

International Conference  
April 24–25, 2024

# FIGHT OR FLIGHT



THE ARCHAEOLOGY  
OF SPACE, MOBILITY,  
AND VIOLENCE

Program & Abstracts



International Conference  
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# FIGHT OR FLIGHT: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SPACE, MOBILITY, AND VIOLENCE

## VENUE

FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

**Silberlaube: Room L115**

Otto-von-Simson-Str. 26, 14195 Berlin

(“Seminarzentrum” in front of the main canteen)

## ORGANISED BY

Ilia Heit (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut)

Jana Eger (FU Berlin / CEZA Mannheim)

Vera Egbers (BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg)



[www.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/link/fight-or-flight](http://www.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/link/fight-or-flight)

The conference is part of the the BAK annual theme 2023/24

”“Conflicts [and how to] deal with them

# PROGRAM

Wednesday, 24 April

**10.00 Registration**

**10.15 Welcome and Introduction**

Ilia Heit, Jana Eger, Vera Egbers

**10.30 Ilia Heit**

Conflict Potential and Conflict Resolution in Prehistory – Searching for Preconditions and Archaeological Proxies

**11.00 Mariia Lobanova**

Conflict Mediation and Syncretic Pottery of Seredri Stoh and Cucuteni-Trypillia in the Southern Buh Area (2nd Half of the 5th Millennium BCE)

11:30 Coffee Break

**11.50 Franz Pieler**

“War and Peace” in the Weinviertel, Lower Austria: Dynamics of the Complex Bandkeramik Fortification of Asparn/Schletz

**12.20 Julia Längauer**

“Tu Felix Austria Nube” – (Female) Mobility as a Means of Conflict Avoidance in the LBK

12:50–13:50 Lunch Break

**13.50 Svitlana Ivanova**

Yamna Culture – Conquerors or Peaceful Neighbor

**14.20 Dmytro Kiosak**

Pressed against the Wall? Trypillian Para-Urbanisation and Agricultural Frontier

14:50 Coffee Break

**15.10 Polina Fricke**

Homo Homini Lupus Est? (Based on Materials of the Sintashta Culture)

**15.40 Pascal Hoffmann**

Extreme Spaces and Ethnicity in Roman Thought  
Can an Archaeology of Extreme Spaces Bridge the Gaps?

**16.10 Discussion**

18:30 Dinner

# Thursday, 25 April

## 10.00 **Olena Dzneladze, Denys Sikoza, and Oleksandr Symonenko**

Native or Trophy: Swords from the Chervony  
Mayak Necropolis

## 10.30 **Alisa Demina**

Violence against Memory: Communicative  
Strategies of Scythian Burial Destructions

11:00 Coffee Break

## 11:20 **Alejandro Mizzoni**

Mobility and Politics in Ancient Syria: Some  
Theoretical Considerations

## 11.50 **Orit Peleg-Barkat**

Forced/Voluntary Conversion or Migration?  
The Hasmonean Conquest of Idumea between  
Historical Sources and the Archaeological Finds

12:20–13:20 Lunch Break

## 13.20 **Anne D. Peiter**

Roadblocks and Passport Controls: Reflections on  
the History of Flight and Resistance in Rwandan  
History up to the Tutsicide

## 13.50 **Geesche Wilts**

Archaeological Investigation of Refugee Boats  
at Lampedusa

14:20 Coffee Break

## 14.40 **Yarden Stern**

The Old Central Bus Station: Art and Violence  
at the Edge

## 15.10 **Final Discussion**

15:30 Farewell

# Friday, 26 April

- 10.15 Excursion with guided tour to **The Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation** for all participants (<https://www.flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de/en/home>). Stresemannstraße 90, 10963 Berlin; near Anhalter Bahnhof

# ABSTRACTS

## **Ilia Heit**

German Archaeological Institute, Eurasia Department  
(Berlin, Germany)

### **Conflict Potential and Conflict Resolution in Prehistory – Searching for Preconditions and Archaeological Proxies**

In the early 2020s, global warming, pandemics, political terror, and wars have significantly disrupted the ontological security of the Global North. With warfare back on the agenda, the search for the roots of human evil is increasingly attracting the attention of archaeology. While the archaeological record does not provide clear evidence of interpersonal conflict, injuries on skeletons caused by human hands serve as markers for the existence of violence and homicide, at least since the Neolithic period. The increased occurrence of weapons in the metal ages further indicates an increasing potential for conflict in various communities. However, it is much more difficult to find evidence of peace-making and conflict avoidance, which were certainly part of social interactions in the past.

In archaeological interpretations, space, mobility, and encounters between different social units are repeatedly identified as crucial factors in understanding the presence or absence of violence in prehistoric communities. Can these factors be used to identify preconditions for conflict potential and archaeological proxies for conflict resolution? In order to address this question, a closer examination of spatial management, human mobility, and social encounters in the prehistoric South Caucasus is undertaken.

## **Mariia Lobanova**

Odesa Archaeological Museum (Odesa, Ukraine)

### **Conflict Mediation and Syncretic Pottery of Serechnii Stoh and Cucuteni-Trypillia in the Southern Buh Area (2nd Half of the 5th Millennium BCE)**

The settlements of Cucuteni A-Trypillia B1 in the Southern Buh area are characterized by the prevalence of ceramics with incised decoration. Among them, vessels with fluted and stamp decorations are more represented. “Steppe” ware, synchronous with the Skelia phase of the Serechnii Stoh culture, is not numerous in the complexes. In recent years, information about this ceramics category has been significantly expanded. The ceramics samples from the Sabatynivka-type settlements are the most expressive and diverse regarding “steppe” artifacts among the currently known ceramic complexes in the Southern Buh area. Artifacts from the Shamrai settlement find direct correspondences in the Skelia ware of the Serechnii Stoh culture. Therefore, the relationship with the steppe Eneolithic population can be traced in a diachronic perspective and may have differed at different stages of development.

In Kamiane-Zavallia 1, two semicircular ditches were found to delimit the settlement area (Saile et al. 2016; Kiosak 2019). A distinctive collection of bifacial flint points was collected during the settlement investigation. Both ditches and weapons are considered to be evidence of the military nature of relations between the Trypillian and the Steppe cultures (Dergachev 2007). At the same time, the proximity of evidence of „military“ contact and “peaceful” interaction is interesting, as reflected in the materials of these two settlements, Kamiane-Zavallia 1 and Shamrai. This picture shows the ambiguity, versatility, and dynamism of Trypillian-Steppe contacts, which developed and changed over time until the end of the 5th millennium BCE.

## **Franz Pieler**

Amt der Niederösterreichischen Landesregierung,  
Abteilung für Kunst und Kultur, Landessammlungen  
Niederösterreich (Asparn/Zaya, Austria)

### **“War and Peace” in the Weinviertel, Lower Austria: Dynamics of the Complex Bandkeramik Fortification of Asparn/Schletz**

The fortified Bandkeramik site of Asparn/Schletz is amongst the most prominent Neolithic sites in middle Europe, due to the gruesome evidences of a massacre, in which, around 5000 BC, many inhabitants seem to have met their ends. Interdisciplinary research carried out in recent years as well as in an ongoing project shed new light on the connections of the potential regional central hub with the wider Bandkeramik world as well as with the regional dwelling cluster.

In parallel to these regional studies, the structures of Asparn/Schletz have been assessed in detail, revealing a surprisingly dynamic evolution of the enclosure. Contrary to preliminary reports, all fortification ditches date to the late Bandkeramik, implicating that the need for a fortification – probably a need for safety – arose only long after the settlements foundation. The stratigraphy of the trenches shows signs of repeating episodes of decay and reconstruction. This also involved earthen bridges being broken down and rebuilt at a later stage. During presumably peaceful episodes, the ditches were used for pit ovens and – after they were partly filled in – as burial ground. Some of the regular burials, which come from the northern sector of ditch 2 and predate the presumed massacre, also show traces of perimortal violence. This indicates that the inhabitants of Asparn/Schletz, over several generations, were exposed to changing times of conflict and peace. In our contribution, we want to give an account on the history, stratigraphy and architecture of the enclosure(s) of Asparn Schletz and propose an interpretation linking the archaeological evidences to episodes of increased vigilance and rather relaxed security measures.



## **Julia Längauer**

University of Continuing Education Krems/Center for  
Museum Collections Management (Asparn/Zaya, Austria)

### **“Tu Felix Austria Nube” – (Female) Mobility as a Means of Conflict Avoidance in the LBK**

“You, happy Austria, marry!” was the Habsburg motto highlighting the policy of avoiding armed conflict and securing their power peacefully. They, however, seem not to have been the first in middle Europe to follow this strategy. Also for the Linearbandkeramik (LBK), strategies for conflict avoidance are becoming more and more visible by advanced methods such as strontium isotope ( $87\text{Sr} / 86\text{Sr}$ ) ratio and ancient DNA (aDNA) analyses. These strategies seem to have primarily focused on the mobility and relocation of women, whereas men rather seem to have stayed with (or returned to) their native groups. The extensive family ties, sometimes spanning up to 600 km and more, may have enabled the people of the LBK to engage in long-distance trade and navigate territories of neighbouring and distant groups safely.

Recent research carried out in the project “Mobile things, people and ideas” examining imported goods in the LBK central hub of Asparn/Schletz in Lower Austria, suggest extensive trade connections, which seem to go together with far reaching marital relationships. Although this conflict avoidance strategy failed in the end, the violent end of the settlement should not obscure the preceding 400 years of successful development. Within the new interdisciplinary project “United by Crisis?” we aim to get a better understanding of the proposed settlement cluster of Asparn/Schletz and its social strategies within the cluster and the outer world. In our contribution, we want to provide insight into potential conflict avoidance strategies of the LBK community of Asparn/Schletz, which has been in the focus of interdisciplinary research during the last years.

## **Svitlana Ivanova**

Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
(Kyiv, Ukraine)

### **Yamna Culture – Conquerors or Peaceful Neighbors?**

Questions about war and violence in ancient societies have long captured the attention of researchers. The theory of invasion by the Early Bronze Age steppe warrior population to the west and its destruction of agricultural civilizations in Europe was particularly popular. Much less attention was given to questions of peaceful coexistence or intercultural contacts. In this context, it is interesting to examine the relationships between the populations of different cultures in the early and middle Bronze Age in the Northwestern Black Sea region (3400/3200-1800 BCE).

This region is considered a “contact zone” and a kind of “bridge” connecting the East and West, the world of steppe herders and the world of European farmers. The major cultures of this time were the Budzhak Yamna culture, Catacomb culture, and Babino culture. The populations of all three cultures inhabited the same region, were partially synchronous, and buried their dead in the same burial mounds. In the graves of the Budzhak culture, skeletons with skull injuries and arrowheads embedded in the bones were found. For a long time, it was believed that this was the result of intercultural conflicts with the population of the Catacomb culture, which arrived in the Northwestern Black Sea region from the east in the middle of the 3rd millennium BCE. However, further research has clarified that the arrowheads point to internal conflicts within the Yamna population. It is possible that the populations of the two cultures managed to establish peaceful relations, that manifested itself in the archaeological situation. In the Northwestern Black Sea region, there is no evidence of military conflicts between the populations of the Budzhak and Catacomb cultures with the Babino culture, although militarization of this society is observed in other areas where the Babino culture is present. A reconstruction of the relationships between culturally diverse populations is possible based on archaeological data. The Northwestern Black Sea region, in the early Bronze Age, at certain stages, was not only a „contact zone“ but also a „zone of peaceful coexistence.“ As they moved westward into the Balkan-Carpathian area, the population of the Yamna (Budzhak) culture built peaceful relations with the local inhabitants, as confirmed by archaeological contexts.

## **Dmytro Kiosak**

GPR 'Human Past', University of Bordeaux, France  
(Bordeaux, France)

### **Pressed against the Wall? Trypillian Para-Urbanisation and Agricultural Frontier**

The concentration of population in Trypillian mega-sites ('para-urbanisation') has received many explanations. One of them was a military threat from the steppe nomads or other Trypillian groups that would force the population to live in large numbers for effective self-defence (M. Videiko, V. Zbenovich). The Trypillian mega-sites are particularly large and densely located in the extreme south-east of the Trypillian territory. At the time of their foundation, the Trypillians did not move further east and south towards the steppe. Instead, they settled in the north and northeast, crossing the Dnipro River. In our view, this spatial pattern may indicate that the Trypillian advance to the east and southeast, towards the fertile black earth of southern Ukraine, was halted by an obstacle of some type. The specific type of this obstacle remains to be determined. It could have been steppe mobile groups that lived in the Black Sea steppe, but probably at a much lower population density. The exact nature of their relations is debatable. It could also have been some kind of agro-climatic barrier: increased climate continuity, aridity, harsh winters, heavy soils, etc.

New archaeological data from the Southern Buh valley include both evidence of 'military' interaction (bifacial arrowheads, ditches) and that of 'peaceful' relations ('Steppe' pottery in Trypillian contexts, some syncretic items with traits of both technologies). They pre-date the mega-sites foundation and enable us to discuss the role of Steppe nomads in Trypillian para-urbanisation. In any case, the population concentration could be explained by demographic growth without a 'valve' for the excess population in the form of further agricultural development of new territories. Thus, a certain 'hidden boundary effect' can be responsible for the agglomeration of the population. We explore this hypothesis by demographic and ecological modeling.

## **Polina Fricke**

Independent researcher (Berlin, Germany)

### **Homo Homini Lupus Est? (Based on Materials of the Sintashta Culture)**

As is known, one of the main triggers for conflicts are limited resources. The struggle for them can be merciless and can be recorded using different parameters. Primary indicators of aggression include traces of chaos in the living space and mass specific traumas on osteological remains. Among the secondary indicators we can distinguish: overpopulation of the territory and, as a consequence, the need for fortifications of settlements, a high concentration of weapons and manifestations of military specialization. Certain researchers base their argumentation on the latter indicators, when they associate different prehistoric archaeological cultures with societies that took an active part in violent conflicts. Among other things, this approach is used to reconstruct the social specifics of steppe cultures of northern Eurasia. In this presentation I will discuss the Sintashta culture, which dates to the Bronze Age of the Southern Trans-Urals. Its most popular characteristics suggest a high degree of settling with stall-raised cattle. Keeping in mind that pastures and cattle were the main factor of the life-supporting economy, the need to protect and defend these resources was constant. However, due to the fact that there is no evidence of violence itself, a logical question is: Were only other humans a factor of danger? What if the emergence of secondary indicators of “aggression” occurred due to other reasons?

## **Pascal Hoffmann**

Institute for Classical Archaeology and Byzantine Archaeology,  
University of Heidelberg (Heidelberg, Germany)

### **Extreme Spaces and Ethnicity in Roman Thought – Can an Archaeology of Extreme Spaces Bridge the Gaps?**

Roman political and philosophical discourse frequently operates with dichotomies and contrasts, such as Roman-Barbarian, Male-Female, Free-Slave, Land-Sea, etc. Around 20 years ago, two different concepts dealing with geographical peripheries gained some traction, one as a now almost paradigmatic notion in Mediterranean studies, the other as a hotly contested political term in Southeast Asian studies. The former, made popular by Horden and Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea* (2000), established a view on the Mediterranean world as one fragmented into diverse and highly codependent ecological – and, associated, cultural – niches, but yet without a sound theoretical exploration of the concept. The latter was expressed by W. van Schendel (2002) as the Zomia landscape, a marginalized, diverse collection of peoples that lived at the mountainous peripheries of the agricultural and urban centers of the Asian kingdoms, which were the traditional foci both of imperial and colonial state formation processes and of academic research disciplines. Authors such as J. C. Scott (2009) gave the term a distinct political spin in light of past and current resistance phenomena, while others like S. Hong have recently begun to apply it to maritime cultures as well.

Based on ideas about othering and the creation and maintenance of cultural identities, as they were likewise being explored for instance by L. Binford (2004) around the same time in the framework of (ecological and cultural) niches in ecosystems, and 20 years into the maturation of both concepts, some conclusions can be drawn. Perhaps an archaeology of extreme environments of the Mediterranean – the sea, mountains, lagoons and swamps, deserts –, which are at odds with the ideology of Roman literary sources as spaces to be civilized, can be a fruitful new approach across previous disciplinary and methodological boundaries. It remains to be examined which sources would be helpful in this endeavor, and how the ecological vulnerability of those areas plays into their relationship with the center.

## **Olena Dzneladze**

Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
(Kyiv, Ukraine)

## **Denys Sikoza**

Regional Inspectorate for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Sites (Kherson, Ukraine)

## **Oleksandr Symonenko**

Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
(Kyiv, Ukraine)

## **Native or Trophy: Swords from the Chervony Mayak Necropolis**

Chervony Mayak is a Late Scythian hill-fort and necropolis located on the right bank of Dni-pro lower reach. The Lower Dni-pro region during the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods was inhabited by the Late Scythians and Sarmatians. Ten swords and their fragments were found in the Chervony Mayak necropolis. One of them came from tumulus grave, nine from the graves of burial ground and another one was found accidentally in the gully near the necropolis. The majority of Late Scythian swords have a tanged hilt without metal pommel and cross-bar. They look like Sarmatian swords of the same type but on the other hand resemble a Roman spathae and La Tène swords. This observation raises new questions about their origins and influence. The Late Scythian edged weapons had a long (ca. 1 m) blade with a tang which was the core of the grip and parallel cutting edges. The daggers were not longer than 40 cm, the main part of swords is from 50 to 70 cm long, several specimens are from 76 up to 110 cm. The prototypes of traditional Late Scythian sword were the late La Tène imported swords of the type occurred in Mausoleum of Scythian Neapolis, Vyshe-tarasivka and Zolota Balka findings. The specimens from Chervony Mayak demonstrate the acquaintance of the Late Scythian blade-smiths with Oriental and Western traditions. All graves are dated to the period since the middle 1st till the middle 2nd century AD. Two different positions of the sword in situ in the burials have been observed: along the left hip and on the left shoulder of the buried. It may indicate two different traditions of carrying: on the hip belt (“Sarmatian manner”) and on the shoulder belt (“Roman manner”).

## **Alisa Demina**

National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”,  
Department of Archaeology

### **Violence against Memory: Communicative Strategies of Scythian Burial Destructions**

Barrow monuments were the important medium of shaping and sharing the communal narratives about the past. Simultaneously, being the most prominent features of the steppe landscape, they existed within a constantly changing negotiation about the land ownership. The initial burial often marked the beginning rather than the conclusion of the barrow's formation, with various types of burial openings and mound reuse being characteristic of steppe sites. During the Scythian time, particularly in the Pontic area, a distinct shift occurred in the relationship between barrows and the individuality of the deceased. In contrast to Bronze Age barrows often used for multiple consecutive burials, Scythian barrows typically contained a single grave at the structure's center. Peripheral burials, commonly belonging to women and children, probably had an accompanying function. This pattern was also observed in Scythian secondary burials within Bronze Age kurgans, where singular graves occupied the central position in the mound. Both archaeological and written sources indicate that the burials were made in a way to create the lasting memory about the deceased, both through preserving the integrity of the body and arranging the elaborate inventory.

At the same time, Scythian burials also show an unprecedented level of destruction. Multiple researches have shown that initial openings were made already in the Scythian time by the people familiar with the grave placement. The case study of Scythian burials in the North Azov region supports the hypothesis that the grave robbing alone cannot explain the last mentioned phenomenon. This is indicated by the: choice of the central burial for destruction with relative intactness of the inventory in the periphery burials; mutilation, often dismemberment or complete disintegration of the bodies; destruction of anthropomorphic stelae. These actions seem to have rather intentional violent character, opposite to the initial effort for preservation.

The connection between the funeral and individuality in these cases display the communicative aspect of reversal: a monument created for commemoration turns into its opposite, the instrument for forgetting. However, it could be argued that these violent actions could

have the similar purpose as placing secondary burials in the Bronze Age kurgans – asserting a claim to the land. The latter was more common for the initial stages of colonizing new pastures by establishing the symbolic connection with distant ancestors. In contrast, Scythian kurgans were rarely, if ever, reused by conflicting groups, as they were not seen as anonymous, but connected with individual people. Consequently, erasing the memory embodied in these burials was necessary to establish a new connection with the land. Overall, the opposite strategies operated within the same framework of memory shaping, with kurgans at the center of this transformative process.



## **Alejandro Mizzoni**

Universidad de Buenos Aires, Ancient History I (Orient),  
History Department, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras  
(Buenos Aires, Argentina)

### **Mobility and Politics in Ancient Syria: Some Theoretical Considerations**

From ancient times, mobile peoples were often imagined as essentially indomitable. Their ability for movement and their flexibility would make them hard to subdue by supposedly better prepared armies. Furthermore, their lack of the comforts of a civilized life gave them warring capabilities that would allow them to conquer the urban world in times of distress or decline. In the 20th century, the difficulties posed by modern States to deal with mobile communities have been noted, and it has been theorized about the limits imposed by mobility on the emergence of subordination. Within studies on ancient Western Asia, it has been argued that urban authorities encountered difficulties in subduing and controlling pastoralist groups. On the other hand, the dichotomy between the urban and pastoral worlds has been questioned; both sectors could be part of the same societies, and the presence of shepherds in the city has been highlighted, and even suggesting the existence of cities of pastoralists. Furthermore, studies focusing on mobility show that belonging to “settled” sectors often implied movement scales similar to or greater than those of groups considered “mobile”, including state agents (tax collectors, soldiers, or even kings and courts).

## **Orit Peleg-Barkat**

Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
(Jerusalem, Israel)

### **Forced\Voluntary Conversion or Migration? The Hasmonean Conquest of Idumea between Historical Sources and the Archaeological Finds**

The Edomites which inhabited the southern part of Transjordan in the first half of the first millennium BCE expanded over the second half of the millennium into southern Judah, eventually transforming this geographical unit into an administrative district named 'Idumaea' in the fourth century BCE at the latest. However, this ethnic group suffered a second upheaval with the Hasmonean conquest of Idumea at the end of the second century BCE, by the Hasmonaean ruler Hyrcanus I. According to the historical records (Flavius Josephus, Ptolemy of Ascalon(?), and Strabo) the conquest of Idumaea involved conversion of the Idumeans to Judaism. Former research, based mainly on this historical evidence, has focused on the question of whether the conversion was forced or voluntary. However, the archaeological evidence from western and southern Idumaea shows that the inhabitants of these regions did not choose to accept the Hasmonaean ultimatum of conversion so that they can remain in place, but rather abandoned their homes and disappeared from this region.

Both urban centers, such as the city of Marisa, and rural sites, such as Khirbet er-Rasm, were abandoned and never resettled. Settlement in western Idumaea resumed only after a gap of about a hundred years in the days of Herod the Great (37 – 4 BCE), whose family (on his father's side) was of Idumaeian descent. In eastern Idumaea, evidence from the time of the conquest is rather scarce but shows destruction and immediate resettlement. In both areas the new settlements are characterized by indicative Jewish material culture. The paper will examine the various possible reasons and directions of the Idumean migration that followed the Hasmonaean conquest of Idumaea, as well as the consequences of this migration on Idumean influence on Jewish material culture under the Hasmonaean and Herod the Great. It will also discuss the discrepancy between the historical texts and the archaeological evidence and how it can be resolved.

## **Anne D. Peiter**

Université de La Réunion (Saint-Denis, Réunion)

### **Roadblocks and passport controls: Reflections on the history of flight and resistance in Rwandan history up to the Tutsicide**

Based on autobiographical testimonies in which survivors of the tutsicide report on their experiences with the massacres of the „hundred days of the machete“, I would like to investigate the mechanisms with which the extremist Hutu militias cut off the escape routes of their neighbors, friends and sometimes (namely in the case of so-called “mixed marriages”) even relatives. In addition to the earlier years of crisis and the so-called “small genocides” of 1959, 1962, 1973 and since the beginning of the war (1990-1993), roadblocks were among the increasingly “professionalized” techniques intended to ensure the “habitability” and “availability” of prospective victims. Escape was therefore only possible if it took place secretly during periods of relative “calm” and not when the “wind” (a common euphemism for the recurring killings) began to blow or when the state demanded new “labour” (another euphemism).

Since the transition to independence, Rwandan history can be described as a story of permanent oscillation between exile and remaining, fleeing and preserving hope. Similar to the long prehistory of the Shoah, in which, according to the historian Raul Hilberg, the struggle and active resistance of the Jews were always only the last, but never the first option in response to persecution, the position of the Tutsi as a minority explains their habitus of not resorting to counter-violence. There were only exceptions when the situation throughout the country became desperate after the Rwandan president’s plane was shot down on 6 April 1994. Those to be killed sometimes tried to defend themselves against the approaching henchmen with the help of the simplest weapons – above all stones. But the fight was so unequal that the only success was that some were able to try to escape to one of the neighboring states.

In my contribution, I would now like to explore the reflections in which survivors of tutsicide attempt to explain the reasons for their reluctance to go into exile. It will be shown that individual escapes increasingly began to put those who stayed behind in danger, which led to people refraining from fleeing out of solidarity with relatives even in situations in which the persecution had already taken on life-threatening characteristics in the run-up

to the actual genocide. Conversely, however, the demands of the exiled Tutsi to finally be allowed to return to Rwanda – in some cases after decades – which were accompanied by the struggle, reinforced conspiracy-logic threat scenarios on the part of the Hutu. They believed that their own lives were threatened by the „reversal“ of the direction of flight, back to their homeland – which in turn led to the paradoxical decision to no longer allow any movement in the country through the identity controls of 1994. It will therefore not only be necessary to consider how individual contemporary witnesses view the possibility of flight in retrospect. Rather, I will also be interested in the question of the extent to which the racist phantasms that circulated among the Hutu affected the persecuted themselves: survivors who experienced the catastrophe of spring 1994 as children sometimes say that they too believed that the exiled Tutsis were diabolical creatures with long tails who wanted to kill them. The fact that it was this army – without any outside help, without support from the international community, indeed hindered by the “Opération Turquoise” set in motion by the French – that put an end to the genocide, marks the beginning of another flight movement, this time involving the genocidal murderers and their families.

The aim of my contribution will therefore also be to shed light on the negationist thesis of the “double genocide” from the aspect of flight, because the victim-perpetrator reversal was based precisely on the fact that around a third of all Rwandan Hutus fled to neighboring countries, above all to what was then Zaire, towards the end of the genocide. The humanitarian catastrophe that followed this flight became the basis of a narrative that claimed that in reality the Tutsis had established a system of terror and driven this “ethnic” majority to flee. Overall, it can be seen that the interpretation of fleeing and staying, “evading” or „resisting“ reveals the distortions in the politics of memory that turned Tutsicide into an alleged invention and one’s own violence into mere self-defense.

## **Geesche Wilts**

Institut für Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie,  
Universität Hamburg (Hamburg, Germany)

### **Archaeological Investigation of Refugee Boats at Lampedusa**

Since three decades Lampedusa is well known for being the goal of Refugees. Mainly African and Arabic people try to escape with boats and cross the Mediterranean Sea. On September 12, 2023, the mayor of Lampedusa declared a state of emergency. That day 5.000 refugees made their way to Lampedusa. Too much to handle on that little Island. At the same time the archaeological investigation Team, Geesche Wilts and Jonathan Kündiger, was at Lampedusa. The project was about documenting the Boats of the Refugees with archaeological methods. This documentation shows the circumstances under which refugees are coming to Italy. These circumstances did change in Summer 2023.

Since 2022 there is a new form of boat made out of metal, which sometimes has been used. In the middle of September 2023 when 10.000 people arrived at Lampedusa in just three days, these metal boats, only built for escape, has been the most used type of boat. The documentation of these boats shows that they have similarities and differences. Sometimes it seems, that they are self-build. The boats are made of 1 mm thin metal plates welded together. The internal stiffeners are usually only attached with spot welds. These boats are life-threatening. Poorly made welds can break quickly. The boats are often overcrowded, so one wave can capsize a boat. Sometimes saver wooden boats are still reaching Lampedusa.

Based on the documentation, the question of status differences during the escape arises. Further investigations are planned: shipwreck research methods to investigate the safety of these boats and the analysis of the objects found on board, for example to research the drinking water supply on the escape.

## **Yarden Stern**

Women and Gender Studies, Tel Aviv University (Tel Aviv, Israel)

### **The Old Central Bus Station: Art and Violence at the Edge**

It begins with two protests, occurring simultaneously yet separately during the summer of 2018: The first, against transgender violence and the second for the inclusion of homosexual subjects in surrogacy legislation. The location of each protests comes to note the symbolic spatial politics behind each cause: while the first took place at the parking lot of the old Central Bus Station in the edges of south Tel-Aviv the latter assembled Rabin Square, the established location for political protest at the heart of the city. I look at coalitions and collaborations that could only take place at the periphery, where queer subject who are unable or unwilling to occupy central avenues, connect and prosper. The old Central Bus Station, once an indispensable hub has become an abandoned yet ample complex for the minority community inhabiting the edges of the city, housing artist studios, alternative food markets and open health clinics. The centrality of this site is explored highlighted through various artistic attempts to represent and occupy the space – in the haunting tours of the past and presence of sex work in the station by transgender artist Leroy Bar-Natan; through the unlikely collaboration between queer artist Gil Yefman & African women's textile collective Kuchinate, as they come together to create felt installations and explore feelings of grief and national belonging; by the queer photographer of Dafna Amira who captures the emptiness of the site, devoid of life yet filled with structural violence. Understanding of the interworking's of minority life in the edges of Tel-Aviv, unearths the lives of those who can only exist out of sight, as certain bodies coalesce at the sidelines, assemble and come together at the edges of designated borders, both cultural and national.



# MIT **KONFLIKTEN** UMGEHEN

Jahresthema 2023/24

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