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Professor Dawnie Steadman was in residence at the University of South Carolina and hosted by the Department of Anthropology for the interval of August 19 – 31, 2012. Dr. Steadman is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Tennessee. She is also Director of the world-renown Forensic Anthropology Center, which has pioneered studies on the effect of cultural and natural processes on post-mortem human remains. The personnel at this Center have played a major role in training forensic scientists and law enforcement agencies throughout North America in the interpretation of human remains at crime and disaster scenes. In addition to her forensics work, Dr. Steadman is highly regarded for her skeletal biology research on migration, status, health, and conflict on prehistoric Native American populations in the southeastern United States.

There were three objectives to her visit. First, to conduct a series of half-day workshops on issues related to skeletal biology for our faculty and students in biological anthropology. Second, to provide a public lecture on her work on mass graves and human rights. Third, to initiate plans for developing new grant proposals to continue a long-term project on prehistoric warfare and health in the Tennessee region, a collaboration that she and Charlie Cobb have been pursuing for about seven years.

1. **Workshops.** These “hands-on” workshops were typically attended by 8-10 people. They were mainly faculty and graduate students, but we were pleased to have a couple of our advanced undergraduate students participating as well. For week 1, Dr. Steadman focused on issues surrounding “bioarchaeology”, e.g., recent methods in the determination of age and sex, approaches toward resolving the etiology of diseases expressed in bone, and recent models for building demographic profiles from skeletal populations. Week 2 concentrated on forensic anthropology. Workshops tackled such issues as how to address comingling (multiple individuals in the same interment), and how to distinguish major types of trauma (e.g., blunt force versus sharp force) and their possible causes within each category.

Professor Steadman also came to learn as well as to teach. There are several areas in which we have special expertise where she hoped to gain additional knowledge. In this regard, Dr. Jon Leader offered a session on remote sensing instruments (e.g., ground penetrating radar) and their relative efficacy in detecting subsurface features such as graves. Professor Sharon DeWitte offered a workshop on hazards analysis, a statistical approach for modeling the effects of frailty (history of illness) and demography (age and sex) on prehistoric patterns of morbidity and mortality.

2. **Lecture.** On Thursday, August 30, Professor Steadman provided a public lecture attended by about 70 persons. Her presentation covered the wide range of cases related to mass killings and interments on which she has been involved. These range from the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, to the Argentine “Dirty War” of the 1970s, to the recent conflicts occurring in the locale of the border between Uganda and the Congo. The talk was particularly interesting to social scientists because it transcended the forensics dimensions of these events, to consider how one
incorporates the wishes of surviving family members and communities into these projects. Their notions of justice and reparation do not always square with scientists from North America, and a delicate balance must be sought to incorporate multiple world views into this type of very sensitive study.

3. Continuing Work on Grants. Since 2005 Dr. Steadman and I (Cobb) have been collaborating on a long-term research project that examines the adverse health impacts of chronic warfare, as expressed in infectious disease and metabolic disorders. In particular we have been examining a skeletal sample (N > 1600) from a number of archaeological sites dating to the late prehistoric period (ca AD 1100-1400) in central Tennessee. These peoples lived in substantial villages supported by maize agriculture, and erected earthen monuments in the form of pyramids—all signatures of major advances in social complexity. They also lived in a time of endemic warfare, and spent much of their lives in fortified towns. We are examining how this “landscape of conflict” may have impacted community health by reducing access to food resources (due to fear of ranging too far from towns) and promoting infectious disease by massing populations into condensed areas (e.g., we have evidence for tuberculosis and treponemal disease).

Our work was initiated by a National Science Foundation grant in 2005, and we received a Wenner Gren Foundation grant last year to conclude our first major stage of work. We now plan to expand the scope and scale of research by incorporating a number of contemporary sites over a much larger region in the mid-South. Given our experience, the costs of this research will well exceed that normally given out in either the physical anthropology or archaeology divisions of NSF.

Although the NIH usually funds research related to modern populations, there is a new (limited submission) initiative—the Transformative Research Award—for which we believe we can make the argument that our work establishes a baseline for longitudinal research on protracted warfare and chronic adverse health consequences. The annual deadline is in August, and Professor Steadman and I plan to visit the NIH in March when we are both in Washington D.C. for a professional conference. We will use this opportunity to meet with the program director to lay out our larger research agenda and solicit an opinion on whether NIH would fund such research. Because the Transformative Research Award highlights behavioral studies, we believe we can make a good pitch. We thus spent considerable time over the two weeks of her visit toward laying out the justification for this research.

As a side-note, Dr. Steadman and I had a productive afternoon on one of our days meeting with Dr. Eric Brenner, an adjunct professor and epidemiologist. We solicited his insights on GIS modeling in epidemiology, and on what kind of models might be amenable to the relatively small sample sizes we have in our database compared to modern case studies. His suggestions were extremely valuable for our projected publishing efforts, as well as for strengthening our future grant proposals.
The Institute for Visiting Scholars is a terrific program. Our department has benefited in numerous ways that should have payoffs for years to come.