Empires in Archaeological Perspective
Archaeological and historical evidence for selected empires of the Ancient Near East (Assyria) and pre-Columbian America (Aztecs and Incas) will be used to illuminate cross-cultural similarities and differences in the strategies complex pre-modern societies used to expand into empires. We will read and discuss the ways in which such societies produced, acquired, accumulated, and distributed wealth.

Readings: Most readings noted below can be access through Google Drive or downloaded from TED (ted.ucsd.edu). To access PDFs, use the name “anar184ucsd” and password “archofempires” in Google mail. This will enable access to the class Google Drive folder.

Responsibilities:
Reading Responses You will write a 1-3 page analysis of each week’s readings. These should be emailed to me (at jfortier@ucsd.edu) no later than 2pm on the day before class times. (The idea is that I will have adequate time to orient discussion around your comments.) These will be shared with each other through Google docs. Instructions on how to do this will be given in class. You are exempt from this requirement on the day you give presentations. (20%)

Discussant
You will lead classroom discussion on 1 set of weekly readings during the quarter. Post a copy of your lecture notes to turn in after your presentation on Google docs. (20%)

Lecture
Special topics lecture/presentation. You will develop a lecture on a special topic of your choosing in one of the last three weeks of the term. Print a paper copy of your notes to turn in after your presentation. You may assign an article for other students to read in that final week of classes. (20%)

Final Paper
You will write a 10-12 page paper on a topic of your choice in consultation with me. Papers due at final exam time. (30%)
Class Participation
Attendance is required. Occasionally we may have activity, such as a banquet, during class. These educational activities are oriented toward the subject of empires in archaeological perspective, and required. (10%)

Syllabus
We focus on a different topic theoretically for the first part of the term. Many of our readings will weave together some of the threads of the same issues. Therefore, we will draw on previous readings as the weeks progress. We may return to Carla Sinopoli’s article from week 1, and re-read or discuss parts of it in week 3, for example. During the second half of the term, we will read case studies, archaeological reports, and become familiar with the various world areas where early empires developed. Also, if a better-suited reading becomes available, we will add or substitute it during the term.

Week 1. Jan 8, 10, 12 Empires: Ancient & Modern
Goals: Define states and empires; describe features; describe differences in def’ns over time;
Readings:
Morrison, “Sources, approaches, definitions” in Empires;

Week 2: Economy & Trade
Goals: Describe different kinds of economies & theories about them; The Ancient Economy: Marxist, Formalist, and Substantivist approaches.
Readings:
Polanyi, “The Economy as instituted process” in Trade & Market in the Early Empires, Ch. XIII (p.243);
Tyson “Empire in the Ancient Near East” Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology, p. 2360 -.
and
Demetriou “Emporion”, in: Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology, p. 2364 -.

Week 3: World Systems & Political systems in archaeological perspective
Goals: Review bands, tribes, & Chiefdoms, States, and Empires; World Systems Theory
Readings:
Chase-Dunn and Hall, “The Historical Evolution of World-Systems”
Marcus, “The Archaeological Evidence for Social Evolution”

Week 4: Center/Peripheries & hinterlands in archaeological perspective
Goal: Center/Periphery relations; Segmentary States & the role of ideology/hegemony in states & empires.
Readings:
Stahl, "Political economic mosaics: archaeology of the last two millennia in tropical sub-Saharan Africa."
Kardulas, “Negotiation And Incorporation On The Margins Of World-Systems: Examples From Cyprus And North America”

Week 5: Ancient Empires: South Asia
Readings:
Kenoyer “The Indus Civilization”;
Coningham “The Mauryans”; Ch. 11 in: The archaeology of South Asia
Stein “The Chola Empire”
Morrison, "Coercion, resistance, and hierarchy: local processes and imperial strategies in the Vijayanagara empire."

Week 6: Ancient Empires: East Asia
Readings: Barnes, Ch 12 “The making & unmaking of empire”
Sims-Williams, “The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith”
Escuriaza-Lopez, “Aurel Stein’s Methods and Aims in Archaeology on the Silk Road”

Week 7: Ancient Empires: Ancient Persia & Assyria
Readings:
Ross & Steadman, Ch. 5 “Southwest Asia: Mesopotamia & its neighbors” in: Ancient Complex Societies
Kuhrt, “The Achaemenid Persian empire (c. 550–c. 330 BCE)”
Tyson, “Empire in the Ancient Near East, Archaeology of”
Matney, Timothy, Guillermo Algaze, et al. "Understanding Early Bronze Age social structure through mortuary remains: A pilot aDNA study from Titriş Höyük, southeastern Turkey.

Week 8: Ancient Empires of South America
Ross & Steadman, Ch. 13 “Andean Civilizations and Empires” in: Ancient Complex Societies
Goldstein, "From stew-eaters to maize-drinkers."

Week 9: Ancient Empires: Mesoamerica into Southwestern North America
Ross & Steadman, Ch. 12 “Ancient Mesoamerican Cultures” in: Ancient Complex Societies
Smith, Michael E. "The Aztec empire and the Mesoamerican world system."

Week 10: Conclusions
Marcus, “The Archaeological Evidence for Social Evolution”

Reading References


Stein, Burton “The Chola State and the Agrarian Order” Ch VII in Peasant state and society in medieval South India" (1980). Book also at https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=acls;cc=acls;view=toc;idno=heb02450.0001.001