Archaeologies of Poverty: Proposed Collaborating at the University of York
2013-2014 Faculty Grants for International Connections Proposal
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Proposed Activity
Poverty is among the most pressing contemporary global social, political, and economic issues. Although a previous generation of scholars saw poverty as essential to our understanding of human social and cultural experience, the concluding decades of the Twentieth Century witnessed little formal scholarly interest in the topic. However, with the onset of the current global economic crisis, poverty has reemerged as a substantive topic for anthropologists, archaeologists, and a host of scholars from a variety of disciplines. Some of these scholars suggest that poverty is merely the inevitable outcome of a global capitalist system characterized by the unequal distributions of natural resources, investment capital, infrastructure, and political power. Although there is little doubt that the ascendancy of global capitalism has forever altered our understanding of poverty, a myopic focus on comparatively recent developments has led many scholars to conflated poverty with capitalism. Capitalism may have exacerbated the gulf between the “haves” and “have-nots,” but since poverty predates capitalism by millennia it cannot be solely responsible for the presence of poverty as a social phenomenon.

I seek the support of an International Connections Grant for two weeks of scholarly collaboration with Professors James Symonds, Matthew Collins, Oliver Craig, Nicky Milner, and other faculty and graduate students in the Department of Archaeology at University of York, York, England. York has developed one of the largest—and most productive—archaeology faculties in Europe, and is recognized as a cutting-edge center for archaeological research addressing the material and biological evidence for the development of social inequality. Given his professional standing as the foremost authority on archaeological manifestations of poverty, I am particularly interested in collaborating with Professor Symonds. My present research examines poverty from the Neolithic (circa 10,000 BCE) until the present, and an immersive collaboration with Dr. Symonds would permit me to examine the scholarly potential for archaeological examinations of poverty in earlier social contexts. This collaboration will center on questions of whether it is possible for us to engage the distant past using contemporary perspectives on poverty and what the material manifestations of poverty might be among human societies of greater antiquity.

Personal and Professional Goals for the Visit
I organized a symposium entitled “Whither Archaeologies of Poverty?” for the 2013 Society for American Archaeology meetings in Honolulu, Hawaii. I invited Professor Symonds to participate, but he was unable to participate given the considerable expense of the trip. Two scholarly presses (Oxford and Arizona) are interested in publishing an edited volume from the symposium, but Dr. Symonds’ participation is critical to the scholarly impact of the planned volume. An immediate goal of my proposed journey to York would be to engage Dr. Symonds on the themes of the volume and have him prepare the volume’s conclusion. Although I have corresponded with Dr. Symonds for more than two years, we are part of two distinct professional networks and have never had the opportunity to meet. A trip to York would allow me to connect with Dr. Symonds and his colleagues who are also engaged in issues of inequality and poverty. Thus, the proposed collaboration would permit two groups of archaeologists who commonly do
not collaborate, Europeanists and North Americanists, to dramatically expand our respective professional and personal networks.

**Expected Outcomes: Professional, Personal, & Institutional**
The immediate outcome envisioned from this collaboration is an edited volume examining the nature of poverty in a variety of temporal and cultural settings. Additionally, I am preparing a single-authored book, tentatively entitled *Dirt Poor: An Archaeological History of Poverty*. Unlike the edited volume, in this work I seek a synthetic perspective on the nature and origins of poverty among human societies—from the Neolithic to the present. An extended collaboration with Dr. Symonds is certain to help move that project in new and unexpected directions.

As previously stated, over the past forty years York has developed a reputation as one of the most active and produce archaeological faculties in Europe. As such, they routinely have five or six active archaeological research projects each summer. My visit to York could create a special institutional relationship that would allow preferential participation by our students in these projects. These connections would also lead to heightened awareness among our students of York’s graduate programs in archaeology, anthropology, and a range of other disciplines. Additionally, since Lehigh does not have graduate programs in anthropology or archaeology, greater professional connections with York would allow their students to participate in our archaeological research programs, giving us the opportunity to work with their graduate students while allowing these students access to our field sites and data for their dissertation research.

**Pre-Trip Planning**
I have been in touch with Dr. Symonds and Dr. John Shofield, Chair of the York Department of Archaeology, regarding my proposed visit. On February 22, 2013 I received word that the faculty had voted to extend a formal invitation supporting my application and encouraging my visit. I received an informal invitation via email on February 23, 2013, and the Chair sent a formal letter of invitation on March 5, 2013. In addition to the planned collaboration with Dr. Symonds, I have volunteered to offer a public lecture, a departmental colloquium, and lead a seminar with graduate and undergraduate students while in York.

**Post-Trip Planning**
Upon returning from York, I will immediately prepare and submit a report of activities to the Vice President for International Affairs and my department chair. I will also prepare a presentation to be delivered to interested faculty regarding my activities in York and the professional and personal impacts of this collaborative activity.

**Budget**
Round-trip airfare (Newark–London; United.com 2013 fare): $870
Round-trip train (London–York; therainlines.com): $200
Hotel (13 nights @ $130 per night; Hilton.com): $1,690
Food (14 days @ $95 per day, US State Dept. rate): $1,330

**Total:** $4,120

**Proposed Dates of Visit**
Since I am presently in the application stage, firm dates for my visit have not been set. However, preliminary scheduling suggests that late February to mid-March would be best for all concerned since it would take advantage of Lehigh’s previously scheduled Spring Break.
Dear Cameron (if I may)

Thank you for contacting me. I am delighted that you have an interest in my work on poverty.

I have consulted with my colleagues and we would be very happy to discuss arrangements for a visit to our department in York in 2014. We have a vibrant research community and receive several visiting international scholars each year. We also have a diverse faculty, with a number of prehistorians and specialists in pre-modern historical periods, so I imagine that you might enjoy talking to a number of my colleagues.

Let me know what I can do to facilitate your visit, and whether you need a formal letter of invitation from our Head of Department, John Schofield?

With all good wishes,

James
Dear Cameron

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to visit the Department of Archaeology at the University of York, to spend time with my colleagues to undertake research in which we also have mutual interest (archaeologies of poverty and historical archaeology in general) and to receive one or two research seminars from you on some of your current work. We can accommodate you (by which I mean a work space) either at a desk here in the King's Manor, in the centre of York, or on Campus where we have additional space in the Humanities Research Centre. We can discuss details closer to the time, but for now I hope this is sufficient as an invitation. We look forward very much to meeting you.

With best wishes,

JOHN SCHOFIELD

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