

Adam T. Smith
Office Hours: M 1-3:30pm
Haskell Hall 205

Winter Quarter 2006
Anthropology 268/368
Tues-Thurs 10:30-11:50

<http://chalk.uchicago.edu/>

The Rise and Fall of Early Complex Societies

The advent of complex societies marks a profound transformation in human culture, society, politics, economy, and psychology. The geographically and temporally irregular emergence of “the State” has been variously described as the point of origin for social struggle, the source of sublimation and neurosis, and the genealogical root of a wide range of institutions predicated upon specialization and radical inequality. In this course we will examine contemporary approaches to the problems associated with the rise and fall of early complex polities and undertake a comparative examination of four pivotal case studies: Mesopotamia (Sumer), Egypt, China, and the Maya lowlands. The course will begin with an introduction to the position of early complex societies in 19th and 20th century social thought followed by an evaluation of the major theoretical frameworks archaeologists have constructed to explain their appearance. In this context, we will undertake a critical examination of current theoretical debates in political anthropology, including problems associated with existing systems of classification (e.g., chiefdom, state), schemes of social development (e.g., socio-cultural evolution), and the epistemological foundations of the field. We will then proceed to evaluate various theoretical models in reference to our five case studies. In addition to exploring the historical and archaeological remains, we will address key aspects of social complexity illustrated by each case, such as bureaucracy, kingship, and political legitimacy. The class will conclude with critical discussions of models for the expansion of early complex societies—“secondary state formation,” imperial expansion, World Systems theory—and their collapse.

Course Requirements

Undergraduates (268)

Take Home Mid-Term Exam (35%)
Take Home Final Exam (60%)
Class Participation (5%)

Graduates (368)

Side-Bar meetings (TBA)
Take Home Mid-Term Exam (35%)
Term Paper (60%)
Class Participation (5%)

Texts

All students are expected to complete the readings required for each class period. Graduate students are expected to complete the recommended readings as well. The readings have been put on the course website on the CHALK system.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

WEEK 1

January 3. Rediscovery: Early Complex Societies in Modern Thought

January 5. Studying Complex Societies, States, and Civilizations

Fried, M. H.

- 1967 *The Evolution of Political Society: an Essay in Political Anthropology*. Random House, New York. Pp. 3-26 (Ch. 1).

Smith, A. T.

- 2003 *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities*. University of California Press, Berkeley. Pp. 1-29 (Introduction).

Recommended:

Cohen, R.

- 1978 State Origins: A Reappraisal. In *The Early State*, edited by H. J. M. Claessen and P. Skalik, pp. 31-75. Mouton Publishers, The Hague.

Service, E. R.

- 1978 Classical and Modern Theories of the Origins of Government. In *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, edited by R. Cohen and E. R. Service, pp. 21-34. Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia.

WEEK 2

January 10. Early Complex Societies: What and How?

Adams, R. M.

- 1966 *The Evolution of Urban Society*. Aldine Pub. Co., New York. Pp. 1-37.

Smith, A. T.

- 2003 *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities*. University of California Press, Berkeley. Pp. 78-111.

Trigger, B. G.

- 2003 *Understanding Early Civilizations: a comparative study*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK ; New York. Ch. 6.

Recommended:

Flannery, K. V.

- 1997 The Ground Plans of Archaic States. In *Archaic States*, edited by G. M. Feinman and J. Marcus, pp. 15-57. School of American Research, Santa Fe.

January 12. The Roots of Complex Societies

Earle, T.

- 1997 *How Chiefs Come to Power*. Stanford University Press, Stanford. Pp. 17-66 (Ch. 2).

Yoffee, N.

- 2005 *Myths of the Archaic State: The evolution of the earliest cities, states, and civilizations*. Ch. 2.

Recommended

Patterson, T. C.

- 1988 Pre-State Societies and Cultural Styles in Ancient Peru and Mesopotamia: A Comparison. In *Upon This Foundation: The 'Ubaid Revisited*, edited by E.

- Henrickson and I. Thueson, pp. 293-321. Carsten Niebuhr Institute, Copenhagen.
- Wright, H. T.
 1994 *Prestate Political Formations. In Chieftdoms and Early States in the Near East: The Organizational Dynamics of Complexity*, edited by G. Stein and M. Rothman, pp. 67-84. Prehistory Press, Madison.

WEEK 3

January 17. Mesopotamia

- Lloyd, S.
 1984 *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: From the Old Stone Age to the Persian Conquest*. Thames and Hudson, London. Pp. 37-64 (Ch. 3).
- Postgate, J. N.
 1992 *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*. Routledge, London. Pp. 109-154 (Ch. 6-7).

Recommended:

- Von Soden, W.
 1994 *The Ancient Orient*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids. Pp. 42-61 (Ch. 5).
- Yoffee, N.
 1995 Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 281-311.

January 19. Urbanism, Order and Bureaucracy

- Van de Mieroop, M.
 1997 *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. Pp. 23-41.
- Smith, A. T.
 2003 *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Politics*. University of California Press, Berkeley. Pp. 184-231.

Recommended:

- Baines, J. and N. Yoffee
 1998 Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. In *Archaic States*, edited by G. Feinman and J. Marcus, pp. 199-260. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.

WEEK 4

January 24. Egypt

- Midant-Reynes, B.
 2000 *The Prehistory of Egypt From the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford. Pp. 231-250 (Ch. 8).
- Wenke, R. J.
 1989 Egypt: Origins of Complex Societies. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18: 129-155.

Recommended:

- Grimal, N.
 1994 *A History of Ancient Egypt*. Blackwell, Oxford. Pp. 63-101 (Ch. 4).
- Wenke, R. J.
 1997 City-States, Nation States, and Territorial States: The Problem of Egypt. In *The Archaeology of City-States*, edited by D. L. Nichols and T. H. Charlton, pp. 27-50. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.

January 26. Kingship and Power **[Midterm exam distributed in class]**

- Kemp, B.
1989 *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*. Routledge, London. Pp. 111-136 (Ch. 3).
Schele, L. and D. Freidel
1990 *A Forest of Kings*. Quill William Morrow, New York. Pp. 96-129 (Ch. 3).

Recommended:

- Kolata, A. L.
1997 Of Kings and Capitals: Principles of Authority and the Nature of Cities in the Native Andean State. In *The Archaeology of City-States*, edited by D. L. Nichols and T. H. Charlton, pp. 245-254. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington.

WEEK 5

January 31. China

- Barnes, G. L.
1999 *The Rise of Civilization in East Asia*. Thames and Hudson, London. Pp. 16-27, 108-118 (Ch. 1, 7).
Chang, K.-C.
1999 China on the Eve of the Historical Period. In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, edited by E. L. Shaughnessy and M. Loewe, pp. 37-73. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Recommended:

- Underhill, A. P.
2002 *Craft Production and Social Change in Northern China*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York. Chs. 1, 7.

February 2. Warfare, Ideology, and Authority **[Midterm Exam Due]**

- Barnes, G. L.
1999 *The Rise of Civilization in East Asia*. Thames and Hudson, London. Pp. 131-152 (Ch. 9).
Carneiro, R.
1970 A Theory of the Origin of the State. *Science* 169: 733-739.
Webster, D.
1998 Warfare and Status Rivalry: Lowland Maya and Polynesian Comparisons. In *Archaic States*, edited by G. M. Feinman and J. Marcus, pp. 135-172. School of American Research, Santa Fe.

Recommended:

- Bard, K.
1992 Toward an Interpretation of the Role of Ideology in the Evolution of Complex Society in Egypt. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 11: 1-24.
DeMarrais, E., L. J. Castillo and T. Earle
1996 Ideology, Materialization, and Power Strategies. *Current Anthropology* 37(1):15-31.

WEEK 6

February 7. Maya

- Coe, M. D.
 1999 *The Maya*. Thames and Hudson, London. Pp. 11-39, 57-101 (Ch. 1, 3-4).

Recommended:

- Freidel, D.
 1981 Civilization as a State of Mind: The Cultural Evolution of the Lowland Maya. In *The Transition to Statehood in the New World*, edited by G. D. Jones and R. R. Kautz, pp. 188-227. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Pyburn, K. A.
 1997 The Archaeological Signature of Complexity in the Maya Lowlands. In *The Archaeology of City-States*, edited by D. L. Nichols and T. H. Charlton, pp. 155-168. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.

February 9. Cosmology, the Grassroots, and Legitimacy

- Bronson, B.
 2000 Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient China. In *Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient States*, edited by J. E. Richards and M. Van Buren, pp. 120-127. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Demarest, A. A.
 1992 Ideology in Ancient Maya Cultural Evolution: The Dynamics of Galactic Polities. In *Ideology and the Evolution of Precolumbian Civilizations*, edited by A. Demarest and G. Conrad. School of American Research Advanced Seminar. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Pp. ??
- Gillespie, S. D.
 2000 Rethinking Ancient Maya Social Organization Replacing "Lineage" with "House". *American Anthropologist* 102(3):467-484.

Recommended

- *Bauer, B. S.
 1991 Legitimization of the State in Inca Myth and Ritual. *American Anthropologist* 98(2): 327-337.
- *Coe, M. D.
 1999 *The Maya*. Thames and Hudson, London. Pp. 102-150, 199-229 (Ch. 5, 9).

WEEK 7

February 14. Complexity After the Earliest Complex Polities

- Price, B. J.
 1978 Secondary State Formation: An Explanatory Model. In *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, edited by R. Cohen and E. R. Service, pp. 161-186. Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia.
- Sherratt, A.
 1997 *Economy and Society in Prehistoric Europe*, pp. 134-154. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh. Ch. 5: "Social Evolution: Europe in the Later Neolithic and Copper Ages."
- Yoffee, N.
 1997 The Obvious and the Chimerical: City-States in Archaeological Perspective. In *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross-Cultural Approaches*, edited by D. L. Nichols and T. H. Charlton, pp. 255-263. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington.

Recommended:

- Mann, M.

- 1986 *The Sources of Social Power, vol. 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Pp. 190-230 (Ch. 7).
 Runciman, W. O.
 1982 *Origins of States: The Case of Archaic Greece. Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24(3): 351-377.

February 16. Empires and World Systems

- Morrison, K. D.
 2001 Sources, Approaches, Definitions. In *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, edited by S. E. Alcock, T. N. D'Altroy, K. D. Morrison and C. M. Sinopoli, pp. 1-9. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 Sinopoli, C.
 1993 The Archaeology of Empires. *Annual Review of Anthropology* (23): 159-180.
 Smith, M. E.
 2001 The Aztec Empire and the Mesoamerican World System. In *Empires*, edited by S. E. Alcock, T. N. D'Altroy, K. D. Morrison and C. M. Sinopoli, pp. 128-154. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Recommended:

- Kohl, P. L.
 1989 The Use and Abuse of World Systems Theory: The Case of the "Pristine" West Asian State. In *Archaeological Thought in America*, edited by C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, pp. 218-240. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 Larsen, M. T.
 1979 The Tradition of Empire in Mesopotamia. In *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, edited by M. T. Larsen, pp. 75-103. Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen.

WEEK 8

February 21. The Collapse of Early Complex Societies

- Tainter, J. A.
 1988 *The Collapse of Complex Societies*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Pp. 39-90

Recommended:

- Cowgill, G.
 1988 Onward and Upward with Collapse. In *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, edited by N. Yoffee and G. Cowgill, pp. 244-276. University of Arizona, Tucson.
 Yoffee, N.
 2005 *Myths of the Archaic State: The evolution of the earliest cities, states, and civilizations*. Ch. 6.

February 23. Aftermath: Landscapes, Memory, and Early Polities

- Alcock, S. E.
 2001 The Reconfiguration of Memory in the Eastern Roman Empire. In *Empires*, edited by S. E. Alcock, T. N. D'Altroy, K. D. Morrison and C. M. Sinopoli, pp. 323-350. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 Smith, A. T.
 2004 *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities*. University of California Press, Berkeley. Ch. 1

WEEK 9

February 28. Field Trip to Oriental Institute Museum

March 2. From Early Complex Societies to Modern States

Marx, K. and F. Engels

1998 *The German Ideology*. Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York. Pp. 38-62.

Smith, A.

1976 *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Pp. 17-25, 407-431.

WEEK 10

March 7. Early Complex Societies in the Contemporary World

[Final Exam posted on CHALK]

Abu El-Haj, N.

1998 Translating Truths: Nationalism, The Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem. *American Ethnologist* 25(2):166-188.

Kohl, P. L. and C. Fawcett

1995 Archaeology in the Service of the State: Theoretical Considerations. In *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, edited by P. L. Kohl and C. Fawcett, pp. 3-18. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.