Collaboration Goals

- Network with scholars in an effort to operationalize the concept of poverty in a range of archaeological & historical settings.
- Establish a common research language for future efforts to examine poverty in archaeological & historical contexts.
- Explore the possibility of future collaborative field research in the UK.
- Examine the feasibility of a collaborative summer research program in Wales for Lehigh students.
- Explore the possibility for a direct-exchange student partnership between Lehigh and Cardiff University.
- Present a series of lectures and class presentations to Cardiff faculty & students regarding archaeological research being conducted by Lehigh faculty.

Collaboration Background

Poverty is a topic of increasing importance to social scientists. Despite this growing interest in the pervasive nature of economic inequalities and social marginalization, archaeologists have been slow to recognize the presence of poverty prior to the development of global capitalism. Although social inequality has been an important area of archaeological research for more than a century, there has been little effort to examine these inequalities as examples of “poverty.” Recent work by a range of scholars, including Dr. James Symonds has started to challenge these notions, suggesting that poverty was pervasive in pre-capitalist societies, and may even have been present among ancient hominids prior to the emergence of Homo sapiens.

Although these arguments have been criticized based on their reliance on a series of culturally-specific definitions for what constitutes poverty, a growing number of archaeologists are beginning to examine the possibility that an explicit analysis of ancient poverty might help us understand the comparative economic and social dimensions of poverty in both the past and present. Given the importance of these issues for our contemporary world, I am interested in exploring the historical many dimensions of poverty in antiquity.
Professor James Symonds has been at the forefront of the effort to examine poverty in archaeological contexts, and I was anxious to examine these issues with him and his research team in the Department of Archaeology at York University. Unfortunately, after contacting him and having accepted an invitation to visit York in early March 2014, Dr. Symonds informed me in mid-February that he had accepted a faculty position at Amsterdam University and would be unavailable for a visit during our agreed upon dates. He suggested I contact Dr. Niall Sharples, Head of Archaeology at Cardiff University, as a collaborator since Professor Sharples’ work addresses many of these same topics.

I contacted Professor Sharples about the possibility of collaborating and he was happy to invite me to Cardiff during their Reading Week, when he would be free from regular teaching duties. Fortunately, Vice President and Associate Provost for International Affairs, Dr. Mohamed El-Aasser, and the Faculty Collaboration Grant Committee Chair, Dr. Vincent G. Munley, both agreed to a change in the location of my collaboration from York to Cardiff to accommodate this situation. I am grateful for their allowing this flexibility in the nature of my faculty collaboration grant.

### Collaboration Highlights

- Attended conference on *Houses and Households* at the Royal Society of Antiquaries.
- Met 15 archaeologists working in the UK who address similar theoretical issues.
- Inspired to co-organize an international session at the 2015 SAA meetings.
- Toured various archaeological sites in southern Wales and southwestern England.
- Lectured to faculty, staff & students at Cardiff University.
- Met with faculty, staff, undergraduate & graduate students at Cardiff University.
- Entered into discussions on a possible collaborative field research project for 2015.
- Inspired to developing a proposal for a new interdisciplinary graduate program in Archaeometry at Lehigh.
- Working with Lehigh Study Abroad to develop a faculty-led summer program in Cardiff & a student exchange with Cardiff University.

### Dr. Niall Sharples & Cardiff University

To begin our collaboration, Professor Sharples invited me to a conference on *Houses & Households in Prehistory* he organized for the Prehistoric Society of Britain at the Royal Society of Antiquaries in London. This conference brought together a number of scholars whose work explores the nature of inequality among social groups during the Bronze and Iron Ages in the UK and western Europe. Professor Sharples felt that this meeting would provide the perfect opportunity to meet 15 to 20 scholars working on these issues. During breaks, at lunch, and at dinner following the conference, Professor Sharples introduced me to a number of imminent archaeologists addressing the manifestations of inequality in their particular case studies. These interactions allowed me to get to know these scholars, exchange information on our research, and generate contacts for future intellectual exchanges. Inspired by these interactions, I am making plans to co-organize a session with Dr. Adam King (University of South Carolina) at the 2015 Society for American Archaeology annual meeting explores these same themes and
bringing many of these scholars to the US for the first time. I anticipate inviting Drs. J.D. Hill (British Museum), Michael Parker-Pearson (University College London), Colin Richards (Manchester), and Niall Sharples.

Following the one-day conference, I took the train to Cardiff for the remainder of my collaborations with Professor Sharples. During the subsequent eight days, Professor Sharples toured me around Cardiff city centre, Cardiff University, and numerous archaeological sites in southern Wales and southwestern England. Additionally, he introduced me to his departmental colleagues, his graduate and undergraduate students, and the Director of the School of History, Archaeology & Religion. These interactions stimulated my thinking not only about the nature of poverty and inequality in the archaeological record, but the need for an integrated Archaeometry program at Lehigh. I am present working with my departmental colleague Dr. David Small to propose a joint graduate program in Archaeometry with the Department of Materials Science & Engineering and the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences. The development of an inter-disciplinary program like this would put Lehigh at the forefront of archaeological research and provide new and exciting research opportunities for our students.

Professor Sharples and his former colleague Dr. Oliver Davis also were keenly interested in encouraging my collaboration in a project they are presently pursuing at a major Iron Age hill fort in Cardiff. The site of Caerau is one of the largest Iron Age settlements in the region, and also contains evidence of occupation during the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Medieval periods. They have encouraged me to return with Lehigh students to assist in their investigations of the site in the summer of 2015. I have contacted Neil McGurty, Director of Lehigh’s Study Abroad Office, to discuss the possibility of taking students to Cardiff in the summer of 2015 and the potential for a student exchange with Cardiff University. These discussions remain ongoing, but staff from the Cardiff University Study Abroad Office are eager to meet Lehigh personnel at an international conference in San Diego this May to discuss this possibility.

Theoretical discussions regarding poverty, personal property, inequality, and social ranking largely emphasized the nature of change accompanying the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age in the UK. This period saw a reduction in the control of private property by individuals and the rise of corporately-produced earthworks and hill forts. Sharples suggests that this transition is one in which social ranking was reduced, with societies putting a range of social leveling mechanisms into practice that actively limited the ability of individuals to accumulate large amounts of material culture and thus stifling the emergence of social classes and anything resembling poverty. Thus, Sharples believes hill forts were locations where community interests superseded individual or sectarian interests. However, much additional research needs to take place to evaluate these suggestions and it is hoped that a collaborative research project at Caerau may provide additional evidence of these anti-poverty measures.

While in Cardiff I also provided a formal lecture for the School of History, Archaeology & Religion and spend two days meeting with faculty, staff & students in these programs. Subsequent to these interactions I’ve received several emails from those with whom I interacted as well as a personal letter of thanks from the Director of the School. Although he was away during my visit, one of the historians in their department specializes in Welsh migration to Scranton, Pennsylvania. We have begun to correspond regarding the possibility of having him lecture for us when he returns to the US for additional research.
In summary, the Faculty Collaboration Grant allowed me to network with a series of scholars who enjoy international reputations. Additionally, it permitted me to explore the theoretical issues surrounding poverty and inequality with scholars working in a variety of cultural and temporal settings. Finally, it will continue to pay benefits for my future research and Lehigh University by offering a series of new institutional relationships that would have been impossible otherwise. I wish to thank the Vice President and Associate Provost for International Affairs, his staff, and members of the grant committee for making this collaboration possible.

Dr. Sharples’ 2013 excavations at Ham Hill in Somerset, England. Students from Cardiff University and Cambridge University worked to excavate an Iron Age roundhouse, household storage pits, and a series of walls and ditches that enclosed the settlement.

Dr. Sharples team recovered evidence of a massacre at Ham Hill. These remains suggest that occupants of the hill fort were killed with edged weapons, de-fleshed, dismembered, and their remains left scattered in the interior of the Ham Hill enclosure by Roman forces.
My tour of Ham Hill with Dr. Sharples included a review of his open excavation units. Since the site is within an active stone quarry, his 2013 units remained open and visible. The large circle at the center of the photo is the excavated Iron Age round house.

Caerau hill fort is inside the modern city of Cardiff. Composed of a series of outer earthen walls and an interior village area (the open green space in the center of this photo). Dr. Sharples would like Lehigh to engage in a collaborative research project at this site in the summer of 2015.

LIDAR image of Caerau with evidence of a Medieval ringwork (upper right corner of the fort), the remains of a 12th century church (beside the ringwork), and a series of Iron Age ramparts and ditches surrounding the site.
Drs. Sharples and David also believe it would be useful to encourage Lehigh architecture students to accompany our research team in 2015. The remains of a 12th century church atop Caerau have not been adequately recorded and would make a valuable addition to knowledge of the site.

Interior photo of Caerau hill fort. Drs. Sharples and Davis toured me around the entire site, indicating areas where they would like to test the site for additional evidence of Iron Age occupation in the summer of 2015.

In 2012 the BBC program *Time Team* initiated limited excavations at Caerau. These investigations suggested that the site contains evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Medieval occupations.
In addition to tours of Ham Hill and Caerau, Dr. Sharples provided a walking tour of other major Iron Age sites in Somerset, including the Cadbury hill fort. Long believed to be the site of mythical Camelot, Cadbury would be of interest to Lehigh history students.

In addition to our tour of Iron Age hill forts, Dr. Sharples found time to take me to other important local archaeological and historical sites, including the ruins of Tintern Abbey. Given its size and importance as well as the impacts of monastic dissolution by King Henry VIII in 1536, this site would be of interest to our students in architecture, history, archaeology, and religion.

Finally, Dr. Sharples provided a tour of Chepstow Castle—the best preserved Norman Era castle in Wales. The earliest construction dates to 1069. There are many unique architectural and archaeological questions surrounding the construction and occupation of Chepstow Castle that might also be of interest to Lehigh history, archaeology, and architecture students.
Burlington House, London. Location of the Royal Society of Antiquaries and the Prehistoric Society’s symposium *Houses and Households in Prehistory*.

Dr. Sharples walking the central plateau at Cadbury hill fort, Somerset, England.