

## **2025 SHOT Proposed Session**

Rethinking migration and technology in ancient Africa

### **Session Organizers**

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### **Abstract**

In Africa, migration and technology have long been central to shaping ancient societies, influencing cultural landscapes, economic systems, and sociopolitical structures. Contrary to previous assumptions of isolation, recent scholarship increasingly demonstrates that ancient African societies were interconnected through the movement of people, ideas, languages, and material culture. This session explores the intricate relationship between migration and technology, emphasizing how technological innovations facilitated mobility and, conversely, how migration spurred technological transformations. From the spread of lithic technologies and metallurgical practices across Africa to the adaptation of agricultural techniques in diverse ecological contexts, this session seeks to illuminate the dynamic interplay between human movement and material culture. Innovations in maritime and riverine transport also played key roles, expanding trade networks that linked various cultural and ecological zones, from the coastal regions to the interior. We invite papers that explore a wide range of technologies, including lithic tools, ceramics, metallurgy, beadwork, architecture, languages, agriculture, music instruments, textiles, and games with a focus on how these technologies were transmitted, transformed, and localized across different regions. By centering Ancient Africa in global discussions of technological and social change, we seek to challenge outdated narratives of technological diffusion and highlight the agency of African societies in shaping their own histories. We welcome interdisciplinary contributions from archaeology, history, anthropology, linguistics, and allied fields that critically examine these themes through material culture, ethnohistorical records, and environmental data.