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## **Symposium: Emergence of Social Complexity and its Evidence in the Archaeological Records**

Arkadiusz Marciniak and Andrzej Pydyn

The aim of the session is to examine various categories of archaeological data with regard to their usefulness in studying the emergence of social complexity. This will engage with the critiques of definitions of social complexity in archaeological theories. It will also examine dialectical relations between these important social issues and archaeological data that supposedly reflect, represent or mask them. A significant focus will be on ethnoarchaeology and its usefulness for understanding relationships between material evidence and interpretation social complexity.

The second part will explore the practice of using archaeological data for studying social complexity and its constitution by examining various categories of archaeological evidence. This will include also faunal and botanical data, in the light of the increasing awareness of their importance for social studies in archaeology and their role in the study and construction of social complexity.

An important element of the study of the emergence of social complexity is organisation of space both within and between settlements. The changes in spatial arrangements of settlements and domestic architecture as well as distribution of material culture are both results and causes of social organisation and its transformations over time. The papers give an overview of the dynamic interplay between the material sphere and social complexity.

Furthermore, the session will engage a discussion on the origin of complex societies in different parts of the world. The development of these societies could take place only as a result of a simple social and economic evolution, but could be strongly effected by other factors, for example the establishment of long-distance network of exchange which united different regions in the Old World or development of the European colonialism in other parts of the world. The papers will discuss material data that reflect and change these kinds of transformations.

### ***Defining social complexity in early Egypt: Levels of patterning in the evidence***

John Baines

The evidence for the rapid emergence of complex society in Ancient Egypt is limited in range, focusing on the funerary domain and on specialised architecture, representational art, and writing, as well as the distribution of loci within sites and of sites across the country. Settlements are largely lacking. Restrictions in material are due in part to problems of terrain and of the choices of excavators, but they also reveal significant aspects of the society and of its emerging values and concerns.

Among many domains of change, three exemplify issues of analysis and focus: 1) the distribution of material culture beyond as well as within the borders of the nascent state; 2) the specialisation of idioms of display together with the patterning inherent in them; and 3) the dynamic differentiation of social hierarchies that foster other changes and become constrained by them. The central social group must have directed development in fundamental ways and should be drawn into any analysis, but the only access to its members is through the strongly mediated effects of their leadership on the material record and its remote reflection in later Egyptian traditional sources.

### ***Emerging from the labyrinth: Spatial organisation as evidence for ancient social networks***

E.B. Banning

Over the last decade, archaeologists have shown increasing interest in methods, such as network analysis, that might help them understand the relationship between changes in the spatial structure of settlements or domestic architecture and changes in social structure. Walls and fences act as barriers to social interaction, while doorways and streets both facilitate and constrain it. This paper uses examples from the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East to illustrate the potential and some of the problems of such analyses.

***Pampean hunter gatherers: Increasing complexity features***

Mónica Alejandra Berón

The integration of several cultural features along a prehistoric time span within the same area indicates a long process leading to increasing complexity in the social organisation of hunter gatherers in the south of Dry Pampas, Argentina. Social interaction among populations from distant areas and different environments, evidenced by non-local or exotic items in the archaeological record, may be an example. Increasing sedentarism, higher demography, larger artifactual density, variability, as evidence of diversified activities, and craft specialisation, evidenced in pottery manufacture from at least 760 BP are also indicators. The recurrent employment of burial places and the intentional practice of circular cranial deformations dating to 2900 BP are early indicators of this process. Even if the existence of leadership or social differentiation, considered complexity clues elements by several authors, are not clearly present yet, we think that the mentioned features indicate a tendency towards complexity, as will be expressed in this paper.

***Bigmen, chiefs and colonialism***

Chris Gosden

The Papua New Guinean Highlands and Hawaii are generally taken to represent quite different points on a social evolutionary scale, with the former being inhabited by bigmen, the latter by chiefs. This paper will argue that part of the differences in social arrangements might be due to the differential effects of colonialism in the two regions. An alternative view of social structure is sketched out.

***The formation of the Houlouf Chiefdom: A settlement pattern analysis***

Augustin F.C. Holl

Houlouf is today a small village inhabited by slightly less than 500 souls. They are predominantly Kotoko, speakers of one of the many Central Chadic languages. The village still has a few visible remains of its past glory: a high mound, remains of the Sultan's Palace, earthen-ramparts, and finally, a copious corpus of ethnohistorical record. A long-term archaeological project combining palaeoecological research, detailed survey, and testing of 14 mound-sites, conducted on the Houlouf region has produced important clues on this polity. The research presented in this paper will focus on the changing patterns of settlements distribution through time, in an occupation sequence starting from ca. 1900 BC to the present. Settlement-location strategies as well as site ranking suggest a process of political centralisation culminating with the rise to primacy of Houlouf in ca. 1400 AD. Such a process, as shown by the Houlouf cemetery, is materialised by social ranking and unprecedented access to long-distance "luxury" trade items, such as alloyed copper, carnelian and glass.

***Food of power or power of food?: Introduction of rice and Japanese state formation***

Leo Aoi Hosoya

Food is not only a source of energy for human beings, but has always had implication of culture, religion and political power. The introduction of a new cultivar is a problem of entangled practical and cultural aspects, involving cultural preference of food and political relationship between the communities involved. Introduction of rice agriculture into the prehistoric Japan (300BC-AD300) from the Continental Asia is one example to raise the problem. Before the introduction of rice agriculture into Japan, stable and developed societies exploited indigenous plant food such as nuts and millets. During this time, the people were not interested in introducing rice agriculture, despite contact with the Continent, where such agriculture had existed since around 5-6,000 BC. However, when rice agriculture was introduced around 300BC it transformed Japanese society, resulting in the emergence of national states. Since the concept of agriculture as well as rice plants, which were exotic to Japan, were introduced and spread rapidly with such social influence, it is assumed rice itself was a medium of some political power. In this paper I attempt to reconstruct the meanings of rice to the society studying botanical remains in various archaeological contexts.

***Faunal remains and social change: Beyond subsistence studies***

Arkadiusz Marciniak

The limited evidence for changes in social complexity in Central European prehistoric societies can be interestingly supplemented by analysis of animal bone assemblages from settlement sites. This paper examines the usefulness of

particular categories of faunal assemblages e.g. species composition, sex and age profiles, body part representation, etc. for the study of social complexity. It looks also at the association of these kinds of data with other evidence commonly used for the study of social complexity as changes in organisation of space both between and within settlements and domestic architecture. Examples from Central European prehistory are provided to illustrate the potential of such analyses.

***Complexity (or not?) in Amazonian archaeology***

Eduardo G. Neves

Amazonian archaeology has, for the last half century, been characterised by a polarised debate with two different perspectives. On one hand, based on proposed estimates of low population density for the pre-colonial period, some scholars suggest that Amazonian social formations were characterised by lack of complexity in terms of the establishment of settled hierarchies. On the other hand, there are those authors who, based on estimates of high population density and evidence of monumental architecture, propose the existence of hierarchical state-level social formations in pre-colonial Amazonia.

This paper proposes that the issue of social complexity in Amazonian archaeology needs to be addressed in a different way. It is argued here that one should abandon typological evolutionist schemes that see the emergence of state-level societies as inevitable. Instead, I propose here that pre-colonial Amazonian societies were integrated horizontally into vast regional networks indicating a very old and stable relationship within the tropical forest landscape. As a consequence, nature in the Amazon is as much a historical as it is a biological product.

***Ancient complex societies of the tropical forest: Great art, subsistence, settlement, and society***

A.C. Roosevelt

According to earlier consensus, the rise of complex societies was a functional cultural adaptation to population growth in heterogeneous regions that required centralised hierarchical organisation and central rule and planning. Armed forces under the control of rulers kept the peace and protected against invasion, while complex organisation also gave the elite the capacity to develop fine art and architecture. New data about human societies suggest alternative patterns in the development and functioning of complex societies. Complex societies have been identified in a wide range of habitats, including tropical rainforests. The evidence indicates that large-scale complex societies can be organised by non-hierarchical, non-centralised methods in local communities rather than from the top down. In fact, non-centralised complex societies may have greater longevity than more hierarchical societies. Complex societies can be supported either by foraging as well as by agriculture. We also know that fine art is produced and consumed in societies without a superordinate elite.

Amazonia is one of the regions from which the new data comes. This presentation relates Amazonia to theoretical discussions about the origin and nature of pre-industrial complex societies.