

## **SPRING 2023 SEMINAR:**

**Deborah Rubin**

**Making History with Our Feet: how human migration shaped world civilizations**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY, POSSIBLE TOPICS, AND QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT**

**REQUIRED BOOK:** King, Russell, ed. *Atlas of Human Migration*. London: Marshall

Editions, 2007. For a popular audience, but compiled by scholars. An overview with excellent maps and photographs illustrating the material. Consult me if you have trouble acquiring this book.

## **NON-REQUIRED RESOURCES FOR SOME INDIVIDUAL TOPICS:**

Diamond, Jared, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York:

W.W. Norton, 1998. Fascinating discussion of migration and the settlement of the Earth that seeks to answer the question, “Why did migrants in different places succeed unequally in creating complex civilizations?” This is a long book, for someone who is really interested in this question. *Hint:* Success in building civilizations had everything to do with available animals and crops that could be domesticated and also with natural resources! The differences are tragic.

Fischer, David Hackett, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Fascinating book on how populations preserve informal ‘folkways’ for centuries after migration. This is a long book, for someone who is really interested in this question. *Hint:* Shocking differences between the populations that migrated to four regions on the Atlantic coast in the future U.S.

Fisher, Michael H. *Migration: A World History*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Compact discussion with only a few maps. Part of the New Oxford World History.

*Historical Atlas of the World with over 1,200 Maps*. Parragon Books, 2010. Fantastic, very detailed maps and chronology. Lucid, detailed maps of migrations, empires, and political changes over time. Covers the entire planet.

*History of the World Map by Map*. New York: DK (Division of Penguin Random House), 2018. Seems to be a Smithsonian publication. A very comprehensive reference book

with excellent maps of migrations from prehistoric times to present, including all continents and Polynesia. Brief texts accompany each map.

Hunter, Philip. "The Genetics of human migrations."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4253842/> Discusses the concept of race, now obsolete.

Matras, Yaron. *The Romani Gypsies*.

Reich, David. *Who We Are and How We Got Here: Ancient DNA and the New Science of the Human Past*. New York: Vintage, 2018.

Rosenman, Ellen, "On Enclosure Acts and the Commons." To find this article on internet, google: "Ellen Rosenman, "On Enclosure Acts and the Commons." The British enclosure acts resulted in a huge migration of impoverished workers from rural areas to industrializing cities. This is a hot topic because it involves the appropriation of communal land by early capitalists, so expect strong opinions in some sources. Good bibliography in this source. Other works on the enclosures:

<https://sites.udel.edu/britlitwiki/The-enclosure-acts/> (British Literature Wiki "The Enclosure Acts"; and <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny> ("The Enclosure Act/ History of Western Civilization II lumenlearning.com)

Vince, Gaia. *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World*. New York: Flatiron Books, 2022.

### **Other Materials For Romani culture:**

Wikipedia: "Romani diaspora." Many other internet sites, including "Gypsy migrations to Europe." See also gypsy or Romani migration maps.

\*\*Django Reinhardt (1920-53). Great Romani jazz guitarist, played with Stephane Grappelli.

\*\*Tony Gatlif films on Romani migration and culture: *Latcho Drom* (1993) on Romani travels and *Gadjo Dilo* (1997), fictional film about rediscovering Romani roots.

\*\*Romani (traveler) music has greatly influenced Irish and British traditional music. There are many recordings available. .

\*\*Within the European Union, the Romani people are recognized as a significant minority population, whose status and civil rights are now a concern. What are the rights of the stateless and landless?

## **POSSIBLE TOPICS:**

**Note:** We will omit topics that are extensively covered in conventional national/ European and US history courses, for example: colonialization in the Americas and Africa; refugees from the Irish potato famine; westward expansion in the US; refugees from WW II and the Holocaust.

**\*\*Pre-homo sapiens and homo sapiens leave Africa** to populate Europe, Asia, the Americas, the Pacific Islands, and Australia. (160,000 BCE-10,000 BCE). Why did people keep moving, even into places with extreme challenges of climate and geography?

**\*\*Using genetics/ DNA to track human migration.** A scientific revolution in migration studies. How does genomics inform the history of migration, of human evolution, and of the social construct of race? A tool to research prehistoric migrations.

**\*\*Using linguistics to track human migration.** Another tool to research prehistoric migrations.

**\*\*Populating of Polynesia** (2000 BCE-1000 CE). Why was (almost) every island in the Pacific eventually populated? Why would people risk so much in such small boats and go so far to such uncertain destinations?

**\*\*Topics arising from the book *Guns, Germs and Steel*.** Why did certain locations allow for advanced civilizations to evolve while others did not? Diamond's theory is startlingly simple and surprising—and, doubtless, disputed.

**\*\*The ancient world: Jewish Diaspora** (1500 BCE-50 CE). What forces drove this diaspora? Do they seem different from those driving other migrations? Should we speak about exiles and refugees versus migrants and invaders?

**\*\*Phoenicians** (12-2 Centuries BCE). How do trading peoples behave differently when they migrate and when they settle?

**\*\*The ancient world: Greek expansion** (1100-480 BCE). What is migration as opposed to empire-building?

**\*\*The ancient world: Roman expansion** and the Roman Empire (510 BCE-117 CE). How was it possible for Romans to govern this huge territory and reshape its customs? Was this a migration at all? How do wars interact with migration?

**\*\*The Celts:** (400 BCE-700 CE). Migration throughout Europe, ending primarily in the western isles of Ireland and Britain.

**\*\*The Silk Road/ Route** (2 C BCE-15 C AD): This term describes—NOT a migrating people—but the road that many trading peoples took. How did the silk trade (and other trades), plied by many peoples, influence world history? How did the passage from Europe to Asia suddenly close and what was the consequence?

**\*\*Early medieval world: Germanic and Asian nomadic tribes** profoundly change Europe (300-500 CE). Do migrating populations change their own nature? Are they converted? Do they acquire literacy? Do they merge with local populations?

**\*\*Early medieval world: Islamic migrations** in southern Europe and Eurasia (630-945 CE). What set of circumstances could have allowed for this explosive expansion and cultural tsunami?

**\*\*Nomadic peoples of the Sahara (Tuareg)** (4-5 C AD to present). What happens when the land of nomads is inhospitable to settlement and to political divisions? What influence can a nomadic people have on others' attempts to stake out claims to the land?

**\*\*Vikings** travel by sea and river along the seacoasts of Europe and the rivers of eastern Russia (790-1066 CE). Did Vikings do different things under different circumstances? Were they sometimes raiders, sometimes settlers, sometimes traders? How might these activities leave different heritages behind them?

**\*\*Romani/gypsies/travelling people** (10C?-18C). Migration from India throughout Europe and into Great Britain. A non-acquisitive **migration of traders** who claim no nation or national identity. What does it mean to have allegiance to **no place or state** and to have **no 'homeland,'** past or present? Note that Irish "travelers: are not necessarily related to Romani gypsies. Where did they come from and how did they emerge?

**\*\*Mongols** led by **Ghengis Khan** almost conquer Europe and expand in Asia (1204-1242 CE). How did this very brief period affect Europe?

#### **TOPICS FROM MORE RECENT TIMES:**

**\*\*The Middle Passage:** enslavement and transportation of Africans to the Americas (1440-1800). A great deal to be explored.

**\*\*Australia: transportation of 'undesirables'** from Great Britain (1716-1853 CE). How did this enforced migration shape a nation?

\*\*Topics arising from the book *Albion's Seed*: how are “**folkways**” preserved after migration? How did four regions and four populations of 17<sup>th</sup> Century England come to be so different in the first place?

\*\***The British enclosures**, and the migration of landless workers to industrial centers (1650-1870). An example of **migration within a nation**. What forces here are different from ones already discussed?

\*\***Refugees of war, natural disaster, and poverty**: 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

\*\***Climate migration** in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Where are we now?

### **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR ALL TOPICS:**

(Address the ones that interest you for your chosen topic.)

#### **IN GENERAL:**

What questions did you ask? Which ones got answered? Which ones didn't? What do you wish you could still find out?

#### **IN GENERAL:**

\*\*What tools do we have for researching prehistoric migrations?

\*\*What is the difference between migrants, nomads, traders, pastoralists, invaders, raiders, empire builders?

#### **MORE SPECIFIC:**

\*\*Do the migrations have **goals**, clearly expressed or implicit? New land for pastoralists? New land to farm? Plunder? Empire building? Trading?

\*\*How do they **travel**: horseback, on foot, boats? Fast or slow migration? What did they do **along the way**?

\*\*Do migrating populations **settle or keep moving**? (e.g. Romani people don't necessarily want to settle. What did Vikings want?) Are they peaceful movers (Romani people)? Traders (Phoenicians, followers of the silk road)? Aggressive/acquisitive movers (Germanic and Slavic tribes)? Religious enthusiasts (Muslims)?

**\*\*How do they relate to the population already there?** Do they assimilate? Do they demand that the existing population assimilate to them? Do they create a culture that is somewhat tolerant? (The Mongol Empire tolerated all religions. Islam less so.)

**\*\*How were they viewed** by those they encroached upon? (The Germanic and Slavic tribes that moved west into Europe were called “**Barbarians.**” Why? The Muslims were called “**infidels**” and Crusades were organized to oppose them.

**\*\*How are they viewed by professional historians today?** For instance, some European historians describe the Germanic tribes as *migrating*; others describe them as *invading*.

**\*\*Do they change the place** they move through or settle in or are they **assimilated**? What culture do they bring? How did they change history? **What remains** of these populations today?

**\*\*Do the migrating populations behave differently in different places or times?** (The Vikings sometimes **raided** and destroyed, sometimes **settled** and **assimilated**.)