

Gathering Hopewell: Society, Ritual, and Ritual Interaction, edited by Christopher Carr & D. Troy Case, 2005. New York (NY): Kluwer Academic/Plenum; ISBN-13 978-030648479-7 paperback £30 & US\$54.95; xxi+807 pp., 83 figs., 90 tables, CD

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Gathering Hopewell is a monumental effort by largely one man (Carr) to gather an enormous amount of data and expertise from three regions — the Mann, Havana and Scioto Hopewell — and to shape it according to his vision. Such an admirable effort, while also introducing an innovative method and theory for American audiences is all the more astounding for being so readable.

The book begins with a biography of Stuart Struever to whom the book is dedicated and whose grand perspective is emulated by Carr himself. Similar to Struever, an emphasis is given to using techniques from several disciplines and one wonders whether

Struever would have produced it himself, given today's relaxation of the rules governing ethnographic analogy.

Carr and Troy Case introduce the volume by explaining the inspiration behind it. Troubled by the lack of humanism in ecological or neo-Darwinian approaches to the Hopewell, they wish to present a more humanistic view. To achieve this they argue for a more contextual approach and adopt a methodological concept called 'Thick Prehistory'. This is a methodology introduced by British post-processualists and is best described by Chris Tilley as 'the intellectual networking of potential connections between things in time and space' (Tilley 1996, 4). Through this disputed use of ethnographic accounts as middle-range theories to explain rituals that were most likely contextually contingent, British prehistorians have been using Thick Prehistory in a similar way to Carr for over fifteen years.

Probably in an attempt to distance themselves from these archaeologists, Carr *et al.* explain how they differ from a 'practice and agency approach'. They argue, quite rightly, that to explain everything in terms of competition over power is to reduce intention to a generalized, probably Western motive. Unfortunately, they equate the opposite of competition over power with conformity within regions and much of the book is dedicated to proving that differences within regions were systemic rather than cultural. This is unfortunate since the stated ambition to provide a contextual understanding of the Hopewell is a very good one. Contestation is found in many contextual studies of the Hopewell — as it is in most ethnographic accounts — but conflict was not necessarily over power and certainly does not preclude a systemic model of culture (Martin 2002). This neglect of internal differences is not entirely the fault of the authors though. Such a vast attempt at generalization is bound to gloss over differences in favour of similarities within regions.

The second chapter, by Carr, is an extensive and thorough historiography of Hopewell research and researchers. He criticizes previous ecological or economic interpretations that treat the Hopewell as a homogeneous entity, and advocates examining the Hopewell on a regional basis in relation to ethnographic models. Like his British counterparts, he sees ethnography as a way to present Hopewell societies in a much more humanized way by modelling the past on the ethnographic present.

The rest of the book is composed of 3 sections (18 chapters) that deal with social organization, the size and composition of ritual gatherings, and the character of exchange between regions. Introductions to each section are written by Carr who gives a welcome and

well-written summary of the topics and how chapters are integrated into his vision. Most of the chapters are co-written by Carr — which helps to control the direction of the book.

The first of these chapters (Ch. 4) is co-written by Carr, Ruby and Charles, who provide an overview of the three areas studied: their settlement and ceremonial archaeology, and previous interpretations of their social organization. This is aimed to illustrate the differences between the three regions, while the differences within them are seen as functional differentiation.

The following chapter (Ch. 5) then addresses types of leadership other than hierarchical ranking that might have existed for Ohio Hopewell. Carr and Case introduce a novel way of distinguishing between these different types of leadership by categorizing the form of their grave goods. Thus shamans, non-shamans, sodality leaders, warriors, hunters, diviners, healers and combinations of these leadership roles are all identified in the Hopewell by linking artefacts with these ethnographically defined social roles. As long as such determinations are understood as subjective, and I am not sure that they are, such a division of society into various activities instead of just ranks is an insightful contribution and a good way of thinking about variation in burials.

Carr returns briefly to Havana Hopewell in Chapter 6 to illustrate that ranking probably did exist in the Havana Hopewell — extrapolating from literature on the Klunk-Gibson site. Then, in Chapter 7, he argues that this is in contrast to the Scioto and Paint Creek Valleys of Ohio. Carr sees divisions within mounds as reflecting different leadership roles or clans instead of Gerber's ranked divisions at Scioto and Paint Creek mound complexes. However, on the basis of its slightly larger quantity of copper artefacts he goes on to suggest that the Scioto site of Hopewell contained leaders from all the complexes in the region. This is a rather tenuous assertion, but is the basis for an argument that defines the Scioto region as an internally uniform culture integrated by alliances.

In the next chapter Carr suggests clans as another alternative to ranked variation in mounds and one that is closer to Native American social organization. This is again a useful insight. Animal totemic clans are also associated with activities in society such as war or peace and would have probably represented those associations in burial. Carr then sorts Ohio burials into different animal totemic clans using the presence of animal parts in them to distinguish them, a much less speculative determination than leadership roles. Mixtures of different animals are explained as representing phratries or dual divisions while effigy

pipes are claimed to represent personal animal spirit guides.

Chapters 9 and 10 are the first studies by independent contributors and examine the gender correlations in Ohio Hopewell. These illustrate dramatic differences in gender associations between regions as well as between the Hopewell period and more recent ethnographic accounts. This illustrates for me the huge problem with direct ethnographic analogy, but in Chapter 11 Carr and Keller present the different figurine styles of each region, again seeking their meanings through ethnographic analogy. Assuming that they were produced by women, due to ethnographic associations of clay with women, they argue that differences in styles indicate that interregional marriage was limited, but that some interaction between female artisans was likely.

The second section relates to the composition of Hopewell ritual gatherings. Carr's introduction first reviews the various functions given for Ohio gatherings and offers an alternative interpretation based upon the Algonquian Feasts of the Dead. This was a festival adopted in the seventeenth century to solidify alliances between groups against the Iroquois by digging up their dead and mixing them together in a huge burial ceremony. While Carr *et al.* conclude — from calculations of the number of people in Scioto Hopewell gatherings (one per 'gift') — that such large gatherings were relatively unusual, they argue that occasional larger gatherings did indeed resemble these alliance building ceremonies.

Chapter 14 is an actual contextual study of such a site in the Scioto Valley of Ohio (Tremper mound) and a study of platform pipes from the site. The deposition of 375 mixed cremations in a large wooden building with two separate artefact caches (including 136 platform pipes), certainly indicates large gatherings — as long as they were deposited on only a few occasions. By using chemical sourcing analyses, four sources are identified for the clay used to make the pipes — sources as far away as northwestern Illinois and southwestern Minnesota. Despite the logistical difficulties of such a gathering, these sources are argued by Carr *et al.* to represent the origins of groups and their burials assembled at this site.

Chapter 15 is a similar study of clay sources, used for pottery at the Mann site in Indiana. Studies indicate that some of the clay came from Tennessee and that some of the styles came from Georgia, reproduced in local clay. This is again interpreted as the participation of outside groups in rituals. Neither of these examples though appear to me to be evidence for integration within regions. A more useful discussion how these interactions might have occurred leads

into the third section (Ch. 16) where Carr introduces several alternative mechanisms for the dispersal of Hopewell traits.

These mechanisms are quite plausible alternatives to exchange and include vision and power questing, pilgrimages, travelling medicine persons, spirit adoption, interregional marriage and others. Carr relates each to particular leadership roles (mentioned in Ch. 5), the idea being that in order to understand how objects came to travel such distances, one must understand the context of their deposition — defined here as the ethnographically assigned identities they were deposited with. Such an innovative interpretation of the diffusion of traits based upon indigenous activities is an inspired addition to Hopewell research.

The final four chapters illustrate another useful concept introduced by Carr in Chapter 16. This is the idea that similarities in object forms smoothed interactions between different traditions despite their having contextually contingent meanings and values. While Carr perhaps overemphasizes the stasis and shared meanings of objects on another (canonical) level, this is similar to the semiotic principle that object forms provide commensurability between different frames of reference (Latour 2005). This is one of the very few studies that have actually followed up this understanding. Thus Chapters 17 to 20 examine the various copper celts, panpipes, earspools and silver artefacts from across the Hopewell culture and illustrate that most were made locally, but with similarities that would have given traditions something in common to enable them to interact. Such similarities are seen to have resulted through individuals travelling to distant parts and attaining new ideas, rather than through interregional exchange.

This book is a monumental work from a seasoned scholar that should be a model for other archaeological studies. Despite containing over 700 pages of text and 21 contributors it is still highly accessible and coherent. The decision to share their data on an accompanying CD is admirable. It is also theoretically consistent and even though some readers may not agree with Carr's theory or methodology one cannot help being impressed. He introduces several innovative insights, interpretations and concepts that will certainly stimulate and possibly transform Hopewell archaeology. While a more nuanced approach to different practices within regions would have been appreciated, Carr's assumption of regional uniformity is probably the result of his valiant attempt to paint regions with a broad brush, a consequence that many attempts at generalization unfortunately share. What is important is his attempt to lift interpretation out of our Western conceptions and find more indigenous models to think

with. As long as they do not become determinative as well, these indigenous models may provide valuable alternative models to work with in the future.

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