THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF COLONIALISM

Colonialism has been implicated frequently as one of the most significant forces in world history, and the current global situation is to a large extent the product of a long and complex history of colonial encounters. Indeed, one could claim with some justification that the past 5,000 years of human history have witnessed an unending series of colonial encounters and attempts at imperial expansion. It has been estimated that, by the early decades of the twentieth century, one half of the surface of the earth's continents was under some form of colonial domination and about two fifths of the population of the world (more than 600 million people) were living under colonial rule. Other regions (such as Latin America) had suffered long periods of transformative colonial domination in previous centuries. Moreover, despite the dramatic collapse of the major European colonial empires in the face of widespread popular resistance movements during the last half of the 20th century -- giving rise to the recent popularity of the term "postcolonial" to describe the current world situation -- colonialism is still alive and well (Israel and the United States being the two most obvious, and violent, examples of states presently engaging in colonialist ventures). Moreover, several current states that are dominated by populations resulting from earlier episodes of settler colonialism (for example, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) are hardly postcolonial from the standpoint of the descendents of the indigenous inhabitants.

The development and regional manifestations of the modern capitalist "world system", in both its colonial and "postcolonial" guises, have become an increasingly central focus of research by historians, sociocultural anthropologists, and archaeologists during the past few decades. Archaeologists have a good deal to gain from theoretical insights generated by other disciplines in the course of this work, but they also have much to contribute to the field as a whole by virtue of both their privileged access to a comparative perspective on the deep history of precapitalist colonial encounters and the complementary kinds of evidence they can bring to bear on study of the historical process of modern colonialism. In fact, the study of colonial encounters is a field with unusually rich potential for mutually beneficial collaboration between archaeologists and historical anthropologists.

This seminar is designed to provide students with a critical exploration of the theoretical literature on this important topic and with a detailed examination of particular archaeological case studies towards an understanding of the nature and long-term history of colonial encounters. The specific goals of the course are: 1) to impart a thorough general understanding of the highly variable nature, structure and effects of
colonialism, 2) to examine the distinctive potential contributions and methodological strategies of archaeological research on this issue, and 3) to furnish a comparative perspective (in both spatial and temporal terms) on processes of social and cultural transformation associated with colonialism.

The seminar is organized around several thematic issues and topics that pertain either to the study of colonialism in general, or to the archaeology of colonialism in particular. Under these headings, case studies have been selected to facilitate comparison between ancient and modern forms of colonialism. An active inter-regional comparison, particularly between European and New World examples, will also guide discussion.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Students will be evaluated on the following:

1) Preparation and Participation: Read and critically discuss the readings for each seminar session. Students should come to class prepared to participate in an analytical discussion the readings assigned for the week.

The seminar participants will be divided into two groups. Each group will be responsible for one of two tasks during the weekly section, with the roles rotating every week. One group will provide a brief critical summary and pose questions for discussion, and the second group will respond to the discussion questions.

2) Write a 15 page research paper on a case of colonial interaction not covered in the general discussion (but incorporating theoretical insights and comparative information from this discussion). Students should bring their cases into comparative discussions during seminar sessions as their research progresses (due Friday, March 17 at 5:00 p.m.).

**TEXTS (Available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore)**

*Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (2005), by Frederick Cooper, University of California Press, Berkeley


The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters: Comparative Perspectives (2005), edited by Gil J. Stein, School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series.

Other articles indicated will be on e-reserve on the Chalk site.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1 (January 4): Introduction and Definitions (colonialism, imperialism, colony, settler colonialism, postcolonialism, etc...)


Press of Florida.


**Week 3 (January 18): Changing Theories of the Nature and Tempo of Change: Acculturation, the Middle Ground, Evolution, Rupture, Annalist Temporalities**


**Week 4 (January 25): Identity, Mixture, and Connections -- Creolization, Hybridity, Ethnicity, Ethnogenesis, Koinai, Diasporas and Networks**


**Week 5 (February 1): 1- Big History/Macro-Scale Analysis: World Systems, Political Economy, and Globalization.**

2- Locating Agents and Agency


**Week 6 (February 8): Material Culture, Consumption, and Entanglement**


**Week 7 (February 15): Colonial Landscapes**


**Week 8 (February 22): Colonizing the Mind**


Week 9 (March 1): Colonizing the Body: Race, Gender, Labor, Slavery


Week 10 (March 8): Violence, Conquest, and Archaeological Practice


**Additional Reading (a highly eclectic partial list)**


van Dommelen, P. and C. Gómez Bellard (2008). *Rural Landscapes of the Punic World*


