the two organizations agreed to work toward a second thematic conference. Migration from the Middle East, particularly from Syria, as well as North Africa is greatly affecting European countries; migration from Latin America to North America, principally to the United States, is a subject of intense debate. Especially considering the disruptions caused by climate change, migration raises critical humanitarian and even moral—not just a political—questions. SAA and EAA believe that archaeology, with its deep time perspective, can profitably contribute both to the scientific literature and to public discourse.

For a variety of reasons, it became clear to both professional societies that small thematic conferences were logistically and financially impractical. Still desiring to work together on the subject of human migration, which has become even more relevant in the intervening years, the SAA and EAA have decided to pursue collaboration through one or more joint project(s) held under the auspices of CfAS.

Established in 2017, CfAS advances synthetic research using the working group model pioneered by the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis ([NCEAS](#)). Although new to archaeology, the NCEAS model of research has been a powerful driver for advancing interdisciplinary scientific research in other fields (Carpenter et al. 2009; Hackett et al. 2008). The rationale behind and the vision of the Coalition is articulated in two papers (Altschul et al. [2017](#), [2018](#)), which are available on the [CfAS Website](#). As the human migration project(s) are intended to put into practice the collaborative research model laid out in those papers, RFI applicants are strongly encouraged to consult them.

SAA and EAA will sponsor one or more collaborative synthetic research projects completed by small *working groups* that embody considerable intellectual and disciplinary diversity. Over 2-3 years, the working group for each project will be funded to meet 3 or 4 times for intensive research sessions of 5 working days. In between, team members will continue to collaborate remotely. The working group will integrate multiple perspectives and multiple sources of data to generate explanatory insights that are impossible to achieve through the study of a single case or from a single perspective. Working groups are expected to employ a wide range of data resources including cultural resources management (CRM) and heritage management fields, and other under-utilized sources. By the end of the working group effort, source and synthesized data products must be made available, open access, through a recognized digital repository. All published working group outcomes must be open access in some form (e.g., green open access).

Letters of interest submitted in response to this Request for Information will be used by CfAS to identify 15 participants for a 3- or 4-day *design workshop* to be held in fall 2019. That workshop will develop one or more proposals to fund one or more full *working group projects* that will extend over 2-3 years. While the design workshop will have strong international participation, it will be held in the US in fall 2019, with dates to be determined by the selected participants and the conference venue. However, some of the working group meetings will likely be held internationally.

While we expect that many of the design workshop participants will be proposed for participation in the full working group effort, not all may be included and other researchers will likely be added in the working group proposals developed by the design workshop. Travel, lodging, and related meeting costs of the participants selected for the design 4-day workshop will be paid through an award to CfAS. Subsequent working group proposals will cover participant travel and digital repository costs as well as meeting facilities and analytical support but will *not* fund additional field or lab work.

### **RFI Submission, Evaluation, and Award**

#### **RFI Submission**

RFIs must be submitted electronically to [tklein@srifoundation.org](mailto:tklein@srifoundation.org) by June 15, 2019, 5PM MST (GMT-7). Letters of Interest shall be submitted in a single pdf or Microsoft Word document, with pages having 1" margins and at least an 11 point font size.

#### **Who May Submit Letters of Interest:**

Letters of Interest can be submitted by any scholar or researcher with experience and having the rights to data relevant to human migrations. Letters of Interest are welcome from all researchers regardless of nationality. Submitters do not need to be members of the SAA or EAA, nor do they need to be archaeologists. CfAS is committed to diversity and professional development and strongly encourages letters of interest from junior, historically underrepresented researchers, from heritage management professionals as well as academics, and individuals from developing countries and indigenous communities.

## RFI Sections

Each RFI response must consist of a 2-page letter of interest and a 2-page curriculum vitae.

### 1. Letter of Interest

A 2-page letter of interest demonstrates the applicant's relevant experience, describes their interest in the study of human migration and explains how they would contribute to the design workshop and subsequent working group efforts. The applicant will outline the data set(s) and/or methodological/theoretical approaches that they would contribute to the design workshop and synthesis working group efforts. Willingness and ability to engage in interdisciplinary research and to integrate diverse data sources should be emphasized.

### 2. Curriculum Vitae

A 2-page summary curriculum vitae is required. No other information will be considered (e.g., hyperlinks to outside material). (The US National Science Foundation's biosketch format is acceptable but not required.)

## Review and Selection Process

A review panel will evaluate RFI responses on the extent to which they convey convincing arguments for making a contribution to this collaborative research effort. The panel will consider the applicant's experience with human migration, their access and familiarity with any offered data set, and their interest in designing professional and public products of scientific research. The review panel will make a recommendation to the CfAS Board of Directors. On the recommendation of the CfAS Board, the SRI Foundation Board of Directors will make a final determination on the awards. Award conditions will be negotiated with Terry Klein, Executive Director of the SRI Foundation. Letters of interest not satisfying these requirements specified here may be rejected without evaluation.

## Award Information.

The award will pay directly for the conference facility, lodging, and meals during the design workshop. If required, it will also cover visa fees and provide letters of invitation. Participants, including international participants, will be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses. This would include, for example, transportation to and from the origin airport, advance-purchase coach airfare, transportation from the destination airport to the conference facility, and meal expenses (at a standard US General Services Administration (GSA) rate) during travel. If reimbursement represents a problem, it may be possible to arrange an advance or for purchase of plane tickets directly.

## Effect of Submitting a Letter of Interest

By submitting a response to the RFI, the applicant acknowledges that RFI responses may be submitted by other applicants and that CfAS is under no legal obligation to select an applicant's letter of interest. Applicants submitting RFI responses further acknowledge that CfAS' decision as to whom to grant an award is final, binding and non-appealable.

## References Cited

Altschul, Jeffrey H., Keith W. Kintigh, Terry H. Klein, William H. Doelle, Kelley A. Hays-Gilpin, Sarah A. Herr, Timothy A. Kohler, Barbara J. Mills, Lindsay M. Montgomery, Margaret C. Nelson, Scott G. Ortman, John N. Parker, Matthew A. Peeples, and Jeremy A. Sabloff

2017 [Fostering Synthetic Research in Archaeology to Advance Science and Benefit Society](#). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114(42):10999-11002

2018 [Fostering Collaborative Synthetic Research in Archaeology](#). *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 6(1):19-29

Carpenter, E.V., P. Armbrust, F.S. Arzberger, I. Chapin, J. Elser, E. Hackett, A. Ives, P. Kareiva, M. Leibold, P. Lundberg, M. Mangel, N. Merchant, W.W. Murdoch, M.A. Palmer, D. Peters, S.T.A. Pickett, K.K. Smith, D.H. Wall, A.S. Zimmerman

2009 Accelerate Synthesis in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. *Bioscience* 59(8): 699–701

Hackett, Edward J., John N. Parker, David Conz, Diana Rhoten, and Andrew Parker

2008 Ecology Transformed: The National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and the Changing Patterns of Ecological Research. In *Scientific Collaboration on the Internet*, edited by Gary M. Olson, Ann Zimmerman, and Nathan Bos, pp. 277–296. MIT Press, Cambridge.