Ninth Biennial Open Forum for Graduate Students

(Un)Known Spaces: Perceived and Intangible Landscapes

Boston University

February 19-21, 2010
Schedule of Events

Friday February 19th, 2010

5:30–5:50 pm  Registration  
Gabel Museum of Archaeology  
Stone Sciences Building  
675 Commonwealth Avenue  
STO 253

6:00–7:00 pm  Keynote Speaker Address  
"On Perceiving the Intangible"  
Dr. Wendy Ashmore  
College of Arts and Sciences  
725 Commonwealth Avenue  
CAS 211

7:00–8:00 pm  Reception  
Gabel Museum of Archaeology  
Stone Science Building  
675 Commonwealth Avenue  
STO 253

8:00–9:30 pm  Dinner with Dr. Wendy Ashmore  
The Elephant Walk  
900 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02451  
Conference presenters and invited guests only
**Saturday February 20th, 2010**

8:30–9:30 am  **Registration and Breakfast**  
Gabel Museum of Archaeology  
*Stone Science Building*  
*675 Commonwealth Avenue*  
*STO 253*

Session I, 9:30 am–12:00 pm  
*Stone Science Building*  
*675 Commonwealth Avenue*  
*STO B50*

1. Interpreting the “Sacred” in Pre-Contact Southern New England: Manitou Offerings and the Algonquian Animate World  
*Katie Kirakosian, University of Massachusetts - Amherst*

2. The (Re)Union of the Known and the Unknown: An Archaeological Approach to the Study of Graffitied Landscapes  
*Travis Parno, Boston University*

3. A Paradox of Place: Settlement Constancy and Changing Cultural Systems in the Highland Andean *Altiplano*  
*Ben Vining, Boston University*

10:30–10:45 am  **Break**

Session II, 10:45am–12:15 pm  
*Stone Science Building,  
675 Commonwealth Avenue*  
*STO B50*

1. Using GIS to Visualize Ephemeral Hunter-Gatherer Landscapes in a Transforming Environment  
*Marienka Brouwer, Michigan State University*
2. Landscapes of Status in Viking-Age Iceland
   Kathryn A. Caitlin, University Of Massachusetts – Boston

3. The Mortuary Landscape of Bronze Age Hovsgol Province, Mongolia
   Eliza Wallace, Boston University

12:15–1:45 pm Lunch Break

Session III, 1:45 pm–2:45 pm
Stone Science Building,
675 Commonwealth Avenue
STO B50

1. Mudflats to Mansions: an Archaeological Life History of the Landscape of Boston’s Back Bay
   Alexander Keim, Boston University

2. At the Edge of Nation: Lynching Memorials across America
   LaTanya Autry, University of Delaware

3. Over my Dead Body: Resurrection of History and Memory at the Gravesite
   Rachel Carmen Ceasar, University of California - Berkeley

2:45–3:00 pm Break

Session IV, 3:00-4:00 pm
Stone Science Building,
675 Commonwealth Avenue
STO B50
1. Landscape and Cosmology: Their Interactive Relationship in the Sultanate of Banten, Java, Indonesia
   Kay Makino, Boston University

2. "Para Mí Es un Lugar Sagrado": Contemporary Conceptions of Cenotes in Valladolid, Yucatán
   Jessica Anne Wheeler, Tulane University

3. Tangled Silk: The Politics and Economics of Silk Road Heritage
   Allison Cuneo, Boston University

4:00–8:00pm Dinner Break

8:00 pm Pub Social
   Cornwall’s Pub
   654 Beacon Street
   Boston, MA 02215

Sunday February 21th, 2010

10:00am–12:00pm Roundtable Brunch and Discussion
   Gabel Museum of Archaeology
   Stone Science Building
   675 Commonwealth Avenue
   STO 253
Wendy Ashmore (PhD Pennsylvania '81) is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. Interested in the social use and understanding of space, and she has spent much of her career studying the structure and meaning of settlement patterns and civic design among the ancient Maya and their neighbors. Her recent research has explored the relationship between gender, the built environment, and spatial order. She has written, edited, and contributed to numerous works, including *Lowland Maya Settlement Patterns* (ed., 1981), *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives* (edited with A. Bernard Knapp, 1999), *Archaeology: Discovering Our Past* (with Robert J. Sharer, 2003), the recently completed *Settlement Archaeology at Quiriguá, Guatemala* (2007), and the forthcoming *Voices in American Archaeology* (2010).
ABSTRACTS
Interpreting the “Sacred” in Pre-Contact Southern New England: Manitou Offerings and the Algonquian Animate World

Katie Kirakosian, University of Massachusetts - Amherst

The adjustments necessary to one's interpretive lens in order to recognize all the possibilities surrounding the creation of the archaeological record can benefit from an emic and etic partnership. Native peoples today have Traditional Knowledge (TK) about the ways that artifacts and ecofacts were used in the past and are still used today, yet their knowledge is seldom consulted when considering the past. Through the lingering residue of Western cultural imperialism, archaeologists often fail to interpret potential “ritual worship” and/or potential “spiritual activities” at sites that have been narrowly categorized as middens, camps, quarries etc. Yet with groups in which all aspects of life are interconnected, such assumptions must be reexamined critically. The discipline of archaeology and the theories that come from its practitioners would radically benefit if the people whose ancestors created such archaeological sites were invited to the table more frequently. It is through a Western worldview and cultural logic that a majority of the archaeological interpretations in southern New England and beyond have been formulated in the present, yet these interpretations may be in stark contradiction to the worldview and cultural logic that created the artifacts and sites themselves in the past.

The research presented here will focus on a small group of shell-bearing features throughout southern New England that were originally interpreted as trash pits, storage pits, or middens. By thinking holistically about these features and by discussing other possibilities with Native people, the Pre-Contact southern New England landscape is made much more complex. Deep-seated and separate categorical designations such as “trash,” “utilitarian,” and “ritual” may ultimately be considered inappropriate and may even mask animate landscapes. Archaeologists may just need to experiment with, learn and/or practice new techniques and ways for perception.
The (Re)Union of the Known and the Unknown: An Archaeological Approach to the Study of Graffitied Landscapes

Travis Parno, Boston University

A brief walk through many urban landscapes reveals the fragments of a struggle, a social war whose weapons are colors and whose participants are known only in scribbled pseudonyms. The study of graffiti within anthropological and sociological spheres is certainly nothing new. However, scholars of archaeology, landscape, and material culture studies have much to add to the discussion of these socially meaningful marks. Following a 2006 survey of the city of Bristol’s graffitied landscape, this paper is offered as a tentative exploration of how archaeologists and students of material culture can approach the study of graffiti from a variety of angles. Methods discussed include graffiti as indices of identity; spatial analysis of graffiti loci; the relationships between graffiti, temporality, and stratigraphy; and the intersection of graffiti and the public. Rather than presenting specific, transparent conclusions, this paper is instead an introduction to graffiti studies in an attempt to illustrate that an informed, nuanced approach to the painted symbols of the urban landscape can yield significant details about individual human actions and unspoken dialogues.
Over my Dead Body: Resurrection of History and Memory at the Gravesite

Rachel Carmen Ceasar, University of California - Berkeley

I will examine how past violent events continue to shape the Spanish community and state via current exhumations, and how this made landscape constructs an intangible template for rescripting social relations in post-civil war, post-dictatorship Spain. I begin with a brief historical account of where archaeology, medical anthropology, and ethnography intersect to explore how the exhumation landscape unearths and disturbs local and collective negotiations of history, memory, and identity; social, political, and religious practices; and archaeological and legal expertise in contemporary Spain.

I aim to tell a story on the resurrection of Spanish memory through the spatiotemporal site of the exhumation. The exhumation is a recuperative event of local and collective ritual healing in that what is emerging from the grave is not only from the grave but also beyond it. Exhumations are not just about pulling bodies out; they are events that come to change the landscape. This event—the actual exhumation and what it produces—becomes a platform from which past history and memory can be accessed and spoken from, as well as where theoretical and empirical debates on archaeology, the body and biotechnology, and warfare are problematized. Ritualized processes of unveiling the body and its personhood come to heal reopened wounds, reawakening trauma and memories that were thought to have been buried along with Franco. In this manner, one’s remains are made whole again, reconstituted in the abstract form of family narratives, socio-biopolitical evidence, and genetic codes. This landscape becomes where the living can extract their histories from: past violent events are re-inhabited in the conceptual spaces of voice and the everyday such that people’s stories can be resurrected and (re)experienced within the commonplace.
At the Edge of Nation: Lynching Memorials across America

LaTanya Autry, University of Delaware

In modern downtown Duluth, Minnesota, the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial recognizes the lives of Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie, three young African American men lynched by a mob of 5,000 to 10,000 white citizens in 1920. Unveiled in 2006, the memorial structure was part of a fifteen year long process of restoring dignity to the lives of these men falsely accused of raping a young white woman. Before this project, the history of the lynching was largely unknown. After the trials and short prison terms of three mob members, white Duluthians buried the event. However, over several decades the sparse black population kept this memory alive through oral histories.

Over the past decade or so, some community groups across the country have rallied to mark and remember places that were formerly lynching sites. This paper explores place-making in local, regional, and national contexts by focusing on the commemorative programs in Duluth, Minnesota; Waco, Texas; and Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. This interdisciplinary work is based on field research; review of the local histories, cultural geographies, and memorial development records; interviews with memorial organizers, artists, and local residents; analysis of memorial and corresponding lynching photographs; and a study of landscape as nationalist ideology.

Through an examination of place I demonstrate that while these memorials are located throughout the U.S. and correlate with America’s lynching history, they yet remain outside of the discourse on national landscape. I acknowledge that on one level by the very existence of lynching memorials in the U.S. one could argue that these forms are national landscape. However, I assert that the concept of American landscape, at least in terms of visual culture, involves something more conceptual grounded in the collective imagination and memory. So while this essay reveals some linkages between memorials across the country, it also addresses how the works are not conceptually organized or recognized as a national practice.
A Paradox of Place: Settlement Constancy and Changing Cultural Systems in the Highland Andean Altiplano

Ben Vining, Boston University

The highland Andean altiplano presents the opportunity to examine archaeological land-use in a marginal setting. The Proyecto Arqueológico Lago Suches has documented over seven thousand years of occupation within a lake basin in the highest regions of the Peruvian altiplano. During two seasons of traditional pedestrian surface survey, approximately 170 archaeological loci have been registered and subsequently analyzed within their social and environmental contexts through analysis of remotely-sensed and GIS data. This examination of settlement patterns reveals a paradox in which dynamic social, economic, and cultural systems are not reflected in static site selection criteria that remained constant over millennia. Despite striking cultural changes from ca. 9000 - 500 b.p — from the early Archaic hunter-gatherer societies to the subsequent state-level Tiwanaku and Inka empires — that are salient elsewhere in the Andes, settlement, land-use, and pastoral movement in the Suches Basin remained remarkably unvarying. This constancy creates a cultural landscape marked by entrenched land-use patterns, a trajectory of long-term social memory, and site selection behavior that reflect similar preferences over time despite major changes in groups’ social and economic organization. This situation is complicated by modern ideologies, including, for example, residence and avoidance rules regarding ancestors which are reproduced in social discourse but which are not, in practice, put into effect. This paradox draws attention to the idea that variable cultural phenomena can be accommodated within similar settlement patterns controlled by significant physical, environmental, or other constraints.
"Para Mí Es un Lugar Sagrado": Contemporary Conceptions of Cenotes in Valladolid, Yucatán

Jessica Anne Wheeler, Tulane University

Cenotes are karst geological features, often but not always covered or explicitly subterranean, that consistently (that is to say, for most of the year) contain water as a result of their connections to the subterranean water table, found primarily on the Yucatán Peninsula. Depending on the context, cenotes have served a variety of roles over the several thousand years of the peninsula’s habitation. Expressions of their importance can be found in their archaeological remains, their depictions by pre-hispanic and contemporary residents in art and text, and their centrality in the contemporary tourist economy of the area.

During December 2008 and January 2009, I conducted six semi-structured interviews with residents of Valladolid, Yucatán, and the surrounding area. From these interviews, certain trends in the conceptions, perceptions, and understandings of cenotes by contemporary residents of Yucatán developed. Cenotes have become contested spaces as a result of their numerous uses and their formerly communal nature. They are used in development projects, either for eco-tourism sites or irrigation projects. As parts of certain archaeological sites, they are significant factors in Yucatán’s tourism economy. Cenotes are also important elements of stories about the past and future told in many communities. In addition, they serve as important ways of educating others about the history of the peninsula’s people.

Although the information gleaned from these interviews is in no way an exhaustive or definitive survey of the ways in which cenotes fit into physical, spiritual, historical, and economic landscapes in Yucatán, they nonetheless provide a rich source of information to begin exploring these questions. This project will examine the various ways in which the six participants conceive, understand, and perceive of cenotes as multifaceted landscapes, and suggest avenues for further research in this area.
Tangled Silk: The Politics and Economics of Silk Road Heritage

Allison Cuneo, Boston University

The Silk Road was a main artery of foreign exchange, merging the cultural worlds of the East and West between approximately 200 BCE to 1614 CE and enabling the movement of not only commodities, but also religion, artistic traditions, knowledge, and peoples. Because of its historical and cultural importance in shaping the people and land of this region, UNESCO has sought to preserve and protect not only the sites and monuments that were a product of Silk Road cultural and economic exchange, but also the cultural landscape itself under the intangible heading of a cultural route. In the Report on the Expert Meeting on Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage, a number of initiatives were undertaken by UNESCO to promote the concept of cultural routes as a form of world heritage, particularly the overland portion of the Silk Road.

At face value the Silk Road appears to fit well within UNESCO’s concept of a heritage route due to its expansive nature, its impact on the exchange and transmission of art, religion, academic knowledge, and technology, and its important economic role for nearly two millennia. However, UNESCO faces a number of internal legislative challenges that may impede the nomination process, particularly the difficulty of defining and protecting a cultural heritage route. Likewise, the state parties associated with the Silk Road have their political and economic motivations for nominating their heritage sites for inscription on the World Heritage List. Will UNESCO be able transcend these national agendas and its own confusing criteria to negotiate the protection of the Silk Road landscape? This paper will explore the challenges that UNESCO faces in inscribing the Silk Road to the World Heritage List as well as the varying ways in which the memory of the Silk Road is interpreted and subsequently manipulated to further both political and economic agendas in Central Asia and China.
Mudflats to Mansions: an Archaeological Life History of the Landscape of Boston’s Back Bay

Alexander Keim, Boston University

The landscapes inhabited and perceived by humans undergo constant change. Nowhere is this truer than in the urban landscape, where near-constant construction and a regular influx of new inhabitants ensure a multiplicity of meanings over time. The Back Bay neighborhood of Boston, MA, is an area that has had an unusually diverse array of geo-physical, economic, and social characteristics over thousands of years. In order to help untangle these meanings, it is useful to construct what Wendy Ashmore has called a “life history of place...examining evidence for human recognition, use, and modification of a particular position, locality, or area over the full span of its existence” that attest to “the sequences of social decisions and dispositions” (Ashmore 2002). Boston’s Back Bay locale has been exploited and experienced in diverse ways by human beings over time, and has been imbued with many different meanings. Through an archaeological understanding of the life history of the Back Bay, we can recover these disparate phenomena and attempt to understand their meaning to the humans who experienced them, in order to explore how humans dwelled within the landscape and extracted from it economic and cultural resources used to both sustain and change their societies.
Landscape and cosmology are intricately related to one another. The urban landscape of the trading center in the kingdom of Banten, Indonesia underwent multiple stages of changes from an indigenous/Hindu place to a sprawling Islamic urban center to an increasingly European-influenced regional trading hub for spice trade in the seventeenth century. In each stage, the people of Banten incorporated foreign elements into their world and let the urban landscape serve political and economic purposes.

Yet, the underlying landscape remained, reflecting and embodying the indigenous cosmology. For example, the city wall of Banten was constructed more for establishing a conceptual boundary between those in the society and those from outside, rather than for a meaningful defensive purpose. The foreign quarters were also established outside the city wall, and no Europeans or Chinese were allowed to live inside the city wall despite their significant economic contributions to the kingdom. The seventeenth-century Great Mosque of Banten also embodies the indigenous hierarchical cosmology with its floor gradually raised as it gets close to the sacred part of the religious center. A similar concept and spatial arrangement exist in the local households. Yet, European influence is undeniably felt in the city landscape with the construction of a Dutch fortress with its typical diamond-shaped bastions. The European technology was revered and actively incorporated into the local landscape as a symbol of power.

Did the changes that took place in the landscape of the kingdom of Banten fundamentally alter the cosmology of the locals or were they only a veneer over the deep-rooted indigenous belief system? While landscape and cosmology in seventeenth-century Banten undoubtedly interacted with one another, the local cosmology showed its strong resilience to foreign influence and the Bantenese interpreted their dynamic and developing landscape in their own way.
Using GIS to Visualize Ephemeral Hunter-Gatherer Landscapes in a Transforming Environment

Marieka Brouwer, Michigan State University

At the end of the last glacial period in Europe (c. 10,000 years ago), the continent experienced a series of dramatic environmental changes. Concurrently, small groups of nomadic hunter-gatherers were colonizing the previously ice-covered areas. Unfortunately, these people only left ephemeral traces of their activities and thus, European prehistorians have been hard-pressed to fill the informational lacuna between the Paleolithic and Neolithic cultural periods. In addition, there are several large-scale confounding factors specific to the Netherlands that have hampered the development of clear understandings of Mesolithic lifeways. These include differential preservation of occupations and disparate applications of excavation techniques, as well as the overarching problem of extensive human reuse of certain locales, from prehistory to the present day. These factors often lead to loss of archaeological proveniences and sometimes, destruction of potentially informative Mesolithic assemblages.

The current research seeks to understand how these nomadic people lived in and moved about their landscape, and how these behaviors were modified over time to address new landscape characteristics. Specifically, this project focuses on the paleo-river systems of the Netherlands. Agent-based modeling will be applied to the landscape evolution models, considering basic and more nuanced motivations of human decision-making in regard to the changing use of the landscape (e.g., survival requirements versus cultural perceptions and ideological obligations). Cost-benefit surfaces will be generated for a variety of human modes of behavior at 500-year intervals. The resulting model will thus predict areas most likely to have hosted specific behaviors. To determine degree of fit, the model will be tested against existing archaeological data and theoretical scholarship on hunter-gatherer landscape perceptions. It is hoped that these models will help to visualize the transient and ephemeral landscapes of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers.
Landscapes of Status in Viking-Age Iceland

*Kathryn A. Caitlin, University Of Massachusetts – Boston*

The clear tephrachronological sequences of Skagafjörður, Iceland allow us to begin constructing a continuous series of erosion and depositional histories for individual farms across the landscape based on the variations in thickness of the soil deposits between layers of tephra fall. Data collected from several thousand soil cores in the region will be analyzed using GIS in combination with borehole visualization software to investigate the implications of observed sediment differences as both a cause and a consequence of variability in socioeconomic status between adjacent Viking-age farmsteads. This paper presents the preliminary results of the earliest stage of analysis.
The Mortuary Landscape of Bronze Age Hovsgol Province, Mongolia

Eliza Wallace, Boston University

A remarkably homogeneous and long-lived tumulus burial tradition endured for more than a millennium across Bronze- and Iron-Age Eurasia. For unclear reasons, numerous cultural groups with disparate material cultures chose a similar and highly visible monumental mortuary tradition. *Khirigsuurs* of Hovsgol province, Mongolia represent one such tradition. This group of stone monuments varies in size from less than two meters to tens of meters in diameter, but their overall organization is highly standardized. Each central burial mound is surrounded by either a square or circular “fence.” The Khrigsuur Project, associated with the National Museum of Natural History and directed by Bruno Frohlich, has collected locational and descriptive data on over one thousand khrigsuurs, and has excavated over twenty. The khirigsuur tradition provides a unique opportunity to examine a monumental burial practice used for the entire population, with both genders and nearly all age groups represented, spanning only a few centuries of use. This paper uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of both survey and excavation data in the Hovsgol province to illuminate the interaction between the intangible sacred landscape and the burial ritual as a performance.
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