

## Part II

# The Scioto Hopewell: Land, People, Culture, and History

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Within the Scioto and Paint Creek valleys in south-central Ohio, two millennia ago, Native American communities that we call “Hopewell” created a vibrant culture and inspiring material record. Multiple communities gathered together to build truly monumental, earthen ceremonial grounds of many tens of acres and of complex geometric shapes for their rituals of life, death, renewal, and continuity, and in which to bury their honored dead (Carr 2005b; Ruby et al. 2005; Weets et al. 2005). Scioto Hopewell people developed a formal geometry, which underwrote the designs of their ceremonial centers (Marshall 1980, 1987, 1996; Romain 2000), and had an astronomy that allowed them to precisely align these places to the solstices, equinox, and rising and setting moon (Hively and Horn 1982, 1984; Romain 2004, 2005). The Hopewell masterfully shaped shining metals and stones, acquired through long and dangerous journeys afar, into graceful items for use in their rituals, to express their religious beliefs, and to symbolize their social identities: copper panpipes sheathed in silver, smoking pipes sculpted with creatures that provided personal connections to power, and copper breastplates and celts patinated in vivid colors with images of elite persons, to name a few (e.g., Figures 4.4, 4.8L; see also Figure 4.8K;

Carr 2000d, 2005e; Carr and Lydecker 1998; Carr et al. 2002). To obtain these and other materials, Hopewell people traveled in the four directions from their verdant valleys as far as North Carolina, the Gulf Coast, western Wyoming and Idaho, and northern Ontario and Lake Superior. Within their charnel houses, which in instances approached two-thirds the size of a football field, Hopewell community leaders, sodality members, and shaman-like diviners and healers from multiple valleys filled the oaken tombs of certain of their deceased and their cremation basins with dozens to hundreds of gifts of copper axes, copper breastplates, quartz crystal and obsidian points, or galena cubes. The Scioto Hopewell individuals and communities, and their neighbors across the Eastern Woodlands, enjoyed a centuries-long period of peaceful relations among themselves, without bioarchaeological evidence of the kinds of interpersonal and intercommunity violence found in both earlier and later societies in the Scioto and the Woodlands (Buikstra 1977:80; Hall 1977:504–505; C. A. Johnston 2002:112; Mensforth 2001; Milner 1995:232, 234–235, 1999:120–122).

By all accounts, the Scioto Hopewell were remarkable people. Woodland Indians fifteen hundred years later across the Eastern United

States recounted in their oral histories of origin, migration, and tradition the grand ceremonial grounds in the Scioto area (Mann 2003). The rich material legacy of the Scioto Hopewell fired the curiosity of the earliest travelers and settlers in Ohio, was a primary impetus for large scale archaeological expeditions to there in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries, and motivated the development of American archaeology as a discipline intellectually and methodologically (e.g., Shetrone 1936:1–25; Thomas 1894; Willey and Sabloff 1980:20–24, 30–31, 35–43). The elaborate artistry, architecture, burial practices, and travels of Scioto Hopewell peoples have given them a central place in all textbooks of North American and New World archaeology (Fagan 1995; Jennings 1978; Fiedel 1992; Milner 2004) and Native American art (Brose et al. 1985; Gardner 2005:403–404; Skokstad 2005:421–424; Townsend and Sharp 2004). Indeed, Scioto Hopewell Native Americans have been seen by archaeologists as “core” to the development of one of two “cultural climaxes” in the Eastern Woodlands before Contact (Griffin 1967; Hall 1973, 1980).

Despite the richness and reputation of the culture, deeds, and material record of Scioto Hopewell peoples, and for all the excavations that have been made of Scioto Hopewell ceremonial centers and burial mounds, remarkably little had been revealed with empirical certainty about Scioto Hopewell society, those who constituted it, and their social, ritual, and religious lives, until the appearance of the large sociological data sets and analyses in *Gathering Hopewell* (Carr and Case 2005c). Artistic representations of Hopewell elite (e.g., Dragoo and Wray 1964; Fowke 1902:592; Moorehead 1922:128; Shetrone 1936:122; Willoughby and Hooton 1922:plate 15) were described individually, but not as a whole corpus to create an integrated picture of the social personae, roles, and groups within Scioto Hopewellian communities. Mortuary analyses (Greber 1976, 1979a; Greber and Ruhl 1989:54–62) focused on whether Scioto Hopewellian societies exhibited ranking, but did not consider such topics as the social roles of leaders, their power bases, means of recruitment, formality, and degree of

centralization; whether clans, phratries, moieties, or sodalities existed; kinship structure; or the number of genders and their roles and relative prestige. Little was known about the nature of Scioto Hopewellian rituals beyond means for disposing of the dead (e.g., Baby 1954; Brown 1979; Magrath 1945; Mills 1916) and qualitative descriptions of the sizes of ritual gatherings (Greber 1996). The greatest strides in understanding Scioto Hopewell society were made in the realm of settlement and community organization (e.g., Dancey 1991; Dancey and Pacheco 1997b; Pacheco 1993, 1996), although within a static framework devoid of social actors.

If Scioto Hopewell people are to be known in their own cultural and meaningful terms and if their material accomplishments are to be understood in that light, rather than through the projection of a sociological theory, an ethnohistoric analogy, or a Western view of life onto the Hopewellian material record (e.g. Byers 2004; DeBoer 1997: 234–236, 239), it is necessary to fill the Scioto-Paint Creek landscape with Hopewell people and to come to know the details of their social, political, ritual, and religious lives empirically (e.g., Greber 1996). The social and political organization of Scioto Hopewell people, and its expression through rituals, provided the means by which the labor and transgenerational enculturation of geographically dispersed individuals were harnessed and focused on building the architecture of the ceremonial centers, creating the artworks, and acquiring the exotic raw materials that we equate with Hopewell. The religious beliefs of Scioto Hopewell peoples, which are expressed vividly in their material accomplishments, provided the charter and some of the immediate motivations for these endeavors. It is through thickly describing the social, political, ritual, and religious lives of Scioto Hopewellian people that their material accomplishments can become more than a fascination and mystery for Westerners and more than a note of pride in ancestral histories for Woodlands Native Americans. Hopewell people and their lives can be known, and in terms closer to their own.

Part II of this book aims at doing precisely that – at thickly describing Scioto Hopewell people and their lives in a personalized, locally contextualized, and empirically based manner that is sensitive to their voices. Chapters 2 through 5 summarize and integrate the details of the natural and symbolic environments, subsistence, settlement, social and ritual organization, and beliefs of the Hopewellian peoples who lived in the Scioto-Paint Creek area, and the changes they created in their culture over time. The chapters tightly integrate the multiple, specifically sociological analyses and descriptions made in the book, *Gathering Hopewell* (Carr and Case 2005c), extend these through further analysis and interpretation, and place the resulting reconstruction of Scioto Hopewell social-ritual life within a larger cultural, natural, and historical context not previously presented. Much new information on the local natural and symbolic environments, subsistence practices, sodalities, world view, history of changes in Scioto Hopewellian life, and the causes of its origin and ending, is presented and integrated here.

This summary of Scioto Hopewell culture and lifeways is also provided in order to contextualize for the reader the HOPEBIOARCH electronic data base reported here – to give specifically Hopewellian cultural meaning to the aspects of the Scioto Hopewellian mortuary-material record that the data base describes. Further, the summary is meant to stimulate in the reader questions and topics about Scioto Hopewellian life that could be addressed in the future with the data base (see also Chapter 15). The chapters that follow in Part II assume that the reader has a basic working knowledge of the culture history and lifeways of Hopewellian peoples in Ohio and across the Eastern Woodlands. Broad introductions to Hopewell are presented by Bense (1994), Fagan (1995), Fiedel (1996), Griffin (1967), Milner (2004), Prufer (1964b), Struever (1965), Struever and Houart (1972), and Walthall (1980).

Part II of this book begins by describing the natural and symbolic environment of the Scioto and Paint Creek valleys, the settlement pattern and multi-scalar organization of communities within those valleys, and the relations of

alliance that communities developed with one another over time. With an understanding the basic social units within the region, discussion proceeds to the topics of leadership, social ranking, clans and their organization, kinship structure, sodalities, and gender. Once the various social groups, identities, and roles of the Scioto Hopewell peoples have been introduced, their presence at ritual gatherings of varying functions within ceremonial centers is described, the differing sizes and social compositions of the gatherings are summarized, and changes in the size and compositions of the gatherings over time are correlated with changes in the nature of leadership and intercommunity alliance strategies. Part II ends with the history of change in Scioto Hopewellian lifeways and a reconstruction of the causes of their rise and fall.

One large picture that emerges from these summaries is that the grandeur of the archaeological record of the Scioto Hopewell, and the labor organization implied by it, was accomplished with only a moderate degree of social hierarchy among individuals and groups, only the barest beginnings of centralized leadership at the end of the era, and only moderately formal and institutionalized social positions. Scioto Hopewell society was comprised of complementary groups and positions that had complementary roles and that were tied together largely horizontally as approximate equals. In addition, the memberships of different social groups commonly crosscut each other. These characteristics align more closely to the ethnological ideal model of the mature tribe with sodalities, put forth by Service (1962), and to the ethnographic descriptions of Indian tribes of the historic Northeastern Woodlands and the American Southwest, than they do to sociologically vertical but simpler Big Man systems (Sahlins 1968, 1972) or to vertical and more complex social formations such as ritual chiefdoms and headships, kingdoms, redistributive chiefdoms, or city states (Earle 1997; Netting 1972; Peebles and Kus 1977; Frazer 1935, vol. 4; Huntington and Metcalf 1991:135–136, 180–188; Winkelman 1992:69–73). At the same time, there is

evidence that through time, Scioto Hopewell society became somewhat more hierarchical in how individuals and groups related to one another, and a little more centralized in its leadership. It appears that two social positions analogous to the priest-chief, each with a domain of power over multiple communities in different valleys, were emerging by the end of the Middle Woodland period.

A second large picture that the chapters in Part II unveil is how Scioto Hopewellian social and ceremonial life originated and came to an end. Its beginning is traced to a new world view that emphasized horizontal relationships of local social groups with spirits, the dead, and one another on the earth-disk, and that supplanted to a degree the focus on vertical relationships between living humans on the earth-disk and spirits and the dead in Above and Below realms that had been central in the world view of Late Adena peoples. Population aggregation into the main Scioto and Paint Creek valleys, increases in local population density there, horticultural intensification, and increasing social complexity

are all found to have been, initially, responses to this change in world view rather than causes of it. These historical relationships are documented empirically with artifactual, artistic, paleoethnobotanical, site survey, mound architectural, and mortuary data. The end of Scioto Hopewellian social and ceremonial life is documented to have resulted from the breakdown of an intercommunity spiritual-social alliance (a sociopolitical cause) that was most likely precipitated by a perceived spiritual event or problem of fundamental proportion (spiritual belief). Other, previously posed causes of the end of Hopewellian life, including the invention of the bow and arrow, increased social competition and unrest, subsistence change, and climatic cooling are shown empirically to be out of sync temporally with the cultural fall or to not have occurred. The abruptness and historical timing of both the beginning and the ending of Scioto Hopewellian social and ceremonial lifeways are among the key pieces of evidence that point to the causes of these cultural changes.