

## **Coming Together: Comparative Approaches to Population Aggregation and Early Urbanization**

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The present global, accelerating process of movement of people from villages to cities has brought about a growing scholarly interest in the environmental, social, economic, and cultural causes and effects of population nucleation. Cycles of population nucleation and dispersal have occurred repeatedly in societies throughout the world over past millennia and, owing to theoretical and methodological developments, their studies have intensified remarkably in recent decades.

Archaeology, therefore, can make a substantial contribution to the understanding of the origins and, even more importantly, the possible consequences of current nucleation processes.

Since 2008, the Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology (IEMA) at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, hosts a visiting scholar every year, who organizes an international conference on a specific anthropological problem relevant to present, pressing social matters. This year, the 9th IEMA Visiting Scholar Conference was held on April 2-3, and entitled '*Coming Together: Comparative Approaches to Population Aggregation and Early Urbanization.*'

Through case studies from Europe, the Near East, and the Americas, the participants focused on three major issues in their papers: the integrative mechanisms that brought smaller communities together, the social practices and institutions that fostered the sustainability of aggregated settlements, as well as the impacts of aggregation on long-term socio-cultural developments. Apart from urban settlements of early civilizations, prehistoric nucleated sites also were consulted in order to understand the socio-economic processes that led to their formation, and to consider variation in the trajectories of their development. During the two days, 16 papers were presented and, as the final accord of the conference, an interactive discussion took place that was broadcasted live via internet.

In addition to Michael E. Smith (Arizona State University) as the keynote speaker of the symposium, the participants included Bradley A. Ault (University at Buffalo, SUNY, USA), A. Nejat Bilgen (Dumlupınar University, Turkey), Jennifer Birch (University of Georgia, USA), Brais X. Currás (University of Coimbra, Portugal), Manuel Fernández-Götz (University of Edinburgh, UK), Bisserka Gaydarska (Durham University, UK), Laura Harrison (University at Buffalo, SUNY, USA), Alan Kaiser (University of Evansville, USA), John E. Kelly (Washington University, USA), Robin Osborne (University of Cambridge, UK), John O'Shea (University of Michigan, USA), Daniel J. Pullen (Florida State University), Pál Raczky (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary), Clemens Reichel (University of Toronto/Royal Ontario Museum, Canada), Susan C. Ryan (Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, USA), and Inés Sastre (Spanish National Research Council, Spain).

The symposium will result in an edited volume in 2017 published by SUNY Press.

For additional information about IEMA and the conference (including abstracts) see <http://iema.buffalo.edu/about/>.



9th IEMA Visiting Scholar Conference participants:

From left to right: Laura Harrison, A. Nejat Bilgen, Bradley A. Ault, Jennifer Birch, Pál Raczky, Daniel J. Pullen, Robin Osborne, Susan C. Ryan, John O'Shea, Alan Kaiser, Clemens Reichel, Bisserka Gaydarska, John E. Kelly, Manuel Fernández-Götz, Michael E. Smith, Inés Sastre, Attila Gyucha (conference organizer), Peter F. Biehl (IEMA director)